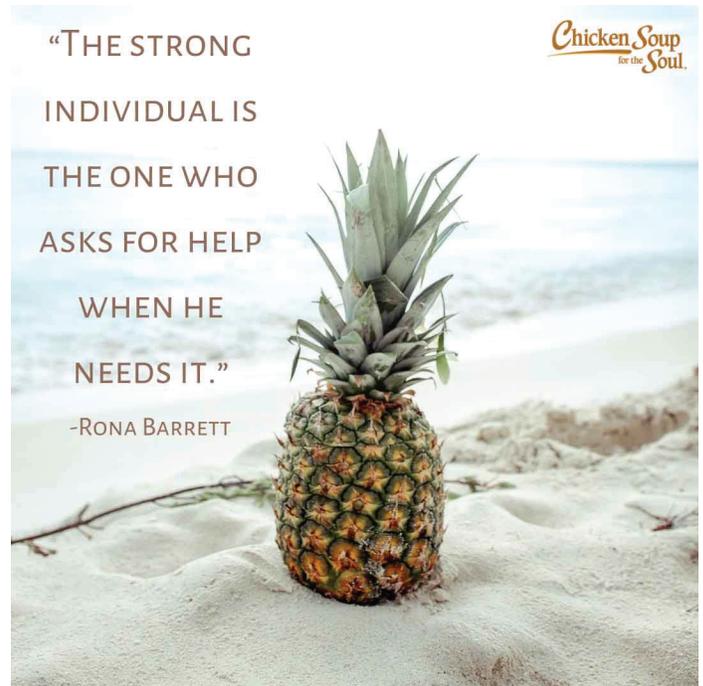


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Church Services

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church: Worship in the church at 8:30 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215332349572015/>)

Groton Christian & Missinary Alliance Church: Worship in the church at 10:30 a.m.: (<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonCMA/>)

St. John's Lutheran Church: Worship in the church at 9 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsgroton/>)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church - No corporate service in the church for the month of June or July:

(<https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Lutheran-Church-GrotonSD-ELCA-636505039852208/>)

United Methodist Church: Drive-In Worship at 11 a.m. Listen on 106.1 FM at the church site. (<https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc>)

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, 10:30 a.m. People will stay in their vehicles and listen to the service on their FM radio.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont has worship on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m..

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont / Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden - will have a podcast posted. <https://anchor.fm/paul-irvin-kosel>

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

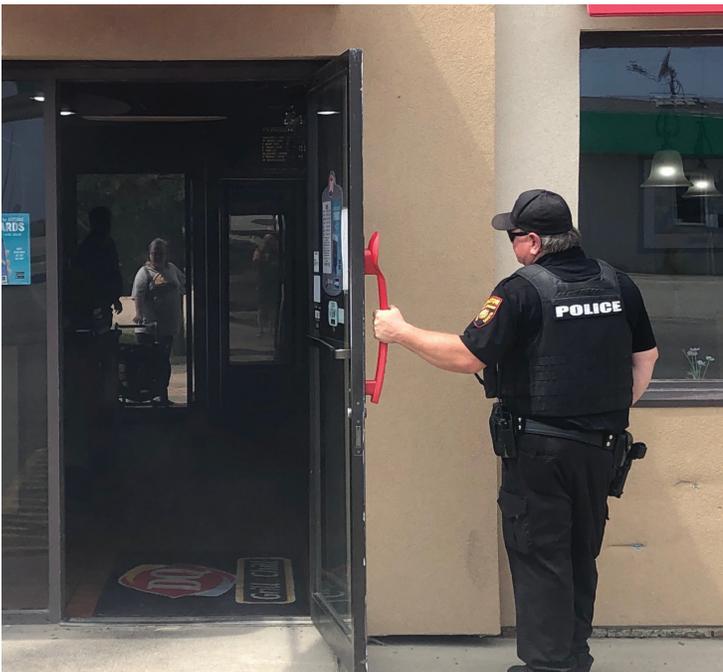
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Fryer catches on fire at Groton Dairy Queen

It couldn't have happened at a more inopportune time. There was a long line at driveup during the noon hour when the fryer caught on fire at the Groton Dairy Queen. The Groton Fire Department was called to the scene, the employees were evacuated and the business closed up. Smoke can rolling out the top of the building through the ventilation system and the fire department personnel had blowers to try and get as much smoke out of the building. There were no injuries. The fryer will need to be replaced before the business can open back up, according to owner Dale Grenz. It will be closed today and depending on how quickly everything can get cleaned up and the fryer replaced, a Monday opening is unknown.



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Sunday Extras



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

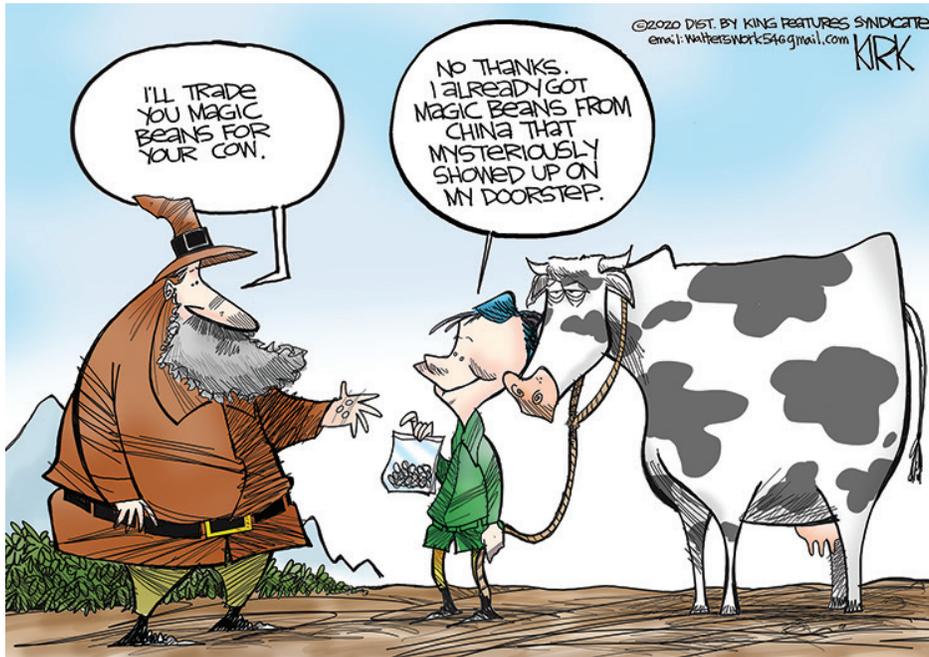


*Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in Your sight,
O Lord, my strength
and my Redeemer.*

Psalm 19:14

"Portrait of Helen Fry" by Roger Fry (1896)

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Simeon in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Whose first chapter begins, "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab"? *Exodus, 2 Kings, Job, Proverbs*

3. In Luke 7, where did Jesus raise a widow's son from the dead? *Amos, Nain, Lystra, Philippi*

4. From Genesis 4, who is considered the father of all musicians? *Jeremiah, Joash, Jubal, Job*

5. In Luke 1, what was Elisabeth and Zacharias' child named? *Elisabeth, Zacharias, Thomas, John*

6. From Genesis 12, where did Abram go after leaving Ur? *Iconium, Nineveh, Haran, Salem*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) 2 Kings; 3) Nain; 4) Jubal; 5) John; 6) Haran

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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Comfort foods

Made fast
and
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Special Baked Beans

It's funny how appliances come and go out of fashion. Take slow cookers — in the '70s we all used them, then in the '80s we denied we owned one! Come the 21st century and slow cookers are back in style. Try this bean recipe and you'll see why!

- 3 (16-ounce) cans great northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 3 tablespoons real bacon bits
- 1/4 cup sugar-free maple syrup

In a slow cooker, combine great northern beans, onion and tomato sauce. Stir in bacon bits and maple syrup. Cover and cook on HIGH for 3 to 4 hours. Mix well before serving. Makes 6 (3/4 cup) servings.

• Each serving equals: 218 calories, 2g fat, 14g protein, 36g carb., 1,691mg sodium, 9g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Meat, 1 1/2 Starch, 1 1/2 Vegetable.

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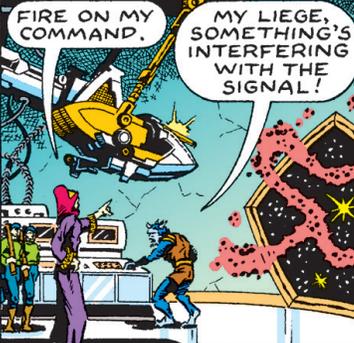


FLASH GORDON

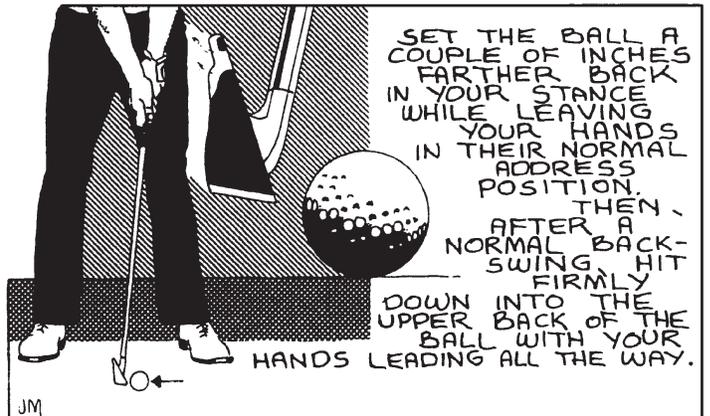
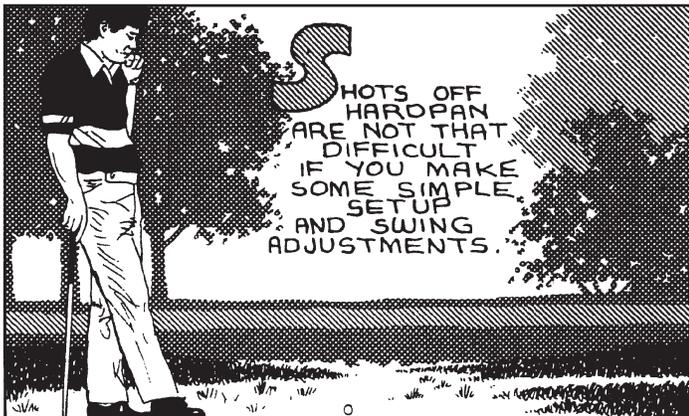
BY JIM KEEFE

8-2

AS THE SPACE PORTAL CONNECTING MONGO TO EARTH IS INITIATED, MING READIES HIS INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION.



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Pulmonary Fibrosis Needs Exact Diagnosis

DEAR DR. ROACH: My husband was recently diagnosed with mild to moderate pulmonary fibrosis. His mother died from pulmonary fibrosis. From what we have read there is no cure, only palliative care. The thought of doing nothing to try to stop the progression is totally unacceptable when there have been such successes with immunotherapy and stem cells. Would he receive more aggressive treatment going to a pulmonary fibrosis care center that has lung disease programs? — C.D.

ANSWER: There are several diseases that may cause fibrosis of the lung, so having an exact diagnosis made by an expert is critical for getting the right treatment. The most common type of pulmonary fibrosis is called “idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis” (it also has been called “usual interstitial pneumonia” and “cryptogenic fibrosing alveolitis”), and I am going to discuss that diagnosis.

The cause of IPF is unknown (both “idiopathic” and “cryptogenic” mean “of unknown cause”), but cigarette smoking is a risk factor. It is usually diagnosed in people who are their 50s and 60s, although some familial cases may come on earlier. IPF can run in families.

Although it is a rare disease, it seems to be on the rise. The major symptoms are cough and shortness of breath.

There is no cure for IPF, but there are treatments available. Two drugs, pirfenidone and nintedanib, are approved for use in the U.S. and Canada. Both of them slow progression of lung disease, reduce exacerbations and have been proven to reduce mortality from the condition, if only slightly. I am

concerned that you and your husband apparently haven’t heard of these drugs.

I strongly advise you get a referral to a center for lung disease in order to get your husband the best care. I found 35 IPF trials recruiting patients in the U.S. and six in Canada. A clinical trial will help scientists understand this condition as well as determine the best current treatment. You also can find out what centers have expertise on this condition by seeing where the trials are conducted at www.clinicaltrials.gov. The most aggressive treatment isn’t always the best, but you and your husband deserve to hear about all the options.

The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation can help you find experienced centers for treating this condition. You can find them online at www.pulmonary-fibrosis.org.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My niece recently was diagnosed with breast cancer. Radiation was recommended. Her mother said that first she’d have to boost her immune system. Is it possible to actually do that? — P.P.L.

ANSWER: Radiation is a common treatment after breast cancer surgery. It’s done to reduce the risk of recurrence, depending on the exact type of cancer.

Boosting the immune system is a new adjunct for many types of cancer. There are several ways to do this: One is to genetically modify the patient’s own immune T-cells, but many other techniques are in trials now.

However, if your niece’s mother is talking about supplements, I’d be cautious. Supplements that are promoted to boost the immune system generally are ineffective at doing so. Making sure your niece has proper nutrition, gets good sleep and experiences as little stress as is manageable are ways to prevent stress on the immune system. Everyone could benefit from those deceptively simple steps, but especially a person being treated for cancer.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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1. Name the two artists who released “Suspicion” in 1962 and 1964.

2. Who had a top 10 hit with “Blame It on the Bossa Nova”?

3. Who wrote and first released “I Am a Rock”?

4. What is the target of the song “Dedicated Follower of Fashion”?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: “If you see me with a great big smile, At some party where the fun runs wild.”

Answers

1. Elvis Presley (1962) and Terry Stafford (1964). When Stafford’s version came out, it managed to crack the stranglehold The Beatles had on the top five slots on the charts, coming in at No. 3.

2. Eydie Gorme, in 1963. The Bossa Nova was a ‘60s-era dance, similar to the Samba and popular with college kids. “Bossa nova” means “new trend” in Portuguese.

3. No, it wasn’t Simon and Garfunkel ... it was only Simon. He wrote and released the song in August 1965. The duo released it in December of that year.

4. The song takes jabs at Carnaby Street, the youth hippie and mod fashion hub of ‘60s London.

5. “Funny Way of Laughin’,” by Burl Ives in 1962. The song took a Grammy for Best Country & Western Recording in 1963.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

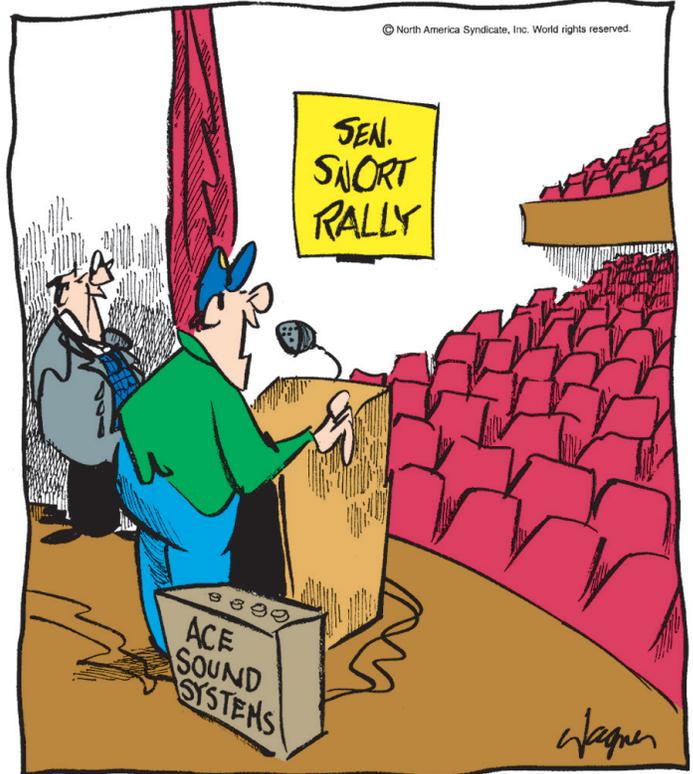
by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT

Wagner

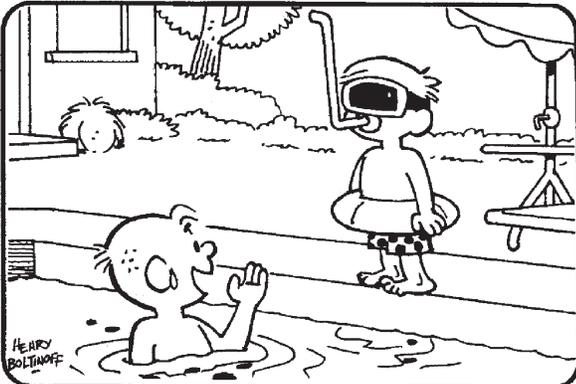


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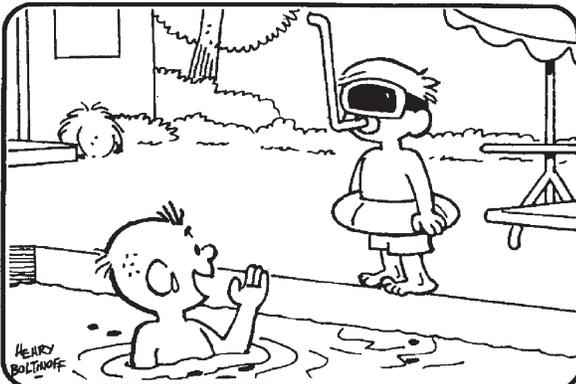
"Taxing, taxing, one-two-three..."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Tree limb is missing. 2. Swim trunks are different. 3. Walkway is missing. 4. Boy's hair is different. 5. Umbrella handle is gone. 6. Walkie-talkie is missing.

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• A tip from our good friend A.S.M.: “When buying berries packed in a basket, check the bottom to see if there’s a juice stain. This means that the strawberries at the bottom are crushed.”

• “Here’s a great tip for use at bath time with baby: I have a sippy cup that changes color when the drink is hot. Oddly enough, it changes at the perfect temperature for baby’s bath. So, I fill the tub and toss in the cup. When the cup starts to change back to its original color (blue), I know the bathwater is not too hot. I always swish the water around and check with my wrist also, but it is a good visual clue to check.” — *P.B. in Idaho*

• “To remove muffins or rolls from a pan, set it on an old, damp towel for a minute. The steam must loosen the bottoms because they just slide right out. I thank my mom for this tip.” — *J.R. via e-mail*

• When heating milk in a pan, “seal” the pan with unsalted butter to keep the milk from filming and sticking to the sides. Lightly coat all sides of the pan with butter, and the milk is sure to not leave scum, which can take away from the rich flavor of the milk.

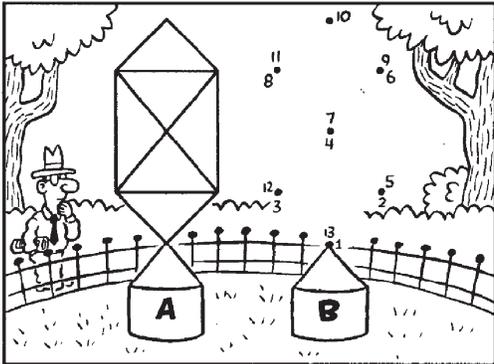
• Do you find yourself throwing away unused and spoiled fruits and veggies at the end of the week? Try setting aside time after you come home from the grocery store for prepping fruits and vegetables. Pre-bag snack sizes of carrots, celery, strawberries, grapes, cantaloupe and apples. Pre-cut veggies for meals to make later in the week. Slice tomatoes and onions for sandwiches, and tear and separate lettuce for salads. They all make great, healthy treats, and having them ready to go makes it easier to get that five a day!

Send your tips to Now Here’s a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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AN ARTY PUZZLE! The statue on pedestal "A" is made by bending one long steel rod. If you join the dots on pedestal "B," you'll see how this was done without going over any leg more than once.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

N	O	I	T	A	E	R	C	E	R	K	L	S	N
T	O	B	C	S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	N	O
A	C	S	U	E	N	I	H	S	N	U	S	A	I
E	E	E	C	G	C	G	N	I	H	S	I	F	T
H	A	K	U	H	S	R	O	O	D	T	U	O	A
G	N	I	T	A	O	B	E	S	E	T	I	K	C
G	D	B	L	E	M	O	N	A	D	E	O	R	A
B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L	P	M	A	C	H	V



Illustrated by David Coulson

IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME!

Hidden in the above diagram are 19 words associated with summer vacation time. They can be found by reading up or down, side to side, or diagonally. Letters can be used more than once. Listed below are the 19 words you're looking for.

- Baseball
- Bikes
- Boating
- Bugs
- Camp
- Fans
- Fishing
- Heat
- Hot
- Ice Cream
- Kites
- Lemonade
- No school
- Ocean
- Outdoors
- Recreation
- Sunshine
- Swimming
- Vacation

THE TALE OF THE PROGRESSIVE SHOPPER! In 5 days Eloise spent \$100 at the local mall. Each day she spent \$6 more than she did the day before. Can you figure out how much she spent on each day?



Answer: Day 1, \$8; Day 2, \$14; Day 3, \$20; Day 4, \$26; Day 5, \$32.

LINK-UPS! Here's a list of 12 one-syllable words that are divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from a word in the left column to a word on the right.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1. DAM | DOCK |
| 2. GALL | ATE |
| 3. NET | THEN |
| 4. INN | ASK |
| 5. HAD | ANT |
| 6. EAR | HER |

Answers: Damask, Damask, gallant, nether, haddock, earthen.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Height of fashion?
- 4 First victim
- 8 Expansive
- 12 Retirement plan acronym
- 13 Sushi bar soup
- 14 Grooving on
- 15 Plaid garment
- 17 Greek vowels
- 18 Small barrel
- 19 Irish overcoats
- 21 Wunderkind
- 24 Thither
- 25 Atmosphere
- 26 — sauce
- 28 Florida city
- 32 Mid-month date
- 34 Chow down
- 36 Painter Chagall
- 37 Archaeologist's find
- 39 Cushion
- 41 Opposed
- 42 Plaything
- 44 Malign
- 46 Young child
- 50 Mongrel
- 51 Hodgepodge
- 52 Yankee Doodle's feather?
- 56 Huff and puff
- 57 "Zounds!"
- 58 Erstwhile

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18			19		20					
21	22				23		24					
25				26		27		28		29	30	31
32			33		34		35		36			
37				38		39		40		41		
			42		43		44		45			
46	47	48			49		50					
51					52		53				54	55
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

- acorn
- 59 Knitting need
- 60 Scruff
- 61 "Science Guy" Bill
- DOWN**
- 1 That guy
- 2 Mound stat
- 3 Holy fish?
- 4 Pedro's pals
- 5 Recycling receptacle
- 6 Jacob's brother
- 7 Humble
- 8 "Platoon"
- locale
- 9 Initial stake
- 10 Celebrity
- 11 Pitch
- 16 Barbie's companion
- 20 Drunkard
- 21 Twosome
- 22 Stash
- 23 Curly's brother
- 27 Shrill bark
- 29 Coconut cookie
- 30 Senior moment?
- 31 Zits
- 33 Take a chair
- 35 Slight amount
- 38 Army rank (Abbr.)
- 40 Ten-year period
- 43 Sanaa's land
- 45 Bear hair
- 46 Country singer Keith
- 47 — podrida
- 48 A-line designer
- 49 Sitarist's rendition
- 53 Upper limit
- 54 Aye rival
- 55 Mamie's man

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

H	E	M		A	B	E	L		V	A	S	T
I	R	A		M	I	S	O		I	N	T	O
M	A	C	K	I	N	A	W		E	T	A	S
		K	E	G		U	L	S	T	E	R	S
P	H	E	N	O	M		Y	O	N			
A	I	R		S	O	Y		T	A	M	P	A
I	D	E	S		E	A	T		M	A	R	C
R	E	L	I	C		P	A	D		C	O	N
			T	O	Y		D	E	F	A	M	E
T	O	D	D	L	E	R		C	U	R		
O	L	I	O		M	A	C	A	R	O	N	I
B	L	O	W		E	G	A	D		O	A	K
Y	A	R	N		N	A	P	E		N	Y	E

LAFF - A - DAY



"Do I have time to go shopping?"

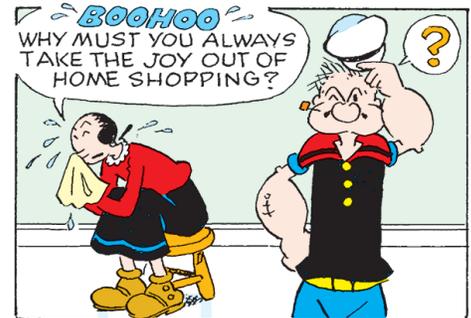
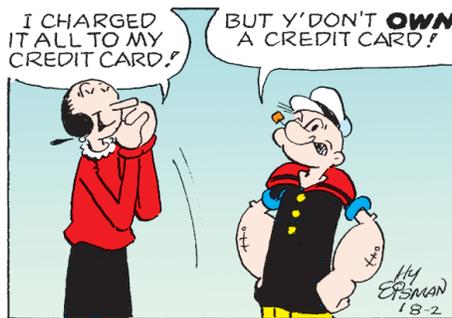
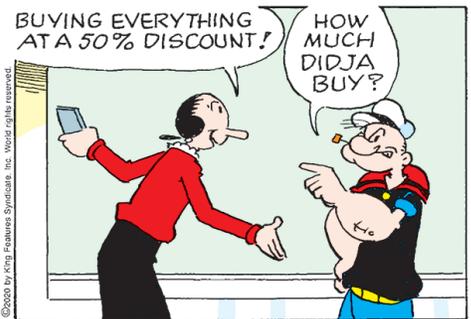
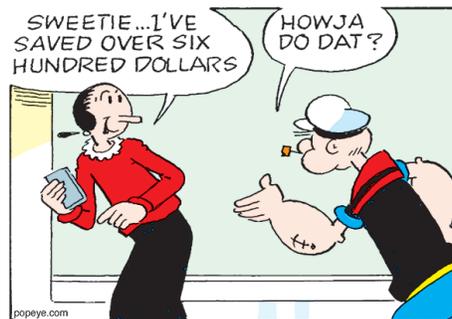
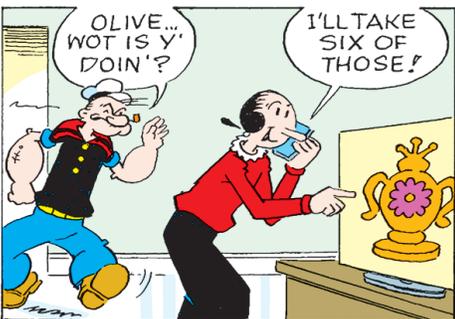
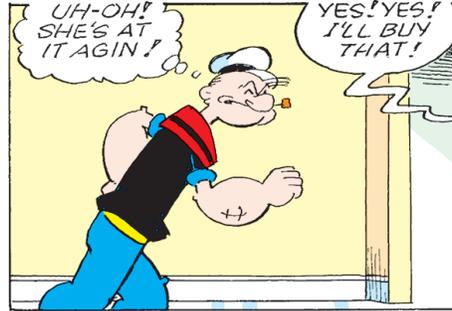
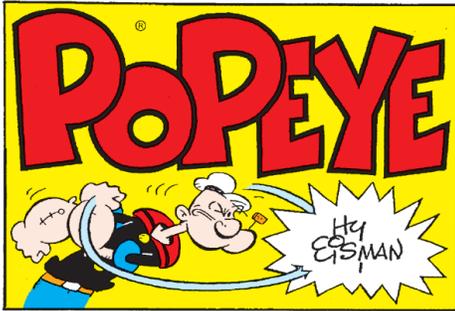
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



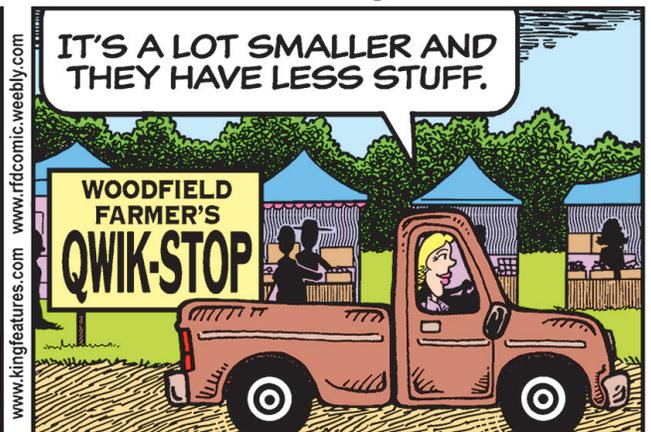
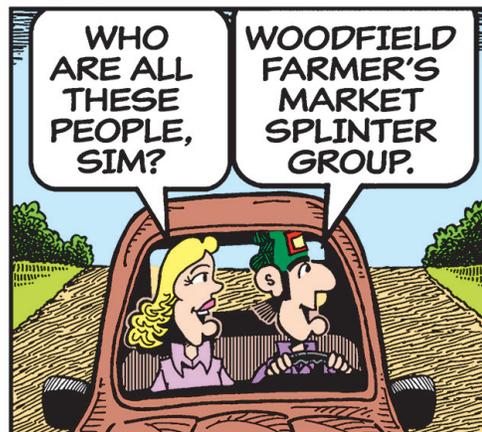
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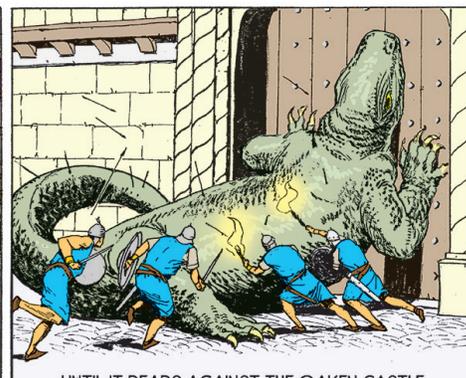
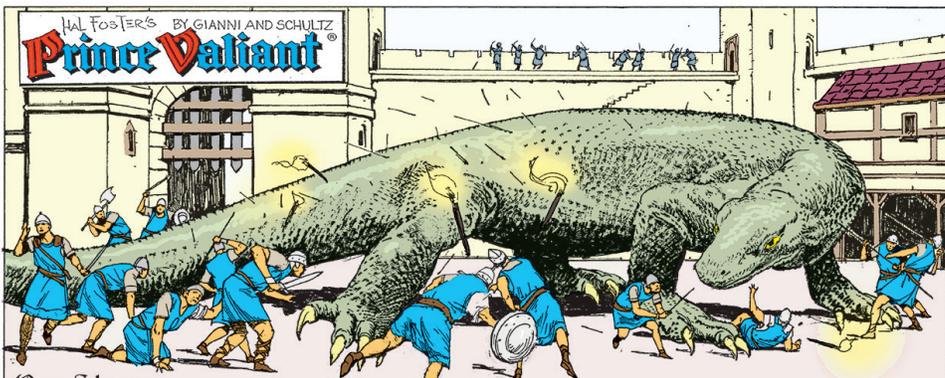
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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Our Story:

REPORTS OF A DRAGON LUMBERING OVER CAMELOT'S WALLS HAVE NOT BEEN EXAGGERATED.

NEITHER ARROWS, LANCES, NOR THE TAR-SATURATED TORCHES THAT VAL ORDERS THROWN AGAINST ITS ARMORED HIDE SLOW ITS MARCH ...

... UNTIL IT REARS AGAINST THE OAKEN CASTLE DOORS. "WHY," ASKS VAL, "HAS THIS HORROR FOLLOWED OUR SHIP OVER AN ENTIRE OCEAN?"



"WHAT HLL HAVE WE DONE TO IT?" THEN THE DOORS SHATTER AND THE MONSTER IS IN THE COURT.

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INSIDE, THE THREE BEASTMEN FINALLY UNDERSTAND WHY THEIR HOSTAGE SITUATION HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN.

HOW THEY HOWL WITH BLOODTHIRSTY RAGE AT THE SIGHT OF THEIR ANCIENT ENEMY!

NEXT: Aerial attack

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Getting Through the Day

Some random thoughts for getting through the day ...

Have you heard of custom puzzles? They're available at a number of places online. (Read the reviews before you order and look for U.S. companies.) Select a favorite vacation or family photo, decide on the size of the puzzle and the number of pieces, send in your order and you'll get back all the pieces to create a puzzle of that image. Call the company first to be sure of the details.

Buy stamps by mail and stay out of the post office. Ask the local post office to have your mail carrier bring out a stamp order form and envelope. Check off the ones you want, write a check payable to Postmaster and slide it into the envelope. Leave it in your outgoing mail and within a few days your stamps will be delivered to you.

Do you have enough indoor plants? Even if you have a few, can you use

more? Plants are good for our indoor environment where we're all spending so much time. Check your local nursery for curb pickup.

If you miss playing chess with others, you can play online. See www.chess.com/play/computer and play against the computer. Better yet, play against a pal using an old-school method: set up a board on each end and send your moves to each other via email.

On the other hand, too many people are trying to cut their own hair nowadays since too many salons and barber shops are closed. If you think you want to cut your own hair, don't. If you really insist you need to cut your hair and haven't done it before, go online to YouTube and watch a few dozen how-to videos about cutting hair. Then rethink your plan again. Whatever you do, don't use regular kitchen or paper scissors. If you have to do this, invest in proper haircutting shears.

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1. How many times did Iceland's Magnus Ver Magnusson win the title of World's Strongest Man?

2. How many consecutive scoreless innings did the Los Angeles Dodgers' Orel Hershiser pitch during his record-breaking streak in 1988?

3. What boxer handed Joe Louis his first loss as a pro with a 12th-round knockout at Yankee Stadium in 1936?

4. Former NFL running back O.J. Simpson played the character of T.D. Parker in what football sitcom that aired on HBO from 1984-91?

5. Nine-time NBA All-Star and 1996 NBA Defensive Player of the Year Gary Payton was known by what nickname?

6. The California Commotion, Aussie Peppers, Chicago Bandits and Cleveland Comets are teams competing in what women's pro sports league?

7. What two Chicago Bears greats had their jersey numbers retired at Soldier Field?



by Ryan A. Berenz

halftime of a 33-6 loss to the Green Bay Packers on a windy, rainy Halloween night at Soldier Field in 1994?

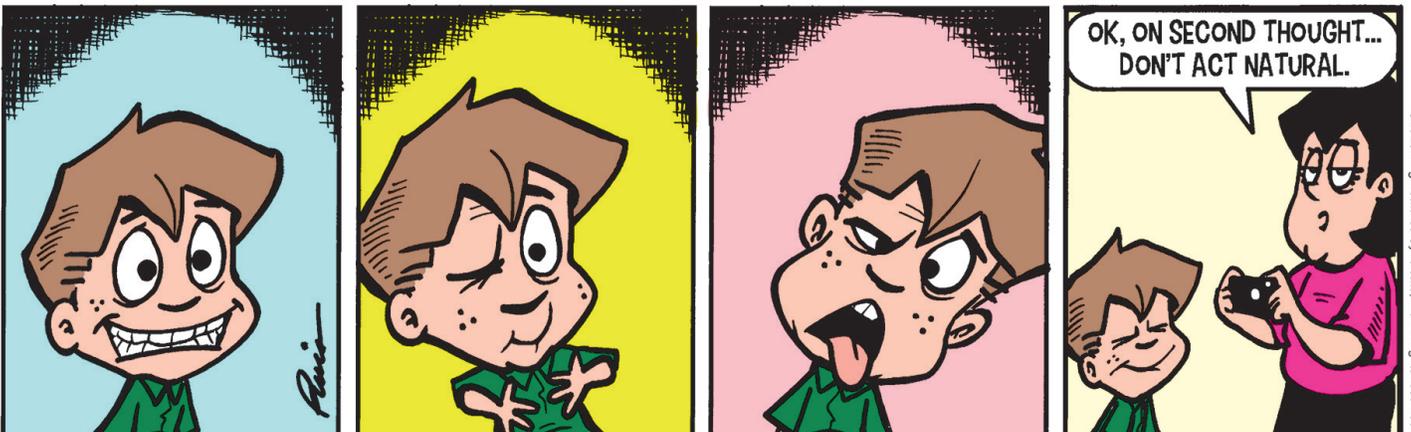
Answers

1. Four (1991, 1994-96).
2. 59.
3. Max Schmeling.
4. "1st & Ten."
5. "The Glove."
6. National Pro Fastpitch (NPF) softball.
7. Dick Butkus and Gale Sayers.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Attention Students!

South Dakota is home to outstanding universities and technical colleges that are leading the country in science, technology, engineering and mathematic (STEM) fields that so many students are pursuing. These students have an opportunity to receive a first-class education right here in South Dakota.

While South Dakota has a lot of resources for college-aged students pursuing STEM, there's no reason we shouldn't expand our reach to the younger generations. That's why this week, my office announced South Dakota's first Congressional App Challenge, a digital app competition for middle and high school students across the state.

The Congressional App Challenge was created because Congress recognized STEM and computer science skills are essential for economic growth in the United States. As a nation, we've fallen behind on these fronts, and we have a programmer shortage. STEM jobs are high-paying and in high-demand. It's crucial we maintain American competitiveness – investing in our youth now and encouraging them to acquire these valuable skills will prepare us as a nation as more careers become STEM focused.

This competition is flexible. The Congressional App Challenge accepts computer programs (or apps) written in any programming language, for any platform (desktop/PC, web, mobile, raspberry Pi, etc.). You may not understand what raspberry Pi is, but your middle schooler might.

Since this is a new competition for South Dakota's students, I need your help to spread the word. Students must register online by September 10th and submit their app by October 19th. That deadline is coming up fast.

You don't have to be an expert coder to join the competition – we are looking for students of all skill levels, regardless of coding experience.

Winners will be selected by a panel of judges in South Dakota and honored by South Dakota's Congressional office. Winning apps will be featured on display in the U.S. Capitol building and on the Congressional App Challenge website.

I know South Dakota is full of creative students and I'm looking forward to seeing their talents on full display.

To register for the competition, please visit www.CongressionalAppChallenge.us.

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When it Comes to the Election, States Should Use South Dakota Common Sense

With fewer than 90 days left until the November election, voters are considering how best to cast their ballot in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We won't be moving the date of our election – it will be November 3 as scheduled – but logistics may be different. Absentee voting has become a popular choice this year since you can avoid crowded polling places. Normally, I vote in person at my polling location, but for this year's primary election I actually voted absentee. South Dakota has a safe and secure absentee voting system in place, but this is not necessarily the case across the nation.

One of the important pillars of South Dakota's absentee voting process and that of other states is that eligible South Dakota voters must submit a request for an absentee ballot before the ballot can be mailed to them. We have done this for many years now. South Dakota also requires that voters provide proof that they are indeed eligible to vote—on our voter registration form, there is a space to enter in your driver license number, or, if you don't have one, the last four digits of your Social Security number.

Additionally, South Dakota requires absentee ballot applications to be notarized or include a photocopy of a photo ID card such as a driver license. In other states, absentee ballots are being automatically sent to every voter, regardless of if they requested one. This can lead to voter fraud. For example, if a voter recently moved to a new house and hasn't yet updated their voter registration information, a ballot could be sent to their old house. There's nothing stopping the new residents from filling out the ballot.

Maintaining the integrity of our free and fair elections is critically important—our elections are how we choose our country's leaders. We need to make sure that they remain secure as we adapt to life during a pandemic. One of the main concerns we have with mail-in voting is making sure that all votes will be counted on Election Day. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS), which delivers mail-in ballots, has been bogged down by delays in recent months because of the coronavirus. We don't want voters' filled-in ballots left behind at USPS locations across the country where they can be compromised or greatly delayed. In South Dakota, our absentee ballots must be received by 5:00 p.m. the day before the election. This allows our normal election process to be completed on November 3.

Protecting the integrity of our election system isn't a partisan issue—we all deserve to know, without a doubt, that our votes are being counted appropriately and that only the legal, valid votes of others are accepted at the ballot box. While this has always been the case, our concerns are exacerbated this election cycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because not every voter wants to or is able to vote in-person at a polling location, states must take steps to protect their elections while allowing for social distancing as well.

I trust in South Dakota's voting process, and I encourage other states to take a look at how we do it. Our absentee voting process is voluntary and we require proof of eligibility to vote. These are two common-sense ways to help secure the validity of election results.

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John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Safeguarding South Dakota's Top Industry

While most sectors of our economy were thriving before the coronavirus pandemic hit, farmers and ranchers were struggling. Low prices, extended trade disputes, and natural disasters had meant a tough few years for agriculture producers even before the arrival of the coronavirus. So the pandemic has hit farmers and ranchers particularly hard. Agriculture is the lifeblood of South Dakota, and making sure our agriculture producers have what they need to keep feeding our nation – and the world – is one of my top priorities in Washington.

During debate on the CARES Act – our largest coronavirus relief bill to date – I fought to make sure that we included relief for farmers and ranchers. The final bill included \$14 billion to replenish the Commodity Credit Corporation, plus an additional \$9.5 billion in emergency support to allow the Department of Agriculture to provide income and price support for farmers and ranchers.

Days after the bill passed, I led a bipartisan group of senators and representatives in a letter to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, urging him to use a portion of the funds to provide support for hard-hit cattle producers. In mid-April, the Department of Agriculture responded to that letter and other petitions by announcing that it would issue \$16 billion in direct payments to agriculture producers, including livestock producers, affected by the virus. Sign-ups for this funding began at the end of May, and according to the most recent data, South Dakota agriculture producers had received approximately \$342 million.

The coronavirus relief legislation we passed in late March established the Paycheck Protection Program, which provides forgivable loans to small businesses to help them keep their employees on their payroll during this crisis. Self-employed Americans, which describes many farmers and ranchers, are eligible for these loans. But in practice, the program's guidelines have excluded a lot of agriculture producers. Low commodity prices and a challenging planting season meant that many farmers and ranchers had a negative net income in 2019. And right now the program's guidelines exclude farmers or ranchers without employees with a negative net income for last year.

In June, I introduced the Paycheck Protection for Producers Act, legislation that would allow more farmers to access the Paycheck Protection Program by allowing them to use their 2019 gross income instead of their 2019 net income when applying for a loan. I will continue to advocate for passage of this bill in the Senate, either as part of future coronavirus relief legislation or another bill.

I'm also hoping the Senate will take up my Pandemic Authority Suitable to Utilize Reserve Easements Act – or PASTURE Act – in the near future. This legislation, which I also introduced in June, would provide relief to farmers and ranchers by allowing emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for the duration of this crisis.

Under current law, agriculture producers can hay or graze their CRP acres during weather-related disasters without a reduction in their CRP payments. My legislation would extend that provision to cover pandemics, including the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, farmers and ranchers are having to hold onto their livestock for longer than expected. This bill would help ensure that they have adequate forage for their animals.

Another challenge facing farmers during the pandemic is the drop in fuel demand. This is troubling news for the ethanol industry and for employees at shuttered plants, but also for the broader agriculture and rural economy.

As ethanol producers idle production, they will slow their purchases of corn – which will be grim news for corn farmers, who are anxiously keeping an eye on the approaching fall harvest. In addition to supporting direct relief for biofuels, I recently introduced several bills that would support the industry by approving advanced fuel registrations, updating old emissions data that is holding back exports, and extending emergency Food and Drug Administration guidance to ensure ethanol-based hand sanitizer can continue to help fight the pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the vital role American farmers and ranchers play. Without these essential workers, the shortages on shelves during the pandemic would be much worse. We need to ensure that our agriculture producers have the support they need to weather this crisis and continue feeding and fueling our nation. I will continue to do everything I can to help farmers and ranchers through the challenges they're facing.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



An Optimistic Outlook

Last week, when I was in Sioux Falls to discuss reopening schools with parents and superintendents, I saw a great bulletin board in a 4th grade classroom. It said, "Put your positive pants on." That message reminded me of a lesson that is often easy to forget: an optimistic outlook can be tremendously helpful when responding to life's challenges. That's especially true in the fight against COVID-19.

As we get more and more data about this virus, it's becoming increasingly clear that most of us aren't at high risk. This virus has a clear vulnerable population; we know that elderly folks are far more likely to get seriously ill, especially when paired with certain pre-existing health conditions. That leaves about 95% of the population that is not at risk for serious infection. For these folks, we can continue getting back to normal, while making the best decisions for ourselves and our loved ones.

We need to make sure to take care of the vulnerable population, and that starts with good hygiene and social distancing. Our vulnerable friends and family should continue to take extra precautions and to stay home when they are able, and we can all take precautions to avoid spreading the virus to them.

We can also celebrate that we're getting better at treating COVID-19. This means that even for those who do get seriously sick, our outlook is getting better all the time. Our case fatality rate is dropping, meaning that those who get sick are more likely to recover from the virus than in the past.

Data shows that the antiviral drug Remdesivir substantially reduces the mortality rate and cuts recovery time significantly. Similarly, a study out of Michigan's Henry Ford Health System indicates that hydroxychloroquine may cut mortality rate for COVID-19 in half. And progress on a vaccine is moving along ahead of schedule.

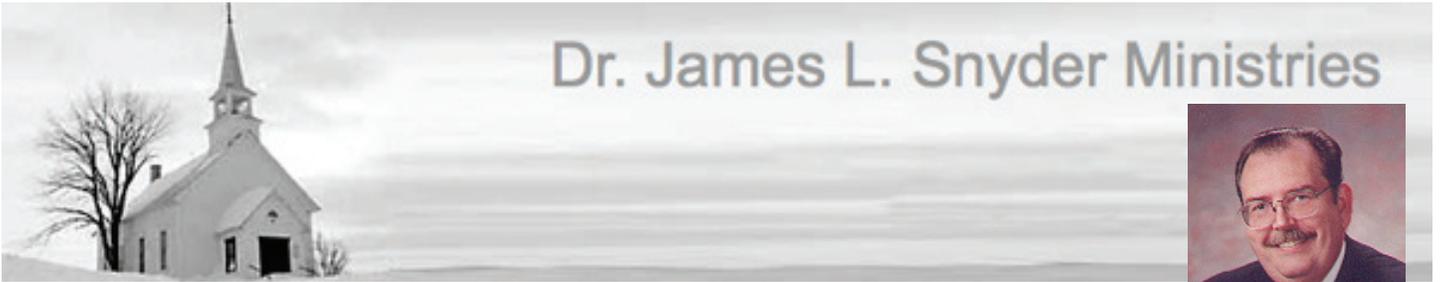
As we continue planning to reopen schools in the fall, let's remember that kids are less likely to contract the virus and far less likely to get seriously ill. In fact, science suggests that influenza is a greater risk to kids than COVID-19. If children do contract the virus, data indicates they are less likely to spread it to others.

There is a risk associated with everything that we do in life; more South Dakotans have died from accidental injuries than from COVID-19 in the past 5 months. We mitigate risks by taking proper precautions when we get in our cars, when we operate farm equipment, and when we make choices about what we eat and how much we exercise. The same should be true about life as we get back to normal.

So let's remember to "put our positive pants on." We need to emphasize facts, not fear. Let's tell the story of what works in the fight against this virus, and let's continue to get through this together.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



Are Homemade Cookies Addictive?

Some people say we are living in the “new normal.” I’m not sure exactly what they mean, and I don’t have the time to ask, nor the desire.

If the “new normal” is what I have been experiencing in the parsonage for the last several months, I’m all for it. Let it continue. Everybody should be able to live their own normal.

Because of being limited, as far as traveling is concerned and going shopping or whatever, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I have spent a lot of time at home enjoying our time together.

I must say that my wife and I don’t always see eye to eye. After all, I’m 6’3”, and she’s only 5’2”. I’m tempted to say at times, but I value my life too much, that I have a “higher perspective” than my wife. But you didn’t hear it for me.

We have spent almost half a century together, and we’re coming out of it most amicably. Some people might say we were opposites in many regards. She’s on the vegetable side of the table, and I’m on the fruit side.

There have been some little clashes concerning that. She’s a vegetable connoisseur and I, well, let’s say I’m a fruitoholic. The only veggie I really approve of is the Carrot Cake.

Apart from that, we have been able to carve out a wonderful life together. I didn’t realize how much it was until all of this “lockdown” nonsense that we’re in right now.

When I go out, come home and walk into the house, I am overwhelmed by the aroma that is all through the house. The first time this happened, I had to stop and try to figure out what was happening. Then it became clear, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage had spent the whole day cooking or baking.

One day it is baking, and then the next day it is cooking and putting it all together, it is marvelous.

We haven’t eaten out in a restaurant for months, but rather have enjoyed home-cooked meals the whole time. I’m not sure if I should leave a tip!

I remember one day when I came into the house the aroma was one of my favorites. My wife had been baking cookies all day long, and the house was filled with that beautiful aroma.

On the table were cookies just out of the oven, and in the oven was a new batch of cookies. Those cookies on the table smelled so wonderful. Not only that, but they also looked delicious. I’m not sure what delicious looks like, but those cookies came very close to that definition.

I came and stood by the cookies and looked at them, and then I heard, “Don’t you dare touch one of those cookies!”

Looking up, my wife was staring at me, knowing full well my intent to snatch a cookie. The problem with cookies on the table is when you take one, there is an empty space so you can’t get away with it.

“But, my dear, they look and smell so wonderful. This must be the best batch of cookies you have ever made in your life.”

I’m trying to negotiate into getting at least one cookie. The problem is, nobody, especially me, can negotiate with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

I looked at her, looked back at the cookies, and then again at her with some of my most sorry-looking eyes I could manufacture. If I could have created a tear, I would’ve at that moment.

At that time, I knew I would have to wait to have a cookie, but it was just killing me to not only smelling them but seeing in the same room that I’m in. Such torture is inhuman.

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I went into the living room and sat down to watch a little TV. In a few moments, my wife came in carrying one cookie and said, "You can have one cookie per day."

Smiling at her, I accepted the cookie and indulged in gratifying my cookie-itis. And it was wonderful. My problem at the time was, it was only one, and it was small.

I found out she was making these cookies for other people and members of the family. I tried to tell her that I was a member of the family, but she threw a grimace at me and continued baking the cookies.

How can anybody live on just one cookie per day?

Later on, I saw on the table plastic bags filled with cookies designated for some friend or family member. An idea crumbled in my head at that time. When my wife said, "one cookie per day," what did that actually mean?

Looking at all the bags of cookies on that table, I developed my own interpretation and assumed it meant one cookie per day per plastic bag. I hope she doesn't catch on to my plan, but I have enjoyed her cookies all day long. Remember, I only ate one at a time.

As I was enjoying my last cookie, a verse of scripture came to mind. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

My words don't mean anything unless it is backed up by what I do. I think I need to confess my cookie snatching to my wife.

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#167 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

I spoke too soon last night; we're back in terrible territory. Today, 71,600 new cases were reported, which is quite something on a weekend. This is a 1.5% increase to 5,003,600, which mean we did, indeed, manage to break the five million mark before the week ended—not a happy milestone. The fifth million took 16 days, just the same time as the fourth million did. In second place around the world is Brazil with three million; we're definitely Number 1. We have seven states and three territories on an increasing trajectory, and that's enough to drive a great deal of growth. In the past week, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida had the most new cases per capita. We're testing around 720,000 people per day, a decrease over last week driven, I hope, by specific issues in Florida and California not by some more nefarious source. We peaked a month or so ago, but this new spike in cases is worrisome. Our seven-day average is around 54,000; I do not want to see today's numbers continue. For the record, the world total hit 19 million cases Thursday, just four days after crossing 18 million. The speed of that is simply breathtaking.

We're up to 161,921 reported deaths, which brings us up to 161,921, a 0.9% increase. This is our fifth consecutive day over 1000 deaths, and our seven-day average is hanging right around 1000. This significantly less than we were seeing in April, but it is much higher than we were seeing a month ago when we were closer to 500. We are seeing much more transmission in smaller cities and rural areas in the South and the Midwest. We have 21 states and territories reporting an increasing number of deaths and just ended our fifth consecutive week of increased deaths.

A group of researchers at Duke University set up a very simple test to evaluate the effectiveness of different kinds of face mask in stopping the spread of droplets and aerosols from the upper respiratory tract. They used a laser to illuminate droplets and particles and a simple cell phone camera to record the results. A computer algorithm counted particles and droplets expelled that escaped the masks. They tested 14 commonly available masks including the N95 reserved for health care workers and a bandana over the mouth and nose. Each mask was tested 10 times.

It should be no surprise that the N95 performed best; but there were some masks generally available to the public which also performed very well. First, here's what didn't work: the neck fleece or "gaiter mask." This thing actually broke up the larger respiratory droplets, which are usually quite easy to trap in a mask, into tiny particles that were not captured, that is, they made things worse. Folded bandanas and knitted masks also did poorly, although they were not actually worse than nothing. Don't use these. What did work? Three-layer surgical mass were very effective. Homemade cotton masks were also quite effective. You're well off to use either one. I would not recommend bandanas or gaiter masks.

Dominoes continue to fall in big-time college sports as the Mid-American Conference cancels its fall sports season. This conference includes schools in Ohio, Kentucky, New York, Michigan, and Illinois. I do not believe this will be the last such cancellation we're going to see.

I looked today at a compilation of information on differences between symptomatic and asymptomatic or between mildly and severely ill people infected with SARS-CoV-2. There was a number of possible explanations advanced based on current evidence. It could be that none, some, or all of these factors play a role; research continues.

One is partial protection due to prior exposure to other related viruses. We are seeing what looks like

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T-cell based protection in some folks we know for sure have not previously been infected with this virus. It is possible there is some degree of cross-reactive protection from those exposures. We don't know this is a thing in this case, but there are intensive efforts underway to sort out this possibility.

Another is differences in exposure dose. It is quite common in viral infections to see more severe infections in those subjected to heavy doses of a virus and milder or even asymptomatic infections in those exposed to smaller doses. We can't run the experiments needed to demonstrate conclusively whether this makes a difference; but it appears to be a possibility.

There is some thinking that other viruses generally vaccinated against in children may provide some cross-reactive immunity or maybe just a general stimulation of nonspecific innate immune mechanisms. There is some evidence people who've had certain vaccines, particularly fairly close in time to Covid-19 exposure, might be covered with some degree of protection, at least for a while.

Another idea is related to genetic differences. This is going in a few different directions, but one possibility has to do with ACE2 receptors, those binding sites on host cells where the virus makes its first assault on the host. We know that children tend to be less seriously ill, and so the question has arisen about their expression of ACE2 on cells. We don't have anything on that yet, but we'll see what turns up as this work proceeds.

And the answer could be as simple as masks. While we've grown accustomed to considering masks more beneficial to others than to the wearer; this this could now be something of a clue into how well they do work. If exposure dose is, indeed, as important as we think it is, this could provide evidence supporting the effectiveness of masking.

We talked the past few days about the critically short supply of remdesivir. It appears we have a solution. Pfizer has agreed to devote some of its manufacturing capacity to making it for Gilead, the company who owns the drug. If they can crank up production quickly enough, that will be a help.

Mae Krier went to Seattle from her native Pennsylvania during World War II to help make airplanes for the war effort, and she's still helping her country out during a crisis. This real-life Rosie the Riveter was just 17 years old when she pitched in on the airplane effort. That was before she met and married her husband, Norman, with whom she spent more than 70 years.

Now 94 years old, Krier is sewing face masks for those who need them; she's made hundreds of them so far. She said, "I make them with good feeling. If just one of these little face masks can save one life, I've done my job." I'll note that most 94-year-olds don't worry much about jobs at all; but this is actually Krier's side job these days. Her first one is to get her fellow Rosies recognized for their contribution to the war effort with a Congressional Gold Medal. She has a bill through the House and is currently working on the Senate. I wouldn't write off her efforts; this is a woman who gets things done.

She has confidence the US will come out of this pandemic fine. "People are great. They'll do what has to be done. When World War II was declared every man, woman, and child just dropped everything and did what it took to save our country. It wasn't my job or your job; it was our job." She added a message for the rest of us: "We can do it."

That should carry us another day. Be well. We'll talk again.

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COVID CASES OVER THE WEEKS WORLDWIDE

3 Weeks Ago

2 Weeks Ago

Last Week

This Week

Total Confirmed
14,313,491

Total Confirmed
16,055,909

Total Confirmed
17,859,763

Global Cases
19,668,394

3,712,445 US
2,074,860 Brazil
1,077,781 India
770,311 Russia
350,879 South Africa
349,500 Peru
338,913 Mexico
328,846 Chile
295,632 United Kingdom
273,788 Iran

4,178,730 US
2,394,513 Brazil
1,385,635 India
811,073 Russia
434,200 South Africa
385,036 Mexico
375,961 Peru
343,592 Chile
300,270 United Kingdom
288,839 Iran

4,620,502 US
2,707,877 Brazil
1,750,723 India
849,277 Russia
503,290 South Africa
434,193 Mexico
407,492 Peru
357,658 Chile
306,752 Iran
306,181 Colombia

4,998,802 US
3,012,412 Brazil
2,153,010 India
885,718 Russia
553,188 South Africa
475,902 Mexico
471,012 Peru
376,870 Colombia
371,023 Chile
326,712 Iran

Global Deaths
602,776

Global Deaths
644,661

Global Deaths
685,179

Global Deaths
727,523

140,120 deaths US
78,772 deaths Brazil
45,358 deaths United Kingdom
38,888 deaths Mexico
35,042 deaths Italy
30,155 deaths France

146,463 deaths US
86,449 deaths Brazil
45,823 deaths United Kingdom
42,645 deaths Mexico
35,102 deaths Italy
32,060 deaths India

154,449 deaths US
93,563 deaths Brazil
47,472 deaths Mexico
46,278 deaths United Kingdom
37,364 deaths India
35,146 deaths Italy

162,430 deaths US
100,477 deaths Brazil
52,006 deaths Mexico
46,651 deaths United Kingdom
43,379 deaths India
35,203 deaths Italy

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	July 29	July 30	July 31	Aug. 01	Aug. 2	Aug. 3	Aug. 4
Minnesota	52,281	52,947	53,692	54,463	55,188	55,947	56,560
Nebraska	25,157	25,422	25,766	26,211	26,391	26,702	26,956
Montana	3,475	3,676	3,814	3,965	4,081	4,193	4,233
Colorado	45,314	45,796	46,204	46,809	47,267	47,727	47,968
Wyoming	2,136	2,172	2,217	2,259	2,297	2,333	2,364
North Dakota	6141	6227	6301	6468	6602	6660	6785
South Dakota	8492	8641*	8685	8764	8867	8955	9020
United States	4,352,304	4,427,493	4,495,224	4,566,275	4,620,502	4,667,957	4,718,249
US Deaths	149,260	150,716	152,075	153,391	154,449	154,860	155,478
Minnesota	+478	+666	+745	+771	+725	+759	+613
Nebraska	+258	+265	+344	+445	+458	+311	+254
Montana	+94	+201	+138	+151	+116	+112	+40
Colorado	+749	+482	+408	+605	+458	+460	+241
Wyoming	+64	+36	+45	+42	+38	+36	+31
North Dakota	+155	+86	+74	+167	+134	+58	+125
South Dakota	48	+149	+44	+80	+103	+88	+65
United States	+57,534	+75,189	+67,731	+71,051	+54,227	+47,455	+50,292
US Deaths	+1,204	+1,456	+1,359	+1,316	+1,058	+411	+618
	Aug. 5	Aug. 6	Aug. 7	Aug. 7	Aug. 9		
Minnesota	57,162	57,779	58,640	59,185	60,101		
Nebraska	27,178	27,489	27,821	28,104	28,245		
Montana	4,314	4,429	4,602	4,757	4889		
Colorado	48,394	48,988	49,436	49,893	50,324		
Wyoming	2,392	2,424	2,449	2,490	2,498		
North Dakota	6933	7057	7177	7327	7508		
South Dakota	9,079	9168	9273	9371	9477		
United States	4,768,083	4,818,328	4,883,657	4,945,795	4,998,802		
US Deaths	156,753	157,930	160,104	161,456	162,430		
Minnesota	+602	+617	+861	+545	+916		
Nebraska	+222	+311	+332	+283	+141		
Montana	+81	+115	+173	+155	+132		
Colorado	+426	+594	+448	+457	+431		
Wyoming	+28	+32	+25	+41	+8		
North Dakota	+148	+124	+120	+150	+181		
South Dakota	+59	+89	+105	+98	+106		
United States	+49,834	+50,235	+65,329	+62,138	+53,007		
US Deaths	+1,275	+1,177	+2,174	+1,352	+974		

* The July 29, 2020, daily update includes cases reported to the South Dakota Department between Monday, July 27 at 1 p.m. and Tuesday, July 28 at 7 p.m. due to a delay in the daily data extraction.

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August 8th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Two females died yesterday from COVID-19. One was in the 70s and the other in the 80+ age group. They were from Pennington County and Minnehaha County. That brings the state total to 146 deaths.

Day County had two more positive cases resulting them falling off the fully recovered list. Marshall County recorded a positive cases now making two active cases in that county. Brown had a positivity rate of 9.8 percent as 8 of the 82 tests were positive. Only 2 were recovered in Brown County leaving 44 active cases. Spink County had one recovered so they are down to 6 active cases. Today's positivity rate for South Dakota is 6.1 percent while our neighbors to the north in North Dakota are at 10.9 percent with two more deaths being tallied there for a total of 112.

Now I do want to make a notation about the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Don't expect a huge spike in Meade County which is where Sturgis is located at. You have to remember that the state stats records the place of residence, not the number of cases. It could be conceivable to say that there could be 100 cases recorded during the rally; however, let's say 75 of them have residence outside of South Dakota. South Dakota's numbers would increase by 25 and not the 100. The other 75 would be recorded in their respective state's numbers.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +8 (436) 9.8%
Recovered: +2 (389)
Active Cases: +6 (44)
Total Tests: +82 (5718)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (20)
Deaths: 0 (3)
Percent Recovered: 89.2% (-1.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +106 (9477 total) 6.1%
Total Tests: 1,741 (149,344 total)
Hospitalized: +5 (871 total). 48 currently hospitalized (up 1 from yesterday)
Deaths: +2 (146 total)
Recovered: +63 (8307 total)
Active Cases: +41 (1,024)
Percent Recovered: 87.6 -4
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 44% Non-Covid, 54% Available
ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 66% Non-Covid, 32% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 12% Non-Covid, 83% Available

number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding +3 (53)

Fully recovered from positive cases: (Lost Day) Bon Homme 13-13, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 2-2, Haakon 1-1, Hand 7-7, Hyde 3-3, Perkins 4-4, Potter 1-1, Stanley 14-14, Tripp 20-20.

Aurora: 2 active case
Beadle (9): +4 positive (18 active cases)
Bennett: 1 active case
Bon Homme: Fully Recovered
Brookings (1): +5 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases)
Brown (3): +8 positive, +2 recovered (44 active cases)
Brule: 5 active cases

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The

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Buffalo (3): +1 recovered (8 active cases)
 Butte (1): 4 active cases
 Campbell: 2 active cases
 Charles Mix: 8 active cases
 Clark: 2 active cases
 Clay: +3 recovered (14 active cases)
 Codington (1): +2 recovered (21 active cases)
 Corson: 8 active cases
 Custer: +3 positive, +3 recovered (9 active cases)
 Davison (1): 13 active cases
 Day: +2 positive (2 active cases)
 Deuel: 2 active cases
 Dewey: +1 positive (18 active cases)
 Douglas: 3 active cases
 Edmunds: 4 active cases
 Fall River: 6 active cases
 Faulk (1): 2 active cases
 Grant: +2 positive (7 active cases)
 Gregory: 1 active case
 Haakon: 1 active case
 Hamlin: +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Hand: Fully Recovered
 Hanson: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes (3): +4 positive (12 active cases)
 Hutchinson: +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson (1): 3 active cases
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: 3 active cases
 Lake (2): +1 positive (15 active cases)
 Lawrence: +6 positive, +1 recovered (25 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +12 positive, +6 recovered (93 active cases)
 Lyman (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)
 Marshall: +1 positive (2 active cases)
 McCook (1): +1 positive (4 active cases)
 McPherson: 2 active cases
 Meade (1): +4 positive, +3 recovered (23 active cases)
 Mellette: 1 active case
 Miner: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Minnehaha (68): +27 positive, +22 recovered, 1 death (349 active cases)
 Moody: 5 active cases
 Oglala Lakota (2): +1 positive (24 active cases)
 Pennington (32): +6 positive, +11 recovered, 1 death (117 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active case
 Potter: Fully Recovered
 Roberts (1): +6 positive (16 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: +1 recovered (6 active cases)
 Stanley: Fully Recovered
 Sully: +1 positive, +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Todd (5): +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 Tripp: Fully Recovered
 Turner: +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)
 Union (3): +4 positive, +2 recovered (32 active cases)
 Walworth: 1 active case
 Yankton (2): +3 positive (16 active cases)
 Ziebach: +1 positive (10 active cases)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	1203	0
20-29 years	2072	2
30-39 years	1853	6
40-49 years	1430	7
50-59 years	1406	17
60-69 years	840	25
70-79 years	359	24
80+ years	314	65

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, August 8:

- 5,861 tests (1,666)
- 7,508 positives (+181)
- 6,268 recovered (+104)
- 112 deaths (+2)
- 1,128 active cases (+75)

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	4679	75
Male	4798	71

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased
Aurora	38	36	375	0
Beadle	591	564	1861	9
Bennett	6	5	537	0
Bon Homme	13	13	749	0
Brookings	133	110	2648	1
Brown	436	389	4372	3
Brule	45	40	736	0
Buffalo	109	98	636	3
Butte	14	9	784	1
Campbell	3	1	92	0
Charles Mix	101	93	1251	0
Clark	16	14	385	0
Clay	124	110	1298	0
Codington	129	107	2794	1
Corson	32	24	446	0
Custer	32	23	786	0
Davison	94	80	2324	1
Day	23	21	627	0
Deuel	10	8	398	0
Dewey	49	33	2076	0
Douglas	17	14	397	0
Edmunds	14	10	403	0
Fall River	22	16	973	0
Faulk	26	23	187	1
Grant	26	19	697	0
Gregory	7	6	387	0
Haakon	2	2	289	0
Hamlin	18	14	627	0
Hand	7	7	283	0
Hanson	21	17	201	0
Harding	0	0	53	0
Hughes	92	77	1696	2
Hutchinson	28	24	885	0

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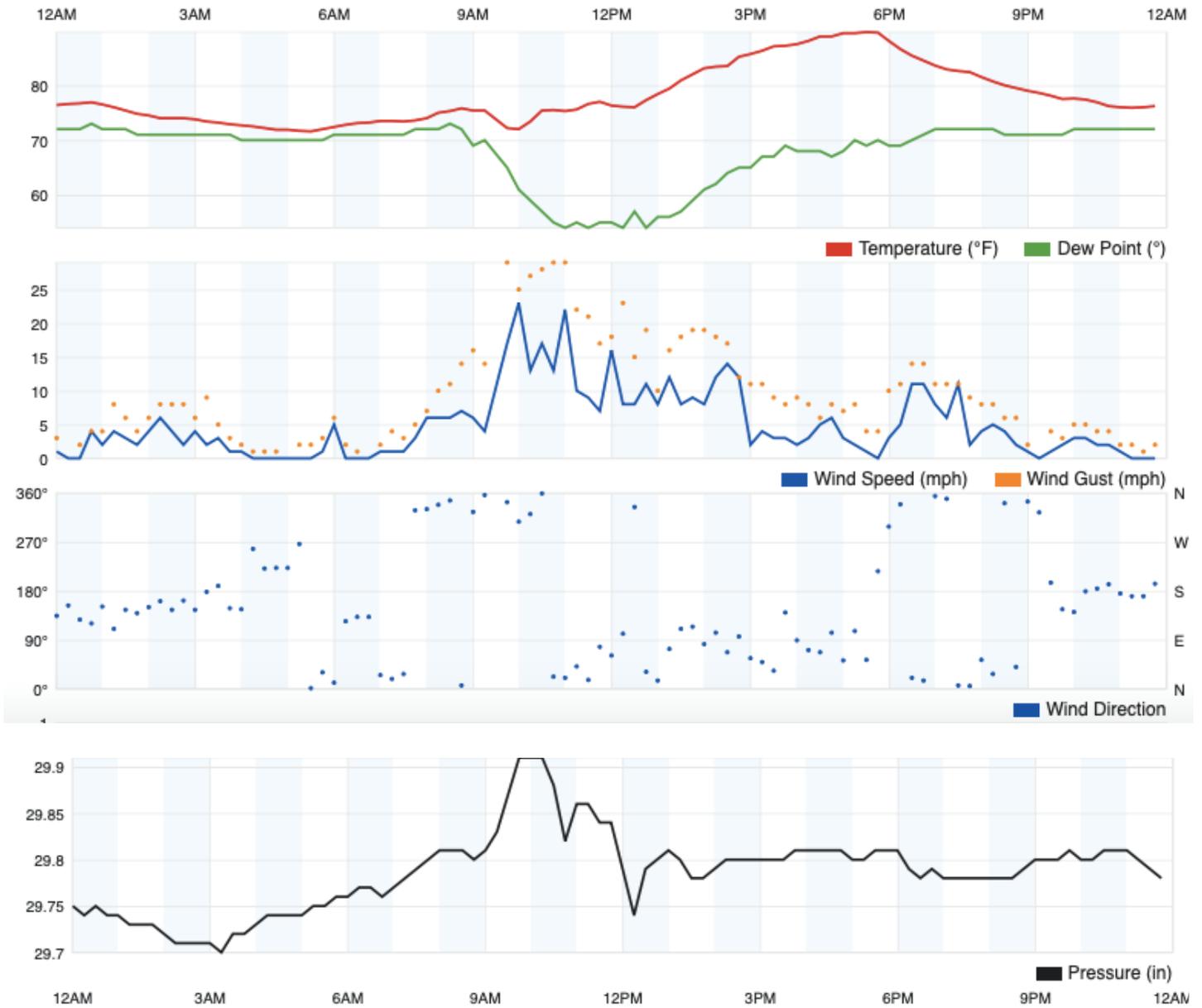
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Hyde	3	3	131	0
Jackson	11	7	463	1
Jerauld	39	38	267	1
Jones	2	2	59	0
Kingsbury	14	11	547	0
Lake	91	74	911	2
Lawrence	52	27	2082	0
Lincoln	621	526	6678	2
Lyman	89	79	944	2
Marshall	9	7	453	0
McCook	27	22	628	1
McPherson	8	6	212	0
Meade	91	67	1953	1
Mellette	24	23	381	0
Miner	15	11	249	0
Minnehaha	4376	3959	27012	68
Moody	32	27	616	0
Oglala Lakota	154	128	2927	2
Pennington	881	732	10843	32
Perkins	6	5	181	0
Potter	1	1	285	0
Roberts	81	64	1790	1
Sanborn	13	13	218	0
Spink	24	18	1133	0
Stanley	14	14	248	0
Sully	3	2	72	0
Todd	69	61	2082	5
Tripp	20	20	603	0
Turner	51	40	904	0
Union	213	177	1873	4
Walworth	18	17	689	0
Yankton	113	95	3030	2
Ziebach	34	24	297	0
Unassigned	0	0	7496	0

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Partly Sunny
then Chance
T-storms

High: 89 °F

Tonight



Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Clear

Low: 55 °F

Monday



Sunny

High: 82 °F

Monday
Night



Clear

Low: 57 °F

Tuesday

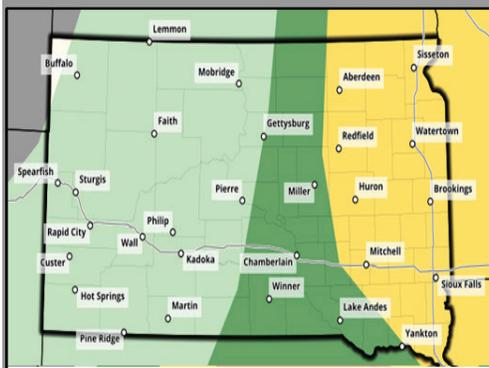
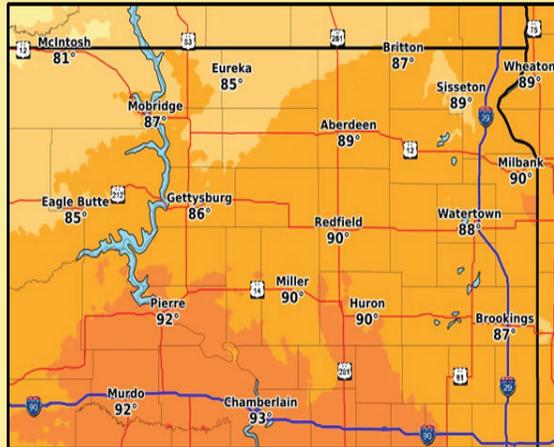


Sunny

High: 84 °F

**Another Hot
One Today...
Partly Cloudy Skies**

**Highs:
Upper 80s - Low 90s**



Severe Weather Outlook Friday Afternoon/Night

**...Storms Return
Storms possible This
afternoon and evening**

ISSUED: 5:03 AM - Sunday, August 09, 2020



Lingering storms in far eastern SD push out of the area this morning. This afternoon/evening brings another chance for storms with the possibility of severe, especially in eastern SD. Hail and strong winds will be the main threat.

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Today in Weather History

August 9, 1918: An estimated F2 tornado touched down east of Bristol, South Dakota, and moved NNE. The tornado was said to look like a long snake in a spiral, smashing barns into kindling.

August 9, 1992: A tornado packing winds estimated between 113 and 157 mph caused significant damage to the town of Chester, in Lake County. Shortly after 7 pm CDT a tornado tore right through the heart of Chester causing considerable damage. Four businesses were destroyed, three others had significant damage, and five had minor damage. An elevator and new grain bin were leveled, and another bin was heavily damaged. Most of the building housing the fire department was demolished. Also, many houses and vehicles sustained damage, and large trees were uprooted or broken off. In one instance a steel beam was thrust through a garage and into the car inside. One mile north of Chester, an entire house was moved off the foundation. The town had to be evacuated for 19 hours after the tornado because the tornado damaged a 12,000-gallon ammonia tank releasing 4,000 gallons of the liquid gas into the air. The ammonia was a health hazard forcing residents out. To the south of Chester, the storm destroyed a new convenience store and blew two fuel tanks over 100 yards.

1878: The second deadliest tornado in New England history struck Wallingford, Connecticut, killing 34 persons, injuring 100 others, and destroying thirty homes. The tornado started as a waterspout over a dam on the Quinnipiac River. It was 400 to 600 feet wide and had a short path length of two miles. The deadliest New England tornado occurred in 1953 when an F4 killed 90 people in Worcester, Massachusetts.

1969: An F3 tornado hit Cincinnati, Ohio, killing four persons and causing fifteen million dollars property damage. The tornado moved in a southeasterly direction at 40 to 50 mph.

1987 - Florida baked in the summer heat. Nine cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Jacksonville with a reading of 101 degrees. Miami FL reported a record high of 98 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Tropical Storm Beryl deluged Biloxi with 6.32 inches of rain in 24 hours, and in three days drenched Pascagoula MS with 15.85 inches of rain. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region and over the Central High Plains Region. Thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced wind gusts to 92 mph at Harrah. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms in Arizona deluged Yuma with record torrential rains for the second time in two weeks. The rainfall total of 5.25 inches at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot established a state 24 hour record, and was nearly double the normal annual rainfall. Some of the homes were left with four feet of water in them. Seventy-six cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Lake Charles LA equalled their record for August with a low of 61 degrees. Canaan Valley WV was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 32 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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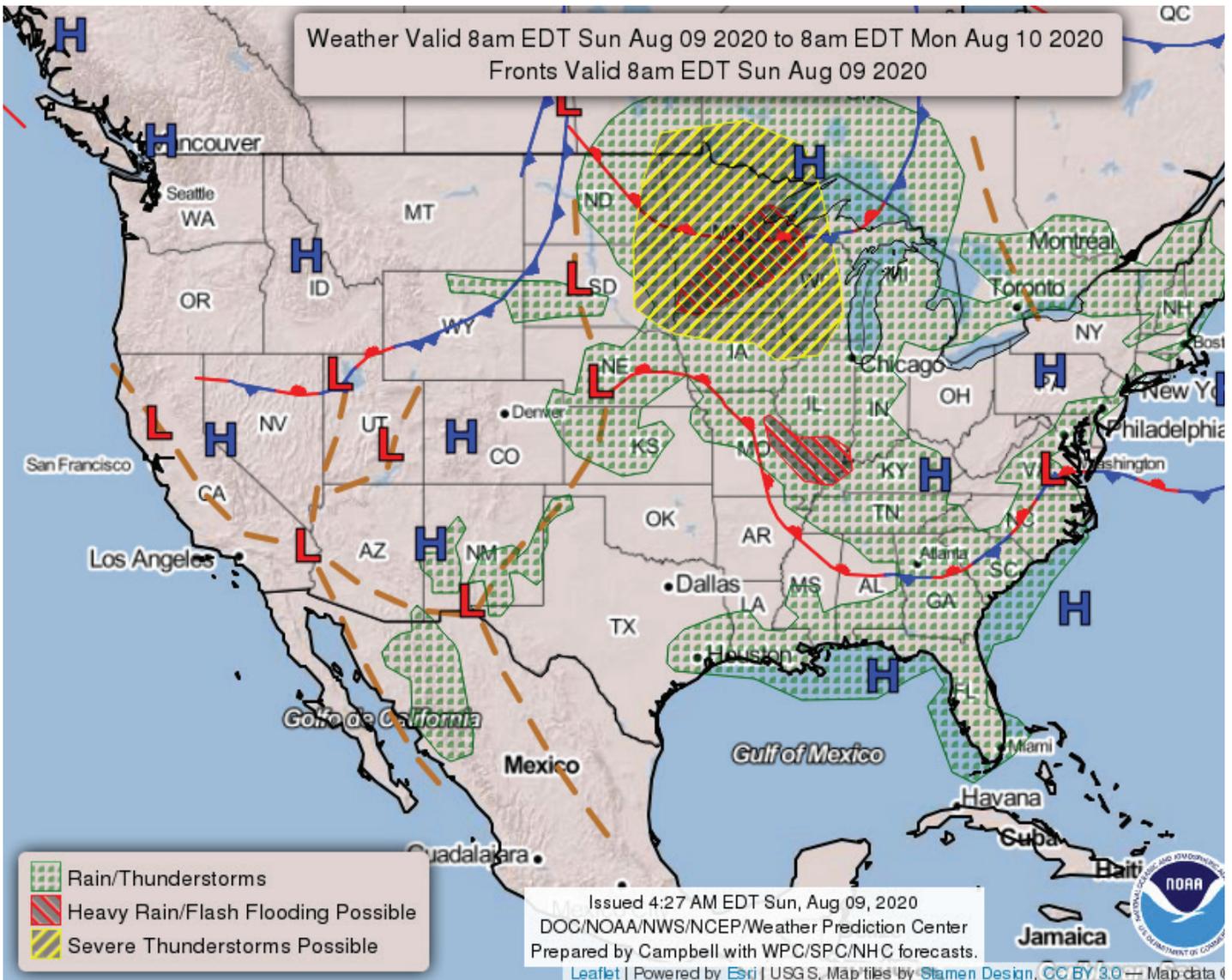
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90 °F at 5:20 PM
Low Temp: 72 °F at 5:19 AM
Wind: 29 mph at 9:37 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 105° in 1947
Record Low: 41° in 1927
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 58°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.63
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.45
Average Precip to date: 14.49
Precip Year to Date: 10.96
Sunset Tonight: 8:50 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:29 a.m.



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ONE ANSWER

It was the first day in her new position as the secretary to the president. As she was presented with her first task, she wanted to appear confident and competent.

Speaking very carefully, he said to her, "These accounts that I am giving you are critical. They are the foundation of our income. I want you to go over each of them at least three times to make sure that all of the numbers in each are correct before you return them to me. Your results must be right!"

Working anxiously for quite some time, she finally completed her task. Returning the work assigned her by the president, she proudly gave him the results of her efforts. As he took the papers from her hands, she said with confidence, "Sir, I want you to know that I exceeded your expectations. I went over each page ten times, and discovered that there are ten different answers to each column."

When asked the Way to heaven and eternal life, Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me."

This statement in John's Gospel is one of the most basic and important passages in all of Scripture. If anyone anywhere wants to know the Way to God and eternal life, this is the one and only answer. Jesus, with no hesitation, declared once and for all that He is the Way. Some may argue that this declaration and proclamation is much too narrow. But, in all reality, it is wide enough for anyone, anywhere to enter into at any time.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, for sending Your One and only Son into the world to become, if we choose, Our Savior. "He" is the Way to eternal life with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. John 14:6

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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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

12-21-22-30-31

(twelve, twenty-one, twenty-two, thirty, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$98,000

Lotto America

11-14-29-31-48, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 2

(eleven, fourteen, twenty-nine, thirty-one, forty-eight; Star Ball: five; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.89 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$24 million

Powerball

02-03-14-40-51, Powerball: 24, Power Play: 3

(two, three, fourteen, forty, fifty-one; Powerball: twenty-four; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$158 million

Bikers descend on Sturgis rally with few signs of pandemic

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — The coronavirus may be changing the world, but there aren't many signs of the pandemic at the massive annual motorcycle rally being held this week at a small city along Interstate 90 in western South Dakota.

The scene Saturday at the 80th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally was familiar to veterans of the event, with throngs of maskless bikers packing the streets.

Motorcyclist Kevin Lunsmann, 63, rode more than 600 miles (965 kilometers) to the rally from Big Lake, Minnesota, with several friends. Lunsmann said he has attended the Sturgis event every year since 2003 and didn't want to miss the 80th, despite being "somewhat" concerned about the coronavirus.

Still, the crowds of people and rows of bikes surprised him. He said there was no difference from previous years "other than a few people wearing masks."

Lunsmann said he was avoiding the bars and nightclubs that line the city's main drag this year, but many others were not. They were filled with revelers as the sun set Friday.

"Everybody's still partying hardy," Lunsmann said.

Organizers expected the overall crowd to be smaller, perhaps half the size of a normal year, when some half-million people from across the country roar into a town whose population is around 7,000.

The sheer numbers raise the prospect that this year's rally could spread the COVID-19 virus in a state with no special limits on indoor crowds, no mask mandates, and a governor who is eager to welcome visitors and their money.

"Screw COVID," read the design on one T-shirt being hawked at the event. "I went to Sturgis."

Bob Graham, 71, was one of the few people wearing masks as he walked along Main Street. "We don't want the virus. We want to come up here a few more years yet," Graham said.

Graham made his 36th annual trip to Sturgis from Central City, Nebraska, with his wife, calling it "kind of like our therapy for the year."

For Stephen Sample, who rode his Harley from Arizona, the event was a break from the routine of the last several months, when he's been mostly homebound or wearing a mask when he went to work as a surveyor.

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"I don't want to die, but I don't want to be cooped up all my life either," he said.

Sample was aware his trip to the rally could end in the hospital, which seemed to weigh on him.

"This is a major experiment," he said. "It could be a major mistake."

Republican Gov. Kristi Noem has taken a largely hands-off approach to the pandemic, avoiding a mask mandate and preaching personal responsibility. She supported holding the rally.

Daily virus cases have been trending upward in South Dakota, but the seven-day average is still only around 84, with fewer than two deaths per day.

Sturgis officials plan to mass test residents to try to detect and halt outbreaks, but the area's largest hospital system is already burdened with the influx of tourists and bikers who inevitably need medical care during this time.

Marsha Schmid, who owns the Side Hack Saloon in Sturgis, was trying to keep her bar and restaurant from becoming a virus hot spot by spacing out indoor tables and offering plenty of hand sanitizer.

She also scaled back the number of bands hired for the rally, hoping the crowds would stay thin but still spend the cash that keeps her business viable for the rest of the year.

"You've got people coming from all over the world," she said. "I just hope they are being responsible and if they don't feel good, they stay away."

South Dakota has 106 new coronavirus cases, adds 2 deaths

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials are reporting 106 newly confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the state and two new deaths.

The state has now had a total of 9,477 cases of COVID-19 as of Saturday. There were 1,024 cases still active.

The South Dakota Department of Health reports 8,307 recoveries from the disease, and a total of 48 people are currently hospitalized.

With the new deaths reported Saturday, South Dakota's death toll from the disease has risen to 146.

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

Sioux Falls may short of bus drivers when classes begin

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls School District may be short of bus drivers when school begins later this month

School Bus Inc. is the company that has the contract to transport Sioux Falls students to and from school by bus. Manager Jim Shafer tells the Argus Leader that concerns over the coronavirus pandemic is partially to blame for the shortage.

Shafer said in a normal year, the district would still be looking for 10-15 drivers. He said it's about double that this year.

Shafer said driver applications are coming in, but there's background checks, physicals and other tests potential hires need to do.

Shafer said "the district has done pretty extensive stuff" in the way of precautions. Those include an expectation by the district that drivers wear masks.

Azar leads highest-level US delegation to Taiwan in decades

By JOHNSON LAI Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar arrived in Taiwan on Sunday in the highest-level visit by an American Cabinet official since the break in formal diplomatic relations between Washington and Taipei in 1979.

Beijing has already protested Azar's visit as a betrayal of U.S. commitments not to have official contact

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with the island. China claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be brought under its control by military force if necessary.

Azar is due to meet with the island's independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen along with health officials during a three-day visit aimed at highlighting cooperation in the fight against the coronavirus.

Taiwan's government-run health care system has been credited with keeping the number of coronavirus cases to under 500 with just seven deaths, despite its close proximity to China where the virus originated.

China sees Taiwan as a key irritant in its troubled relationship with Washington, with whom it is also at odds over trade, technology, the South China Sea and China's response to the virus pandemic.

The U.S. maintains only unofficial ties with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, but is the island's most important ally and provider of defense equipment.

Azar is the first health secretary to visit Taiwan and the first Cabinet member to visit in six years. In 2014, then-Environmental Protection Agency administrator Gina McCarthy visited Taiwan, sparking protests from Beijing.

Azar's office said he will hold discussions on COVID-19, global health and Taiwan's role as a supplier of medical equipment and technology.

Azar's visit was facilitated by the 2018 passage of the Taiwan Travel Act, which encouraged Washington to send higher-level officials to Taiwan after decades during which such contacts were rare and freighted with safeguards to avoid roiling ties with Beijing.

China has cut contacts with Tsai over her refusal to recognize China's claim to the island and has brought increasing diplomatic, economic and military pressure against her, including by poaching away several of its remaining diplomatic allies and excluding it from international gatherings including the World Health Assembly. That, in turn, has increased already considerable bipartisan sympathy for Taipei in Washington and prompted new measures to strengthen governmental and military ties.

Also Sunday, Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu met with the first representative of Somaliland to the island ahead of the territory's opening of a representative office in Taipei.

Wu earlier tweeted that Mohamed Omar Hagi Mohamoud had "braved Chinese pressure" — a reference to reports that China had sought to block relations between Taiwan and the region on the Horn of Africa that broke from the rest of Somalia but is not recognized by the United Nations as an independent country.

"The fact 'sovereignty & friendship aren't for sale' deserves international recognition," Wu tweeted.

On his arrival, Mahamoud tweeted that "We are ready to establish good relations with all countries - those we share values of democracy are special."

Masks in class? Many questions as Germans go back to school

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Masks during class, masks only in the halls, no masks at all. Distance when possible, no distance within same-grade groups, no distance at all.

As Germany's 16 states start sending millions of children back to school in the middle of the global coronavirus pandemic, the country's famous sense of "Ordnung," or order, has given way to uncertainty, with a hodgepodge of regional regulations that officials acknowledge may or may not work.

"There can't, and never will be 100% certainty," said Torsten Kuehne, the official in charge of schools in Pankow, Berlin's most populous district where 45,000 students go back to school Monday. "We are trying to minimize the risk as much as possible."

Germany has won plaudits for managing to slow the spread of the coronavirus quickly, efficiently and early, but the opening of schools is proving a new challenge as the country struggles to balance the concerns of anxious parents and children, skeptical scientists, worried teachers and overtaxed administrators.

Many around the world will be closely observing the real-life experiment offered in Germany to see what works and what doesn't. U.S. President Donald Trump is pushing for American schools to reopen in person and on time even as the country nears 5 million confirmed coronavirus cases, and in Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has stressed the government's moral duty to ensure children return to class next

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month -despite having the highest official death toll in Europe.

The U.N. said this week that as many as 100 countries have yet to announce a date for schools to reopen, and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned of a possible "generational catastrophe" in education. He urged that restarting school be made a "top priority" once countries have the coronavirus under control.

Germany has seen some 217,000 confirmed cases and 9,200 deaths, and brought down a peak of some 6,000 new daily infections in March to the low hundreds. Numbers have been creeping back up, however, and topped the 1,000 per day mark in recent days for the first time in about three months.

Israel attempted a full reopening in May, at a time when the coronavirus was widely thought to have been beaten in the country, only to suffer new outbreaks that led to schools being shut down again and a surge in the spread of the virus nationwide. In South Africa, four grade levels were restarted in June but then closed back down when the country's virus cases surged.

As Berlin prepares to send its nearly half-million students back to school on Monday, many fear something similar could happen.

"The concerns are enormous, because the schools are hotspots," said Doreen Siebernik, who heads the Berlin branch of the GEW teachers' union. "I know that there are pupils coming to school who have contact with hundreds, with thousands of people every day."

Berlin's plan includes requiring students - and teachers - to wear masks in hallways, but not during instruction or in the playground. Sports, music and drama will be allowed, but with restrictions, like requiring choir members to keep at least 2 meters from one another.

Berlin's minister for education Sandra Scheeres said "it's not possible in a school" to always keep students 1.5 meters (5 feet) from one another, but that the distance should be kept if feasible. Students are to be kept in "cohorts" — groups that should not mix — so that if there is an outbreak, only those affected would need to be quarantined.

The state government recommends those groups don't mingle outside school either, but it was not clear how that could be enforced.

"There are conflicting priorities, health protection on the one hand, which is very important to us, and on the other hand that we want to ensure the right to education of every single child," Scheeres said.

A Berlin Institute of Technology study on coronavirus transmission concluded that classrooms should be ventilated for a full 15 minutes every half hour. Scheeres' current plan calls for windows to be opened following each 45 minute class.

Dr. Isabella Eckerle, head of the emerging viruses research group at the University of Geneva, said there was still a lot to learn about how children are affected by the coronavirus and transmit it, but that it was clear from school openings in other countries they could spark wider outbreaks.

"If we go back to the normal school day now clinging to wishful thinking that children do not play a role in the pandemic, that will come back to haunt us," she said. "Instead of ideologically charged discussions, we need pragmatic concepts to get us through the winter."

In a sharply-worded open letter to Scheeres and the city's mayor, Marco Fechner, a father of two and parent representative in the Pankow district, noted that many classroom windows don't open, and that the government has stricter mask rules for supermarkets and its own offices than schools.

He urged the administration to focus more resources to permit some learning from home, so that class sizes and contact could be kept to a minimum.

"This decision is absolutely incomprehensible to me as a father, and I fear for the health of my children and our relatives," Fechner wrote.

Similar concerns are playing out elsewhere, like in Scotland where schools also are due to reopen on Tuesday. There is uncertainty about whether measures to increase hand washing and social distancing — with limited mixing between classroom groups but no mandatory masks — will work.

Berlin's back-to-school guidelines are middle-of-the-road among German states.

The first students to return, in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, had no mask requirement but the "cohort" principle was in place and the education minister said mask regulations

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were in the works. In a worrisome sign, two schools were temporarily closed Friday after new cases of coronavirus were detected.

Students over age 10 who returned to school in Hamburg on Thursday were required to wear masks, but could take them off once seated in classrooms.

In Germany's most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, 2.5 million students face the country's strictest measures as they return on Wednesday, including a mask requirement while in class.

Federal Health Minister Jens Spahn said Germany's staggered returns and different approaches will help determine what works and what doesn't.

Meantime, schools and districts have been improvising their own solutions to conform with voluminous government guidelines.

In Berlin's Pankow, Kuehne has been talking with school lunch suppliers all summer to work out a plan to serve meals at staggered times, and in classrooms, to avoid large groups in the cafeteria.

"I wouldn't say I'm worried, but I see the very, very big challenges ahead of us as school authorities, schools and parents," he said.

_____ AP reporters Josef Federman in Jerusalem; Jill Lawless in London; Mogomotsi Magome in Johannesburg and Dorothee Thiesing, Frank Jordans and Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin contributed to this story.

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

Lebanon information minister resigns in wake of deadly blast

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's information minister resigned on Sunday as the country grapples with the aftermath of the devastating blast that ripped through the capital and raised public anger to new levels.

The resignation comes as public anger is mounting against the ruling elite, blamed for the chronic mismanagement and corruption that is believed to be behind the explosion in a Beirut Port warehouse. Hundreds of tons of highly explosive material was stored in the waterfront hangar, and a blast sent a shock wave that killed at least 160 people, wounded nearly 6,000 and defaced the coastline of Beirut — destroying hundreds of buildings.

Manal Abdel-Samad said in her resignation letter that change remained "elusive" and she regrets failing to fulfill the aspirations of the Lebanese people.

"Given the magnitude of the catastrophe caused by the Beirut earthquake that shook the nation and hurt our hearts and minds, and in respect for the martyrs, and the pains of the wounded, missing and displaced, and in response to the public will for change, I resign from the government," she wrote.

In the country where civil war raged for 15 years, few, if any, have been held accountable for it and most of the warlords remain in power or leading powerful political factions.

On Sunday, France's Ambassador to Lebanon said his country is taking part in the investigation of the Aug. 4 blast. Bruno Foucher tweeted that 46 officers are operating as part of the judicial investigation. That probe was started by a French prosecutor after a national of France, Jean-Marc Bonfils, was killed in the blast and others injured.

It is "a guarantee of impartiality and speed" in the investigation, Foucher tweeted.

The disaster fueled angry demonstrations Saturday where protesters set up gallows and nooses in central Beirut and held mock hanging sessions of cut-out cardboard images of top Lebanese officials.

Demonstrators held signs that read "resign or hang." The protests quickly turned violent when the demonstrators pelted stones at the security forces, who responded with heavy volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets. One police officer was killed and dozens of people were hurt in confrontations that lasted for hours.

Protesters also fanned out around the city, storming a couple of government ministries. They briefly took over the foreign ministry, saying it will be the headquarters of their movement. In the economy and energy ministries, the protesters ransacked offices and seized public documents claiming they would reveal how corruption has permeated successive governments.

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Five of the parliament's 128 members have also announced their resignation since Saturday— including three legislators of the Christian Kataeb party, a member of the Socialist Progressive Party and an independent.

Abdel-Samad's resignation comes amid reports that another government official — the environment minister — is expected to resign, adding to the challenges facing Prime Minister Hassan Diab.

Diab took over in January and has since been beset by crises.

The government, backed by the powerful militant Hezbollah group and its allies, announced it is defaulting on Lebanon's sovereign debt and has since been engaged in difficult, internally divisive talks with the International Monetary Fund for assistance. The coronavirus restrictions deepened the impact of the economic and financial crisis and fueled public anger against the new government. Lebanese have criticized Diab's government for being unable to tackle the challenges, saying it represents the deep-seated political class that has had a hold of the country's politics since the end of the civil war in 1990.

Foreign Minister Nassif Hitti resigned even before the blast, citing an absence of "effective will to achieve comprehensive structural reform" and competing leadership.

In a televised speech Saturday evening, Diab said the only solution was to hold early elections. He called on all political parties to put aside their disagreements and said he was prepared to stay in the post for two months to allow time for politicians to work on structural reforms.

The offer is unlikely to soothe the escalating fury on the street. It is also expected to trigger lengthy discussions over the election law amid calls for introducing changes to the country's sectarian-based representation system.

The information minister's resignation comes ahead of an international conference co-hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres aimed at bringing donors together to supply emergency aid and equipment to Lebanon. Previous offers of aid have been contingent on carrying out significant government reforms to tackle corruption.

Beirut explosion bares pitfalls of sending aid to Lebanon

By BASSEM MROUE and LORI HINNANT Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hospitals and schools, then shattered and bent water pipes, then the crater that once was Lebanon's port.

The rebuilding needs of Lebanon are immense, but so is the question of how to ensure the millions of dollars promised in international aid is not diverted in a country notorious for missing money, invisible infrastructure projects and its refusal to open the books.

And the port — the epicenter of the explosion that shattered Beirut, the center of Lebanon's import-based economy, and a source of graft so lucrative that Lebanon's political factions were willing to divide its control so everyone could get a piece — sits at the heart of the fears.

Sunday's donor teleconference is hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron, who was mobbed last week by tearful victims of the Beirut ammonium nitrate explosion begging him to ensure the corruption they blame for the blast that devastated the capital does not profit from its destruction.

International diplomacy usually calls for careful language. Rigged votes are "irregular." The response to furious protests should be "measured." Disappearing funds require "transparency."

But Macron's response to the crowd, and later in a speech in Beirut, was unusually blunt: The aid "will not fall into corrupt hands" and Lebanon's discredited government must change. Germany, Lebanon's second-biggest bilateral donor, made similar demands.

"That's precisely what the Lebanese people have rightly demanded: individual interests and old lines of conflict must be overcome and the welfare of the entire population must be put first," German Foreign Ministry.

In the short-term, the aid streaming into Lebanon is purely for humanitarian emergencies and relatively easy to monitor. France, Britain, Canada and Australia, among others, have been clear that it is going directly to UN agencies or the Lebanese Red Cross. But actual rebuilding requires massive imports of sup-

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plies and equipment. And the contracts and subcontracts that have given Lebanon's ruling elite its wealth and power, while leaving the country with crumbling roads, regular electricity cuts, trash that piles on the streets and intermittent water supplies.

"The level of infrastructure in Lebanon is directly linked today to the level of corruption," said Neemat Frem, a prominent Lebanese businessman and independent member of parliament. "We badly need more dollars but I understand that the Lebanese state and its agencies are not competent."

Lebanon has an accumulated debt of about \$100 billion, for a population of just under 7 million people — 5 million Lebanese and 2 million Syrians and Palestinians, most of them refugees. Its electricity company, controlled like the port by multiple factions, posts losses of \$1.5 billion a year, although Frem said most factories pay for their own generators because power is off more than it's on.

"There's grand theft Lebanon and there's petty theft Lebanon. Petty theft Lebanon exists but that's not what got the country in the hole we're in," said Nadim Houry, executive director of the Arab Reform Initiative.

Prior aid, Houry said, ended up as a tool in the hands of the political leaders, who kept their slice and doled out jobs and money to supporters.

"The pie is getting smaller and smaller and they just keep taking," he said.

Protesters, tired of the small indignities they endure to get through a day — 37% of people report needing to pay bribes, compared with 4% in neighboring Jordan, according to Transparency International — and the larger issue of a collapsing state, are going after both.

On Saturday, they seized offices of the Economy Ministry, hauling away files they said would show corruption around the sale and distribution of wheat. Lebanon's wheat stockpile, stored next to the warehouse filled with ammonium nitrate, was destroyed in the explosion.

"We restored the economy ministry to the Lebanese people," one man called out as they rifled through the desks.

Julien Courson, head of the Lebanon Transparency Association, said the country's non-profits are forming a coalition to monitor how relief and aid money is spent. He estimated Lebanon loses \$2 billion to corruption each year.

"The decision-makers and the public servants who are in charge of these files are still in their positions. Until now, we didn't see any solution to the problem," he said. "I think the Lebanese government has an interest in finding a suitable solution."

A first step would be an online clearinghouse for every contract linked to reconstruction, Courson said. And the first project has to be highly visible and spread the benefits widely, said Christiaan Poortman, board chairman of Infrastructure Transparency Initiative.

"That will help keeping some of the political stuff at a distance," Poortman said. "Donors will have to be on top of this. The issue of procurement is always where lots of corruption takes place ... it needs to be done quickly, and there is always the temptation to not follow the rules and go ahead and do something where a lot of people are going to make a lot of money."

Macron's office said international donors can do nothing until Lebanon's leaders agree to an audit of the national bank, a key demand of the International Monetary Fund for months and one that the political factions have resisted.

Speaking at a news conference in which he conspicuously did not appear alongside Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Macron said he was approaching Lebanon with "the requirements of a friend who rushes to help, when times are hard, but not to give a blank check to systems that no longer have the trust of their people."

Hinnant reported from Paris.

Riot declared as fire burns in Portland police union offices

By MARTHA BELLISLE and GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A fire inside a police union building led authorities in Portland, Oregon, to de-

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clear a riot and force protesters away from the offices as violent demonstrations continue in the city that had hoped for calm after federal agents withdrew more than a week ago.

Three officers were hurt, including two who were taken to a hospital, during efforts to clear a crowd of several hundred people outside the Portland Police Association building late Saturday, police said in a statement. The two hospitalized officers have since been released.

Rallies had been held earlier in the afternoon and evening throughout the city, including at Peninsula, Laurelhurst and Berrydale parks, local media reported.

Police said a group from Peninsula Park marched to the Portland Police Association building, which is located about 5 miles (8 kilometers) north of the federal courthouse that had been the target of nightly violence earlier this summer. The Portland Police Association is a labor union that represents members of the Portland Police Bureau.

A group of demonstrators broke into the building, set the fire and were adding to it when officers made the riot declaration just after 11:30 p.m., police said. Video shot by a journalist, and surveillance video from inside the building obtained by the police department, shows smoke and flames arising from inside the building.

Officers formed a line and used flash bangs and smoke canisters to force the protest several blocks away. Demonstrators congregated at Kenton Park, where they were again ordered to disperse. Most of the crowd had left by 2 a.m., police stated.

The gatherings this week had been noticeably smaller than the crowds of thousands who turned out nightly for about two weeks in July to protest the presence of U.S. agents sent by the Trump administration to protect the federal courthouse downtown.

This week's clashes have, however, amped up tensions after an agreement between state and federal officials seemed to offer a brief reprieve.

Police arrested 24 people during demonstrations overnight Friday after they said people defied orders to disperse and threw rocks, frozen or hard-boiled eggs and commercial-grade fireworks at officers. An unlawful assembly was declared outside the Penumbra Kelly public safety building.

Most of those arrested were from Portland, while one man was from Oakland, California, and another was from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Most were in their 20s or 30s. The charges included assault on an officer, interfering with an officer, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

An Oregon State Police trooper was struck in the head by a large rock and suffered a head injury, police said. The trooper's condition was not immediately known.

Some demonstrators filled pool noodles with nails and placed them in the road, causing extensive damage to a patrol vehicle, police said. Oregon State Police worked with Portland officers to clear the protesters.

Since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, protests over racial injustice and police brutality have occurred nightly for more than 70 days.

Democratic Mayor Ted Wheeler said violent protesters are also serving as political "props" for President Donald Trump in a divisive election season where the president is hammering on a law-and-order message. Trump has called the protesters as "sick and dangerous anarchists" running wild in the city's streets.

Tear gas was used by police on protesters Wednesday for the first time since the U.S. agents pulled back their presence in the city. But officers did not use it Thursday or Friday despite declaring the demonstrations unlawful assemblies. Police said tear gas wasn't used Saturday.

Bellisle reported from Seattle.

Belarus strongman president faces strong election challenge

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Belarusians are voting on whether to grant their authoritarian president a sixth term in office, following a campaign marked by unusually strong demonstrations by opposition supporters frustrated with the country's stumbling economy, political repression and weak response to the coronavirus

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pandemic.

Incumbent Alexander Lukashenko, in office for 26 years, has made it clear he won't hesitate to quash any attempt by his opponents to protest the results of Sunday's election.

"If you provoke, you will get the same answer," he said after casting his ballot. "Do you want to try to overthrow the government, break something, wound, offend, and expect me or someone to kneel in front of you and kiss them and the sand onto which you wandered? This will not happen."

But some voters were defiant.

"There is no more fear. Belarusians will not be silent and will protest loudly," 24-year-old Tatiana Protasevich said at a Minsk polling place Sunday.

The head of staff for main opposition candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya was detained late Saturday for allegedly participating in authorized protests and is likely to be in jail until at least Monday. Eight other members of her staff were detained Sunday morning, said her spokeswoman Anna Krasulina.

Tsikhanouskaya herself reportedly was so concerned about her own security that she left her residence to spend the night elsewhere.

Tsikhanouskaya, the wife of a jailed opposition blogger, became the main opposition candidate after two other prominent aspirants were denied places on the ballot. One of them was jailed and the other, former ambassador to the United States Valery Tsepkalo, fled the country fearing imminent arrest.

As polls opened on Sunday, the country's central elections commission said more than 40% of the electorate had cast ballots in early voting, a figure likely to heighten concerns about the results' legitimacy because of the potential for manipulation.

"For five nights nobody has guarded the ballot boxes, which gives the authorities a wide field for manoeuvrings," said Veronika Tsepkalo, the wife of Valery Tsepkalo and member of Tsikhanouskaya's campaign headquarters.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, whose assessments of elections are widely regarded as authoritative, was not invited to send an observer mission.

Tsikhanouskaya had crisscrossed the country, tapping public frustration with Lukashenko's swaggering response to the pandemic and the country's stagnating Soviet-style economy. One of her rallies in the capital Minsk attracted an estimated 60,000 people, an enormous turnout in the country where dissent is routinely suppressed.

Belarus, a country of 9.5 million people, has reported more than 68,500 confirmed coronavirus cases and 580 deaths in the pandemic. Critics have accused the authorities of manipulating the figures to downplay the death toll.

Lukashenko announced last month that he had been infected with the virus but had no COVID-19 symptoms and recovered quickly, allegedly thanks to doing sports. He defended his handling of the outbreak, saying that a lockdown would have doomed the nation's weakened economy.

Belarus has sustained a severe economic blow after its leading exports customer, Russia, went into a pandemic-induced recession and other foreign markets shrank. Before the coronavirus, the country's state-controlled economy already had been stalled for years, stoking public frustration.

For some voters, Lukashenko's long and hardline rule is in his favor.

"He is an experienced politician, not a housewife who appeared out of nowhere and muddied the waters," pensioner Igor Rozhov said Sunday. "We need a strong hand that will not allow riots and color revolutions," a reference to uprisings that forced out leaders in Georgia and Ukraine.

Political observers say the election campaign exposed divisions among the Belarusian elite as some of its members entered politics for the first time.

Belarusian authorities last week arrested 33 Russian military contractors and charged them with plans to stage "mass riots." The political opposition and many independent observers saw the arrests as an attempt to shore up the incumbent's sagging public support.

The arrest of the Russians marked an unprecedented spike in tensions between Belarus and Russia, which often have acrimonious disputes despite their close ties.

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When Russia and Belarus signed a union agreement in 1996, Lukashenko aspired to use it as a vehicle to eventually lead a unified state as the successor to Russia's ailing president, Boris Yeltsin. The tables turned after Vladimir Putin became Russian president in 2000, and the Belarusian leader began resisting what he saw as a Kremlin push for control over Belarus.

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Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this story

Afghan council frees Taliban prisoners to set up peace talks

By RAHIM FAIEZ and KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A traditional Afghan council concluded Sunday with hundreds of delegates agreeing to free 400 Taliban members, paving the way for an early start to negotiations between Afghanistan's warring sides.

The declaration read out in both of Afghanistan's official languages of Pashto and Farsi calls for an immediate start to negotiations and cease fire. The move looks to bring the United States a little closer to returning its troops and ending its longest military engagement.

No date has been set but negotiations between Kabul's political leadership and the Taliban are expected to begin as early as next week and will most likely be held in the middle eastern state of Qatar, where the Taliban maintains a political office.

The Afghan negotiations were laid out in a peace deal signed by the United States and the Taliban in February. At the time of its signing it was touted as Afghanistan's best chance at ending decades of war.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani praised delegates for their decision, urged the Taliban to stop fighting.

Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen said the decision "was a good step, a positive step." He said negotiations could start within one week of their prisoners being freed.

As for a cease fire, Shaheen said the Taliban was committed to the deal it struck with the United States and according to that deal "the cease fire will be one of the items to be discussed during the intra-Afghan negotiations."

The council's decision to free the prisoners does not come as a surprise as delegates were urged by the U.S. at the start of the council, or jirga, on Friday to take "this difficult action" so negotiations could begin to bring an end to the war.

"To remove obstacle, to start peace talks and to stop the bloodshed, the Jirga confirms the release of 400 Taliban prisoners," said Atefa Tayeb, a council secretary who read out the final declaration at the conclusion.

The deal negotiated between the United States and Taliban calls for the government to free 5,000 prisoners and for the Taliban to free 1,000 government and military personnel in its custody as a goodwill gesture ahead of the start of negotiations.

Kabul balked at the release but eventually freed all but the last 400. President Ghani said he was not authorized to free these because of the seriousness of their crimes, and asked for the council to decide instead. He did not detail of what the 400 were accused.

Delegates were therefore given the stark choice of either freeing the prisoners or seeing a war that has killed tens of thousands continue. The delegates said they wanted international guarantees that the Taliban would not return to the battlefield.

Washington's Peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad spent more than a year and a half negotiating the deal with the Taliban to provide for the withdrawal of American soldiers after more than 19 years in Afghanistan.

The withdrawal began earlier this year but roughly 8,600 U.S. soldiers remain in Afghanistan and their return will depend on the Taliban honoring its commitment to fight against other terrorist groups and ensure Afghanistan is not again used to attack the United States or its allies.

The withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops is not dependent on the success of negotiations between Kabul's political leadership and the Taliban. But U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has made it clear that Washington wants a negotiated end to the conflict, including a cease fire.

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An attack against a military compound on Saturday that killed seven military personnel and injured another 16 was a reminder that Afghanistan's war would not be over easily. No one took responsibility for the attack but both the Taliban and Islamic State affiliate is active in the area.

A spike in recent violence in Afghanistan has been mostly attributed to the IS affiliate, whom the Taliban are fighting as are the Afghan government and U.S. forces. Previously a U.S. department of defense official who could not be named because of the sensitivity of the subject said Washington considered IS its biggest threat in Afghanistan and wanted a deal that would recruit the Taliban in a coordinated fight against it.

Kathy Gannon reported from Islamabad.

Saudi Aramco half-year profits plunge 50% from virus impact

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Aramco's net income plunged by 50% in the first half of the year, according to figures published Sunday, offering a revealing glimpse into the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on one of the world's biggest oil producers.

Profits for the first six months of the year plunged to \$23.2 billion, half of last year's \$46.9 billion for the same time period.

The results were announced as Aramco's second quarter earnings dipped to \$6.6 billion compared to \$24.7 billion during the same time last year, reflecting a staggering 73% drop.

The majority state-owned company's financial health is crucial to Saudi Arabia's stability. Despite massive efforts by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to diversify the economy, Saudi Arabia still depends heavily on oil exports to fuel government spending.

The price of Brent crude hovers just under \$45 a barrel, significantly less than before the pandemic but up from a low of around \$21 a barrel in April.

Aramco CEO Amin Nasser acknowledged the company's finances were impacted by "strong headwinds from reduced demand and lower oil prices" sparked by the pandemic, which halted flights around the world and plunged economies into recession, including Saudi Arabia's.

The company said it will uphold its commitment to pay out dividends of \$18.75 billion for the second quarter as part of its promise to pay \$75 billion in annual dividends.

Nasser described Aramco's half-year earnings as "solid" and credited the company's low production costs and operational strength, which helped it to maintain its promised dividend payments.

Aramco was knocked out of its top spot as the world's most valuable listed company by Apple in recent days. Its stock price gained a little on Sunday, trading at around 33 riyals (\$8.80) a share. At its highest, Aramco traded above \$10 a share in December and at its lowest slipped to \$7.20 a share in March.

Looking ahead, Nasser said the energy market is seeing a partial recovery as countries around the world ease restrictions and reboot their economies.

"We are determined to emerge from the pandemic stronger and will continue making progress on our long-term strategic journey, through ongoing investments in our business," Nasser said.

Even before the half-year results were announced, it was clear Aramco's half-year earnings would take a hit with the company's first quarter profits down 25%.

Aramco, which floated a sliver of its shares on the local Saudi stock market last year, had long kept its financial details a closely-held secret until the company began preparations for its market debut.

DJ, big hitters atop tight leaderboard for 4th round of PGA

By JIM LITKE AP Sports Writer

The bad news: The final-round "Battle of the Titans" golf fans have been clamoring for — Brooks "Big Game" Koepka vs. Bryson "The Brain" DeChambeau with a tournament on the line — won't be coming to a PGA Championship near you. At least not on this Sunday.

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The good: If Saturday's Round 3 at TPC Harding Park is any indication of what's to come, the first major of this COVID-19 season won't lack for fireworks.

Koepka, the two-time defending champion, faced a gut check after making three straight bogeys and promptly responded by birdieing two of his last three holes to shoot 69 and stay two shots of the lead. Even gutsier, perhaps, was Koepka's post-round interview performance, which resembled a major leaguer walking over to the opposing dugout and daring anyone inside to come out and fight.

Koepka nearly yawned when asked to assess the players ahead of him, a group that includes leader and 2016 U.S. Open champion Dustin Johnson (at 9-under 201), rising stars Scottie Scheffler, Cameron Champ (both at 8 under), Collin Morikawa and veteran Paul Casey (both at 7 under).

"A lot of guys on the leaderboard, I don't think have won. I guess DJ has only won one," he began. "I don't know a lot of the others that are up there."

Right behind Koepka, but left out of that withering assessment, was DeChambeau, who climbed to 6-under by dropping a 95-foot bomb of a birdie putt the 18th.

Both are among the game's premier power players, but Koepka, already a four-time major winner, has been the one throwing most of the shade. He plays fast and has little patience for those who don't. DeChambeau, who treats short putts like a surveyor and on-course rulings like federal cases, often plays painstakingly slow. Both look like college football-sized safeties. But it took Koepka several years to muscle up his 6-foot frame, while DeChambeau (6-1) added almost 40 pounds of bulk in a matter of months.

Whether they'll discuss any of that remains to be seen. But they'll be within shouting distance of each other all day. DeChambeau, playing alongside Tony Finau, goes off at 4:20 pm ET. Koepka, alongside Casey, tees off 10 minutes later. If play backs up on the course, CBS will want to make sure the boom microphones nearby are turned up to full volume.

But even if their feud fizzles, there should be plenty to talk about. Johnson packs plenty of power, too, and knows that with a second major comes a whole lot of bragging rights.

"It's simple," Johnson said. "I've got to hit a lot of fairways and a lot of greens. If I can do that tomorrow, I'm going to have a good chance coming down the stretch. ... I'm just going to have to do what I did today. Just get it done."

The list of players who didn't — on golf's traditional "moving day" no less — was long. Li Haotong's distinction — the first Chinese player to lead any round in a major — disappeared after he shot 73, fittingly highlighted by a double-bogey after a tee shot got stuck in a tree. Tiger Woods' reputation as a contender everywhere he plays, took a hit at Harding Park, too. He didn't make a birdie until the 16th, and after a promising opening round, has looked every bit the 44-year-old who caught lightning in a bottle at the 2019 Masters and might not be that lucky again.

Saturday's round finished in the gloaming, with the mercury at 59 degrees and bedeviling 15 mph winds. More of the same is expected for Sunday, which could bode well for youngsters Scheffler, Champ and Morikawa, who played college golf at Cal-Berkley nearby and knows Harding Park well.

"Obviously it's played very different. The tees are way back, the greens are a lot faster," he said, then paused. "But what's crazy is there aren't enough fans."

So even if you're just keeping score at home, make some noise. It would be appreciated.

Rajapaksa sworn in as PM in Sri Lanka, cementing family rule

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka's former President Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in as the prime minister for the fourth time Sunday after his party secured a landslide victory in parliamentary elections that cemented his family's hold on power.

Rajapaksa took oath before his younger brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, at a prominent Buddhist temple on the outskirts of the capital Colombo.

Mahinda Rajapaksa served as the island nation's president from 2005 to 2015 and is highly popular among the ethnic majority Sinhalese for ending the country's 25-year civil war against Tamil rebels in 2009.

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He was first elected prime minister in 2004 and again appointed for brief periods in 2018 and 2019.

Sri Lanka People's Front — the party led by the Rajapaksa brothers — won 145 seats in the 225-member Parliament in the election last Wednesday. Its main opponent obtained only 54 seats. A party representing ethnic minority Tamils won 10 seats, and 16 others were split among 12 small parties.

The victory gave the Rajapaksa brothers nearly the two-third majority of seats required to make constitutional changes that could strengthen dynastic rule in the country.

This time, five members of the Rajapaksa family have been elected as lawmakers— Rajapaksa, his son Namal, the eldest brother Chamal and his son Sashindra, and a nephew, Nipuna Ranawaka.

The brothers need 150 seats to be able to change the constitution. At least four small parties collaborate with the Rajapaksas' party, so they appear to have mustered that support.

However, analysts say any attempt by Gotabaya Rajapaksa to push for changes that will strengthen presidential powers at the expense of the prime minister may trigger sibling rivalry.

Sri Lanka had been ruled by powerful executive presidents since 1978. But a 2015 constitutional amendment strengthened Parliament and the prime minister and put independent commissions in charge of judiciary appointments, police, public services and the conduct of elections.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected president last November after projecting himself as the only leader who could secure the country after the Islamic State-inspired bombings of churches and hotels on Easter Sunday that killed 269 people. Since being elected, he has said he had to work under many restrictions because of the constitutional changes.

However, Mahinda Rajapaksa is unlikely to cede any of his powers that might shrink his influence as he works on promoting his son Namal as heir. Namal and three other members of the family are likely to control key functions in the new administration.

The landslide victory also raises fears of weakening government institutions such as independent commissions.

US response to the virus is met with incredulity abroad

By NICOLE WINFIELD and LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The United States' failure to contain the spread of the coronavirus has been met with astonishment and alarm in Europe, as the world's most powerful country edges closer to a global record of 5 million confirmed infections.

Perhaps nowhere outside the U.S. is America's bungled virus response viewed with more consternation than in Italy, which was ground zero of Europe's epidemic. Italians were unprepared when the outbreak exploded in February and the country still has one of the world's highest official death tolls at 35,000.

But after a strict nationwide 10-week lockdown, vigilant tracing of new clusters and general acceptance of mask mandates and social distancing, Italy has become a model of virus containment.

"Don't they care about their health?" a mask-clad Patrizia Antonini asked about people in the United States as she walked with friends along the banks of Lake Bracciano, north of Rome. "They need to take our precautions ... They need a real lockdown."

Much of the incredulity in Europe stems from the fact that America had the benefit of time, European experience and medical know-how to treat the virus that the continent itself didn't have when the first COVID-19 patients started filling intensive care units. Yet, more than four months into a sustained outbreak, the U.S. is about to hit an astonishing milestone of 5 million confirmed infections, easily the highest in the world. Health officials believe the actual number is closer to 50 million, given testing limitations and the fact that as many as 40% of all cases are asymptomatic.

"We Italians always saw America as a model," said Massimo Franco, columnist with daily Corriere della Sera. "But with this virus we've discovered a country that is very fragile, with bad infrastructure and a public health system that is nonexistent."

Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza hasn't shied away from criticizing the U.S., officially condemning as "wrong" Washington's decision to withhold funding from the World Health Organization and marveling

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personally at President Donald Trump's virus response.

After Trump finally donned a protective mask last month, Speranza told La7 television: "I'm not surprised by Trump's behavior now; I'm profoundly surprised by his behavior before."

With America's list-leading 160,000 dead, politicized resistance to masks and rising caseload, European nations have barred American tourists and visitors from other countries with growing cases from freely traveling to the bloc.

France and Germany are now imposing tests on arrival for travelers from "at risk" countries, the U.S. included.

"I am very well aware that this impinges on individual freedoms, but I believe that this is a justifiable intervention," German Health Minister Jens Spahn said in announcing the tests last week.

Mistakes were made in Europe, too, from delayed lockdowns to insufficient protections for nursing home elderly and critical shortages of tests and protective equipment for medical personnel.

The virus is still raging in some Balkan countries and thousands of maskless protesters demanded an end to virus restrictions in Berlin earlier this month. Hard-hit Spain, France and Germany have seen infection rebounds with new cases topping 1,000 a day, and Italy's cases inched up over 500 on Friday. The U.K. is still seeing an estimated 3,700 new infections daily, and some scientists say the country's beloved pubs might have to close again if schools are to reopen in September without causing a new wave.

In the U.S., new cases run at about 54,000 a day — an immensely higher number even when taking into account its larger population. And while that's down from a peak of well over 70,000 last month, cases are rising in nearly 20 states, and deaths are climbing in most.

In contrast, at least for now Europe appears to have the virus somewhat under control.

"Had the medical professionals been allowed to operate in the States, you would have belatedly gotten to a point of getting to grips with this back in March," said Scott Lucas, professor of international studies at the University of Birmingham, England. "But of course, the medical and public health professionals were not allowed to proceed unchecked," he said, referring to Trump's frequent undercutting of his own experts.

When the virus first appeared in the United States, Trump and his supporters quickly dismissed it as either a "hoax" or a virus that would quickly disappear once warmer weather arrived. At one point, Trump suggested that ultraviolet light or injecting disinfectants would eradicate the virus. (He later said he was being facetious).

Trump's frequent complaints about Dr. Anthony Fauci have regularly made headlines in Europe, where the U.S. infectious diseases expert is a respected eminence grise. Italy's leading COVID-19 hospital offered Fauci a job if Trump fired him.

Trump has defended the U.S. response, blaming China, where the virus was first detected, for America's problems and saying the U.S. numbers are so high because there is so much testing. Trump supporters and Americans who have refused to wear masks against all medical advice back that line.

□ "There's no reason to fear any sickness that's out there," said Julia Ferjo, a mother of three in Alpine, Texas, who says she is "vehemently" against wearing a mask. □ Ferjo, 35, teaches fitness classes in a large gym with open doors, where she doesn't allow participants to wear masks.

□ "When you're breathing that hard, I would pass out," she said. "I do not want people just dropping like flies."

And health officials watched with alarm as thousands of bikers gathered Friday in the small South Dakota city of Sturgis for a 10-day motorcycle rally. The state has no mask mandates and many bikers expressed defiance of measures meant to prevent the virus's spread.

Dr. David Ho, director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, who is leading a team seeking treatments for COVID-19, decried such behavior, as well as the country's handling of the virus.

"There's no national strategy, no national leadership and there's no urging for the public to act in unison and carry out the measures together," he said. "That's what it takes and we have completely abandoned that as a nation."

When he gets on Zoom calls with counterparts from around the globe, "Everyone cannot believe what

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they're seeing in the U.S. and they cannot believe the words coming out of the leadership," he said.

Even the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, has taken the unusual step of criticizing the U.S. when she urged Washington to reconsider its decision to break ties with the WHO. She also issued veiled criticism of U.S. efforts to buy up stocks of any vaccine that might prove effective, vowing the EU will work to provide access to everyone "irrespective of where they live."

Many Europeans point proudly to their national health care systems that not only test but treat COVID-19 for free, unlike the American system where the virus crisis has only exacerbated income and racial inequalities in accessing health care.

"The coronavirus has brutally stripped bare the vulnerability of a country that has been sliding for years," wrote Italian author Massimo Gaggi in his new book "Crack America" (Broken America) about U.S. problems that long predated COVID.

Gaggi said he started writing the book last year and thought then that the title would be taken as a provocative wake-up call. Then the virus hit.

"By March the title wasn't a provocation any longer," he said. "It was obvious."

Pane reported from Boise, Idaho. AP reporters from around Europe contributed.

Simon Cowell injures back while testing electric bicycle

MALIBU, Calif. (AP) — Simon Cowell broke his back Saturday while testing his new electric bicycle at his home in California.

Cowell was expected to have surgery Saturday evening, according to a spokesperson for the entertainment mogul. Cowell fell off the bike while in the courtyard with his family at his house in Malibu. He was taken to a hospital and was said to be under observation and doing fine.

Cowell created "America's Got Talent" and serves as a judge on the show. He has also been the judge on "Britain's Got Talent," "The X Factor" and "American Idol."

Nagasaki urges nuke ban on 75th anniversary of US A-bombing

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The Japanese city of Nagasaki on Sunday marked its 75th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing, with the mayor and dwindling survivors urging world leaders including their own to do more for a nuclear weapons ban.

At 11:02 a.m., the moment the B-29 bomber Bockscar dropped a 4.5-ton (10,000-pound) plutonium bomb dubbed "Fat Man," Nagasaki survivors and other participants stood in a minute of silence to honor more than 70,000 dead.

The Aug. 9, 1945, bombing came three days after the United States dropped its first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the world's first ever nuclear attack that killed 140,000. On Aug. 15, Japan surrendered, ending World War II.

At the event at Nagasaki Peace Park, scaled down because of the coronavirus pandemic, Mayor Tomihisa Taue read a peace declaration in which he raised concern that nuclear states had in recent years retreated from disarmament efforts.

Instead, they are upgrading and miniaturizing nuclear weapons for easier use, he said. Taue singled out the U.S. and Russia for increasing risks by scrapping the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

"As a result, the threat of nuclear weapons being used is increasingly becoming real," Taue said. Noting that the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty entered into force 50 years ago, Taue urged the U.S. and Russia to show a (asterisk)workable way(asterisk) towards their nuclear disarmament at the NPT review process next year.

He said that "the true horror of nuclear weapons has not yet been adequately conveyed to the world at large" despite struggle and efforts by hibakusha, or atomic bombing survivors, to make Nagasaki the

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last place of the tragedy.

He also urged Japan's government and lawmakers to quickly sign the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

After taking part in the ceremony, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe criticized the treaty for not being realistic. None of the nuclear states has joined, and it is not widely supported even by non-nuclear states, he said.

"The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted without taking into consideration the reality of the harsh national security environment," Abe said at a news conference. "I must say the treaty is different from Japan's position and approach" even though they share the same goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, he said.

Abe has repeatedly refused to sign the treaty. He reiterated that Japan's approach is not to take sides but to serve as a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear states to encourage dialogue to achieve a total nuclear ban. Survivors and pacifist groups say Japan is virtually siding with the U.S. and other nuclear states.

Abe cited "severe national security environment and a wide gap between the two sides on nuclear disarmament." He also noted Japan faces threats of development and modernization of nuclear weapons from "neighboring countries in the region."

Taue, who spoke before Abe, disagreed, saying: "Among the nuclear-weapon states and countries under the nuclear umbrella, there have been voices stating that it is too early for such a treaty. That is not so. Nuclear arms reductions are far too late in coming."

While Tokyo renounces its own possession, production or hosting of nuclear weapons, as a U.S. ally Japan hosts 50,000 American troops and is protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. The post-WWII security arrangement complicates the push to get Japan to sign the treaty as it beefs up its own military to deal with threats from North Korea and China, among others.

An aging group of survivors have expressed a growing sense of urgency to tell their stories, in hopes of reaching younger generations to continue their effort toward establishing a nuclear-free world.

"There is not much time left for us survivors," said Shigemi Fukabori, 89. He was a 14-year-old student mobilized to work at a shipyard when Nagasaki was bombed.

"I'm determined to keep telling my story so that Nagasaki will be the last place on Earth to have suffered an atomic attack."

Fukabori, who almost instantly lost four siblings, said he never forgets the pile of charred bodies, bombed-out street cars and the badly injured desperately asking for help and water as he rushed back to his house in the back of the Urakami Cathedral, which was also nearly destroyed.

"We don't want anyone else to have to go through this," he said.

"Nagasaki bears a responsibility as a witness of catastrophic results the nuclear weapon caused to humanity and environment," Fukabori said in his speech at the ceremony, representing the Nagasaki survivors. "I hope as many people as possible to join us, especially the young generations to inherit our baton of peace and keep running."

Many peace events, including survivors' talks leading up to the anniversary, were canceled because of the coronavirus, but some survivors have teamed up with students and pacifist groups to speak at online events.

Follow Mari Yamaguchi on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/mariyamaguchi>

Asia Today: Sources of many cases in Victoria untraceable

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The premier of Australia's Victoria state says more than 2,700 active cases have no known source and remain the primary concern of health authorities.

Victoria on Sunday saw a welcome drop in its new COVID-19 cases with 394 but a record 17 deaths, including two people in their 50s. It took the hard-hit state's toll to 210 and the Australian total of deaths to 295.

Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said confirmed cases also include almost 1,000 health care workers.

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The city of Melbourne has been under tough restrictions since a week ago, including an overnight curfew and mandatory wearing of masks, but won't see the results of their efforts for another one to two weeks.

Almost 270 Victorian residents have been fined over the past 24 hours for breaching the restrictions, including a man helping a friend to move a television 27 kilometers (17 miles) across the city.

Victoria Police issued 268 fines to individuals in the past 24 hours, including 77 for curfew breaches and 38 for failing to wear a mask when leaving home.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— The Indian Medical Association says 196 doctors have died of COVID-19 so far and, in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requested adequate care for physicians and their families. The Health Ministry on Sunday recorded nearly 64,000 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours for a total of 2,153,010. India also recorded 861 fatalities, driving the death toll to 43,379. India has been posting an average of around 50,000 new cases a day since mid-June and has the third-highest caseload in the world after the United States and Brazil. It has the fifth-most deaths but its fatality rate of about 2% is far lower than the top two hardest-hit countries.

— Hong Kong has seen a further decline in new coronavirus cases, with just 69 reported as of Sunday. Hong Kong's Center for Health Protection said 67 were locally transmitted and the other two brought from overseas. No new deaths from COVID-19 were reported, leaving the total for the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city at 47 among 3,938 cases. Hong Kong has instituted strict measures to prevent new infections and the center urged members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact or dining out. Last week, authorities said they would offer free testing to all 7.5 million residents in order to track those who might have the virus while not showing symptoms and reassure the public that the outbreak is under control.

— Chinese authorities on Sunday announced 15 new cases in the northwestern region of Xinjiang and eight others brought from outside the country. A total of 817 people remain in treatment, 43 of them in serious condition, and 276 are under monitoring in isolation for showing signs of COVID-19 or testing positive for the virus without displaying symptoms. China has reported a total of 4,634 deaths from COVID-19 among 84,619 cases. Xinjiang's main city of Urumqi was the center of China's latest major outbreak, but strict measures including travel restrictions and the lockdown of some residential communities appears to have contained the spread.

— South Korea has reported 36 additional coronavirus cases amid an uptick in local community infections. The additional figures Sunday took the national tally to 14,598 with 305 deaths. Thirty of the new cases were locally transmitted while the rest were associated with international arrivals. South Korea on Saturday also recorded 30 domestically transmitted cases, the first time the figure hit above 30 in about two weeks. Health officials say many of those were linked to church gatherings. Health authorities have said imported cases are less threatening as they enforce two-week quarantines on all people arriving from abroad.

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

Trump order allows some unemployment pay, defers payroll tax

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

BEDMINSTER, N.J. (AP) — President Donald Trump has bypassed the nation's lawmakers as he claimed the authority to defer payroll taxes and replace an expired unemployment benefit with a lower amount after negotiations with Congress on a new coronavirus rescue package collapsed.

Trump's orders on Saturday encroached on Congress' control of federal spending and seemed likely to be met with legal challenges. The president cast his actions as necessary given that lawmakers have been unable to reach an agreement to plunge more money into the stumbling economy, which has imperiled his November reelection.

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Trump moved to continue paying a supplemental federal unemployment benefit for millions of Americans out of work during the outbreak. However, his order called for up to \$400 payments each week, one-third less than the \$600 people had been receiving. How many people would receive the benefit and how long it might take to arrive were open questions.

The previous unemployment benefit, which expired on Aug. 1, was fully funded by Washington, but Trump is asking states to now cover 25%. He is seeking to set aside \$44 billion in previously approved disaster aid to help states, but said it would be up to states to determine how much, if any of it, to fund, so the benefits could be smaller still.

Many states already faced budget shortfalls due to the coronavirus pandemic and would have difficulty assuming the new obligation.

Trump hopes the four executive orders he signed will signal to Americans that he is acting where Congress will not to address economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has upended nearly all aspects of American life. It's unclear what the economic impact of his actions will be, and his orders do not address several areas that have been part of the congressional negotiations, including funding for schools and state and local governments.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer dismissed Trump's actions as "meager" in the face of economic and health crises facing Americans. Democrats initially sought a \$3.4 trillion package, but said they lowered their ask in talks to \$2 trillion. Republicans had proposed a \$1 trillion plan.

Trump's Democratic opponent in the presidential race, Joe Biden, called the orders "a series of half-baked measures" and accused him of putting at risk Social Security, which is funded by the payroll tax.

Trump's embrace of executive actions to sidestep Congress ran in sharp contrast to his criticism of former President Barack Obama's use of executive orders on a more limited basis. Though Trump cast it as a necessary step given the deterioration of congressional negotiations, the president himself was not an active participant in those talks.

The orders "will take care of pretty much this entire situation, as we know it," Trump said, despite the fact that they are far smaller in scope than congressional legislation, and even aides acknowledged they didn't meet all needs.

In addition to the extension of some unemployment benefits, Trump's orders call for a deferral of payroll tax and federal student loan payments and efforts to halt evictions. The evictions executive order directs the Treasury and Housing and Urban Development departments to identify funds to provide financial assistance to those struggling to pay their monthly rent.

Trump said the employee portion of the payroll tax would be deferred from Aug. 1 through the end of the year. The move would not directly aid unemployed workers, who do not pay the tax when they are jobless, and employees would need to repay the federal government eventually without an act of Congress.

In essence, the deferral is an interest-free loan that would have to be repaid. Trump said he'll try to get lawmakers to extend it, and the timing would line up with a post-election lame-duck session in which Congress will try to pass government funding bills.

"If I win, I may extend and terminate," Trump said, repeating a longtime goal but remaining silent on how he'd fund the Medicare and Social Security benefits that the 7% tax on employee income covers. Employers also pay 7.65% of their payrolls into the funds.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., issued a statement saying he supported Trump "exploring his options to get unemployment benefits and other relief to the people who need them the most." Like Trump, McConnell accused Democrats of using the coronavirus package negotiations to pursue other goals.

The Democratic chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Richard E. Neal of Massachusetts, accused Trump of "brazenly circumventing Congress to institute tax policy that destabilizes Social Security." He also cited a threat to Medicare funding.

The use of executive actions drew criticism from Republican Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska. "The pen-and-phone theory of executive lawmaking is unconstitutional slop," said Sasse, a member of the Senate's Judiciary and Finance panels. He added that Trump "does not have the power to unilaterally rewrite the

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payroll tax law. Under the Constitution, that power belongs to the American people acting through their members of Congress.”

With no deal on virus relief in sight, lawmakers went home on Friday with instructions to be ready to return for a vote on an agreement. A stalemate that could stretch well into August and even September was possible, casting doubt on the ability of the Trump administration and Democrats to come together on a fifth COVID-19 response bill.

Often an impasse in Washington is of little consequence for the public — but this would mean more hardship for millions of people who are losing enhanced jobless benefits and cause further damage to the economy.

Schumer said the White House had rejected an offer by Pelosi to curb Democratic demands by about \$1 trillion. Schumer urged the White House to “negotiate with Democrats and meet us in the middle. Don’t say it’s your way or no way.”

The breakdown in negotiations over the last several days was particularly distressing for schools trying to reopen. But other priorities were also languishing, including a fresh round of \$1,200 direct payments to most people, a cash infusion for the struggling Postal Service and money to help states hold elections in November.

Senate Republicans were split, with roughly half of McConnell’s rank and file opposed to another rescue bill.

Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump allows some unemployment pay, defers payroll tax

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Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor in Washington contributed to this report.

Dustin Johnson emerges from a pack to lead PGA Championship

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Dustin Johnson supplied the birdies, eight of them Saturday at the PGA Championship, the most he has ever made in his 157 rounds of major championship golf for a 5-under 65 and a one-shot lead.

Brooks Koepka supplied the needle.

Koepka recovered from three straight bogeys to salvage a 69 and stay within two shots of a leaderboard more crowded than any of San Francisco's congested highways. At stake is a chance to become only the seventh player to win the same major three straight times. He surveyed the cast of contenders, and focused on the guy at the top.

"I like my chances," Koepka said. "When I've been in this position before, I've capitalized. He's only won one. I'm playing good. I don't know, we'll see."

As he stepped away from the microphone, Koepka smiled and said to Jason Day, "How about that shade?" They laughed.

Too bad this isn't a two-man show.

The final round at Harding Park figures to be wide open, just like it was on a Saturday so wild that eight players had at least a share of the lead during the third round.

Johnson lost his yardage book and still found his way through an enormous crowd of contenders. He made a double bogey on the ninth hole and still bounced back with a 31 on the tough, windy back nine.

He needed all eight of those birdies on a day of low scores, long putts and endless possibilities.

One possibility is Koepka hoisting the Wanamaker Trophy for the third straight year, which hasn't happened since Walter Hagen won four in a row in the 1920s when it was match play. The last player to win any major three straight times was Peter Thomson at the British Open in 1956.

Koepka was two shots behind on a board that features only two major champions among the top six.

Scottie Scheffler, the PGA Tour rookie from Texas, ran off three straight birdies only to miss a 6-foot par putt on the final hole. He still shot a 65 and was one shot behind, in the final group at his first PGA Championship. Cameron Champ, who has the most powerful swing on tour, shot 67 and joined Scheffler one shot behind.

Johnson was at 9-under 201 as he goes for his second major title. For all the chances he has had, this is only the second time he has led going into the final round. The other was down the coast at Pebble Beach, his first chance at winning a major. He had a three-shot lead in the 2010 U.S. Open and shot 82.

Now he is more seasoned with experiences good (21 tour victories) and bad (five close calls in the majors).

"I'm going to have to play good golf if I want to win. It's simple," Johnson said. "I've got to hit a lot of fairways and a lot of greens. If I can do that tomorrow, I'm going to have a good chance coming down the stretch. ... I'm just going to have to do what I did today. Just get it done."

Among the cast of contenders are major champions like Koepka, Jason Day and Justin Rose, and fresh faces like Scheffler, Champ and Collin Morikawa. Also right there was Bryson DeChambeau, thanks to a 95-foot putt for birdie on his last hole. Turns out he can hit long putts, too.

Missing from all this action is Tiger Woods, who didn't make a birdie until the 16th hole and is out of the mix for the fourth straight major since his emotional Masters victory last year.

A dozen players were separated by three shots.

Li Haotong, the first player from China to lead after any round at a major, was leading through 12 holes until his tee shot didn't come down from a tree. He made double bogey, dropped two more shots and finished four shots out of the lead.

Johnson didn't have smooth sailing, either, especially when he couldn't find his yardage book.

He thinks it slipped into the bottom of the golf bag, and he didn't feel like dumping his 14 clubs all over the ground to find it. Austin Johnson, his brother and caddie, had a spare yardage book.

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Johnson shot 65 even with a double bogey on the ninth hole. Mistakes like that might be more costly on Sunday with so many players in the mix. Even those who struggled — Rose, Daniel Berger, Tommy Fleetwood all settled for 70 — are only three shots behind.

Adding to the drama will be the lack of atmosphere, this being the first major without spectators. Paul Casey said he still didn't feel nerves from the lack of people. Perhaps that helps with younger players in the hunt for the first time. It also could make it difficult for players to know what's happening around them without any cheers.

Then again, Johnson won the U.S. Open in 2016 at Oakmont without knowing the score as the USGA tried to decide whether he should be penalized for a potential rules violation earlier in the round. He had to play the last seven holes without knowing his score.

It's just one example of what Johnson has endured in the majors. There was a penalty that knocked him out of a playoff in the 2010 PGA at Whistling Straits for grounding his club in sand without realizing it was a bunker. He had a 12-foot eagle putt to win the 2015 U.S. Open at Chambers Bay, only to three-putt for par and a silver medal.

But he's back for another shot, and his game looks to be in order. He has the power, and on this day, he had the putting.

"I definitely have experience in this situation that definitely will help tomorrow," Johnson said. "I've been in the hunt a bunch of times in a major. I've got one major. ... Still going to have to go out and play really good golf."

Oregon trooper injured, 24 arrested in Portland protests

By MARTHA BELLISLE and GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Protesters in Portland, Oregon, defied police orders to disperse and threw rocks, frozen or hard-boiled eggs and commercial-grade fireworks at officers as unrest in the Northwest city continued early Saturday.

An Oregon State Police Trooper was struck in the head by a large rock and suffered a head injury, police said in a release. The trooper's condition was not immediately known.

Some demonstrators filled pool noodles with nails and placed them in the road, causing extensive damage to a patrol vehicle, police said. Oregon State Police worked with Portland officers to clear the protesters.

"Officers are having rocks and chunks of concrete thrown at them," police said on Twitter. "Individuals in the crowd are shining lasers trying to blind officers."

Since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, protests over racial injustice and police brutality have occurred nightly for 70 days.

Portland police declared an unlawful assembly Friday night at the Penumbra Kelly public safety building, ordering everyone in the area to leave. Authorities had previously warned people not to trespass on the property.

Protesters remained for several hours before officers began to rush the crowd away from the building using crowd-control munitions early Saturday. Several people were arrested, police said.

"As arrests were made, certain crowd members began throwing rocks towards officers," police said in a statement. "As this criminal activity occurred, the crowd also blocked all lanes of traffic on East Burnside Street, not allowing vehicles to pass by. Several people in this group wore helmets and gas masks as well as carried shields."

Police said Saturday that they arrested 24 people during the overnight demonstration. Most of those arrested were from Portland, while one man was from Oakland, California, and another was Tulsa, Oklahoma. Most were in their 20s or 30s.

The police also said officers are investigating a report on social media that someone threw explosive devices at protesters early Saturday morning in Laurelhurst Park. There are no reports that anyone was injured, the police said.

The charges included assault on an officer, interfering with an officer, disorderly conduct and resisting

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arrest.

Most of the crowd left the area by about 2:30 a.m. Saturday, police said.

Democratic Mayor Ted Wheeler said this week the violent protesters are also serving as political "props" for President Donald Trump in a divisive election season where the president is hammering on a law-and-order message. Trump has tried to portray the protesters as "sick and dangerous anarchists" running wild in the city's streets.

The chaos that started Thursday night lasted into Friday morning in a residential neighborhood about 6 miles (10 kilometers) from downtown. The demonstrations this week had been noticeably smaller than the crowds of thousands who turned out nightly for about two weeks in July to protest the presence of U.S. agents sent by the Trump administration to protect a federal courthouse that had become a target of nightly violence.

This week's clashes have, however, amped up tensions after an agreement last week between state and federal officials seemed to offer a brief reprieve.

The deal brokered by Democratic Gov. Kate Brown called for agents from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Marshals Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to pull back from their defense of the Mark O. Hatfield Federal Courthouse starting July 30.

Early Friday, as peaceful demonstrations proceeded elsewhere in the city, a group of people gathered at a park in eastern Portland and marched to the local police precinct, where authorities say they spray-painted the building, popped the tires of police cars, splashed paint on the walls, vandalized security cameras and set a fire in a barrel outside the building. One officer was severely injured by a rock, police said, but no additional details were provided.

Tear gas was used by police on protesters Wednesday for the first time since the U.S. agents pulled back their presence in the city. But officers did not use it Thursday despite declaring the demonstration an unlawful assembly.

Portland police have arrested more than 400 people at protests since late May. U.S. agents arrested at least an additional 94 people during protests at the federal courthouse in July.

At his New Jersey golf club, Trump finds supportive audience

By JONATHAN LEMIRE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEDMINSTER, N.J. (AP) — They hustled down the stairs, the rain dabbing their polo shirts and golf attire, as they dashed inside the clubhouse, drinks in their hands and masks missing from their faces.

It was an unexpected perk of their country club membership: being the audience for President Donald Trump's hurriedly announced news conference Friday evening at his course in Bedminster, New Jersey.

They were props in a surreal gathering that violated COVID-19 safety guidelines but gave Trump a stage on which to end his week by falsely claiming the coronavirus pandemic ravaging the nation and endangering his reelection campaign was "disappearing."

As if it were a political rally, the well-heeled crowd offered cheers and jeers as the president delivered broadsides against his political foes. Club members booed when a reporter suggested the news conference violated social distancing regulations put in place by Gov. Phil Murphy, D-N.J.

"You're wrong about that because it's a political activity. They have expectations for political activities. And it's also a peaceful protest," Trump said. The audience roared when the president suggested that the club's members "know the news is fake."

The news conference was not on the president's daily schedule when it was released late Thursday. White House word about the addition came less than an hour before Trump began talking.

Trump had flown in from Ohio to begin a three-day stay at the club. He played a round of golf Friday and then met with campaign staff to map out the next few weeks in a race that has seen him consistently trailing Democrat Joe Biden. Reporters traveling with the president received notice in the morning of a "lid," which meant no public appearances were expected the rest of the day.

As evening approached and the rain moved in, the lid was lifted.

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Aides scrambled to get the club ready. They set up the presidential podium and monitors with the office's seal in a gilded room with chandeliers. It was the same room, not far from the fairways, where Trump, on another August weekend three years ago, first said there was blame on "many sides" of the clash between white supremacists and anti-racist protesters that had just occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Reporters arriving at the club before the news conference watched as members, many carrying glasses of wine, hurried from an upstairs dining room to the first floor ballroom. They, like the reporters, had their temperatures checked. Neither group was given the rapid COVID-19 test usually administered by the White House to anyone who will be near the president.

After reporters tweeted that most in the crowd, packed shoulder to shoulder, were not wearing masks, a staffer handed masks to anyone in the audience who wanted one. Most, but not all, put on a face covering.

Trump addressed the crowd, before reporters entered. In remarks caught on the White House livestream feed, the president said: "You'll get to meet the fake news tonight. You'll get to see what I have to go through. Who's there? Oh, all my killers are there, wow. So you'll get to see some of the people that we deal with every day."

Murphy had tightened New Jersey's restrictions this past week after a recent surge of cases. The new coronavirus guidelines require that for any indoor event, "regardless of the room's capacity, the maximum limit shall be 25 persons." Face coverings are now required of workers and customers.

Trump argued that a "political event" could have up to 100 people, per the guidelines. But the number of people in that room, when including reporters and Secret Service agents, appeared to exceed that limit, and few were 6 feet (1.83 meters) apart.

Aides had suggested to reporters on Friday that the president might sign executive orders that, despite questions about their legality and potential effectiveness, were meant to bypass stalled negotiations about the next round of economic assistance during the pandemic. The administration's talks with congressional leaders had collapsed, endangering federal aid to workers and businesses struggling during an outbreak that has killed more than 160,000 Americans and cost tens of millions their jobs. But no executive orders would be signed that day.

At his news conference, Trump also promoted the latest jobs report which, while surpassing expectations, lagged behind the past two months and suggested the economic recovery had stalled. He battled with reporters, cutting off one who tried to ask a question. He played down intelligence reports that Russia was trying to help his candidacy and that China and Iran were hoping for his defeat.

Trump also returned to his campaign's newest attack line against Biden — that the former vice president is under the control of the "radical" elements of the Democratic Party.

Trump conducted another news conference Saturday at the club, but the crowd was slightly smaller than Friday's and, this time, nearly everyone was wearing a mask and not a glass of wine was in sight. Supporters were just as boisterous, booing the mentions of Democrats and cheering when the president cut off reporters. He did sign a series of executive orders and even offered pens to people in the back of the room.

In campaign meetings before his appearance in the ballroom, the president was shown polling data that indicated that he had narrowed the gap against Biden in most battleground states, though Michigan, which he won in 2016, and Minnesota, which his campaign hoped to pluck from Democrats, were likely out of reach, according to two officials. They were not authorized to publicly discuss internal campaign matters and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Details are soon to be finalized for Trump's reimagined nominating convention, which will now be based in and around the nation's capital. Though the White House is still being considered for Trump's acceptance speech, an idea that has drawn bipartisan blowback for using the executive mansion for an explicitly political purpose, other options are in the mix, according to the officials.

The president also is focusing on fundraising to bankroll the stretch run.

After a fundraiser at a yacht club on Lake Erie on Thursday, Trump raised money at a pair of events Saturday in the Hamptons on New York's Long Island, including one hosted by his eldest son. On Sunday, before returning to Washington, Trump was scheduled to attend another, in Deal, New Jersey, at the the

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home of the late Stanley Chera, a friend and donor who died in April from the coronavirus.

The push comes after a heated call this past week in which Trump urged GOP megadonor Sheldon Adelson to contribute even more to the campaign, according to the officials.

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Brazil makes grim milestone -- 100,000 deaths from COVID-19

By MARCELO DE SOUSA Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazil surpassed a grim milestone of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19 on Saturday night, and five months after the first reported case the country has not shown signs of crushing the disease.

The nation of 210 million people has been reporting an average of more than 1,000 daily deaths from the pandemic since late May and reported 905 for the latest 24-hour period.

The Health Ministry said there had been a total of 3,012,412 confirmed infections with the new coronavirus — death and infection tolls second only to the United States. And as in many nations, experts believe that both numbers are severe undercounts due to insufficient testing.

In a tribute to COVID-19 victims Saturday morning, the non-governmental group Rio de Paz placed crosses on the sand on the famed Copacabana beach and released 1,000 red balloons into the sky.

"It's very sad. Those 100,000 represent various families, friends, parents, children," said Marcio do Nascimento Silva, a 56-year-old taxi driver who lost his children in the pandemic and joined the tribute.

"We reach that mark (100,000) and many people seem to not see it, both among the government and our people. They are not just numbers but people. Death became normal," Silva said.

President Jair Bolsonaro — who himself reported being infected — has been a consistent skeptic about the impact of the disease and an advocate of lifting restrictions on the economy that had been imposed by state governors trying to combat it. He has frequently mingled in crowds, sometimes without a mask.

On the day that Brazil reached more than 100,000 deaths, the federal government's communication secretariat confronted criticism from former Justice Minister Sergio Moro on social media for the management of the pandemic.

"There are many numbers that deserve to be disclosed: - ALMOST 3 MILLION LIVES SAVED OR IN RECOVERY - ONE OF THE LOWEST DEATHS PER MILLION AMONG LARGE NATIONS," said the secretariat's official account on Twitter, sharing Moro's tweet. Bolsonaro answered the tweet with an emoji of shaking hands.

Experts have complained of a lack of national coordination under Bolsonaro and scattershot responses by city and state governments, with some reopening earlier than health experts recommended.

"Administrative incompetence ruined our chance to have a good response to COVID," said Miguel Lago, executive director of Brazil's Institute for Health Policy Studies, which advises public health officials.

Brazil is facing the pandemic with an interim health minister, Eduardo Pazuello, an army general who made his career in logistics. Two earlier health ministers, both physicians, exited over differences with Bolsonaro about social distance measures and the use of hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malaria drug promoted by the president but which most studies have found to be ineffective against COVID-19, or even dangerous.

Bolsonaro, who has called COVID-19 a "little flu," says he recovered from his own infection thanks to that drug.

Many of Brazil's 27 states have begun to reopen shops and restaurants, though responses have differed, as has the strain on the health system. While Brasilia, the capital, has recorded almost 80% occupancy of its ICU beds, Rio de Janeiro's occupation rate is now down to less than 30% in private hospitals.

In Rio, shopping malls and restaurants have already opened and people have returned to the beaches.

"The situation is very comfortable and we don't understand why it is happening. Perhaps the infection rate was much higher than what was reported at the beginning of the pandemic and many of those on the street are immune," speculated Graccho Alvim, director of the state's association of hospitals

Viviane Melo da Silva, 47, lost her mother, Esther Melo da Silva, in the Amazonas state capital of Manaus

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on April 9. The mother reported having a cold, and a few days later started having problems breathing. She died after five days in a public hospital.

"I still don't accept her death, not yet," said da Silva, crying, and expressing regret the family had been unable to hold a wake for her mother.

"The government was saying that it was a 'little flu.' It did not care. It was not worried with that and that's what happened: Innocent people died because of the negligence and the lack of preparation from the government," she added.

Nazare Rosa de Paula, 67, said many people remain indifferent to the virus despite so many deaths. She said her husband Geraldo, a 70-year-old retired bus driver, would wear a mask to go to the supermarket in Rio de Janeiro, but never believed he would be infected.

In April he got what seemed to be just a flu. After his health worsened for eight days, he was diagnosed with COVID-19 and died on April 28.

"It was fast. There was not time to do anything and it surprised a lot of people," de Paula said.

They had been together for 43 years. "Only the feeling of missing him is left. People said that with time (it will get better), but for me, it will not end, it won't."

—— Associated Press journalists Yesica Fisch, David Biller and Mario Lobao in Rio de Janeiro and Tatiana Polastri in Sao Paulo contributed to this report.

Ex-Green Berets sentenced to 20 years for Venezuela attack

By SCOTT SMITH and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — A Venezuelan court has sentenced two former U.S. special forces soldiers to 20 years in prison for their part in a blunder-filled beach attack aimed at overthrowing President Nicolás Maduro.

Lawyers for the former Green Berets, Luke Denman and Airan Berry, said they were barred from the secretive jailhouse proceedings Friday night in what they consider a violation of their constitutional rights to a defense.

Maduro's chief prosecutor announced the surprise decision late Friday night.

"THEY ADMITTED THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FACTS," Tarek William Saab announced on Twitter, adding that proceedings will continue against dozens of other defendants accused of assisting in the May 3 raid. He did not offer details.

"Operation Gideon" was launched from makeshift training camps in neighboring Colombia and left at least eight rebel soldiers dead while more than 60 more were jailed.

Ex-Green Beret Jordan Goudreau, who operated a Florida-based security firm called Silvercorp USA, claimed responsibility for the failed attack and had hired his two former army buddies to prepare a small cadre of deserting Venezuelan soldiers living at the makeshift camps. Venezuelan prosecutors have ordered his arrest. Goudreau is believed to be in the U.S., where he also is under investigation for possibly violating arms trafficking laws in connection to the botched incursion.

Denman and Berry, both decorated former U.S. service members, were found guilty of conspiracy, trafficking in illegal arms and terrorism, Saab said.

But lawyers for the men said the hearing was marred by irregularities.

Alonso Medina Roa said he was hired a month ago by the families of the two Americans but has so far been barred from meeting or speaking with his clients.

In violation of their constitutional rights to a defense, he said, Judge Máximo Marquez never informed him of Friday night's proceedings at the headquarters of the SEBIN police, where the men are being held. They were represented instead by a public defender.

The two Americans arrested in a coastal fishing community have ever since been paraded by officials on Venezuelan state TV as proof of their long-held claims that the United States is set on violently overthrowing Maduro's socialist government.

The incident also prompted claims that U.S. backed opposition leader Juan Guaidó had authorized Gou-

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dreau through a signed agreement to carry out the attack, executed by two of Guaidó's former political advisors in the U.S.

U.S. officials have denied any role in the attack but have not said what knowledge they had about the clandestine camps in Colombia, details of which were made public by an AP investigation two days prior to the raid. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington would use all possible means to win the freedom of Denman and Berry.

Mark Denman, brother of Luke Denman, said in a statement that the families were "very disappointed" that the men were not represented by their private legal counsel.

"With the trial behind us, we are now focused on assuring that during their detainment their rights are adhered to. This includes humane treatment, access to adequate medical care, communication with their families and attorneys," he said.

U.S. officials also have demanded freedom for six jailed American oil executives from Houston-based Citgo, a subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil monopoly, who had been lured to Caracas for a meeting and then arrested on corruption charges, which all deny.

A day before the two ex-Green Berets were sentenced, the corruption trial began for the so-called Citgo 6. The case had lingered since their arrest two years and eight months ago until former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson met in July with Maduro in Caracas to urge they be released and returned home to the United States.

Richardson on Saturday said he would also work to free the convicted veterans, who are both natives of Texas.

"Luke Denman and Airan Berry are American citizens and military veterans who deserve our support," he said. "We will continue our dialogue with the Venezuelans to try to find a way to bring them back home to their families."

Both cases play out amid hostility between Washington and Caracas. The Trump administration last year threw its support behind opposition leader Guaidó, who has been recognized as Venezuela's legitimate president by 60 nations pledging to oust Maduro.

Guaidó blames Maduro for the once wealthy nation's economic and social collapse, while the socialist leader, who is wanted in the U.S. on narcoterrorism charges, says Washington is using Guaidó to steal the nation's vast oil wealth.

Medina Roa said that while Maduro may be looking to negotiate a political deal with the U.S. for the Green Berets' release, authorities don't need to trample further on Venezuela's constitution to achieve their goals.

"It's a perversion of justice to violate their constitutional rights for future political gain," said Medina Roa.

—
Goodman reported from Miami

After MAC surrenders to pandemic, will other leagues follow?

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

In many ways, the Mid-American Conference has little in common with Power Five leagues that first come to mind when fans think of major college football.

There are no 75,000-seat stadiums in the MAC. Million-dollar per year coaches are rare. In a typical season, NFL scouts might find one or two potential first-round draft picks playing at the 12 MAC schools that dot the Midwest. The MAC's biggest games — #MACTion, if you will — are often played on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Its television deal with ESPN pays per year only a few million more than the \$9 million Clemson pays coach Dabo Swinney.

Still, the MAC is one of 10 conferences that competes in the NCAA's highest level of football, and Saturday it became the first of those to surrender to the coronavirus pandemic and cancel the fall sports season.

So is the MAC an anomaly, done in by its small budgets or is this a dire sign of things to come in college football?

"I won't try to judge what other folks are doing," MAC Commissioner Jon Steinbrecher said. "I know

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we're all in the same place. They all have their advisers. They're going to make judgments based on the information they are receiving."

Not long after the MAC announced it would explore second-semester seasons for all fall sports, including soccer and volleyball, the Big Ten made its own announcement that seemed ominous given the timing.

Tapping the brakes on football's preseason, the Big Ten told its schools that until further notice full contact practices cannot begin. All teams will remain in the first two days of what is known as the "acclimatization period," working out in just helmets. The first Big Ten games of the season are scheduled for Sept. 5.

"As we have consistently stated, we will continue to evaluate daily, while relying on our medical experts, to make the best decisions possible for the health, safety and wellness of our student-athletes," the Big Ten said in a statement.

The MAC's schools were facing a significant financial burden by trying to maintain costly COVID-19 protocols, while also dealing with the uncertainty that campuses can be opened safely.

A move to the spring, however, could also be budget-buster if it means less revenue from the ESPN deal, which pays each school about \$1 million per year, and football ticket sales. The MAC also shares about \$90 million per year in College Football Playoff money with four other conferences.

"It would be naive to say that you don't give thought and consideration to what the financial ramifications of any decision are, but this was a health and well-being decision first and foremost," Steinbrecher said. "As we sit here today we don't know what this will mean financially and how the rest of the fall plays out."

Steinbrecher said the decision affects only fall sports, not basketball or others that begin in the second semester such as baseball, softball and lacrosse.

He added the decision was unanimous among the membership. Northern Illinois athletic director Sean Frazier, supported by NIU President Lisa Freeman, has been a vocal advocate of delaying the season.

"No one wants to have football or sports more than me," said Frazier, who played football at Alabama in the late 1980s. "Football gave me all the opportunities I have today, but I can't do it at the expense of people's lives."

Eastern Michigan athletic director Scott Wetherbee said he has been feeling a sense of inevitability for two weeks about the MAC canceling fall football, but can't predict whether this decision trickles up to other conferences.

"Could it? Certainly. There's certainly a narrative out there that could happen," Wetherbee said. "No, it wouldn't shock me if some followed suit. In fact, it would shock me if some didn't."

NCAA chief medical officer Brian Hainline made clear that even though plans for the football season have been adjusted to accommodate potential COVID-19 disruptions like the ones Major League Baseball has had, they are all still aspirational.

"Almost everything would have to be perfectly aligned to continue moving forward," Hainline said Friday during the NCAA's weekly video chat on social media.

As the Power Five conferences re-worked their schedules to play exclusively or mostly within their conferences, another of the MAC's revenue streams dried up.

MAC schools, with athletic budgets in the \$30 million range, rely heavily on payouts from road games against power conference teams. Kent State alone had more than \$5 million in so-called guarantee games canceled. Whether they can be recouped and when is still to be determined. Without that revenue, the strain became too great of trying to keep players and staff safe during a pandemic.

"Certainly there was a cost attached to it," Wetherbee said. "But as a league we were prepared to do it."

The move to try spring football has already been going on in the second tier of Division I.

Nine of 13 conferences that play in the Championship Subdivision, have postponed fall football seasons. The first was the Ivy League in early July.

Now it's the MAC, which was among the first conferences to limit fan access to its basketball tournament in March as concerns for the virus began to soar across the country. On March 12, the MAC was among many conferences to call off their tournaments hours before the NCAA canceled all of March Madness.

"If you told me in March we'd be here today," Steinbrecher said, "I'd never have believed it"

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <http://www.westwoodonepodcasts.com/pods/ap-top-25-college-football-podcast/>

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Schools face big virus test as students return to classroom

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

Reopening schools is easy. Keeping them open will be the hard part.

As educators prepare to welcome students back to class for the first time in months, schools' ability to quickly identify and contain coronavirus outbreaks before they get out of hand will be put to the test in thousands of districts around the country.

Newly reopened schools in Mississippi, Indiana and Georgia have already reported infections just days into the academic year, triggering virus protocols that include swiftly isolating infected students, tracing their contacts and quarantining people they exposed.

"It doesn't matter if you open schools in July, like we did, or if you open in August, September or October. All schools are going to have to deal with the issue of positive COVID-19 test results," said Lee Childress, superintendent of Corinth School District in Mississippi, where more than 100 students are quarantined at home after being exposed to a handful of infected classmates.

Schools are trying to mitigate the risk of transmission by spreading desks apart, serving meals in the classroom and keeping groups of students together throughout the day. Many schools — but not all — will require students and staff to wear masks, which health experts say is critical to cutting down on spread.

Administrators say it might be difficult to control the mixing and mingling that happens at every school. Asymptomatic carriers could silently spread the virus to many others. A student might not remember every contact, or be reluctant to tell the truth because that would mean forcing friends into quarantine.

Contact tracing might prove difficult "when you have that many students and they have multiple contacts inside of a building," said Dallas schools chief Michael Hinojosa.

Schools are reopening as new infections run at about 54,000 a day in the U.S. While that's down from a peak of well over 70,000 in the second half of July, cases are rising in nearly 20 states, and deaths are climbing in most of them.

In Indiana, where case numbers and the positivity rate have been rising, a student showed up to class outside Indianapolis before getting the results of a virus test. Greenfield-Central Junior High soon learned he was positive.

It was the first day of school.

"We felt like we were at a good place to start school and then, through no fault of our own, a kid comes to school who shouldn't have been there," Superintendent Harold Olin said, acknowledging "uncomfortable" conversations with parents whose children then had to be quarantined.

Because it was the school system's first case, Olin himself grabbed a tape measure and headed to the infected student's classroom to figure out who was seated nearby so they could be notified of their potential exposure.

Jason Martin's son, Houston, who attends seventh grade at Greenfield-Central, was among those forced to learn remotely for 14 days.

"Clearly, he's disappointed," Martin said. But the school "responded pretty well from a bonehead parent making a decision to send their kid to school knowing they have a pending COVID test result."

The question of whether an infected student or staffer should trigger an automatic shutdown has divided school officials.

New York City's public school system, the largest in the U.S., says it will automatically shutter classrooms or buildings for 14 days at a time, depending on the severity and circumstances of an outbreak. In hard-hit Texas, school systems in Houston and Dallas say they will close a building for up to five days if a student

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or staffer tests positive, to allow for cleaning and to give contact tracers time to do their work.

It's too risky to try to keep a school open while officials figure out who might have been exposed, Hinojosa said.

"Until there's a vaccine, just be prepared to have these rolling shutdowns," he said.

Others administrators say they will try to keep schools open during an outbreak, counting on quick action to keep a lid on it.

In Pennsylvania, the Bethlehem Area School District intends to keep classrooms open if there's a confirmed case. "One closure decision can lead to a potentially crippling and precedent-setting domino effect of closures throughout the school district," the district says on its website.

Dr. Ibukun Akinboyo, a pediatric infectious diseases specialist at Duke University, said even the best plans for reopening and responding to sick students and staff are going to run into trouble if there's a high level of community spread.

"Whatever is happening in the community will likely play out in the schools as well," she said.

In Mississippi, where more than 20% of virus tests have been coming back positive, at least eight students and one staff member in Corinth have tested positive since school resumed last week. District officials used classroom seating charts to determine who needed to be quarantined.

The tally through Friday: 122 people.

Nurses, administrators and teachers have worked together to identify the infected students' close contacts — anyone who was within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes. But at some point, contact tracing ceases to be practical, and a school might have to close, Childress said.

"I think if you have a large number, the process could quickly become unmanageable, and that would be something that we would know when we see it," he said.

Joel Barnes and his wife are rethinking their decision to send their four kids back to Corinth schools after their son was exposed at the high school. They are awaiting the results of his virus test.

"We expected there to be some cases of COVID, but we're honestly surprised that it happened so quickly and has spread to so many so rapidly," said Barnes, who has lung and nerve damage from a car accident and worries about contracting the virus. "Now it's taken off."

The couple have pulled two of their children from school in favor of remote lessons.

"In hindsight, we wish we'd gone virtual from the start," he said.

Joseph Allen, who directs a program at the Harvard University School of Public Health focused on healthy buildings, said masking, contact tracing and quarantining are all important — but so is proper ventilation and air filtration, which Allen said too many districts are ignoring.

Small, inexpensive steps like opening windows, equipping classrooms with box fans and portable air purifiers, and holding classes outside can make a big difference in keeping the virus at bay, even if an infected student or teacher shows up, Allen said.

"We need to get a bit more creative with schools," he said. "If we don't do those upfront things, we're going to have cases."

Rubinkam reported from northeastern Pennsylvania. Leah Willingham, a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative, contributed to this story from Jackson, Mississippi. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

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

Belarus' leader faces toughest challenge yet in Sunday vote

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — After 26 years in office, the authoritarian leader of Belarus is facing the toughest

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challenge yet as he runs for a sixth term.

Discontent over a worsening economy and the government's dismissive response to the coronavirus pandemic has helped fuel the country's largest opposition rallies since Alexander Lukashenko became its first and only elected president following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Rumblings among the ruling elite and a bitter rift with Russia, Belarus's main sponsor and ally, compound the reelection challenge facing the 65-year-old former state farm director on Sunday.

Lukashenko, who once acquired the nickname "Europe's last dictator" in the West for his relentless crackdowns on dissent, has made it clear he won't hesitate to again, if necessary, use force to quash any attempt by his opponents to protest the results of the presidential election.

On Saturday evening, police arrested at least 10 people as hundreds of opposition supporters drove through the center of Minsk, the capital, waving flags and brandishing clenched-fist victory signs from the vehicles' windows.

Election officials barred the president's two main prospective rivals from what is now a five-person race. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, a 37-year-old former teacher and the wife of a jailed opposition blogger, has managed to draw strong support, with tens of thousands flocking to her campaign rallies.

The head of her campaign, Maria Moroz, was detained Saturday on charges of taking part in unauthorized protests and is likely to remain jailed until after the election, said Tsikhanouskaya's spokeswoman Anna Krasulina. It was not immediately clear what protests the charge referred to.

Krasulina later was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying Tsikhanouskaya decided to leave her home and spend the night elsewhere because of concerns about her security following Moroz's arrest and the apparent detention of another staff member.

In an earlier interview with The Associated Press, Tsikhanouskaya described herself as a "symbol of change."

"It was brewing inside for more than 20 years," Tsikhanouskaya said. "We were afraid all that time and no one dared to say a word. Now people vote for a symbol of change."

Tsikhanouskaya has crisscrossed the country, tapping public frustration with Lukashenko's swaggering response to the pandemic and the country's stagnating Soviet-style economy.

The president has dismissed the coronavirus as "psychosis" and refused to introduce any restrictions to stem the outbreak, suggesting that Belarusians protect themselves against the disease with a daily shot of vodka, visits to sauna and hard work in the fields.

"They were telling us that the virus doesn't exist and dismissed it as 'psychosis' while tens of thousands of Belarusians have got sick," said Diana Golubovich, 54, a lawyer who attended Tsikhanouskaya's rally in Brest, a city on the border with Poland. "Suddenly everyone realized that the social-oriented state that Lukashenko was boasting about doesn't exist."

Belarus, a country of 9.5 million people, has reported more than 68,500 confirmed virus cases and 580 deaths in the pandemic. Critics have accused the authorities of manipulating the figures to downplay the death toll.

Lukashenko announced last month that he had been infected with the virus but had no COVID-19 symptoms and recovered quickly, allegedly thanks to doing sports. He defended his handling of the outbreak, saying that a lockdown would have doomed the nation's weakened economy.

Belarus still has sustained a severe economic blow after its leading exports customer, Russia, went into a pandemic-induced recession and other foreign markets shrank. Before the coronavirus, the country's state-controlled economy already had been stalled for years, stoking public frustration.

"Lukashenko lacks a plan to modernize the country. He has taken political freedoms away, and now he is depriving people of a chance for economic growth," said Valery Tsepka, a former Belarusian ambassador to the United States who planned to challenge Lukashenko for the presidency but fled to Russia with his children last month to avoid imminent arrest. "That is the main reason behind protests."

When the presidential campaign began, authorities cracked down on the opposition with a renewed vigor. More than 1,300 protest participants have been detained since May, according to the Viasna human

rights center.

Standing outside the Minsk Tractor Plant, one worker spoke about his low salary, rising prices and "no glimpse of hope" in Belarus.

"No one trusts the government's promises any more," said Anton Rubankevich, 46, who makes the equivalent of \$480 a month. "If this president stays, we will continue falling into a pit."

Political observers say the election campaign also exposed divisions among the Belarusian elite as some of its members entered politics for the first time.

Along with former ambassador Tsepkalov, the head of a major Russia-controlled bank contemplated running against Lukashenko. The well-connected potential rival, Viktor Babariko, was jailed in May on money laundering and tax evasion charges that he has rejected as politically driven.

In what the political opposition and independent observers regarded as an attempt to shore up the incumbent's sagging support, Belarusian authorities last week arrested 33 Russian military contractors and charged them with plans to stage "mass riots."

The arrest of the Russians marked an unprecedented spike in tensions between neighboring Belarus and Russia.

When Russia and Belarus signed a union agreement in 1996, Lukashenko aspired to use it to eventually lead a unified state as the successor to Russia's ailing president, Boris Yeltsin. The tables turned after Vladimir Putin became Russian president in 2000; the Belarusian leader began resisting what he saw as a Kremlin push for control over Belarus.

Alexander Klaskovsky, an independent political expert based in Minsk, said he thinks the Kremlin hopes the stormy election campaign in Belarus will help erode Lukashenko's grip on power and make him more receptive to a closer integration of the two countries.

"Moscow is interested not in Lukashenko's ouster, but his maximal weakening so that he comes out of that campaign with undermined legitimacy, spoiled relations with the West and the economy in a poor shape," Klaskovsky said. "A weakened and emaciated Lukashenko would be a gift for Moscow."

While election officials are likely to declare Lukashenko the winner by a landslide, his problems will not end with the vote.

"It will be about 80% of the vote for Lukashenko, so that his entourage doesn't think that the leader has grown weaker," he predicted. "The government has enough resources and brute force to keep the power and suppress protests, but it lacks the answer to the main question about the path of Belarus' development. Lukashenko will undoubtedly win, but it will be a Pyrrhic victory."

Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine again tests negative for coronavirus

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Report for America/Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The fourth COVID-19 test result for Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine came back negative Saturday after he received conflicting positive and negative results two days before, ahead of a scheduled meeting with President Trump.

The governor and first lady, Fran DeWine, were tested at Ohio State University "out of an abundance of caution" following a rollercoaster day Thursday that began with DeWine receiving a positive test result followed by two negatives. The governor announced the negative results on Twitter on Saturday afternoon, thanking "everyone who sent along good wishes."

The Republican governor had to take a COVID-19 test Thursday morning in Cleveland as part of White House protocol for anyone scheduled to come in contact with the president. DeWine was administered a rapid point-of-care antigen test at a mobile testing site facilitated by the Republican National Committee, according to DeWine spokesperson Dan Tierney.

DeWine then headed to meet Trump at the airport to greet him.

"I was fully expecting to see the president that morning," DeWine said in a press conference Friday. "But

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as we were driving to the airport to meet him, I was called and told about my positive result.”

DeWine was immediately driven back to Columbus, where the governor, his wife and four members of his staff took another test, a polymerase chain reaction test, at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

That test is the most commonly used test in the country and is considered the gold standard by medical professionals. More than 1.3 million Ohioans have been tested with it.

The result were checked twice, both negative.

The conflicting results underscore the problems with both kinds of tests and are bound to spur more questions about them. Many people in the U.S. can't get lab results on the more accurate version for weeks, rather than the few hours it took the governor to find out.

Farnoush Amiri is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

Fury over Beirut blast fuels protests, clashes with police

By SARAH EL DEEB and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Public fury over this week's massive explosion in Beirut took a new turn Saturday night as protesters stormed government institutions and clashed for hours with security forces, who responded with heavy volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets.

One police officer was killed and dozens of people hurt in the confrontations, which played out in streets that were wrecked from Tuesday's blast at the port that devastated much of the city and killed nearly 160 people. Dozens were still missing and nearly 6,000 people injured.

The disaster has taken popular anger to a new level in a country already reeling from an unprecedented economic and financial crisis and near bankruptcy.

Activists who called for the protest set up symbolic nooses at Beirut's Martyrs' Square to hang politicians whose corruption and negligence they blame for the explosion.

The blast was fueled by thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate that had been improperly stored at the port for more than six years. Apparently set off by a fire, the explosion was by far the biggest in Lebanon's troubled history and caused an estimated \$10 billion to 15 billion in damage, according to Beirut's governor. It also damaged 6,200 buildings and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless.

“Resignation or hang,” read a banner held by protesters, who also planned to hold a symbolic funeral for the dead. Some nooses were also set up along the bridges outside the port.

Khodr Ghadir, 23, said the noose was for everyone who has been in power for the last 30 years. “What happened was a spark for people to return to the streets.”

A placard listed the names of the dead, printed over a photo of the blast's enormous pink mushroom cloud. “We are here for you,” it read.

Dozens of protesters stormed the buildings of government ministries and the headquarters of the banking association, turning their rage to state and financial institutions.

Earlier Saturday, the protesters entered the empty buildings of the foreign ministry, declaring it a headquarters of their movement. Others then fanned out to enter the economy and energy ministries, some walking away with documents claiming they will reveal the extent of corruption that permeates the government. Some also entered the environment ministry.

Many protesters said they now had only their homes and even those are no longer safe. They blamed the government's inefficiency and political division for the country ills, including the recent disaster that hit almost every home.

The violence unfolded on the eve of an international conference co-hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres aimed at bringing donors together to supply emergency aid and equipment to the Lebanese population.

In a televised speech Saturday evening, Prime Minister Hassan Diab said the only solution was to hold

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early elections, which he planned to propose in a draft bill. He called on all political parties to put aside their disagreements and said he was prepared to stay in the post for two months to allow time for politicians to work on structural reforms.

The offer is unlikely to soothe the escalating fury on the street.

In central Beirut, some protesters threw stones at security forces, who then released heavy tear gas. Near parliament, protesters tried to jump over barriers that closed the road leading to the legislature. The protesters later set on fire a truck that was fortifying barriers on a road leading to parliament.

At least 238 people were hurt in the clashes, and 63 of them needed to be taken to the hospital, according to the Red Cross. Several protesters were carried away with blood running down their faces. At one point, gunfire could be heard, but its source was not immediately clear.

The country's ruling class, made up mostly of former civil war-era leaders, is blamed for incompetence and mismanagement that contributed to Tuesday's explosion.

"The current leaders' bloodline needs to end. We want the death of the old Lebanon and the birth of a new one," said Tarek, a 23-year-old university student who had prepared a mix of water and paint in a bottle to throw at the police. No peaceful protest would bring about change, he said.

Sandy Chlela, a 35-year old from Kousba in the north, disagreed with Tarek. She said she had no illusion that the protests would bring change, but the demonstrations were a necessary expression of anger and puts some pressure on the politicians.

"I know it will not change much but we can't act as if nothing happened," the computer programmer said.

The state, which is investigating the cause of the explosion, has been conspicuously absent from the ravaged streets of Beirut, with almost zero involvement in the cleanup. Instead, teams of young volunteers with brooms have fanned out to sweep up broken glass and reopen roads.

The U.S embassy in Beirut tweeted that "the Lebanese people have suffered too much and deserve to have leaders who listen to them and change course to respond to popular demands for transparency and accountability."

Documents that surfaced after the blast showed that officials had been repeatedly warned for years that the presence of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate at the port posed a grave danger, but no one acted to remove it. Officials have been blaming one another, and 19 people have been detained, including the port's chief, the head of Lebanon's customs department and his predecessor.

The protests came as senior officials from the Middle East and Europe visited in a show of solidarity with the tiny country that is still in shock.

The president of the European Council, Charles Michel, arrived in Beirut for a brief visit. Turkey's vice president and the country's foreign minister met Aoun and said that Ankara was ready to help rebuild Beirut's port and evacuate some of the wounded to Turkey for treatment.

At the site of the blast, workers continued searching for dozens of missing people.

Bison, wild horses bring biodiversity to ex-army base

By KAREL JANICEK Associated Press

MILOVICE, Czech Republic (AP) — Wild horses, bison and other big-hoofed animals once roamed freely in much of Europe. Now they are transforming a former military base outside the Czech capital in an ambitious project to improve biodiversity.

Where occupying Soviet troops once held exercises, massive bovines called tauros and other heavy beasts now munch on the invasive plants that took over the base years ago.

The animals are turning the former Milovice military base 35 kilometers (22 miles) northeast of Prague into a miniature version of the steppe that once rolled across the European continent.

With some species wiped out in the wild, the animals now have the chance to live together again in relative freedom. Conservationists deployed them at Milovice five years ago. Now they hope to enlarge the sanctuary by one third to 360 hectares (890 acres) this year.

The animals' task is to improve biodiversity among local plants by eating invasive ones while saving en-

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dangered species, said Dalibor Dostal, the director of European Wildlife, an organization behind the project. "It's a miraculous change," Dostal said. "Nobody expected that the whole process would go ahead so fast and the area would change so much in just a few years."

He said the large animals are as key to preserving the ecosystem "as trees are for forests."

David Storch, an environment professor at Prague's Charles University who was not involved in the project, agreed. He said the project is "absolutely unique" because it shows that nature can be preserved not only by protecting it from human activities but also by actively shaping it with big-hoofed animals.

The selection of the animals was based on the experiences of conservationists in various countries.

Domestic animals such as sheep were ruled out because they would feed on endangered plants as well. Mechanical cutting of the invasive plants was deemed too costly.

While invasive grasses are a delicacy for wild horses, European bison and tauros prefer bushes, creating an ideal partnership.

The invasive plants began to grow after Soviet troops, who stayed on after the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of then-Czechoslovakia, finally withdrew from the base in 1991.

Former military bases are considered places with great biodiversity, the conservationists said, because soldiers' activities simulated the impacts of hoofed animals.

The Czech project includes tauros that were transferred from the Netherlands, where a cross-breeding program aimed at coming close to the original species, the aurochs, started in 2008. That wild ancestor of today's cattle became extinct in the 17th century.

Wild horses were transported from Britain's Exmoor National Park, while European bison came from several reserves in Poland.

The project now has herds of 27 European bison, 25 tauros and some 70 wild horses.

The animals move freely on the pastures on the former military base year-round. With water sources available, they are able to care for themselves, even in winter.

The landscape quickly saw signs of transformation. Flowers started to dot the area as early as the second year of the project as the large herbivores reduced the tall, dense invasive grasses. Today, the whole area changes colors over the course of the year, depending on what flowers are in bloom.

The most precious is the star gentian, also known as a cross gentian. The blue flower is now flourishing at Milovice more than anywhere else in the country.

The former base also has become abundant in other animals and insects. The Adonis blue, a butterfly, has been spotted there for the first time since 1967.

"If we give nature a chance, if we give it time and space, it can take care of many things," said Miloslav Jirku, a biologist with the Czech Academy of Sciences who has been involved in the project from the start.

"At the very beginning, I thought that lots of species that used to be here in the 1990s would have to be returned artificially. Today, a number of them are already here without us doing anything about it," he said.

This version corrects in the summary and the story that the massive beasts are not aurochs, which are extinct.

Follow all AP coverage of climate change and green issues at <https://apnews.com/Climate>.

Italy approves outpatient use for abortion pill

ROME (AP) — Women in Italy can now use the abortion pill on an outpatient basis rather than be hospitalized to terminate a pregnancy.

Italy's health minister, Roberto Speranza, announced the change in guidelines in a tweet Saturday. He said it was based on scientific evidence and was "an important step forward" in line with Italy's 1978 law legalizing abortion.

Previously, women in Italy had to be admitted to the hospital to take mifepristone, which terminates a pregnancy by causing the embryo to detach from the uterine wall.

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Women's groups and pro-choice advocates lobbying for outpatient use had argued that the hospitalization requirement discouraged use of the drug, given the high levels of conscientious objection to abortion within the Italian health care service.

Over the objections of the Catholic Church, Italy in 1978 legalized abortion and in 2009 approved the use of the abortion pill through the seventh week of gestation.

Speranza's deputy, Sandra Zampa, has been quoted as saying it was time to review the guidelines given that a decade of experience had showed the drug could be safely administered without hospitalization. The new guidelines say it can be used up to the ninth week.

Conservative lawmaker Giorgia Meloni blasted the new guidelines as a step back for women, saying the "do-it-yourself" abortion pill taken outside a hospital setting would deprive women of necessary psychological and medical care. In a statement reported by the newspaper of the Italian bishop's conference, Meloni said it would make women "experience a difficult and dangerous procedure in solitude."

The Latest: Beirut protesters enter government buildings

BEIRUT (AP) — The latest on the explosion in Beirut (all times local):

9:40 p.m.

Dozens of Lebanese protesters have stormed the buildings of a number of government ministries and the headquarters of the country's banking association channeling their rage against state and financial institutions after the huge blast that killed over 160.

Earlier on Saturday, protesters entered the empty buildings of the Foreign Ministry and declared it the headquarters of their protest movement. Others fanned out to enter the Economy and Energy ministries, and some walked away with documents claiming they will reveal the extent of corruption that permeates the government. Some also entered the Environment Ministry. Meanwhile, dozens of protesters broke into the banking association headquarters.

Saturday's rally was in response to the devastating explosion at the Port of Beirut on Tuesday that killed nearly 160 people and wounded 6,000, defacing the capital's coastline. Protesters demanded justice for the victims and wanted to hold the government accountable, complaining that years of corruption and mismanagement have brought about the disaster.

Public anger had already been rising in Lebanon before the blast because of an unprecedented financial crisis in which the national currency lost 80% of its value. Banks imposed informal capital controls in a controversial effort to control the collapse of the pound and foreign currency flight. The dire conditions were deepened with rising power cuts and concerns that hospitals were facing severe shortages and financial troubles.

8:20 p.m.

French President Emmanuel Macron's office says an international conference on Sunday is aimed at bringing donors together to provide emergency aid and equipment to the Lebanese population.

Co-hosted by Macron and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the video conference will see the participation of U.S. President Donald Trump, Britain Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Jordan King Abdullah II, Egypt President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and other leaders from Russia, China and the European Union.

The money collected will be used to send emergency medical aid, equipment to help clear streets and rebuild schools and hospitals as well as to provide food for the civilian population, Macron's office said.

Macron, who was the first foreign leader to visit Beirut in the wake of the devastating explosion, promised the aid would not go into "corrupt hands" but to non-governmental organizations and the civilian population.

France is Lebanon's former colonial power.

7:15 p.m.

A group of Lebanese protesters including retired army officers have stormed the Foreign Ministry building in the capital Beirut as part of protests following the massive explosion this week.

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The protesters said Saturday the Foreign Ministry would be the headquarters for a "revolution" and called on the current government to resign.

Retired army officer Sami Ramah read a statement on the building's steps after dozens of protesters pushed their way into the building. "This authority must step down," he said.

Protesters raised flags with the image of a fist that has come to symbolize nationwide anti-government protests.

Some of the nearly 200 protesters entered the building and burned a few documents and pictures of the Lebanese President. It was not clear what the documents were.

Rage against the government spiked after the Beirut port explosion Tuesday that killed nearly 160 people and injured 6,000 while leaving much of the coastline mangled.

Protesters gathered in central Beirut clashed with security forces.

1:55 p.m.

Syria's state TV says 43 Syrian citizens were killed in this week's blast in Beirut.

The TV quotes the Syrian embassy in Lebanon as saying that the number is not final as search operations for dozens of missing are still ongoing.

Lebanon is home to more than a million Syrians many of them refugees who fled civil war in their country.

A Lebanese health ministry official said on Saturday that the blast killed 154 people, including 21 bodies who have not been identified. He added that 45 people are still missing.

1:50 p.m.

The president of a Christian party in Lebanon says the group's three legislators in parliament will resign in protest against the government over this week's deadly blast.

Samy Gemayel made his comments on Saturday during the funeral of a senior official with the Kataeb Party who was killed in Tuesday's blast that destroyed Beirut's port and damaged the capital.

The Kataeb party is part of the opposition and is known for its harsh criticism of the government that is backed by the militant Hezbollah group and its allies.

Lebanon's parliament has 128-members and some legislators have said they will resign in protest over widespread corruption.

Legislator Marwan Hamadeh resigned earlier this week in protest after the blast occurred.

1:15 p.m.

Turkey's Vice President Fuat Oktay says Ankara is ready to help Lebanon rebuild Beirut's port and send ambulance planes to evacuate some of the wounded for treatment in Turkish hospitals.

Oktay spoke on Saturday to reporters after meeting Lebanese President Michel Aoun. He added that a Turkish search team is working at the port that was destroyed in a massive explosion on Tuesday.

Oktay said Turkey has already sent two field hospitals, 400 tons of wheat and food products. He added that his government is ready to use the Turkish port of Mersin to receive products that can be later sent to Lebanon in smaller ships.

Oktay arrived earlier in the day with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

12:40 p.m.

The Dutch foreign ministry says that the wife of the Netherlands' ambassador to Lebanon has died of injuries she sustained in the massive blast that hit Beirut earlier this week.

Hedwig Waltmans-Molier died Saturday morning at age 55. She worked for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs alongside her husband, Jan Waltmans. The couple had two adult children.

The ministry says that Waltmans-Molier, who worked in the human resources department of the embassy, "was standing in the living room next to Jan and by sheer bad luck was hit by the explosion."

The family had recently returned to Beirut after a holiday.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Stef Blok and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Sigrid Kaag expressed their condolences to the family and paid tribute to Waltmans-Molier in a joint statement.

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12:05 p.m.

French President Emmanuel Macron's office has confirmed that an international aid conference will be organized on Sunday to support Lebanon after the deadly Beirut blast.

The videoconference, scheduled on Sunday at 12:00 GMT, will be co-hosted by France and the United Nations, Macron's office said.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday said that he would participate in the conference that will also include other international leaders.

Macron, who walked through the destroyed streets of Beirut during a visit to Lebanon on Thursday, promised that aid would not go into "corrupt hands" but to NGOs and the civilian population.

The French president was the first foreign leader to visit in the wake of the devastating explosion. France is the former colonial power in Lebanon.

11:45 a.m.

Senior officials from the Middle East and Europe have started arriving in Lebanon in a show of solidarity with the tiny country that suffered a deadly blast this week which caused large-scale damage to the capital Beirut.

The first to arrive Saturday was Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the chief of the 22-member Arab League as well as Turkey's vice president and foreign minister.

The visits come as the country braced for large anti-government protests amid popular anger against Lebanon's political elite.

The country's ruling class, made up mostly of former civil war-era leaders, is blamed for widespread corruption, incompetence and mismanagement that contributed to Tuesday's explosion, in which 154 people were killed, more than 5,000 wounded and the country's largest port and nearby areas were destroyed.

The devastating blast was triggered by thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate stored at the port which was apparently set off by a fire.

Census Bureau drop-outs complicate door-knocking efforts

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Bob Garick was looking forward to being a field supervisor during the door-knocking phase of the 2020 census, but as the number of new coronavirus cases in Florida shot up last month, he changed his mind.

With widespread home visits for the 2020 census set to begin next week, the Census Bureau is losing workers like Garick to pandemic fears. The attrition could complicate the bureau's plans to ramp up efforts to reach the hardest to count communities, including minorities and immigrants, on a shortened schedule.

"Before, I thought it was my civic duty, to do my part, but now it's like the health concerns are too great," said Garick, 54, a software development director who is between jobs.

Door-knockers started heading out last month in six areas of the country in a test-run of the most labor-intensive part of the 2020 census, and their ranks have increased with each passing week as more locations were added. But next week, the full army of 500,000 census-takers will be in the field for the first time, knocking on the doors of more than a third of U.S. households that haven't yet responded to the once-a-decade head count.

The census helps determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed and how many congressional seats each state gets.

Bureau officials acknowledge that they've had door-knockers, also known as enumerators, come to training but then not show up for work. The door-knockers wear cloth face masks and come equipped with hand sanitizer and cellphones.

"We are seeing folks who are a little hesitant because of the COVID environment," Deborah Stempowski, the Census Bureau's assistant director for decennial programs, told a conference of data users last week.

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Other non-COVID factors are also playing a role. Some enumerators are uncomfortable with the technology, as iPhones have replaced the clipboards of censuses past. The pandemic has forced training to be held mostly online and there's less in-person interaction with supervisors should enumerators need help, Stempowski said.

Concerns about attracting door-knockers forced the Census Bureau to raise its hourly wage: Enumerators in the highest-paying cities can now earn \$30 an hour. Based on historical trends, the Census Bureau's planning models assume 20% of door-knockers won't show up for training, but the bureau's media office said it's too early to say what attrition rates are this year.

A census taker in Orlando who also was a door-knocker for the 2010 census says the training this time has been quite different. She asked not to be identified for fear of losing her job.

A decade ago, she had 40 hours of training with other census takers in a class where they practiced face-to-face, helping each other develop techniques to persuade reluctant people to answer the census questionnaire.

"We had a lot of practice with each other," she said. "A lot of people whose doors you knock on are reluctant to talk to you, and some people don't want to give any information to the government. If they've never done it before, it's hard to persuade and convince people."

For the 2020 census, her training has been about half that time and primarily online because of the pandemic, though she was required to have an in-person meeting with her supervisor.

Census Bureau director Steven Dillingham said in prepared remarks to a House committee last week that the bureau has 3 million applicants available, and that more than 900,000 job offers have been accepted. But he acknowledged that the number of door-knockers deployed to the field in the test-run was lower than expected, and that offices used for fingerprinting and meeting with census takers have had to close at the last minute because of coronavirus conditions.

"This large number of offers is needed to cover attrition," Dillingham said. "Unlike prior censuses, concern with the pandemic is estimated to increase the number of no shows to training sessions, as well as the number of employees who complete training but decline to show up for work."

The Census Bureau also is recruiting more workers in specific areas of the country, and regional offices are training replacement enumerators on an ongoing basis, he said.

In a joint statement, the bureau and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday that participation in 2020 Census interviews presents a low risk of virus transmission since census takers will be wearing masks, maintaining 6 feet distance and conducting interviews outside as much as possible.

The statistical agency is dealing with a shorter schedule for door-knocking than it anticipated earlier this summer. Facing pandemic-related delays in April, the Census Bureau had asked Congress for delays in handing over data used for redrawing congressional and legislative districts, and it pushed back wrapping up its data collection through door-knocking or self-responses from the end of July to the end of October.

The request passed the Democratic-controlled House, but it's not going anywhere in the Republican-controlled Senate. The inaction coincides with a memorandum President Donald Trump issued last month to try to exclude people living in the U.S. illegally from being part of the process for redrawing congressional districts.

The lack of action is forcing the Census Bureau to turn in numbers used for redrawing congressional districts by the end of the year, instead of by the end of next April as requested. To meet the year-end deadline, the agency announced this week it would finish data collection at the end of September instead of the end of October. Some census officials had previously said they would be unable to meet the end-of-the-year deadline.

When Garick told his supervisors that he was withdrawing from the job, they seemed unfazed, he said. It seemed as if they had heard the same thing many times before.

"I'm a little disappointed that I'm not going to do it, but it didn't seem like a wise move on my part," Garick said.

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

AP FACT CHECK: Trump's false push on preexisting conditions

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is teasing the possibility of executive action to require health insurance companies to cover preexisting medical conditions, something that he says “has never been done before.”

It's been done before.

People with such medical problems have health insurance protections because of President Barack Obama's health care law, which Trump is trying to dismantle.

A look at Trump's claim during a news conference Friday evening in Bedminster, New Jersey:

TRUMP: “Over the next two weeks, I'll be pursuing a major executive order requiring health insurance companies to cover all preexisting conditions for all customers. That's a big thing. I've always been very strongly in favor. ... This has never been done before.”

THE FACTS: No executive order is needed to protect people with preexisting medical conditions because “Obamacare” already does that and it's the law of the land. If Trump persuades the Supreme Court to overturn the Affordable Care Act as unconstitutional, it's unclear what degree of protection an executive order would offer in place of the law.

The Obama health law states that “a group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage may not impose any preexisting condition exclusion with respect to such plan or coverage.”

Other sections of the law act to bar insurers from charging more to people because of past medical problems and from canceling coverage, except in cases of fraud. In the past, there were horror stories of insurers canceling coverage because a patient had a recurrence of cancer.

It's dubious that any president could enact such protections through an executive order, or Obama would never have needed to go to Congress to get his health law passed. Likewise, President Bill Clinton could have simply used a presidential decree to enact his health plan, or major parts of it, after it failed to get through Congress.

“I can't imagine what authority the president could invoke to require insurers to cover preexisting conditions if the Supreme Court does throw the ACA out,” said Larry Levitt, executive vice president for health policy at the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.

“There is no magic wand you can wave to just make it so,” he said.

Levitt said to make coverage of preexisting conditions a reality, insurers would need to be barred as they are under Obamacare from placing limits on lifetime and annual benefit payments, and allow for uniform premiums for the sick and healthy. Also, subsidies have to be offered to encourage healthy people to enroll in plans so premiums are kept down.

Trump, who faces a tough reelection bid in November, did not provide details on his proposal. He's argued that Obama's law is too costly and ineffective and has been pledging since his 2016 campaign to replace it with a better plan.

Republicans were unable to muscle their replacement through Congress when they controlled the House and Senate in 2017 during Trump's first year. Various GOP bills would have offered a degree of protection for people with preexisting conditions, but the proposed safeguards were seen as less than what the law already provided. The general approach in the Republican legislation would have required people to maintain continuous coverage to avoid being turned down because of a preexisting condition.

Trump has frequently claimed he will always protect preexisting conditions despite evidence to the contrary and has even asserted falsely that he was the one who “saved” such protections.

One of Trump's alternatives to Obama's law — short-term health insurance, already in place — doesn't have to cover preexisting conditions. Another alternative: association health plans, which are oriented to small businesses and sole proprietors and do cover preexisting conditions. Neither of the two alternatives

appears to have made much difference in the market.

Democratic attacks on Republican efforts to repeal the health law and weaken preexisting condition protections proved successful in the 2018 midterms, when Democrats won back control of the House.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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Survivors of deadly India crash say plane swayed violently

By SUBRAMONEY IYER and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

KOCHI, India (AP) — The plane swayed violently as it approached a hilltop runway soaked by monsoon rain, and moments later the special return flight for Indians stranded abroad by the pandemic skidded off, nosedived and cracked in two, leaving 18 dead and more than 120 injured.

Among the injured on Friday night, at least 15 were in critical condition, said Abdul Karim, a senior police officer in southern Kerala state. The dead included both pilots of the Air India Express flight, the airline said in a statement, adding that the four cabin crew were safe.

The 2-year-old Boeing 737-800 flew from Dubai to Kozhikode, also called Calicut, in Kerala. There were 174 adult passengers, 10 infants, two pilots and four cabin crew on board.

In a telephone interview from his hospital bed, Renjith Panangad, a plumber who was returning home for the first time in three years after losing his job at a construction company in Dubai, said the plane swayed before the crash and everything went dark.

He said he followed other passengers who crawled their way out of the fuselage through the emergency exit.

"A lot of passengers were bleeding," said Panangad, who escaped without major injuries. "I still can't comprehend what happened. As I am trying to recall what happened, my body is shivering."

He said the pilot made a regular announcement before landing, and moments after the plane hit the runway, it nosedived.

"There was a big noise during the impact and people started screaming," he said.

As the rain stopped Saturday morning, searchers recovered a flight data recorder as the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau started work on the wreckage. Air India Express said its teams also reached Calicut to support and assist families of the victims.

The wreckage of the plane was resting below a flat hilltop, its nose crashed through a wall. The aircraft's fuselage was split in two and cables dangled from the wreckage and luggage and seats were strewn around.

A similar tragedy was narrowly avoided at the same airport a year ago, when an Air India Express flight suffered a tail strike upon landing. None of the 180 passengers on that flight was injured.

Kozhikode's 2,850-meter (9,350-foot) runway is on a flat hilltop with deep gorges on either side ending in a 34-meter (112-foot) drop.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep S. Puri said in a statement that the flight "overshot the runway in rainy conditions and went down" the slope, breaking into two pieces upon impact.

Questions dogging investigators would include not only the aircraft, weather and pilots but also the runway itself. Its end safety area was expanded in 2018 to accommodate wide-body aircraft.

The runway end safety area meets United Nations international civil aviation requirements, but the U.N. agency recommends a buffer that is 150 meters (492 feet) longer than that at Kozhikode airport, according to Harro Ranter, chief executive of the Aviation Safety Network online database.

The Press Trust of India news agency reported that the country's aviation regulator had sought an explanation from the director of the Kozhikode airport in 2019 on finding "various critical safety lapses," which included cracks on the runway, water stagnation and excessive rubber deposits.

In a tweet, Puri denied the allegations and said the flagged issues were "addressed and rectified."

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Officials from the aviation regulator said it was too early to tell at this point whether the accident was a result of a technical error or human error.

Dubai-based aviation consultant Mark Martin said annual monsoon conditions appeared to be a factor, though it was too early to be certain of the cause.

"Low visibility, wet runway, low cloud base, all leading to very poor braking action is what looks like led to where we are at the moment with this crash," Martin said, calling for the European Aviation Safety Agency and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to assist with the Indian government's investigation.

Kerala state Health Minister KK Shailaja asked local residents who joined the rescue effort to go into quarantine as a precautionary measure. The survivors were being tested for the virus, officials said.

The Air India Express flight was part of the Indian government's special repatriation mission to bring Indian citizens back to the country, officials said. All of the passengers were returning from the Gulf region, authorities said. Regular commercial flights have been halted in India because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The passenger manifest of the flight, a copy of which was seen by the AP, showed that a large number of passengers were stranded tourists and workers reuniting with their families after months away.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he was "pained by the plane accident in Kozhikode," and that he had spoken to Kerala's top elected official.

Air India Express is a subsidiary of Air India.

The worst air disaster in India was on Nov. 12, 1996, when a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight collided midair with a Kazakhstan Airlines Flight near Charki Dadri in Haryana state, killing all 349 on board the two planes.

Sheikh Saaliq reported from New Delhi.

Biden risks alienating young Black voters after race remarks

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden's controversial remarks about race this week risk alienating young Black voters who despise President Donald Trump but are not inspired by his Democratic rival.

When pressed by Errol Barnett of CBS News on whether he'd taken a cognitive test, Biden responded that the question was akin to asking the Black reporter if he would take a drug test to see if "you're taking cocaine or not? ... Are you a junkie?"

In a later interview with National Public Radio's Lulu Garcia-Navarro, Biden seemed to draw distinctions between Black and Hispanic populations in the U.S. "Unlike the African American community, with notable exceptions, the Latino community is an incredibly diverse community with incredibly different attitudes about different things," he told the Latina reporter.

He later walked back the comment.

Black voters as a whole delivered the Democratic nomination to Biden, powering his commanding win in the South Carolina primary, which rescued his floundering campaign. But that success was heavily dependent on older Black voters. In a general election where Democrats say no vote can be taken for granted, young Black activists and elected officials say this week's missteps could make it harder to get their vote.

"Trump is terrible, and he's a racist, and we have to get racists out of the White House. But then Biden keeps saying racist things," said Mariah Parker, a 28-year-old county commissioner in Athens, Georgia. "It doesn't make me feel much better that we actually will have an improvement for the Black community with one president over the other."

Most Black voters view Trump as someone who exacerbates racial tensions and are unlikely to support his campaign in large numbers. But those who sit out the presidential election could sway the outcome in closely contested states.

AP VoteCast data illustrates the generational divide Biden is confronting.

Across 17 states where AP VoteCast surveyed Democratic voters during the primary, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders won 60% of voters under 30 overall, to Biden's 19%. And while Biden was strongly supported by African American voters overall, Black voters under age 30 were slightly more likely to support Sanders

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than Biden, 44% to 38%.

A Washington Post-Ipsos poll conducted in June suggested that while Biden had majority support among Black voters aged 18-39, there was skepticism about Biden himself. Among Black Americans under age 40 that were polled, 32% said they didn't feel he was sympathetic to the problems of Black people. And 24% of respondents under 40 said they felt Biden is "biased" against Black people, in contrast to much lower percentages for middle-aged and senior respondents.

Part of the challenge for Biden, said activist Kristin Fulwylie Thomas, is the perception among young Black voters that he's too moderate to deliver on issues that are important to them. The 31-year-old managing director of Equal Ground, an Orlando-based group working to boost turnout among Black voters across Florida, said she hears this concern from voters across the state.

"What I'm seeing and what I'm hearing among young black voters is that Biden was not their first choice, so folks are not excited to vote for him this November," she said.

Every gaffe makes it harder for Biden to generate that excitement.

Michigan State Rep. Jewell Jones, 25, said that he's seen a number of Biden's comments on Black voters, along with his past support for the 1994 crime bill that contributed to mass incarceration of Black Americans, pop up on social media and raise questions among his peers.

"Young people are really holding people accountable these days," he said. "Anything that comes up that they think is questionable, they'll challenge."

Jones said the issue with young Black voters is "not necessarily skepticism about whether or not he's able to do the job."

"Young people today want to know, are politicians' hearts in the right place?" he said.

The Biden campaign says they're working hard to reach out to young Black voters, and point to events hosted by their young voter outreach coalition, League 46, as well as outreach geared specifically towards historically Black colleges and universities and Black sororities.

Pennsylvania State Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta, who is 30, pointed to Biden's clarification as a key difference between the former vice president and Trump.

"It's such a contrast to actually have a leader, and hopefully a president, that's going to hold himself to a high standard," he said.

Kenyatta, who has endorsed Biden, said he's spoken to the former vice president about issues affecting young people and that "his ability to listen and understand that, and then put forward policy that addresses those concerns is going to be pivotal to us."

Indeed, Biden has put out proposals focused on Black economic mobility, which include pledges to steer federal money and tax credits to small business and economic development programs for minority-owned firms and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

On criminal justice reform, he's called for a federal ban on police choke holds, national standards for police use of force, and a new federal police oversight commission. He's also embraced proposals to forgive some student loan debt and offer some free college.

But on a number of key issues being pushed by some young Black activists — like defunding or dismantling police forces, Medicare for All, and legalizing marijuana — Biden has thus far declined to embrace the most progressive policies.

Some of the enthusiasm gap has to do with a generational split on voting within the Black community that has little to do with Biden, said Leah Daughtry, a Black operative who has twice served as CEO of the Democratic National Convention.

"For my generation and older, voting was this thing that was this great privilege because we didn't always have it," she said, noting that at 55, she was part of the first generation of Black women to get the right to vote. For younger Black Americans, "they don't have the lived experience of not being able to."

Daughtry said that she was willing to give Biden "a pass" on his comments after listening to the full interview, but young voters might not be so forgiving.

"For young people — when they see the one quote it would appear to confirm to them, or solidify questions

in their mind about the vice president's intent and goals," she said. "And the best we can hope for is they will do further research. At worst you have some who will say it adds to their reasons for disillusionment."

Is France helping Lebanon, or trying to reconquer it?

By ANGELA CHARLTON and SARAH EL-DEEB undefined

PARIS (AP) — It was almost as if Emmanuel Macron forgot that Lebanon is no longer a French protectorate. Visiting explosion-ravaged Beirut this week, France's leader comforted distraught crowds, promised to rebuild the city and claimed that the blast pierced France's own heart. "France will never let Lebanon go," Macron said. "The heart of the French people still beats to the pulse of Beirut."

His critics denounced the overtures as a neocolonialist foray by a European leader seeking to restore sway over a troubled Middle Eastern land — and distract from mounting problems at home. A meme circulating online dubbed him Macron Bonaparte, a 21st century Emperor Napoleon.

But Macron's defenders — including desperate Beirut residents who called him "our only hope" — praised him for visiting gutted neighborhoods where Lebanese leaders fear to tread, and for trying to hold Lebanon's politicians accountable for the corruption and mismanagement blamed for Tuesday's deadly blast.

Macron's visit exposed France's central challenge as it prepares to host an international donors conference for Lebanon on Sunday: how to help a country in crisis, where French economic ties run deep, without interfering in its internal affairs.

"We are walking on the edge of a precipice. We have to aid, support and encourage the Lebanese people, but at the same time not give the impression that we want to establish a new protectorate, which would be completely stupid," said Jack Lang, a former French government minister who now heads the Arab World Institute in Paris. "We must find new, intelligent solutions to aid the Lebanese."

France's ties with Lebanon reach back at least to the 16th century, when the French monarchy negotiated with Ottoman rulers to protect Christians — and secure influence — in the region. By the time of the 1920-1946 French mandate, Lebanon already had a network of French schools and French speakers that survives to this day — along with France's cozy relationships with Lebanon's power brokers, including some accused of fueling its political and economic crisis.

A surprising online petition emerged this week asking France to temporarily restore its mandate, saying Lebanon's leaders have shown "total inability to secure and manage the country."

It's widely seen as an absurd idea — Macron himself told Beirut residents Wednesday that "it's up to you to write your history" — but 60,000 people have signed it, including members of France's 250,000-strong Lebanese diaspora and people in Lebanon who said it's a way to express their desperation and distrust of the political class.

Aside from a show of much-needed international support, many in Lebanon viewed Macron's visit as a way to secure financial assistance for a country wracked with debt.

The French leader also managed to bring the divided political class together, if briefly. In a rare scene, the heads of Lebanon's political factions — some of them still bitter enemies from the 1975-1990 civil war — appeared together at the Palais des Pins, the French embassy headquarters in Beirut, and filed out after meeting Macron.

But to many, the visit was seen as patronizing. Some lashed out at the petition and those celebrating "France, the tender mother."

One writer, Samer Frangieh, said Macron gathered the politicians as "schoolchildren," reprimanding them for failing to carry out their duties.

There were other, more subtle jabs against France's show of influence. While Macron was touring neighborhoods torn apart by the explosion, the health minister in the Hezbollah-backed government toured field hospitals donated by Iran and Russia, major power players in the region.

"I get the people who want the mandate. They have no hope," said Leah, an engineering student in Beirut who did not want her last name published out of concern for political repercussions. She spoke out strongly against the idea, and against those who see Macron as Lebanon's "savior."

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She said that risks worsening Lebanon's divisions, as Maronite Christians and French-educated Muslims embrace Macron while others lean away. "He hasn't resolved his issues with his country, with his people. How is he giving advice to us?" she asked.

In Paris, Macron's domestic political opponents from the far left to the far right warned the centrist leader against creeping neocolonialism, and extracting political concessions from Lebanon in exchange for aid. "Solidarity with Lebanon should be unconditional," tweeted Julien Bayou, head of the popular Greens party.

Macron himself firmly rejected the idea of reviving the French mandate.

"You can't ask me to substitute for your leaders. It's not possible," he said. "There is no French solution."

But he made a point of noting that he plans to return to Lebanon to verify that promised reforms are being undertaken on Sept. 1, the 100th anniversary of the declaration of Greater Lebanon – and the beginning of French rule.

El Deeb reported from Beirut.

Program allows some Alaska Native Vietnam vets to get land

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Stewy Carlo had a short life, but he lived every moment. While serving in the Army, he bought a 1951 Mercedes and motored around Europe. After his service years, he roamed South America where he developed a love of photography, and then later turned heads while driving an exotic Maserati to a construction job back home in Alaska.

Carlo, a member of the Koyukon Athabascan tribe, was a math whiz from Fairbanks who quit college in 1967 to volunteer for the Army, to serve in Vietnam. There, he was an aircraft controller who "brought a lot of crippled aircraft in," said his brother, Wally Carlo of Fairbanks.

Stewy would be an Alaska Native leader today if he had hadn't been killed in a head-on collision while driving the Maserati in 1975, his brother said.

Wally Carlo intends to honor his brother's legacy by applying for an allotment of 160 acres (65 hectares) of land in Alaska owned by the federal government.

Alaska Natives were allowed to apply for 160 acres (65 hectares) of land under the 1906 Alaska Native Allotment Act. Before a new law went into effect in 1971, there was a big advertising push to urge Alaska Natives to claim title if they hadn't already done so.

That coincided with the Vietnam War, when many Alaska Natives fighting the war probably didn't hear the plea. In 1998, another act allowed the veterans to apply for their land, but both Alaska Natives and Congress felt the window was too short to apply and an occupancy requirement wasn't fair.

Last year, Congress passed the Dingell Act, expanding the window to apply for land and removing the occupancy provision.

"It's something that's really near and dear to our hearts to make sure this program's a success because we know that folks didn't have that opportunity," said Chad Padgett, the Bureau of Land Management's Alaska director.

The BLM and other federal partners have identified about 1,000 Alaska Native service members or their descendants who might be eligible for the program and is in the process of notifying them. The military and Bureau of Indian Affairs are determining eligibility for another 1,200 people.

There could be more since the BLM estimates 40% of the Alaska Native veterans or their surviving family members have moved out of Alaska and may not know the window will reopen to apply. The BLM also estimates about a third or more of the eligible veterans have died, but their heirs might be eligible.

Veterans or family will have five years to select and apply for land. That window will open sometime this fall.

Currently, there are 1.5 million acres (607,028 hectares) of land available for those allotments, located in three parts of Alaska: the Bering Glacier area near Yakutat, the Fortymile area in Alaska's interior and near Goodnews Bay in western Alaska.

The land will have restricted titles, meaning veterans can't sell the land without approval from the Bureau

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of Indian Affairs.

Those locations and the restriction have led to criticism from some combat veterans, including Chris Kiana, who wonders why the government thinks he would like 160 acres (65 hectares) of inaccessible land, between glaciers near Yakutat, land on the complete opposite side of the state from where he was born.

"We're treated like Third World people in a First World. Pathetic," Kiana said.

Kiana was born in northwest Alaska in 1943 and calls himself an urban Eskimo since he now lives in Anchorage.

He joined the Navy and served on a ship that saw heavy fighting in Vietnam. He didn't know Harold Rudolph at the time, but said his ship likely lobbed shells over Rudolph's Army unit during battles.

Rudolph, who is part Aleut and part Tlingit, was born in Valdez in 1948. He served in an artillery unit with the 25th Infantry Division near Saigon during his two-year tour.

Both say the land being offered is not in their ancestral areas, it's off the road system and inaccessible — challenges that are not appealing for men of their age.

"We're trying to make lands available that are desirable and accessible, and access in Alaska is a lot different than what you might think of down in the Lower 48," Padgett said.

"And unfortunately, most of the BLM lands is in an area where you're going to have to get there by boat, snowmobiles, snow machine or plane. It's just that's the way the land pattern is at this point, but that we're trying to make some changes to that," he said.

The BLM is recommending that an additional 15 million acres (6,070,286 million hectares) become eligible for allotments.

Kiana and Rudolph have another solution.

They would rather be paid cash for their allotments, say \$3,000 an acre. Then they could use the \$480,000 to buy a home elsewhere.

"Why don't they allow us a buyout so we can go buy a cabin close by, buy a house close by with a few acres? That's about what we can do with that amount of money," Kiana said.

Instead, the government is offering land where "we have a helicopter out to in most cases or parachute into. Does that make sense?"

By statute, the government can't do that, said Padgett "That's something that they have to take up with Congress."

Wally Carlo would like to secure land near the Yukon River bridge on the Dalton Highway, the supply road that runs north of Fairbanks to the oil fields on the North Slope. That's where other members of the Carlo family previously secured their allotments, but that area isn't currently being offered.

Even if they can't get that preferred land, Carlo can't imagine trying to sell it back for cash to the government.

"We believe that it's not for just our generation now, but for three or four hundred years," he said. "Hopefully, it'll stay in the family, and we've set up a trust to make that happen."

Joe Arpaio defeated in what's likely his last political race

By JACQUES BILLEAUD Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — This political campaign was likely the last for Joe Arpaio, the former six-term sheriff of metro Phoenix known for leading immigration crackdowns and building a political career around the harsh treatment of jail inmates. The 88-year-old lawman narrowly lost a race to win back his old job, his second failed comeback bid four years after getting voted out of office.

Arpaio got edged out Friday in the Republican primary for Maricopa County sheriff by his former second-in-command, Jerry Sheridan, in a race that was lower profile and more modestly funded for Arpaio than the blowout campaigns of his heyday. While he still faced criticism over his 2017 criminal conviction — which President Donald Trump pardoned — many didn't know he was running until they saw his name on the ballot.

"I think some people were tired of me, and they wanted somebody else," Arpaio said. "And that's the

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way it went.”

A retired federal drug enforcement agent, Arpaio was elected sheriff in 1992 after his predecessor was criticized for mishandling an investigation into the killings of nine people at a Buddhist temple.

Early in his 24-year tenure, Arpaio scored big points with voters by enacting tough jail policies, such as creating old-time chain gangs, housing inmates in tents during triple-digit heat, forcing them to wear pink underwear, and banning cigarettes and pornography. Critics say Arpaio created a culture of cruelty inside his jails that led to the deaths of several inmates.

He took up immigration enforcement in 2005 as some voters and Republican lawmakers called for a tougher approach. At the time, almost all other local police bosses in the U.S. were content to let federal authorities handle that work.

Arpaio led 20 large-scale traffic patrols that targeted immigrants and more than 80 business raids to bust people working in the United States without permission. His immigration powers were stripped away by the federal government and the courts by late 2014, minimizing his role in the immigration debate largely to criticizing federal policies.

While his defiant streak played well with voters for many years, Arpaio faced heavy criticism for taking on policies that he knew were controversial and racking up \$147 million in taxpayer-funded legal bills.

Though he billed himself as the toughest sheriff in America, his agency botched the investigations of more than 400 sex-crimes complaints made to his office.

He locked up the two top executives of a weekly newspaper that had been critical of the sheriff's office, made criminal cases against political adversaries, investigated judges and misspent \$100 million in jail funds.

His volunteer posse investigated the authenticity of then-President Barack Obama's birth certificate, a debunked controversy that remained alive in the eyes of some conservatives, including then-presidential hopeful Trump.

For much of his political career, Arpaio survived scandals and dodged investigations that would have sunk the careers of many politicians.

Critics accused him of picking on powerless people to generate publicity for himself and irresponsibly spending taxpayer money on policies that were bound to flop.

His defenders, who often referred to him only as “Sheriff Joe,” said the freewheeling sheriff was the only local police boss who bothered to confront illegal immigration and that his policies reflected their views that jail is supposed to be miserable.

Stan Barnes, a political consultant in Phoenix and former Republican state lawmaker, said Arpaio, for good or bad, reflected for many years what a majority of voters in metro Phoenix wanted from a sheriff — immigration crackdowns and tough jails.

“While judging Joe Arpaio, we all have to make sure we are judging ourselves,” Barnes said.

Arpaio's political fortunes started to decline significantly in 2013 when his officers were found by a judge to have racially profiled Latinos in immigration patrols. Arpaio was eventually convicted of criminal contempt of court for disobeying a court order in the profiling case, though he was later spared a possible jail sentence by Trump's pardon.

As voter frustration mounted over his legal troubles and headline-grabbing tactics, Arpaio lost his bid for a seventh term by nearly 13 percentage points to retired Phoenix police Sgt. Paul Penzone — in the same 2016 election that sent Trump to the White House.

Some political experts have predicted Penzone, a Democrat, will win the November general election.

Arpaio's first comeback bid ended badly when he placed third in the 2018 Republican primary for U.S. Senate, losing both Maricopa County and his adopted hometown of Fountain Hills.

His campaign this year to win back the sheriff's office was fraught with difficulty.

Arpaio, once a master at garnering publicity, couldn't get much news coverage. Though his \$1.2 million in contributions led all other sheriff's candidates, it was a steep drop from the \$12 million he raised in 2016. He also faced questions about his age and health.

His platform consisted of his unwavering support for Trump and bringing back practices that the courts have either deemed illegal or his successor has ended, such as immigration crackdowns. He also faced a

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more moderate electorate than in earlier campaigns.

"It may be my last run for office, but I'm going to be active," said Arpaio, noting he has a new book coming out in a few weeks. "But if you think I am going home to stare at the mountain, that ain't gonna happen. Never gonna happen."

Vote-by-mail worries: A 'leaky pipeline' in many states

By FRANK BAJAK and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Brace yourself for what's expected to be the first U.S. presidential election conducted mostly by mail. It could be messy.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, voting by mail in a contactless and socially distant way seems like a no-brainer. States have made the option widely available -- only 10 now require voters to provide an excuse beyond fear of COVID-19 when requesting a ballot by mail -- and some three in four Americans are expected to embrace the option for the Nov. 3 presidential election, up from one in four in the 2018 contest.

But running a vote-by-mail election is surprisingly complicated, and there's a lot of room for things to go wrong. Validating and counting a deluge of posted ballots in an open and accountable way presents a major challenge, one that only about a half dozen states are fully prepared for.

It doesn't help that President Donald Trump has waged a vigorous offensive against the idea via a barrage of baseless tweets alleging the imminence of massive voting fraud. Turmoil in the U.S. Postal Service has only heightened concerns surrounding the ability of the nation's myriad election systems to manage a presidential vote.

Oregon, Colorado and Washington have held successful all-mail elections for years and others including Florida and California expanded capacity long before the pandemic. Nearly everywhere else, the technical and logistical challenges loom large for budget-squeezed election officials with limited experience.

Chaotic events during this year's primaries did not instill confidence. Untold thousands of absentee ballot requests went unfulfilled, and tens of thousands of mailed ballots were rejected for multiple reasons including arriving too late to be counted.

"The system is buckling under the weight of the dramatic surge and demand for absentee mail ballots," said Wendy Weiser, director of the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice. "It hasn't been built to withstand that high of a volume."

Among the major concerns:

— Although Congress has sent \$400 million to help states deal with pandemic-related pressures on election systems, it's well short of the estimated \$2 billion experts say officials need to be ready for November.

— Not all states are equal when it comes to letting voters fix mistakes that lead to rejection of their ballots, such as failure to sign the mail-in envelope. In a New Jersey special election in May, a whopping 10% of mailed ballots were rejected.

— The rapid introduction of new technologies and processes in state voting systems heightens the risk of foreign interference and insider tampering. That's true even if simple human error or local maneuvering for political advantage are more likely threats.

— The slower count of mailed ballots could clash with voter expectations of a clear Election Night winner. Election officials have already warned voters across the country that it could take days after the polls close to count all the votes.

— In general, voting by mail is much less forgiving than the in-person method, where a voter's identity is verified on the spot and any difficulties can be handled by poll workers.

To ensure success, all the pieces of mail-in balloting systems have to be in place well before Election Day. That's because processing absentee ballots is a complex, multi-step process in most states: Voter fills out application, mails it to local election office; local election office verifies voter's eligibility, sends back ballot; voter completes ballot, signs envelope, returns it. Election office verifies ballot's authenticity, counts it.

"The more complicated we make the ballot-casting process, the more stuff is going to go wrong," said Wisconsin activist Karen McKim. Election management in Wisconsin is as decentralized as it gets, relying as

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it does on 72 county clerks, 1,850 municipal clerks and thousands of poll workers. McKim says it's "unrealistic and unfair" to expect those workers to be ready for a flood of absentee ballots in just a few months.

BALLOT REQUESTS

Ahead of multiple primaries this year, some election administrators were buried under an unprecedented flurry of absentee ballot requests. Some blank ballots got misaddressed; others were lost.

In Georgia's Fulton County, which includes Atlanta and is the state's most populous, thousands of absentee ballots didn't reach voters until after the polls had closed, according to local news reports. Washington, D.C., voters were similarly afflicted.

In Wisconsin, requested absentee ballots never got to thousands of voters who asked. Jonas Zahn, a 46-year-old IBM executive, risked his health to vote in person on April 7 after twice requesting absentee ballots. "They still haven't come so they must still be in the mail," the Beaver Dam resident said in late July.

In Milwaukee, nearly 2,700 absentee ballots were never mailed because election staff goofed and halted a batch printing of mailing labels, the state election commission later reported. It was just one of multiple snafus.

MAIL RELIABILITY

Will the U.S. Postal Service be up to processing and delivering an election-eve flood of tens of millions of ballots? Under a major Trump donor named postmaster general in June, cost-cutting plans are already triggering delays in ordinary mail. A surge of mailed ballots could put the system under extraordinary strain.

Zahn, the Wisconsin voter, said his local mail is now routed through Milwaukee 50 miles away, meaning mail that reached a neighbor in a day or two a decade ago now takes about a week.

"The pipeline that moves mail between voters and election officials is very leaky," Charles Stewart III, a political scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote in a 2010 study. In a July update, Stewart estimated that roughly 4% of mail ballots were lost through this process in the 2016 general election.

States including Wisconsin are now scrambling to add USPS "intelligent mail" bar codes to their systems so ballots can be tracked through the mail. In states including Florida, Ohio, North Carolina and Georgia, counties are adding ballot-tracking software that gives voters more precise ballot status all the way to election authorities, said Steve Olsen, CEO of BallotTrax, the leading provider.

But such measures aren't yet widespread.

In some states, voters who don't trust the mail can use drop boxes instead. But boxes have been vandalized and poorly secured. Some Republicans say they invite fraud. The Trump campaign is suing Pennsylvania over plans to use them in November.

BALLOTS REJECTED

Once a completed ballot arrives at a local election office, the voter's eligibility and identity must be verified. Sometimes, missing signatures or unsealed or damaged envelopes can gum up the process.

In Jefferson County, Kentucky, the state's largest, 3,848 absentee ballots were rejected in the June primary due to lack of a voter signature. That was out of roughly 180,000 absentee ballots cast. Not all states give voters a quick and easy way to fix these problems.

Veteran vote-by-mail states send out periodic mailers to verify voter addresses and get updated signatures. They also have built "ballot-curing" measures into existing systems in case voter signatures don't match what's on record or ballot envelopes arrive damaged or missing required information. But such systems are far from universal and their absence has led to lawsuits in some states.

The complexity of signature matching is a major issue. Many election offices register voter signatures from a variety of sources -- for instance, those scribbled with styluses on cramped touchscreens at motor vehicle departments. The result: A matching process prone to human error.

"It's terrible, but it's the best option we have," said Jennifer Morrell, a former elections official in Colorado and Utah. Rigorous training and bipartisan teams reviewing signatures can help mitigate some of the concerns, but people's signatures change over time and physical ledgers capturing these changes are an endangered species.

But the bigger risk is that first-time and minority voters — who more often vote Democratic — will have their signatures rejected, studies show.

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University of Florida political scientist Daniel Smith found that Black and Latino voters and those under age 30 in the state were at least twice as likely as older and white voters to have ballots rejected over signature mismatches.

COUNTING AND CUSTODY

It took nearly two weeks for Philadelphia to count 140,000 mailed ballots after the June 2 primary. In New York City, it took six weeks after the June 23 primary to tally absentee ballots in one congressional primary where a dispute over ballots lacking postmarks ended up in federal court.

Ensuring a trustworthy chain of ballot custody and bipartisan oversight contributes to those delays. And sometimes insider fraud does happen. A former Democratic Pennsylvania congressman was recently indicted for it.

Which is why election officials including Neal Kelley, the registrar in Orange County, California, urge transparency measures for ballot counting such as live video streaming and obligatory audits.

Eighty percent of the county's residents voted absentee in this year's primary, up from 60% in 2018. Kelley said it took time to get all the pieces in place — he's developed homegrown ballot-tracking — to handle such capacity and instill voter confidence.

"It took us four years," he said.

Cassidy reported from Atlanta. AP writer Marina Villeneuve in Albany, N.Y., contributed to this report.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Aug. 9, the 222nd day of 2020. There are 144 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 9, 2014, Michael Brown Jr., an unarmed 18-year-old Black man, was shot to death by a police officer following an altercation in Ferguson, Missouri; Brown's death led to sometimes-violent protests in Ferguson and other U.S. cities, spawning a national "Black Lives Matter" movement.

On this date:

In 1814, the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which ended the Creek War, was signed in Alabama.

In 1842, the United States and Canada resolved a border dispute by signing the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

In 1910, the U.S. Patent Office granted Alva J. Fisher of the Hurley Machine Co. a patent for an electrically powered washing machine.

In 1936, Jesse Owens won his fourth gold medal at the Berlin Olympics as the United States took first place in the 400-meter relay.

In 1942, British authorities in India arrested nationalist Mohandas K. Gandhi; he was released in 1944.

In 1944, 258 African-American sailors based at Port Chicago, California, refused to load a munitions ship following a cargo vessel explosion that killed 320 men, many of them Black. (Fifty of the sailors were convicted of mutiny, fined and imprisoned.)

In 1945, three days after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, a U.S. B-29 Superfortress code-named Bockscar dropped a nuclear device ("Fat Man") over Nagasaki, killing an estimated 74,000 people.

In 1969, actor Sharon Tate and four other people were found brutally slain at Tate's Los Angeles home; cult leader Charles Manson and a group of his followers were later convicted of the crime.

In 1974, Vice President Gerald R. Ford became the nation's 38th chief executive as President Richard Nixon's resignation took effect.

In 1982, a federal judge in Washington ordered John W. Hinckley Jr., who'd been acquitted of shooting President Ronald Reagan and three others by reason of insanity, committed to a mental hospital.

In 1985, a federal judge in Norfolk, Virginia, found retired Navy officer Arthur J. Walker guilty of seven counts of spying for the Soviet Union. (Walker, who was sentenced to life, died in prison in 2014 at the age of 79.)

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In 2004, Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols, addressing a court for the first time, asked victims of the blast for forgiveness as a judge sentenced him to 161 consecutive life sentences.

Ten years ago: Former Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens, 86, the longest serving Republican in the U.S. Senate, was killed in a plane crash in the southwestern part of his state while on his way to a fishing trip (four others died in the crash outside Dillingham). A fed-up JetBlue flight attendant, Steven Slater, cursed out a passenger he said had treated him rudely, grabbed a beer and slid down the emergency chute of an Embraer 190 at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Five years ago: A year after the shooting that cast greater scrutiny on how police interacted with Black communities, the father of slain 18-year-old Michael Brown led a march in Ferguson, Missouri, after a crowd of hundreds observed 4½ minutes of silence.

One year ago: President Donald Trump said he had received a "beautiful" three-page letter from North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and predicted there would be more talks to try to resolve the standoff over that country's nuclear weapons program. (Negotiations remain stalled; Kim entered 2020 vowing to bolster his nuclear deterrent in the face of what he called "gangster-like" sanctions from the U.S.)

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Cousy is 92. Actor Cynthia Harris is 86. Tennis Hall of Famer Rod Laver is 82. Jazz musician Jack DeJohnette is 78. Comedian-director David Steinberg is 78. Actor Sam Elliott is 76. Singer Barbara Mason is 73. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player John Cappelletti is 68. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Doug Williams is 65. Actor Melanie Griffith is 63. Actor Amanda Bearse is 62. Rapper Kurtis Blow is 61. Hockey Hall of Famer Brett Hull is 56. TV host Hoda Kotb (HOH'-duh KAHT'-bee) is 56. Actor Pat Petersen is 54. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Deion Sanders is 53. Actor Gillian Anderson is 52. Actor Eric Bana is 52. Producer-director McG (aka Joseph McGinty Nichol) is 52. NHL player-turned-coach Rod Brind'Amour is 50. TV anchor Chris Cuomo is 50. Actor Thomas Lennon is 50. Rock musician Arion Salazar is 50. Rapper Mack 10 is 49. Actor Nikki Schieler Ziering is 49. Latin rock singer Juanes is 48. Actor Liz Vassey is 48. Actor Kevin McKidd is 47. Actor Rhona Mitra (ROH'-nuh MEE'-truh) is 45. Actor Texas Battle is 44. Actor Jessica Capshaw is 44. Actor Ashley Johnson is 37. Actor Anna Kendrick is 35.