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School Board Meeting  
Monday, Aug. 31  
7 p.m.  
Elementary Commons  
Area

**CLOSED:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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## Vermillion hands Groton girls first loss

Groton Area girls soccer team lost to Vermillion on Saturday, 4-2. The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the junior parents: Tricia and Bary Keith, Sadie and Nick Leicht, Karla and Russell Davidson, Tammy and Matt Locke and Bridget and Jeff Flihs.

Ellie Schroeder scored first for Vermillion with 23:15 left in the first half. The Tanagers scored again with 9:58 left in the first half by Levi Regnerus. Kenzie McInerney scored for the Tigers with 6:30 left in the first half to make it 2-1 at halftime with Vermillion leading.

Vermillion would score first in the second half with a goal by Schroeder. Regnerus added a score with 12:02 left which gave Vermillion a 4-1 lead. McInerney would score on a penalty kick with 4:48 left in the game and the final score was 4-2, Vermillion.

- Paul Kosel



**The goalie is Jaedyn Penning**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Tricia Keith**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Allyssa Locke**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Vermillion boys hand Groton Area loss



**Jayden Zak**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Vermillion defeated Groton Area in boys soccer action on Saturday, 6-1. The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc., and Julie Milbrandt, a Ruby Ambassador for Plexus.

Vermillion jumped out to a 3-0 lead. Groton Area would score with 31:50 left in the second half when Jayden Zak kicked the ball in from the corner and Brayden Hansen head bunted the ball into the net.

Scoring the goals for Vermillion were Jakob Dobney with two and adding one goal each were Alex Georgescu, Hari Kadarkaraisamy, Will Gilbertson and Noah Gilbertson.

- Paul Kosel



**Isaac Smith**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**The goalie is Tucker Carda**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

### Special School Board Meeting

August 31, 2020 – 7:00 PM – Groton Area Elementary Commons

#### AGENDA:

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

#### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

#### OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Continued discussion and necessary action on District response to COVID-19 including
  - a. Declare school district employees as essential critical infrastructure workers under federal Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) guidelines.
  - b. Adopt parameters for attendance at school district sponsored activities.
  - c. Approve installation of NFHS Pixellot camera streaming system.
  - d. Review of Department of Health guidelines for close contacts and school exclusions.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve educational lane changes
  - a. Diane Kurtz from MS+15 to MS+30 (\$750)
  - b. Shelby Hendrickson from BS to BS+15 (\$750)
2. Approve hiring Andrea Brunson, Special Education Paraprofessional, at \$11.85/hour.
3. Approve Open Enrollment Applications
  - a. #21-16 and #21-17
4. Acknowledge receipt of Notification of Public School Exemption
  - a. #21-06
  - b. #21-07
  - c. #21-08
  - d. #21-09
5. Executive session pursuant SDCL1-25-2(4) for negotiations.

#### ADJOURN

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The information below can be used to join the meeting virtually.

Zoom Meeting Information

<https://sdk12.zoom.us/j/91820591339?pwd=SnU1cnJoVHYzTkMvN1FZVmdxazNLUT09>

Meeting ID: 918 2059 1339

Passcode: 253663

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This week we have a guest writer. Dominique has been a Vikings fan since his family moved to Minnesota when he was a child. He played football at SDSU in 2011, where he was a running back and kick returner. He has also been covering the team as a blogger since 2015 and is the founder of [sportsandfitnessdigest.com](http://sportsandfitnessdigest.com).

Before we get to Dom's article, we need to talk about the big trade that went down involving the Minnesota Vikings. On Sunday the Vikings completed a trade with the Jacksonville Jaguars, sending a second and a fifth-round draft pick (the fifth can climb up to a third if certain goals are attained) and receiving defensive end Yannick Ngakoue in return. Ngakoue is one of the best young pass rushers in the NFL who was unhappy with his situation in Jacksonville and has wanted out for a while now. The Vikings will still need to figure out how to pay for a long-term contract, but with Ngakoue and Hunter, the team has the best defensive end tandem in the NFL. Yannick was a third-round pick back in 2016 and has amassed 37.5 sacks, 42 tackles for a loss, 85 QB hits, and 14 forced fumbles in his first four years in the league.

Now, let's get to Dominique's article!

The Minnesota Vikings have a drastic change in the cornerback room from last season. They sat back as their top 3 corners from last season all signed with other teams during free agency. That meant they were all-in on the guys left on their roster and the players they eventually ended up drafting.

Xavier Rhodes signed with the Indianapolis Colts while Trae Waynes and Mackensie Alexander both signed with the Cincinnati Bengals. Rhodes was once a top corner in the NFL, while Waynes and Alexander were both very good at the respective positions.

This change has many people concerned about the Vikings secondary. However, despite losing their three best corners, Vikings fans should not be overly concerned. There are reasons to be optimistic about the new group heading into the season.

The Vikings' new cornerback group consists of Mike Hughes, Jeff Gladney, Cameron Dantzler, Holton Hill, Kris Boyd, Harrison Hand, Mark Fields, Nate Meadors, and Nevelle Clark. It is a very young and inexperienced group. That is normally worrisome, but Mike Zimmer is the perfect coach for this challenge, as he has a history of coaching up defensive backs and helping them blossom at the NFL level. He has some great talent to do that with right now, not to mention he helped general manager Rick Spielman pick many of these players.

In addition to that, the Vikings have arguably the best safety duo in the NFL. Harrison Smith and Anthony Harris are two of the best at the positions. That will allow the young corners to play with confidence, knowing they will have help over the top. Smith is also great at making sure the defense is lined up properly and adjustments are made as necessary.

Based on reps in camp, it is looking like the week 1 starters are going to be Hughes and Gladney. Expect this to be a battle all season though, as Dantzler has been making plays all throughout training camp. Hill and Boyd are both capable of working their way into the mix as a starter as well.

As long as Hughes is healthy, he will be a reliable number one option. The Vikings drafted him high for a reason. Gladney was also a first-round pick Zimmer was high on, and with a little technique work, Zimmer should have him a viable number two corner in no time.

My favorite out of the bunch is Dantzler. He is tall, plays with an edge, and he could end up being the steal of the draft. If he lives up to the early training camp hype, that will make this rebuild of the Vikings cornerback room finish a lot sooner than anticipated. Either way, it will be fun to watch the young group grow and learn under Mike Zimmer.

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What do you think of the Vikings' trade for Ngakoue? Reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL) and let me know. Or if you have any questions for Dominique, he can be found on Twitter as well (@DomClare). Skol!



By Jordan Wright

## #189 in a series

### Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The Sunday two-week summary doesn't have much news in it. We look a lot like we looked last week, but the rate of growth is slightly slower. That said, we have more states in trouble and fewer showing declines in growth, so our problems are spreading out.

We have Sunday numbers again, radically lower than yesterday; as usual, we will not pronounce upon the significance of those until we see whether the trend holds through Tuesday. We are back below 40,000 new cases today with 32,200, a 0.5% increase. We did break the six million mark as expected, and we're now at 6,006,100 reported cases. Every new million has come in less time than the preceding one until today; the fifth million took just 16 days, and the sixth million took 24. That's a step in the right direction; but honestly, it would be nice not to ever report a seventh. I wonder whether that's even possible; we'd need to slow down a whole lot more to avoid it.

The rate of increase continues to decline; we're in our sixth week that this is so. One-week increase in total cases was 300,600 (5.6%) last week and is 292,600 (5.1%) this week. Two-week increase was 661,400 (13.1%) last week and is 593,200 (11.0%) this week. I hope this trend continues.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and seven of these showed two-week rates of increase greater than 25%. Here are the states with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: Hawaii (65.67% - big decrease), Guam (53.37% - big increase), US Virgin Islands (53.04% - big decrease), North Dakota (36.26% - increase), South Dakota (29.67% - big increase), Montana (27.63%), and Puerto Rico (26.31% - decrease). New to the list this week are Guam and South Dakota.

I am showing 11 states and territories with 14-day trends that are increasing: Guam, Hawaii, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Alabama, Maine, Connecticut, and North Carolina. This is one more than last week. I have 26 showing not much change: Alaska, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, West Virginia, Virginia, and South Carolina. And I have 17 declining: Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. These lists are quite fluid with a handful of states moving back and forth between them from day to day. There is a general shift toward more states having trouble.

New deaths today are a fraction of those yesterday at 230, a 0.1% increase to 182,965. This is a Sunday count, so we'll reserve judgement until Tuesday, but I'd like to see this continue. Total weekly deaths are a bit below last week and averaging just under 1000 per day. If we can continue to hold new cases in check, that may continue to decline; much depends on where those new cases concentrate because we have some small, rural states where the resources for caring for an influx of cases might be more limited.

I received a question today about how much virus is in an infected person and how that relates to how much virus they were exposed to and how sick they are. Here's the question, in part: "I've been wondering about viral load and asymptomatic people. Is their viral load somehow 'less' and therefore doesn't make them as sick yet sufficient to show up on a test? Would a smaller viral load mean that the virus is unable to replicate itself enough to make them sick? Could it mean that an asymptomatic person was only 'lightly exposed?'" I suspect these are questions other people have had too, so I'm going to reproduce my answer here in the hope it is helpful to others:

Two separate issues here: exposure dose and viral load.

Exposure dose is the number of viral particles that entered your body when you were exposed. I think we're getting pretty sure the severity of disease is related to exposure dose: The more virus, the sicker you can get. (Of course, we have all those patient factors as well—age, immunologic function, co-morbidities, etc., but dose plays an important role.)

When we're talking about transmission, viral load is the amount of virus you have in your upper respiratory tract (URT) that you can expel into the world for someone else to pick up. And that does not appear

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to be related to the severity of your disease. Some very ill patients have relatively low URT viral loads, and some asymptomatic individuals have very high URT viral loads. Children, in particular, appear to carry high URT loads, which might make them important sources of infection to others. Most people who develop symptoms are most infectious a couple of days before their symptoms show up, and then the viral load decreases as the symptoms progress. That's the primary factor that has made this disease so difficult to deal with from a public health standpoint.

So why would someone with a lot of virus not be really sick? Good question; we're working on that. We think your own ability to fend off the virus is a significant factor here. Again, consider children, who seem very well able to deal with the virus. I've seen a suggestion that some folks are able to manage the virus, that is, live with a lot of it without letting the virus overwhelm them. Maybe they can keep it confined to the URT where it doesn't do as much damage, but does shed well into the environment; virus way down in your lungs is going to be less likely to make its way through all those passages anywhere near as efficiently. Or maybe something else. As I said, we're working on that.

Exposure dose is the big thing you can do something about. The only way to avoid exposure entirely is to lock yourself in your house all by yourself and have groceries and other necessities delivered, obsessively disinfecting the surfaces of every damned thing that comes into the house. Or move to a remote cabin off in the woods or some such and live off the land, avoiding all human contact until this thing is completely over—which, to be clear, might be never. In the real world we live in, the goal should be to reduce the potential for exposure and reduce the amount of exposure, should it happen. You cannot know who is infected by looking at them: Someone who looks and feels perfectly healthy could be shedding virus like a fiend, and someone else who is sneezing and coughing and gasping for air might not have Covid-19 at all. So you have to treat the world as though everyone is a potential source—because everyone is a potential source.

Keys to reducing exposure risk is to stay home as much as you can and avoid having people over as much as you can. If you're going to socialize, best to do so with a limited group of people who are working as hard as you are to avoid exposure. If you're seeing only one friend, but that person is swanning through crowded nightclubs every weekend, singing and dancing and carousing, you might as well go out with your friend. So choose your contacts wisely; boredom passes, but dead is forever. So is some of the damage this virus leaves in survivors.

When you're out in the world, remember outdoors is safer than indoors, well-ventilated is better than poorly-ventilated, open windows beat closed windows, moving air dilutes virus faster than still air. The closer you are physically to others, the greater your risk of exposure. The longer you are around others, the greater your risk of exposure. Wearing a mask—by both parties—reduces the potential exposure dose. While transmission via surfaces and objects is not a primary means of spread, it is wise to practice good hand hygiene: Wash (or sanitize when you can't wash) frequently, and don't touch your face. Layer all of these precautions over one another, and you minimize both the risk you'll be exposed at all and the exposure dose if you are exposed. There is a lot you can do to protect yourself. And remember you are not just choosing the level of risk you're OK with for your own life; you are choosing for the rest of us too.

I'm seeing a new piece of garbage circulating on the Interwebs in the past several days, and I figured tonight's a good time to deal with it. Said garbage makes the claim that the CDC has "quietly updated the Covid number to admit that only 6% of all the 153,504 deaths recorded actually died from Covid alone," then explaining the people with "2-3 other serious illnesses" died of those, not Covid-19 and that "the overwhelming majority were of very advanced age."

Now, while I presume this dates from around the beginning of the month because that's when we were around 153,000 deaths, I've just started fielding questions about it in the past couple of days. Let's take this in order:

(1) The CDC has not materially adjusted its deaths total beyond adding each day's new reports. You can have a look for yourself at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) where you will find the current total stands at 182,149. So the CDC is still showing a number of deaths that does not reflect the purported 94% reduction.

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(2) I don't think the person who wrote this post understands how death certificates work; although one immediate cause of death is given, the certificates frequently add contributing factors. So if you had diabetes and died in acute respiratory distress associated with Covid-19, the death certificate's likely to list all of that: "respiratory distress" on Line 1, followed by "due to Covid-19" on the next line. Diabetes would get listed farther down. That doesn't mean the "real" cause of death was diabetes and someone pulled a fast one. In deciding which is the immediate cause, the thing is the diabetes probably didn't kill you; it made it easier for Covid-19 to kill you, so of course, we're going to conclude the immediate cause of death was the respiratory distress from Covid-19 with diabetes as an additional, contributing cause, not that you died of diabetes and the Covid-19 was secondary or even irrelevant to that. That's because, without the Covid-19 as sort of the last straw—the thing that initiated the chain of events that led to death, you'd probably still be alive. I keep seeing these claims that doctors are falsifying the cause of death on certificates, usually for money in the stories I'm seeing. It is ludicrous to conclude that tens of thousands of physicians and coroners across the country are operating in some massive, bizarre conspiracy to dupe the public—and that there haven't been leaks. Most of the time, if one person has a secret, that's too many to keep it safe; it belies belief that something this big has stayed on the QT. Time to give this one a proper burial.

(3) Then, there's the lack of any attempt to explain the excess deaths we've been seeing. We've talked about excess deaths several times over the past few months. The way those are determined is that we start out by computing expected deaths. To do this, we look at the average number of deaths for a time period (say, August 1 to August 15) over the past five years in the jurisdiction, adjust that for population changes, and then compare the result to the number of deaths over the same period this year. Observed deaths in excess of the expected number are deemed excess deaths; this computation is used to get a view of the impact of events like natural disasters or war on a population when it might be difficult to correctly attribute each individual death. And the fact is that, between March 1 and July 25 of this year, the US had something like 200,000 excess deaths, far more than the official Covid-19 death toll on July 25 of about 150,000. If only 6% of these were due to Covid-19, that would mean there is something very bad going on in this population that's killed around 190,000 people and no one has a clue it's happening. That beggars belief.

(4) This last is more of a personal reaction here, and that has to do with the way people repeatedly lean on the reassuring argument that, after all, it's "only" old people dying. Like that's no big deal. As if old people's lives have inherently less value than the lives of younger folks. Now, I suppose I'm oversensitive on this point, being one of the olds myself, but this shrieks of callous disregard for an entire segment of the population based on, what, a perception that there can't be any reason an old person would have to want to live or perhaps once you're no longer young and attractive your life can't be worth living—or maybe that since, for most, their economically productive years are over or nearing an end or that they're viewed as a burden on society. Maybe folks are just tired of looking at wrinkles and sagging bodies or getting stuck in traffic behind a "Q-tip" driving too slowly. But this line of thinking is ugly, in my opinion, and we should not be encouraging it.

A few high school kids in California's Bay Area noticed the shift in educational responsibility from the school to the household last March when schools shut down. They were looking for a way to help, not just with content, but to give kids more face-to-face learning and to inspire academic curiosity, and so they conceived YAPA Kids, an online learning enrichment program. They started out thinking they'd offer four or five courses until the end of the school year and hoping someone would sign up. At the end of the second week, it looked like no one would; they had no students. They learned a few fast lessons in marketing and search engine optimization to get their website on the first page of Google searches so they could drum up some interest.

I guess it worked. They were thrilled when they had 100 students signed up, then more. Maggie Dong, Mandarin program lead, said, "The enrollments rose to a sudden slope and in one night, we obtained 300 students. The next day, it rose to 500, then 600, and all the way to 800!" Instead of closing up shop at the end of the school year, they stayed in the game right up to the beginning of the current school year, and



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YAPA Kids now has over 350 teachers from 70 high schools teaching over 250 classes in 23 programs to over 3000 grade 1 through 8 students in 41 states and Canada. They've delivered more than 9050 hours of student-teacher instruction so far.

They're not just getting in front of a camera and clowning around with the kids; these folks are planning curriculum, preparing lessons, learning how to engage students, and on the side, running a nonprofit. This is a professional-looking organization from top to bottom. And they're doing it for free. No one's getting paid, and all of the classes are free for students. Andrew Lu, co-president, high school junior, and founder, explained in an interview with a local TV station that their commitment to free classes is rock-solid, "as long as we have an organization." I looked over the course offerings on the website, and I've been considering how I can impersonate a seventh-grader in need of enrichment so I can sign up for some things. Students are limited to just two courses each in order to keep class sizes small; demand has been so high that some classes are already wait-listed.

Classes are 30 minutes in length to avoid exceeding the attention span of small children and are very hands-on with lots of interaction. These are garnering rave reviews from parents and students. They offer programs in the usual school subjects, math, science (with experiments), history, and writing in addition to computer programming, photography, art, music theory, debate, public speaking, and languages (ASL, Spanish, and Mandarin). Even literary analysis. Pretty impressive work.

This is another remarkable answer to the question about what you did on your summer vacation from a remarkable group of young people. Don't let me hear you muttering about what's wrong with "kids these days." I don't like that kind of talk, and kids like these are a good part of the reason for that. (In general, we need to get over our impulse to write off an entire age cohort in our society, whether they're old or young.) If a bunch of high school kids have dug in this hard to making our society look a little more like one we'd all like to live in, then the rest of us grown-ups probably need to get with the program too. You have a few days to get something good done with your summer vacation, but time's a-wastin', so better hustle.

Be well. I'll be back.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31
Minnesota	70,707	71,236	72,390	73,240	74,257	75,189
Nebraska	32,348	32,727	33,101	33,436	33,753	34,046
Montana	6,624	6,785	6,929	7,063	7,251	7340
Colorado	55,800	55,993	56,343	56,773	57041	57,223
Wyoming	3,089	3,135	3,166	3,196	3,210	3245
North Dakota	10,229	10,467	10,800	11,109	11,484	11,702
South Dakota	11,505	11,571	12,194	12,517	12,942	13,322
United States	5,779,395	5,823,685	5,869,692	5,919,670	5,961,582	5,997,622
US Deaths	178,533	179,743	180,857	181,798	182,779	183,068

Minnesota	+409	+529	+1,154	+850	+1,017	+932
Nebraska	+301	+379	+374	+335	+317	+293
Montana	+135	+161	+144	+134	+188	+89
Colorado	+459	+193	+350	+430	+268	+182
Wyoming	+21	+46	+31	+30	+14	+35
North Dakota	+229	+238	+333	+309	+375	+218
South Dakota	80	+66	+623	+323	+425	+380
United States	+41,339	+44,290	+46,007	+49,978	41,912	+36,040
US Deaths	+1,504	+1,210	+1,114	+941	+981	+289

	Aug. 19	Aug. 20	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24	Aug. 25
Minnesota	66,061	66,618	67,308	68,133	68,867	69,584	70,298
Nebraska	30,825	31,040	31,348	31,626	31,780	31,889	32,047
Montana	5,846	5,956	6,072	6,216	6,376	6,429	6,489
Colorado	53,631	53,901	54,230	54,586	54,883	55,143	55,341
Wyoming	2,850	2,909	2,940	3009	3009	3,046	3,068
North Dakota	8782	8968	9242	9504	9736	9876	10,000
South Dakota	10,443	10,566	10,691	10,884	11,135	11,276	11,425
United States	5,482,823	5,530,247	5,576,089	5,628,070	5,668,564	5,701,557	5,738,056
US Deaths	171,833	173,193	174,290	175,467	176,371	176,797	177,029

Minnesota	+345	+557	+690	+825	+734	+717	+714
Nebraska	+262	+215	+308	+278	+154	+109	+158
Montana	+54	+110	+116	+144	+160	+53	+60
Colorado	+261	+270	+329	+356	+297	+270	+198
Wyoming	+21	+59	+31	+69	----	+37	+22
North Dakota	+135	+186	+274	+262	+232	+140	+124
South Dakota	+83	+123	+125	+193	+251	+141	+149
United States	+38,708	+47,424	+45,842	+51,981	+40,494	+32,993	+36,499
US Deaths	+1,274	+1,360	+1,097	+1,177	+904	+426	+232

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## August 30th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

We gained Aurora County back on the fully recovered list. Stanley County was back on the list yesterday and they are off today. Campbell County also got a positive case to fall off that list.

The positivity rate in South Dakota has climbed to 23.9 percent. North Dakota is 15 percent. Brown County had 21 more cases with a positivity rate of 19 percent. Those currently hospitalized in South Dakota dropped by one again, down to 78.

The big increases across the state are Brookings at 39, Brown at 21, Clay at 50, Codington 23, Lincoln 19, Meade 15, Minnehaha at 57 and Pennington 69.

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +21 (662) Positivity Rate: 19.0%

Recovered: +14 (534)

Active Cases: +7 (125)

Total Tests: 110 (7650)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (26)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 80.6% (-0.5)

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +380 (13,322 total) Positivity Rates: 23.9%

Total Tests: 1,591 (190,950 total)

Hospitalized: +11 (1017 total). 78 currently hospitalized (down 1 from yesterday)

Deaths: (167 total)

Recovered: +164 (10,511 total)

Active Cases: +216 (2,644)

Percent Recovered: 78.9 -1.0

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 50% Non-Covid, 47% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 5% Covid, 68% Non-Covid, 28% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 16% Non-Covid, 79% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases: (Lost Campbell, Stanley, Gained Aurora) Aurora 42-42, Harding 2-2, Jackson 12-11-1, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 3-3, Mellette 24-24.

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)

Beadle (9): +1 positive, +4 recovered (31 active cases)

Bennett: +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +1 positive (16 active cases)

Brookings (1): +39 positive, +4 recovered (129 active cases)

Brown (3): +21 positive, +14 recovered (125 active cases)

Brule: +3 positive, +3 recovered (18 active cases)

Buffalo (3): 4 active cases

Butte (1): +1 positive (26 active cases)

Campbell: +1 positive (1 active case)

Charles Mix: +6 recovered (12 active cases)

Clark: 3 active cases

Clay (2) +50 positive, +7 recovered (196 active cases)

Codington (2): +23 positive, +5 recovered (127 active cases)

Corson: +1 positive (10 active cases)

Custer: +2 positive, +3 recovered (57 active case)

Davison (2): +2 positive +4 recovered (27 active cases)

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cases)  
 Day: +2 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)  
 Deuel: +3 positive, +4 recovered (12 active cases)  
 Dewey: +2 positive, +10 recovered (28 active cases)  
 Douglas: +1 positive (9 active cases)  
 Edmunds: 8 active cases  
 Fall River (1): +4 positive (13 active cases)  
 Faulk (1): +1 positive (4 active cases)  
 Grant: +1 positive (9 active cases)  
 Gregory: +2 positive (10 active cases)  
 Haakon: 3 active cases  
 Hamlin: +1 positive, +2 recovered (18 active cases)  
 Hand: +1 positive (4 active cases)  
 Hanson: 4 active cases  
 Harding: Fully Recovered  
 Hughes (4): +4 positive, +2 recovered (27 active cases)  
 Hutchinson (1): +1 positive (7 active cases)  
 Hyde: +1 positive (3 active cases)  
 Jackson (1): Fully Recovered  
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered  
 Jones: Fully Recovered  
 Kingsbury: +2 positive, +1 recovered (6 active cases)  
 Lake (6): +3 positive (12 active cases)  
 Lawrence (3): +7 positive, +8 recovered (123 active cases)  
 Lincoln (2): +19 positive, +9 recovered (139 active cases)  
 Lyman (3): +3 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)  
 Marshall: +1 recovered (7 active cases)  
 McCook (1): +2 positive (12 active cases)

McPherson: +1 positive (2 active cases)  
 Meade (1): +15 positive, +6 recovered (158 active cases)  
 Mellette: Fully Recovered  
 Miner: 1 active case)  
 Minnehaha (70): +57 positive, +32 recovered (550 active cases)  
 Moody: 6 active cases  
 Oglala Lakota (2): +1 recovered (23 active cases)  
 Pennington (33): +69 positive, +23 recovered (428 active cases)  
 Perkins: +1 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)  
 Potter: +5 positive, +2 recovered (11 active cases)  
 Roberts (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)  
 Sanborn: 2 active case  
 Spink: +4 positive (21 active cases)  
 Stanley: +1 positive (1 active case)  
 Sully: +1 recovered (2 active cases)  
 Todd (5): 3 active cases  
 Tripp: +1 positive (2 active cases)  
 Turner: +5 positive, +1 recovered (17 active cases)  
 Union (4): +8 positive (44 active cases)  
 Walworth: +1 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)  
 Yankton (3): +6 positive, +4 recovered (53 active cases)  
 Ziebach: 14 active cases

## North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 29:

- 3,779 tests (1,456)
- 11,702 positives (+219)
- 9,079 recovered (+61)
- 142 deaths (+1)
- 2,481 active cases (+156)

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	455	0
10-19 years	1316	0
20-29 years	3284	2
30-39 years	2450	7
40-49 years	1892	7
50-59 years	1853	19
60-69 years	1134	29
70-79 years	514	26
80+ years	424	77

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	6676	84
Male	6646	83

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	42	42	422	0	Minimal
Beadle	636	596	2029	9	Moderate
Bennett	22	9	566	0	Moderate
Bon Homme	51	34	956	1	Substantial
Brookings	308	178	3302	1	Moderate
Brown	662	534	5347	3	Substantial
Brule	66	48	846	0	Minimal
Buffalo	110	103	677	3	None
Butte	46	19	889	1	Moderate
Campbell	5	4	111	0	Minimal
Charles Mix	122	110	1655	0	Minimal
Clark	19	16	428	0	Minimal
Clay	344	146	1696	2	Substantial
Codington	310	181	3397	2	Substantial
Corson	55	45	611	0	Moderate
Custer	116	59	849	0	Substantial
Davison	135	106	2637	2	Moderate
Day	37	30	734	0	Moderate
Deuel	44	32	494	0	Substantial
Dewey	79	56	2460	0	Moderate
Douglas	26	17	446	0	Minimal
Edmunds	31	23	464	0	Moderate
Fall River	38	24	1110	1	None
Faulk	32	27	224	1	None
Grant	42	33	839	0	Moderate
Gregory	19	9	464	0	Minimal
Haakon	6	3	309	0	Minimal
Hamlin	54	36	787	0	Substantial
Hand	15	11	348	0	Minimal
Hanson	23	19	244	0	Minimal
Harding	2	2	59	0	None
Hughes	133	102	2073	4	Moderate
Hutchinson	39	31	989	1	Moderate

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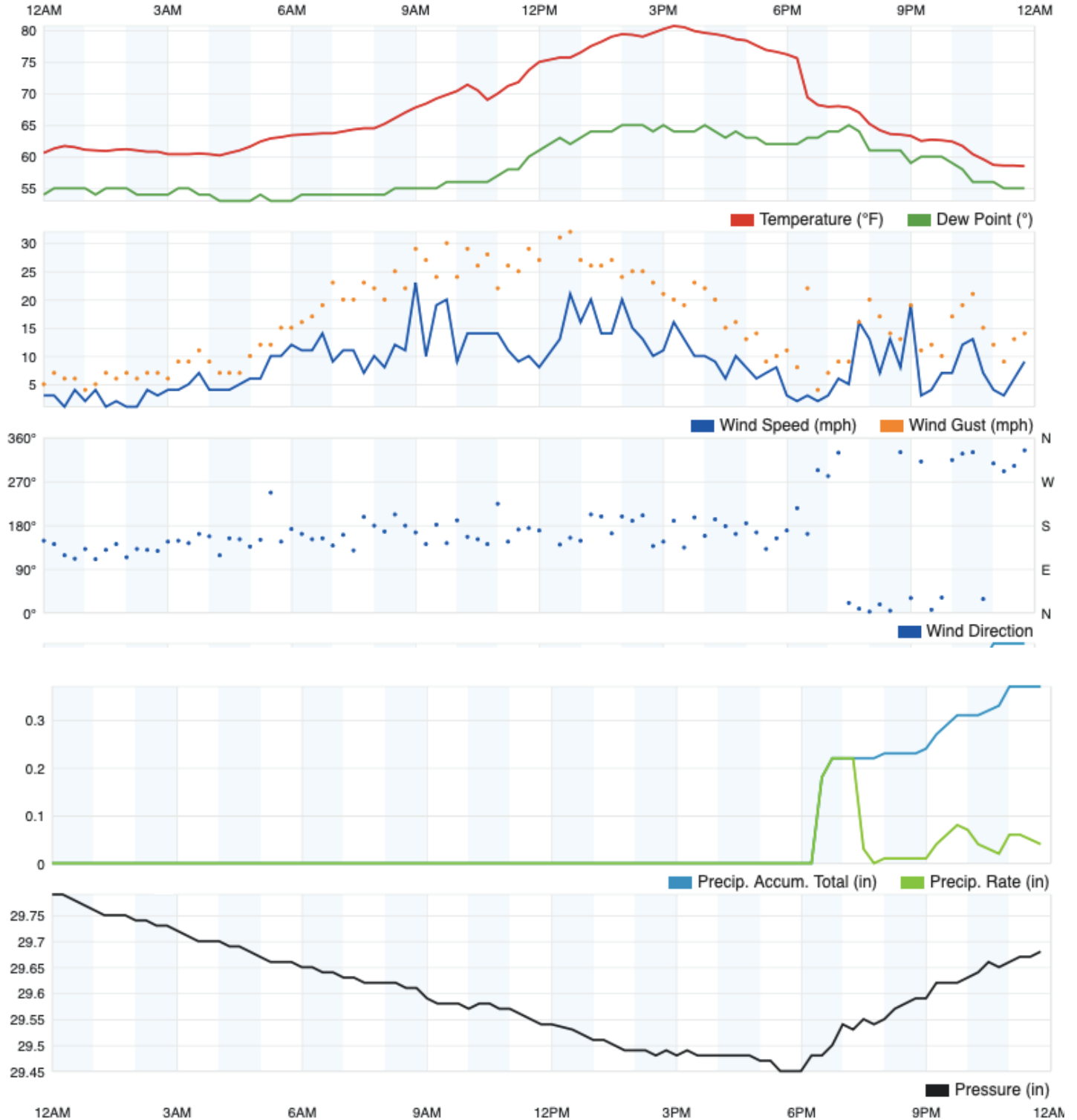
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Hyde	7	4	161	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	11	490	1	None
Jerauld	40	39	292	1	Minimal
Jones	3	3	67	0	Minimal
Kingsbury	23	17	644	0	Minimal
Lake	116	98	1059	6	Moderate
Lawrence	217	91	2365	3	Substantial
Lincoln	888	747	7975	2	Substantial
Lyman	105	86	1075	3	Minimal
Marshall	19	12	527	0	Minimal
McCook	49	36	717	1	Minimal
McPherson	11	9	246	0	Minimal
Meade	294	135	2290	1	Substantial
Mellette	24	24	408	0	None
Miner	16	15	277	0	None
Minnehaha	5235	4615	31522	70	Substantial
Moody	41	35	717	0	Moderate
Oglala Lakota	173	148	3060	2	Moderate
Pennington	1406	945	12263	33	Moderate
Perkins	13	6	223	0	Minimal
Potter	16	5	343	0	Minimal
Roberts	97	84	2133	1	Minimal
Sanborn	15	13	259	0	None
Spink	52	31	1294	0	Moderate
Stanley	21	20	306	0	Moderate
Sully	8	6	103	0	Minimal
Todd	78	70	2451	5	Minimal
Tripp	22	20	663	0	None
Turner	81	64	1028	0	Substantial
Union	263	215	2207	4	Moderate
Walworth	42	26	864	0	Substantial
Yankton	218	162	3544	3	Substantial
Ziebach	48	34	438	0	Substantial
Unassigned	0	0	11856	0	

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 75 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 51 °F

Tuesday



Sunny then  
Sunny and  
Breezy

High: 79 °F

Tuesday  
Night



Clear

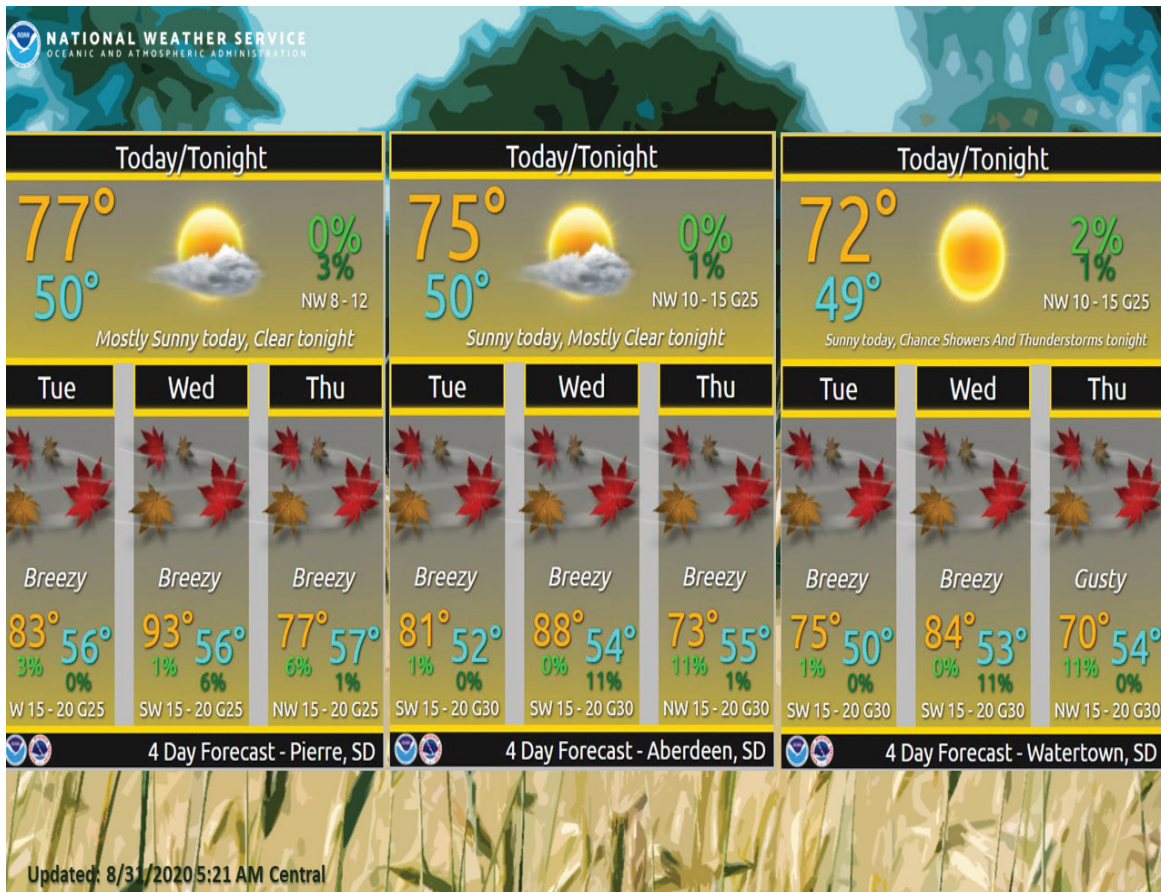
Low: 53 °F

Wednesday



Sunny then  
Sunny and  
Breezy

High: 87 °F



The forecast is dry for several days in a row. The dry, warm and breezy to windy conditions will allow for fire weather to take the main stage this week.



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## Today in Weather History

August 31, 1977: High winds accompanying thunderstorms moved across the southern part of Brown County during the early morning hours. A barn was destroyed three miles west of Warner. Many trees were damaged in the Stratford area. A large, empty fuel tank, southeast of Watertown was folded inward by strong winds. High wind damage was also reported in Faulk and Day Counties.

August 31, 2013: Thunderstorms produced numerous reports of large hail and damaging winds in and near Sioux Falls on the evening of August 31st. Large hail broke windows and damaged many vehicles, as well as siding and roofs on the west side of Sioux Falls. One automobile dealer with a large temporary outdoor display reported four thousand cars were damaged. Estimated property damage was listed at four million dollars. Thunderstorm winds also destroyed several businesses, including a large retail store which was also struck by lightning. The large store lost part of its roof, while the stockroom of the same store and its contents were also damaged. A canopy type tent was destroyed, and a 20-foot retaining wall was blown down. The winds caused extensive tree damage, including several trees blown down, one of which blocked a major intersection when it fell.

1886: A magnitude 7.3 earthquake shook Charleston, South Carolina around 9:50 pm on this day. This earthquake is the most damaging quake to occur in the southeast United States. This earthquake caused 60 deaths and between 5 to 6 million dollars in damage to over 2,000 buildings in the southeastern United States.

1922: An incredible hailstorm occurred near West Chester, PA dropped so much hail that fields were covered with up to two feet of drifted hail the next day.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)

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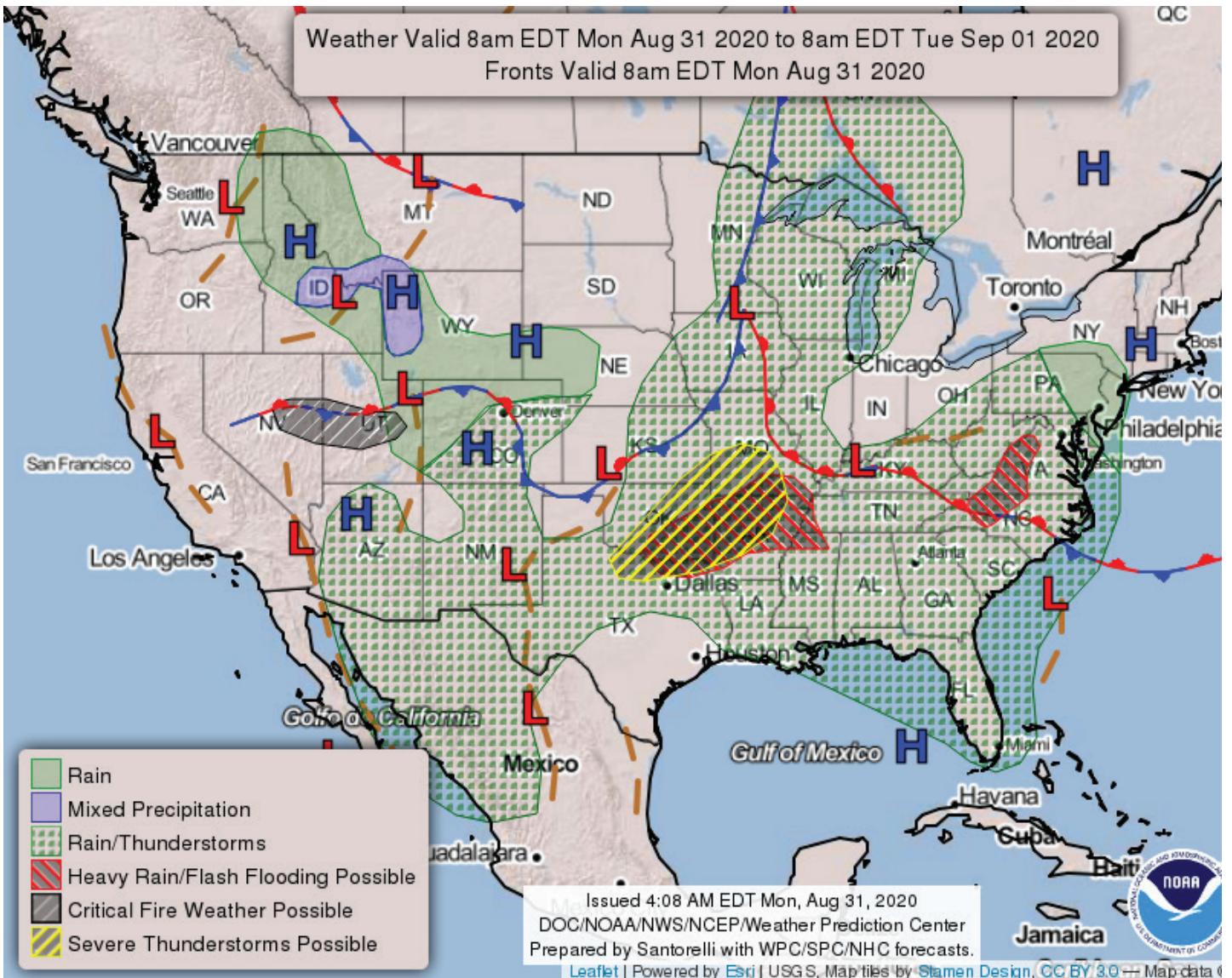
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 82 °F at 3:23 PM**  
**Low Temp: 58 °F at 11:58 PM**  
**Wind: 34 mph at 10:49 AM**  
**Precip: .37**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 98° in 1898, 1921**  
**Record Low: 32° in 1987**  
**Average High: 78°F**  
**Average Low: 52°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug.: 2.35**  
**Precip to date in Aug.: 2.74**  
**Average Precip to date: 16.21**  
**Precip Year to Date: 13.35**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:12 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:56 a.m.**



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## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

The citizens of a small community were overwhelmed with discouragement. The drought had destroyed the crops of the farmers, and they were facing bankruptcy. The merchants were unable to purchase inventory for their stores because their customers could not pay their bills. And things went downhill from there.

Everyone was heartbroken and depressed except one elderly man of God. He invited the leaders of the community to his home for a meeting to see if he could encourage them to continue a little longer.

His friends came to his home and sat around his kitchen table. He asked them to turn from facing him while he hung a large piece of white paper on a wall. Then, he asked them to turn and look at it. As they did, he placed a black dot in the center and asked, "Gentlemen, what do you see?"

In unison, they said, "A black dot." Not one of them mentioned the white paper that surrounded the one small black dot.

"Gentlemen," he asked, "are there some blessings in your life that we can place around the black dot that might make it not so obvious?" One by one, they thought of the good things that they had been overlooking in their time of loss and grief.

God's goodness sometimes disappears from our horizon. When days are difficult and nights are long, it is easy to see the dot and not the One who can remove it.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to be aware of all that we have because of Your goodness and grace. Give us faith to endure the difficulties of life through Your strength. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." Matthew 19:26

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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
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

## News from the Associated Press

### George Floyd? Donald Trump? Hero statue nominations are in

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, ALAN SUDERMAN and JIM ANDERSON Associated Press

George Floyd. Sacagawea. The guy who invented air conditioning.

Americans' suggestions of suitable statues for President Donald Trump's planned National Garden of American Heroes are in, and they look considerably different from the predominantly white worthies that the administration has locked in for many of the pedestals. The outside nominations are more activist, browner and far more indigenous.

Well, for the most part, anyway. The administration also is leaving open the possibility of a statue of Trump himself in the Trump-created statue park after receiving what it said were "multiple nominations" of the president.

Trump ordered up the statue park during a Fourth of July speech at Mount Rushmore, and set up a task force on a 60-day deadline to get the idea going. He also mused in a tweet that it would be a "good idea" to carve his own face into that memorial.

The task force charged with executing Trump's vision — with all of the publicly listed members white — says it sent out thousands of requests to state and local officials for suggestions, both for possible sites around the country and for heroes to honor. Its findings are due to be given to Trump by Tuesday.

Many of the nominations stand in stark contrast to the list the Trump administration came up with, which mandated inclusion of a few dozen mainstream and conservative figures, from John Adams to the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and a few other Black leaders made the Trump administration's hero list, but not anyone known for their Native American, Hispanic or Asian heritage.

Suggestions from many Republican governors, by contrast, were heavy with civil rights leaders, while many local officials pushed for a broader definition for what it means to be a hero.

When Denver-area Douglas County Commissioner Lora Thomas got the solicitation for nominations, "For me and my fellow commissioners, it was immediately a unanimous decision."

They urged the task force to consider a statue to Kendrick Castillo, an 18-year-old high school senior shot to death last year while lunging at a gunman in his British literature class. Eight people were wounded in the attack in suburban Denver by two student gunmen at STEM School Highlands Ranch.

"A person of distinguished courage. Bravery. Good deeds. Noble," Thomas said in a phone interview, reciting the dictionary definitions of a hero. "Gosh darn it, if Kendrick Castillo isn't a hero, I don't know who is."

Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, Commissioner Amy Zanelli, meanwhile, suggested George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black Americans whose killings by police sparked massive street protests.

The summer protests also spun off a debate over statues around the country honoring slave-holders and Confederates. Trump deployed federal forces to protect those monuments from protesters, embracing their defense as a law-and-order issue as he seeks reelection.

Floyd and the others "have shaped the future of America by finally bringing the systemic racial injustices present in our policing to the forefront of politics," Zanelli wrote.

Most governors, including almost every Democrat, dismissed the Trump administration's request for suggestions, according to the Interior Department's website on Friday afternoon. It's the latest example of governors ignoring White House requests — ranging from statues, to school openings to nursing homes testing — amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"I haven't given it a moment's thought," Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly told The Associated Press. "I have other things to do."

Some were highly critical of the effort as an ill-timed political stunt.

"We would encourage the White House to spend their time on the response to the coronavirus," said Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf's spokeswoman Lyndsay Kensinger.

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The Trump administration said it received "robust, bipartisan responses" from around the country. "It's a shame that some governors are unwilling to celebrate and recognize the significant achievements of their own residents who have heroically impacted our nation's history," Interior Department spokesman Ben Goldey said.

The list of heroes submitted by Republican governors included some obvious choices — civil rights hero Rosa Parks; Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court justice; and Sacagawea, the Lewis and Clark expedition's indispensable guide — that stick out for their lack of inclusion in Trump's list. Prominent Native Americans highlighted some state and local nominations.

"We have so much history in Montana and our country," said Yellowstone County Commissioner John Ostlund, a Republican, talking about his board's decision to nominate revered Crow Tribe leaders as well as cowboys, famous explorers and others.

"It was a conscious decision to include all sides of our history. All of the history ... I don't want to erase anything," Ostlund said.

Favorite sons and daughters little known outside their borders also made the cut — a National Rifle Association president, Harry Truman's vice president, air conditioner inventor Willis Carrier.

Asked about what it said were many nominations for a statue of Trump, Goldey, the Interior spokesman, pointed to Commissioner Steve Smith of Custer County, Idaho.

Smith in a letter praised "the President's willingness to fight back with history and important individuals that have shaped this country into the blessings it is."

The four federal agency heads that Trump specifically named to the heroes task force are white. Asked if that was appropriate for a diverse country, Goldey responded, "Your question is completely offensive."

Goldey stressed the task force would not be making the final cut for heroes. He repeatedly declined to say who would be, however, including if it would be Trump making the pick.

Experts in memorials said the process appeared rushed.

"The people who determine these things need to be representative of a broad constituency," said Harriet F. Senie with City College of New York, who specializes in public art and memorials. "Usually these things are years in planning and there are national committees, advisory committees."

The selection so far, "it sounds like hodge-podge lodge," Senie said. "Seriously."

Jim Grossman, executive director of the American Historical Association, said "it would be a mistake" to honor Trump or any living person. For public monuments, "that's a nonpartisan rule that pertains to anybody, regardless of where they are on the political spectrum. And I would defend that up and down all day."

Knickmeyer reported from Oklahoma City, Suderman from Richmond, Virginia, and Anderson from Denver. Associated Press writers Matthew Brown in Billings, Montana; Mark Scolforo in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas, contributed to this report.

## Crews contain lightning-caused wildfire at Wind Cave park

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. (AP) — Crews have contained a wildfire caused by lightning at Wind Cave National Park in western South Dakota.

Park officials said the 28-acre (11.3-hectare) Rankin Fire was contained Saturday night after crews finished establishing a line around the fire. The fire burned in the interior of the park, 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) northwest of the park's visitor center.

Officials said the park's popular Rankin Ridge trail has been reopened, but the Centennial, Sanctuary and Highland Creek Trails remain closed to hiking and back country camping. All park roads and remaining trails are open, along with the Elk Mountain campground.

The fire was caused by a lightning strike.

## South Dakota exceeds 13K total coronavirus cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials say the state has exceeded 13,000 total confirmed cases of the coronavirus.

The South Dakota Department of Health on Sunday reported 380 newly confirmed cases of the coronavirus, raising the state's total to 13,322 since the pandemic hit.

The Argus Leader reports more than 2,000 cases have been reported in the last seven days. That accounts for about 15% of South Dakota's total cases during the pandemic.

No new deaths were reported, keeping the state's total at 167.

Of the new cases reported Sunday, over half were attributed to people between the ages of 10-29. Officials report 154 of them were people aged 20-29 and 60 were in those between the ages of 10-19.

Pennington County, in western South Dakota, reported the most new cases on Sunday with 69. Minnehaha County, the state's most populous county, reported 57 new cases.

## First direct Israel-UAE flight lands in Abu Dhabi amid deal

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) —

A Star of David-adorned El Al plane flew from Israel to the United Arab Emirates on Monday, carrying a high-ranking American and Israeli delegation to Abu Dhabi in the first-ever direct commercial passenger flight between the two countries.

The Israeli flag carrier's flight marked the implementation of the historic U.S.-brokered deal to normalize relations between the two nations and solidifies the long-clandestine ties between them that have evolved over years of shared enmity toward Iran.

With the U.S. as matchmaker, Israel and the UAE agreed earlier this month to work toward normalization, which would make the UAE the third Arab nation to have full relations with Israel, after Egypt and Jordan. But unlike those two nations, Israel has never fought a war against the UAE and hopes to have much-warmer relations.

The American delegation includes President Donald Trump's senior adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner, as well as national security adviser Robert O'Brien, Mideast envoy Avi Berkowitz and envoy for Iran Brian Hook. Israel will be represented by national security adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat and the director generals of several ministries, who will meet with their Emirati counterparts.

"While this is a historic flight, we hope that this will start an even more historic journey for the Middle East and beyond," Kushner told reporters before boarding the plane.

Meir Ben-Shabbat, Israel's national security adviser and head of the Israeli delegation, said he was excited about the trip and that the aim was to lay the groundwork for cooperation in areas like tourism, medicine, technology and trade.

"This morning the traditional greeting of 'go in peace' takes on a special significance for us," he said.

The El Al flight, numbered LY971 as a gesture to the UAE's international calling code number, flew into Saudi Arabian airspace shortly after takeoff and later passed over the capital, Riyadh. That marked another historic first for Israel and at least an acquiescence by the kingdom for the UAE's move.

Saudi King Salman, along with other Gulf Arab leaders to varying degrees, maintain their boycotts of Israel in support of Palestinians obtaining an independent state. Any long-term flights between Israel and the UAE would require Saudi clearance to be profitable. Otherwise the three hour, 20 minute flight would take more than seven hours.

El Al spokesman Stanley Morais said the 737-900 is equipped with a missile-defense system, a standard feature on these types of planes and a requirement for this flight. After grounding its fleet due to the coronavirus, it is the airline's first flight since July 1.

The plane was decorated with the the words for peace in Arabic, Hebrew and English above the pilot's window. Journalists were handed special face masks decorated with the Israeli and Emirati flags. The seat protectors said "Making History" in all three languages, and Israeli folk music played in the background.

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The plane's captain, Tal Becker, said he has not worked for several months and received a call out of the blue asking him to prepare for the flight.

The 45-year veteran, who is the senior captain in El Al's 737 fleet, said he never dreamed of flying to Abu Dhabi, calling it a "very special feeling."

The Israeli delegation will stay in the capital, Abu Dhabi, for one night before returning home on El Al flight LY972, a nod to Israel's international calling code.

Private jets have earlier flown between the two nations as part of covert talks, and Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways flew cargo freighters to Israel before to deliver coronavirus aid to the Palestinians. But the high-profile flight Monday, eagerly promoted by U.S. officials, looks to place a solid stamp on the surprise Aug. 13 White House announcement of Israel and the UAE establishing ties.

Since then, telephone calls were connected, and the UAE's ruler issued a decree formally ending the country's decades-long boycott of Israel. Some Israeli firms have already signed deals with Emirati counterparts, but Monday's visit is expected to usher in a slew of further business cooperation. The official repeal of the boycott looks to open the door to more joint ventures, such as in aviation, banking and finance.

The UAE has touted the deal as a tool to force Israel into halting its contentious plan to annex parts of the West Bank sought by the Palestinians for their future state. It also may help the Emirates acquire advanced U.S. weapons systems that have been previously unattainable, such as the F-35 fighter jet. Currently, Israel is the only country in the region with the stealth warplanes.

The Palestinians, however, have fiercely opposed the normalization as peeling away one of their few advantages in moribund peace talks with Israel. Palestinians have held public protests and burned the UAE flag in anger.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said it was "very painful" to see the flight, which he said was a "clear violation of the Arab position on the Arab-Israeli conflict."

"We had hoped to see an Emirati plane landing in a liberated Jerusalem," he added.

Israelis eagerly anticipate the prospect of mutual embassies, expanding tourism to the Gulf and solidifying business opportunities with another country that shares its penchant for technology and innovation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has touted the deal as validation of his vision that regional peace doesn't have to go through Palestinian acquiescence and come at the cost of ceding land. But he has come under fire from supporters at home for seemingly giving up on dreams of annexation and tacitly agreeing to a questionable arms sale that could undermine Israel's regional superiority. Netanyahu denies such a deal exists.

In a Facebook post, Netanyahu said Monday "is a historic day for the state of Israel that I have worked to achieve for decades."

For Trump, the accord delivers a key foreign policy victory as he faces a tough reelection campaign.

On Sunday, Kushner said "the stage is now set" for other Arab countries to follow the UAE. However, he gave no indication that any other deals are imminent, despite a swing through the region last week by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

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Follow Aron Heller on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/aronhellerap](https://www.twitter.com/aronhellerap).

## Strike leader detained in Belarus as crackdown continues

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Belarus' authorities on Monday detained the organizer of a strike at a top industrial plant, part of a methodical effort to stifle weeks of protests demanding the resignation of the country's authoritarian leader of 26 years after an election the opposition denounced as being rigged.

President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and rejected the European Union's offers of mediation. After a ferocious crackdown on demonstrators in the first days after the Aug. 9 vote that caused international outrage, his government has avoided large-scale violence against demonstrators and sought to end the protests with threats and the selective jailing of activists.



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Anatoly Bokun, who leads the strike committee at Belaruskali, a huge potash factory in Soligorsk, was detained by police Monday and is facing a 15-day jail sentence on charges of organizing an unsanctioned protest. The factory, which accounts for a fifth of the world's potash fertilizer output, is the nation's top cash earner.

The Belaruskali strike committee spokesman, Gleb Sandras, said authorities had managed to halt a strike at the factory that began two weeks ago and all its potash mines are now working.

He said that agents of Belarus' State Security Committee, which still goes by the Soviet-era name KGB, had pressured workers to end the labor action.

"KGB agents have inundated the factory, tracking down the most active workers and using various means of pressure," Sandras told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "The authorities have powerful economic instruments. They are blackmailing workers with mass dismissals."

Strikes at Belaruskali and many other leading industrial plants have cast an unprecedented challenge to Lukashenko, who has kept the bulk of the economy in state hands and relied on blue-collar workers as his main support base.

Belarus Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Nazarov acknowledged Monday that the strikes posed a challenge, but said that all major industrial plants have resumed normal operations.

Bokun's detention follows the arrests of strike leaders at two other major industrial plants in Minsk. The organizer of a strike at the Grodno Azot, a major producer of nitrogen fertilizers, fled to neighboring Poland to escape detention.

Seeking to stem the protests, Belarusian prosecutors have opened a criminal probe against the opposition Coordination Council, accusing its members of undermining the country's security. Last week, Belarusian courts handed 10-day jail sentences to two council members and summoned several others for questioning, including Svetlana Alexievich, who won the 2015 Nobel Prize in literature.

The U.S. and the European Union have criticized the Aug. 9 election that extended Lukashenko's rule as neither free nor fair and urged Belarusian authorities to engage in a dialogue with the opposition.

Following a fierce dispersal of peaceful demonstrators in the days after the vote that left nearly 7,000 people detained, hundreds injured by police rubber bullets, stun grenades and beatings and at least three protesters dead, police stopped interfering with the demonstrations for the next two weeks, but last week again cranked up the pressure on demonstrators and began breaking up rallies.

The Belarusian government also cracked down hard on the news media, deporting some foreign journalists from the country and revoking the accreditation of many Belarusian journalists. Two Moscow-based Associated Press journalists who were covering the recent protests in Belarus were deported to Russia on Saturday. In addition, the AP's Belarusian journalists were told by the government that their press credentials had been revoked.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists said over the weekend that accreditation rights were also taken away from 17 Belarusians working for several other media, including Germany's ARD television, the BBC, Reuters, AFP, and U.S.-funded radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty said five of its journalists lost their accreditation.

The U.S. and the EU officials have strongly condemned the media crackdown.

The detention of hundreds of demonstrators didn't deter the opposition from mounting another massive rally on Sunday, which saw an estimated 100,000 flood the streets of the Belarusian capital amid a heavy police presence.

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Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

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## When Trump talks law and order, some Wisconsin voters listen

By KATHLEEN HENNESSEY Associated Press

DE PERE, Wis. (AP) — Alexis Arnold says she's sympathetic toward protesters who have peacefully fought racial injustice this summer. But as some demonstrations spiral into violence, her anxiety is building.

"Why are we so broken right now?" the 44-year-old art gallery owner wondered.

The uncertainty is drawing her to whatever stability President Donald Trump can offer. He has spent weeks pushing questions of safety and security to the forefront of the presidential campaign. And there are signs some Wisconsin voters are listening, after protests have sometimes become violent in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where a white police officer shot a Black man, Jacob Blake, seven times, paralyzing him.

"The public just needs something to make them feel comfortable and safe again," said Arnold, who is white, has voted for Democrats in the past and is raising a biracial daughter. "I almost rather see Trump stay and try to resolve it rather than bring somebody in new."

That sentiment could prove decisive in Wisconsin, a state that put Trump in the White House in 2016 after he carried it by less than 1 percentage point. The president has already used dark and misleading warnings of destruction in American streets following violence in Portland, Oregon, and is now seizing on unrest in Kenosha, where he'll travel on Tuesday.

His Democratic rival, Joe Biden, has condemned violence and focused more on the victims of police brutality.

But the images of unrest in Kenosha — of protesters clashing with police, shattered windows and a teenager carrying an AR-15 style gun in the streets — are intensifying the partisan divide in Wisconsin. In interviews with dozens of voters in Green Bay and its suburbs, Democrats saw racism and fear-mongering in Trump's messages, part of a ploy to change the subject from the pandemic. Republicans, even those who admittedly cringed at Trump's style on other issues, were unwaveringly supportive.

And some of the rare voters unsure of their choice said they felt drawn to Trump in this moment, a warning sign for Biden, who has tried to make the election a clear referendum on Trump, his leadership and his handling of the coronavirus.

As part of that strategy, Biden has all but shunned in-person campaigning and generally kept a lower profile. (His campaign says that is due to change.) That approach has left some voters who haven't ruled out Trump hazy on where Biden stands on race and criminal justice, a vacuum quickly filled with misinformation.

"It was out there that he would get rid of the police," said Mike Guerts, referring to an often repeated falsehood about Biden's position.

Guerts, a wavering Trump voter, says a friend has inundated his phone with pro-Trump posts. The 55-year-old mail worker from Madison, who was in town visiting his father, said he knows not everything his friend sends is true but he doesn't yet know enough to feel comfortable with Biden.

"I've been a lifelong Republican. I'm torn," he said, noting police brutality is a pressing problem. "But that does not excuse the lawlessness."

There is far less ambiguity among Trump stalwarts. Many were quick to lump all protesters and Democrats together as "socialists." Some disputed there is systemic racism in the U.S. and argued that Black Americans often provoke police into using force. And they rarely mention Kyle Rittenhouse, the white teenager who is charged with shooting three people, killing two, in Kenosha.

Instead, they saw Democrats and their celebrity allies as stoking the unrest.

"They haven't done anything to stop it," said Rick Demro, a 60-year-old, retired commander with Green Bay police department. "You don't see them back up law enforcement. They're quick to cast judgment before the facts come out. I think all that does is promote the rioting instead of trying to quell it. Part of me says, it's to help them for the campaign purposes."

Demro said he's particularly angered by professional athletes and organizations speaking out against police brutality — including his beloved Green Bay Packers. He hasn't missed a home game since the early 1980s, and he waited for 30 years to get his season tickets. But this week, he talked to his wife about

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giving them up in protest. (She refused, he said, because she wants to pass them down to their children.)

Demro was among the Trump supporters who said they did see problem in policing. When he watched the video of a Minneapolis police officer pinning George Floyd to the ground until he stopped moving, the May incident that triggered a new, broadly supported movement for racial justice, he said he knew it was "wrong."

But there's evidence to suggest that events in the months since have taken a toll on public support for protesters in the state.

A Marquette University Law School survey found support for the protests had fallen 13 percentage points from June to August and is now even with disapproval. The survey of Wisconsin residents conducted before the shootings in Kenosha found that support fell everywhere except the city of Milwaukee, including the suburbs, exurbs and large towns, where Trump and Biden are vying for supporters.

To win Wisconsin, Trump must run up the score in the conservative-leaning suburbs and exurbs across the state, working-class areas where trade union's allegiance to Democrats has faded and the pull of cultural issues has grown. While he dominated in Green Bay's Brown County in 2016 — winning by 11 percentage points — the area supported a Democrat-backed Supreme Court justice this spring, in a surprising surge of Democratic turnout.

They were Democrats like Michelle Yurek, a fourth-grade teacher who was preparing to go back to teach in a classroom last week, as Trump told the Republican National Convention that "no one will be safe in Biden's America."

"I don't think we're safe in Trump's America," Yurek said, from her home in a neat subdivision on the edge of Green Bay where she lives with her husband and three children. "I think he's caused a lot of the division."

Driving his supporters to the polls, while overcoming barriers to voting in the pandemic, is critical for Biden. That means winning over voters like Brittaney Leake, a 27-year-old support staff worker at a group home and a mom of three, with another on the way.

Leake says she didn't vote in 2016 because she's disillusioned with what she see as politicians' unfulfilled promises. Biden hasn't given her a reason to change course, she said.

"Just because he's a Democrat doesn't mean he has my vote," Leake said. "If I can't specifically see what he's going to do for a change, I'm not going to vote for him. ... There has to be action."

Arnold, the gallery owner, voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton four years ago. But she hasn't been unhappy with Trump's record. She thinks he's trying to look out for businesses like hers and she's heard positive things about his criminal justice reform bill.

It seems daunting now to switch leaders at a time when she's everyone is "stretched so thin." She's still mulling over her choice, wishing she could hear more from both candidates for a plan for a reset. "I think we're all just kind of worn out. And we just want to get back to somewhat of a normal life."

## Diplomat tapped to be PM vows reforms in crisis-hit Lebanon

By ZEINA KARAM and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A Lebanese diplomat was appointed to form a new government on Monday after winning the backing of major political parties in the crisis-hit country, which is still reeling from a devastating explosion that killed and wounded thousands of people.

President Michel Aoun asked Lebanon's ambassador to Germany, Mustapha Adib, to form a new government after he secured 90 votes among the legislators in the 128-member parliament.

The consultations were being held hours before French President Emmanuel Macron was due to arrive for a two day-visit, during which he is expected to press Lebanese officials to formulate a new political pact to lift the country out of its multiple crises. At least 190 people died and 6,000 were injured in the Aug. 4 blast, which devastated the city's port and caused widespread damage to residential and commercial areas in the capital.

The government resigned less than a week after the blast.

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Adib told reporters his number one priority will be to quickly form a government able to implement crucial reforms to regain the trust of the Lebanese and international community.

He said he will form a Cabinet of experts and will work with parliament to "put the country on track of improvement and to end the dangerous financial, economic and social drainage."

"The opportunity in front of our country is narrow, and the mission that I accepted is based on all political groups knowing that. The government should be formed very quickly," he added.

Macron and other world leaders as well as the International Monetary Fund have refused to give assistance to Lebanon before its leaders enact major reforms. The swift consensus around Adib, a little known diplomat, signaled a sense of urgency by Lebanon's traditional politicians to try and contain the rapidly worsening economic and financial crisis and show movement ahead of Macron's visit.

Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri emerged from his meeting with Aoun on Monday, telling reporters his 18-member bloc had given its backing to Adib. He called for the formation of a government of experts "that implement reforms aimed at restoring the world's confidence in our economy so we can start to emerge from this crisis."

Adib, who returned from Germany to Lebanon on Saturday, was the only name to emerge as a favorite for the post of prime minister, who according to Lebanon's sectarian-based power sharing system has to be a Sunni Muslim. The candidate who gets the most support is asked to form the new Cabinet, but Lebanon's divided political class has often been bogged down over who holds senior posts and key ministries.

Adib was named by four former prime ministers, including Hariri, on the eve of Monday's consultations.

Earlier Sunday, the head of the powerful Hezbollah militant group, Hassan Nasrallah, said his supporters will cooperate and facilitate the formation of a government that would be able to improve economic conditions and undertake major reforms.

The Iran-backed militant group, which has a dominant role in Lebanon's politics, has come under intense criticism and public scrutiny as the country faces multiple devastating crises. Hezbollah and its allies were also expected to name Adib.

Even before the explosion, an unprecedented economic crisis had already sapped the Lebanese currency of more than 80% of its value, driving unemployment, poverty and inflation through the roof.

Coronavirus infections and deaths have also spiked, pushing authorities to reintroduce some restrictions on economic and social activities that have largely been ignored amid the slump. And the recent explosion badly damaged the port of Beirut, a main trade channel for the small country, which depends on imports.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab's government, backed by Hezbollah and its allies, resigned on Aug. 10, six days after nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in Beirut's port, where it had been stored for six years.

Adib, who has been Lebanon's ambassador to Germany since 2013, served as an advisor to one of Lebanon's former Prime Ministers, Najib Mikati. He took part in the committee in charge of writing Lebanon's new electoral law in 2005 and 2006, and acted as chief of Cabinet in 2011.

The 48-year-old is a native of the northern city of Tripoli, holds a PhD in law and political sciences and had taught in universities in Lebanon and France.

## 2020 Watch: Can Trump ignore reality as Election Day nears?

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Presidential politics move fast. What we're watching heading into a new week on the 2020 campaign:

Days to general election: 64

Days to first debate: 29

### THE NARRATIVE

The conventions finally over, the 2020 election season now enters its final phase.

Both sides are pleased with their convention performances which offered dramatically different versions

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of reality to the American electorate. President Donald Trump is essentially asking voters to judge him based on pre-pandemic America. Joe Biden is asking voters to judge the incumbent on conditions as they actually exist, with the pandemic's death toll mounting, the economy struggling and racial tensions again exploding.

Still, both sides expect the election, which Biden has led for virtually the entire cycle, to tighten entering the nine-week sprint to Nov. 3. Reflecting concerns about potential Trump momentum, Biden plans to resume in-person campaigning in the coming days, albeit with smaller, socially distanced crowds.

Both candidates are focused on Wisconsin this week as a series of violent protests follow yet another police-involved shooting of a Black man caught on camera. Each side believes the incident offers a political advantage, and there may be no more important swing state.

## THE BIG QUESTIONS

Can Trump ignore reality?

If you judged the state of America based on last week's Republican National Convention, you wouldn't know that more than 180,000 Americans have died because of the pandemic over the last six months and tens of millions more are out of work.

With some glaring exceptions, the president painted a decidedly optimistic picture of American life under his leadership. The only real threat to U.S. prosperity and even safety, he and his allies said, was a Biden victory this fall.

This message fundamentally ignores six months of death and economic destruction under Trump's watch. For any other politician, this would be an extremely tough sell. And it may be for Trump as well. But Trump has demonstrated nothing if not his command of the public spotlight and his loyalists' unquestioned faith in his word.

Is the Democratic freakout about to begin?

Multiple people on Biden's team tell us that they expect polls to tighten in the coming days.

They insist that they always expected Biden's lead to shrink, given the polarized nature of the electorate. But that's unlikely to calm anxious Democrats who desperately want a blowout victory to quash Trump's efforts to undermine the integrity of the election. Democrats' level of urgency has always been high, but expect it to increase exponentially if Biden's lead begins to evaporate.

A tightening race will also test the unity of the Democrats' coalition, a collection of disparate factions that have been remarkably nice to each other, bound in common cause to defeat Trump. Should things start to go south, the finger pointing will almost certainly follow.

Who is winning Kenosha?

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway last week told Fox News that "the more chaos and anarchy and vandalism and violence reigns, the better it is" for Trump.

While Biden seized on her apparent celebration of violence, Trump's campaign believes he is winning the racially charged debate over police brutality heading into the fall. Democrats believed that the sweeping civil unrest that has consumed the nation for much of the summer would help energize people of color against Trump this fall.

The political calculus is far more cloudy. This week may provide some clarity as both candidates are expected to pay particular attention to the situation in Kenosha, Wisconsin, which has emerged as the new epicenter of the debate.

Trump plans to visit the area on Tuesday, and we wouldn't be surprised if Biden made it a priority as well as he resumes in-person campaigning.

Is Joe Biden really getting back on the trail?

After spending nearly six months mostly keeping his head down in Delaware, Biden is planning to return to the campaign trail in the coming days.

While Democrats seemed quite content to have their nominee out of the public spotlight, Republicans are somewhat giddy. They're particularly excited that Biden has named Minnesota as one state he'll be

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visiting, which is evidence that the former vice president is on defense in at least one state Democrats carried four years ago.

It's unclear exactly what in-person campaigning will look like for Biden, who struggled to draw large crowds even under normal circumstances during the primaries. Several states continue to ban large indoor gatherings. And Biden senior adviser Anita Dunn tells us not to expect the same kind of large, unmasked crowds that showed up for Trump's convention speech last week.

Wherever he goes and whatever his events look like, the exposure offers significant risk and reward for the 77-year-old politician.

## THE FINAL THOUGHT

Thousands of people crowded onto the National Mall late last week to celebrate the 57th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech.

We spoke to Martin Luther King III on the eve of the event, and he told us he was "saddened" that Republicans during their convention last week evoked his father's name to help Trump's reelection bid.

King likened Trump's rhetoric on racial divisions to that of Richard Nixon a half-century ago: "It's just straight racism," King said. "The hands of the clock are going backwards."

2020 Watch runs every Monday and provides a look at the week ahead in the 2020 election.

## Turning 100: Lebanon, a nation branded by upheaval, crises

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — It was a century ago on Sept. 1, 1920, that a French general, Henri Gouraud, stood on the porch of a Beirut palace surrounded by local politicians and religious leaders and declared the State of Greater Lebanon — the precursor of the modern state of Lebanon.

The current French president, Emmanuel Macron, is visiting Lebanon to mark the occasion, 100 years later. But the mood could not be more somber.

Lebanon has been hit by a series of catastrophes, including a financial crash. On Aug. 4, a massive explosion at Beirut's port killed at least 190 people and injured thousands — the culmination of decades of accumulated crises, endemic corruption and mismanagement by an entrenched ruling class.

Facing potential bankruptcy and total collapse, many Lebanese are marking the centennial with a feeling that their experiment as a nation has failed and questioning their willingness to stay in the crisis-riddled country.

"I am 53 years old and I don't feel I had one stable year in this country," said prominent Lebanese writer Alexandre Najjar.

Like others from his generation, Najjar lived through the 1975-1990 civil war, when Beirut's name became synonymous with hostages, car bombings and chaos.

He was a teenager when Israel invaded Beirut in the summer of 1982, imposing a suffocating siege of the capital for three months, and a young man when Christian militias turned their guns on each other in 1989. When former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated in a massive Beirut truck bombing in 2005, Najjar was in his late 30s.

The following year, Israel and Hezbollah engaged in a month-long war. In between, countless other conflicts, bouts of sectarian fighting and other disasters plagued one generation after another, leading to waves of Lebanese emigration.

But the Aug. 4 explosion, says Najjar, was the "peak of a failed state" — proof that authorities cannot even provide basic public safety.

It wasn't supposed to be that way.

Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, Lebanon fell under the French mandate, starting in 1920. France governed for 23 years until the country gained independence as the Lebanese Republic.

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Home to 18 different religious sects, it was hailed as a model of pluralism and coexistence. The nation settled on an unwritten sectarian arrangement, initially seen as the guarantee of stability but which many Lebanese now consider a curse: the president would always be Christian, the prime minister Sunni Muslim and the parliament speaker Shiite Muslim, with other posts similarly divvied up.

In the 1950s, under pro-Western President Camille Chamoun, the economy flourished thanks to booming tourism and cash from oil-rich Arab nations. But his presidency ended with the outbreak of Lebanon's first civil war in 1958, which lasted for several months and saw U.S. troops land to help Chamoun.

Lebanon saw its heyday in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the country became a regional center for the rich and famous who flew from around the world to gamble at the Casino Du Liban, or to attend concerts in the ancient northeastern city of Baalbek by international artists such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Soviet ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev, American jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald, as well as famous Arab singers like Egypt's Umm Kalthoum and Lebanon's own Fairouz.

Palestinian militants during this time had begun launching attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory, splitting the Lebanese. Disaster struck again in 1975, with the start of the 15-year civil war, eventually pitting Lebanon's sects against each other. That conflict killed nearly 150,000 people. Syrian troops moved in, and Israel invaded twice — once in 1978, then again in 1982, in an assault that forced late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his fighters to leave Lebanon.

U.S. interests were repeatedly attacked, most notably two bombings of the American Embassy and the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Beirut that killed 241 U.S. service members, the deadliest attack on the Marines since the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. On the same day, 58 French paratroopers were killed by a second attacker who struck their installation in Beirut.

The country also had two presidents and two prime ministers assassinated, in addition to dozens of other politicians, legislators, journalists and activists who were killed.

Israel's 1982 invasion and the attacks on the Americans marked the rise of what later became the militant group Hezbollah.

After the civil war ended in 1990, the Iranian-backed Shiite militia was the only one allowed to keep its weapons because it was fighting Israeli occupation forces in southern Lebanon. When Israel withdrew from the south in 2000, Hezbollah kept its powerful fighting force, depicting itself as Lebanon's defender. It fought Israeli forces to a draw in 2006, and tensions remain high along the border.

Today, Hezbollah and its allies, led by President Michel Aoun, dominate Lebanese politics and control a majority in parliament.

But the Lebanese are deeply divided over Hezbollah. While many in the Shiite community are fiercely loyal to the group, and many non-Shiites sympathize with its anti-Israel stance, others increasingly see it as imposing Iran's will on the country.

Many civil war-era warlords today head political factions, holding onto posts for themselves or their families and controlling powerful local business interests. The factions pass out positions in government ministries and public institutions to followers or carve out business sectors for them, ensuring their backing.

Corruption has soared over the past two decades, and the sectarian-based patronage system has left Lebanon with crumbling infrastructure, a bloated public sector and one of the world's highest debt ratios, at 170% of GDP — topped by a ruling class that amassed fortunes.

Last October, nationwide protests erupted over the worsening economy, and the financial juggling act that had been the basis of Lebanon's prosperity since 1990 collapsed into the most severe economic crisis of the country's modern history, made worse by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Lebanon is in its worst period over the past 100 years," said legislator Marwan Hamadeh. "We are in the worst stage, economically, politically and even when it comes to national unity."

"We are currently occupied by Iran and its missiles," added Hamadeh, who was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt in 2004 that he blames on Hezbollah.

Historian Johnny Mezher says that to solve its problems, Lebanon could start by adopting a law that boosts national identity rather than loyalty to one's sect and helps ensure qualifications determine who

gets state posts, rather than sectarian connections.

"Religious figures should be prevented from meddling in politics," he said.

Even after seven decades of Lebanese independence, France still wields strong influence on the tiny Mediterranean nation.

Two days after the port blast — with Lebanese leaders totally absent — Macron visited Beirut and toured one of the most heavily damaged neighborhoods to a hero's welcome, with some chanting "Vive La France."

More than 60,000 signed a petition to place Lebanon under French mandate for 10 years, an idea Macron firmly dismissed. "It's up to you to write your history," he told the crowds.

On his return trip, Macron will plant a tree in Beirut on Tuesday to mark the centenary and meet with Lebanese officials to push them toward forming a government and enacting reforms.

"There is no doubt we were expecting the 100th anniversary to be different. We did not expect this year to be catastrophic to this level," said Najjar, who is a lawyer, poet and author of about 30 books in French, including one that tells the story of Beirut during the 20th Century.

"There is still hope," he said. "We have hit rock bottom and things cannot get worse."

## 5 things to know today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. TRUMP PRAISES PROTESTERS, DEMOCRATS SAY HE'S INCITING VIOLENCE Democrats accused the president of trying to inflame racial tensions and incite violence to benefit his campaign after he praised supporters who clashed with protesters during a deadly night in Portland, Oregon.

2. STATE POLICE RETURNING TO PORTLAND Oregon State Police will help local authorities after the fatal shooting of a man following clashes between Trump supporters and counter-protesters.

3. CHINA'S XINJIANG IMPOSES DRACONIAN MEASURES TO FIGHT PANDEMIC The government is physically locking people in homes and arresting those who do not comply with strict quarantines.

4. LEBANON TURNS 100 Marking its centennial this week, many Lebanese feel that their experiment as a nation has failed and question their willingness to stay in the crises-riddled country.

5. LADY GAGA GETS MASKED UP The entertainer took the mask mandate seriously at this year's MTV VMAs by making face masks her over-the-top fashion accessory. She also won five awards.

## State police returning to Portland following deadly shooting

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Oregon State Police will return to Portland to help local authorities after the fatal shooting of a man following clashes between President Donald Trump supporters and counter-protesters that led to an argument between the president and the city's mayor over who was to blame for the violence.

Protesters were back on the streets for a demonstration Sunday night outside a public safety building. Police declared an unlawful assembly and detained several people after saying protesters were seen throwing projectiles.

After Trump called Ted Wheeler, a Democrat, a "fool" and faulted him for allowing mayhem to proliferate in the liberal city, the visibly angry mayor lashed out at the president during a Sunday news conference, addressing him in the first person through the TV cameras.

"That's classic Trump. Mr. President, how can you think that a comment like that, if you're watching this, is in any way helpful? It's an aggressive stance, it is not collaborative. I certainly reached out, I believe in a collaborative manner, by saying earlier that you need to do your part and I need to do my part and then we both need to be held accountable," Wheeler said.

"Let's work together...Why don't we try that for a change?"

The testy news conference followed a chaotic 24 hours in Portland that began when Saturday evening when a caravan of about 600 vehicles packed with Trump supporters drove through the liberal city and



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was met with counterprotesters. Skirmishes broke out between the groups and, about 15 minutes after the caravan left the city, a supporter of the right-wing group Patriot Prayer was fatally shot.

Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson identified the victim as Aaron "Jay" Danielson. He called the victim a "good friend," but provided no further details. Danielson apparently also went by the name Jay Bishop, according to Patriot Prayer's Facebook page.

"We love Jay and he had such a huge heart. God bless him and the life he lived," Gibson said in a Facebook post.

Trump retweeted the victim's name and wrote, "Rest in peace Jay!"

It wasn't clear if the shooting was related to the clashes in Portland, which has become a flashpoint in the national Black Lives Matter protests since George Floyd was killed in May and an increasing centerpiece in Trump's law-and-order re-election campaign theme.

Late Sunday Oregon Gov. Kate Brown released details of a plan to address the violence in Portland while protecting free speech. She said the district attorney's office in Multnomah County, which includes Portland, will prosecute serious criminal offenses and the sheriff's office will work with other agencies to hold people arrested for violent behavior and ensure there is adequate jail space.

Also, Brown said Oregon State Police will return to Portland to help local police, and nearby law enforcement agencies will also be asked to assist.

"We all must come together—elected officials, community leaders, all of us—to stop the cycle of violence," the Democrat said in a statement.

Trump and other speakers at last week's Republican National Convention evoked a violent, dystopian future if Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden wins in November and pointed to Portland as a cautionary tale for what would be in store for Americans.

Police have released little information about the fatal shooting and Chief Chuck Lovell said Sunday that investigators are still gathering evidence, including surveillance video from area businesses. Earlier, the agency released a plea for any information related to the killing, including videos, photos or eyewitness accounts.

Patriot Prayer is based in Washington state and was founded in 2016. Since early 2017, its supporters have been periodically coming to Portland to hold rallies for Trump, ratcheting up tensions long before the national outrage over Floyd's death sparked more than three months of protests here.

Portland has seen nearly 100 consecutive nights of Black Lives Matter protests and many have ended with vandalism to federal and city property, including police precincts, a county jail, the federal courthouse and City Hall. In July, Trump sent more than 100 federal agents from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to safeguard federal property — a move that instead reinvigorated the protests.

Thousands of people clashed with the federal agents each night for two weeks, as agents lobbed tear gas canisters and pepper spray at the crowds and some protesters tossed fireworks at the agents and shined lasers in their eyes.

Those agents withdrew July 31 but smaller nightly protests have continued in pockets of the city. More than 600 people have been arrested since late May.

On Sunday, Portland authorities urged people to stay away from the downtown as they try to de-escalate tensions.

Trump earlier Sunday appeared to be encouraging his supporters to move into Portland in the wake of the shooting. After the shooting, the president shared a video of his supporters driving into Portland and called those in Saturday's caravan "GREAT PATRIOTS!"

Wheeler begged those who wanted to come to Portland to "seek retribution" to stay away.

"If you're from out of town and you're reading something on social media — if you're reading any facts on social media — they're probably wrong because we don't have all the facts yet," Wheeler said. "This is not the time to get hotheaded because you read something on Twitter that some guy made up in his mother's basement."

## In China's Xinjiang, forced medication accompanies lockdown

By DAKE KANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — When police arrested the middle-aged Uighur woman at the height of China's coronavirus outbreak, she was crammed into a cell with dozens of other women in a detention center.

There, she said, she was forced to drink a medicine that made her feel weak and nauseous, guards watching as she gulped. She and the others also had to strip naked once a week and cover their faces as guards hosed them and their cells down with disinfectant "like firemen," she said.

"It was scalding," recounted the woman by phone from Xinjiang, declining to be named out of fear of retribution. "My hands were ruined, my skin was peeling."

The government in China's far northwest Xinjiang region is resorting to draconian measures to combat the coronavirus, including physically locking residents in homes, imposing quarantines of more than 40 days and arresting those who do not comply. Furthermore, in what experts call a breach of medical ethics, some residents are being coerced into swallowing traditional Chinese medicine, according to government notices, social media posts and interviews with three people in quarantine in Xinjiang. There is a lack of rigorous clinical data showing traditional Chinese medicine works against the virus, and one of the herbal remedies used in Xinjiang, Qingfei Paidu, includes ingredients banned in Germany, Switzerland, the U.S. and other countries for high levels of toxins and carcinogens.

The latest grueling lockdown, now in its 45th day, comes in response to 826 cases reported in Xinjiang since mid-July, China's largest caseload since the initial outbreak. But the Xinjiang lockdown is especially striking because of its severity, and because there hasn't been a single new case of local transmission in over a week.

Harsh lockdowns have been imposed elsewhere in China, most notably in Wuhan in Hubei province, where the virus was first detected. But though Wuhan grappled with over 50,000 cases and Hubei with 68,000 in all, many more than in Xinjiang, residents there weren't forced to take traditional medicine and were generally allowed outdoors within their compounds for exercise or grocery deliveries.

The response to an outbreak of more than 300 cases in Beijing in early June was milder still, with a few select neighborhoods locked down for a few weeks. In contrast, more than half of Xinjiang's 25 million people are under a lockdown that extends hundreds of miles from the center of the outbreak in the capital, Urumqi, according to an AP review of government notices and state media reports.

Even as Wuhan and the rest of China has mostly returned to ordinary life, Xinjiang's lockdown is backed by a vast surveillance apparatus that has turned the region into a digital police state. Over the past three years, Xinjiang authorities have swept a million or more Uighurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities into various forms of detention, including extrajudicial internment camps, under a widespread security crackdown.

After being detained for over a month, the Uighur woman was released and locked into her home. Conditions are now better, she told the AP, but she is still under lockdown, despite regular tests showing she is free of the virus.

Once a day, she says, community workers force traditional medicine in white unmarked bottles on her, saying she'll be detained if she doesn't drink them. The AP saw photos of the bottles, which match those in images from another Xinjiang resident and others circulating on Chinese social media.

Authorities say the measures taken are for the well-being of all residents, though they haven't commented on why they are harsher than those taken elsewhere. The Chinese government has struggled for decades to control Xinjiang, at times clashing violently with many of the region's native Uighurs, who resent Beijing's heavy-handed rule.

"The Xinjiang Autonomous Region upheld the principle of people and life first...and guaranteed the safety and health of local people of all ethnic groups," Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Zhao Lijian said at a press briefing Friday.

Xinjiang authorities can carry out the harsh measures, experts say, because of its lavishly funded security apparatus, which by some estimates deploys the most police per capita of anywhere on the planet.

"Xinjiang is a police state, so it's basically martial law," says Darren Byler, a researcher on the Uighurs

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at the University of Colorado. "They think Uighurs can't really police themselves, they have to be forced to comply in order for a quarantine to be effective."

Not all the recent outbreak measures in Xinjiang are targeted at the Uighurs and other largely Muslim minorities. Some are being enforced on China's majority Han residents in Xinjiang as well, though they are generally spared the extrajudicial detention used against minorities. This month, thousands of Xinjiang residents took to social media to complain about what they called excessive measures against the virus in posts that are often censored, some with images of residents handcuffed to railings and front doors sealed with metal bars.

One Han Chinese woman with the last name of Wang posted photos of herself drinking traditional Chinese medicine in front of a medical worker in full protective gear.

"Why are you forcing us to drink medicine when we're not sick!" she asked in a Aug. 18 post that was swiftly deleted. "Who will take responsibility if there's problems after drinking so much medicine? Why don't we even have the right to protect our own health?"

A few days later she simply wrote: "I've lost all hope. I cry when I think about it."

After the heavy criticism, the authorities eased some restrictions last week, now allowing some residents to walk in their compounds, and a limited few to leave the region after a bureaucratic approval process.

Wang did not respond to a request for interviews. But her account is in line with many others posted on social media, as well as those interviewed by the AP.

One Han businessman working between Urumqi and Beijing told the AP he was put in quarantine in mid-July. Despite having taken coronavirus tests five times and testing negative each time, he said, the authorities still haven't let him out – not for so much as a walk. When he's complained about his condition online, he said, he's had his posts deleted and been told to stay silent.

"The most terrible thing is silence," he wrote on Chinese social media site Weibo in mid-August. "After a long silence, you will fall into the abyss of hopelessness."

"I've been in this room for so long, I don't remember how long. I just want to forget," he wrote again, days later. "I'm writing out my feelings to reassure myself I still exist. I fear I'll be forgotten by the world."

"I'm falling apart," he told the AP more recently, declining to be named out of fear of retribution.

He, too, is being forced to take Chinese traditional medicine, he said, including liquid from the same unmarked white bottles as the Uighur woman. He is also forced to take Lianhua Qingwen, a herbal remedy seized regularly by U.S. Customs and Border patrol for violating FDA laws by falsely claiming to be effective against COVID-19.

Since the start of the outbreak, the Chinese government has pushed traditional medicine on its population. The remedies are touted by President Xi Jinping, China's nationalist, authoritarian leader, who has advocated a revival of traditional Chinese culture. Although some state-backed doctors say they have conducted trials showing the medicine works against the virus, no rigorous clinical data supporting that claim has been published in international scientific journals.

"None of these medicines have been scientifically proven to be effective and safe," said Fang Shimin, a former biochemist and writer known for his investigations of scientific fraud in China who now lives in the United States. "It's unethical to force people, sick or healthy, to take unproven medicines."

When the virus first started spreading, thousands flooded pharmacies in Hubei province searching for traditional remedies after state media promoted their effectiveness against the virus. Packs of pills were tucked into care packages sent to Chinese workers and students overseas, some emblazoned with the Chinese flag, others reading: "The motherland will forever firmly back you up".

But the new measures in Xinjiang forcing some residents to take the medicine is unprecedented, experts say. The government says that the participation rate in traditional Chinese medicine treatment in the region has "reached 100%", according to a state media report. When asked about resident complaints that they were being forced to take Chinese medicine, one local official said it was being done "according to expert opinion."

"We're helping resolve the problems of ordinary people," said Liu Haijiang, the head of Dabancheng

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district in Urumqi, "like getting their children to school, delivering them medicine or getting them a doctor."

With Xi's ascent, critics of Chinese traditional medicine have fallen silent. In April, an influential Hubei doctor, Yu Xiangdong, was removed from a hospital management position for questioning the efficacy of the remedies, an acquittance confirmed. A government notice online said Yu "openly published inappropriate remarks slandering the nation's epidemic prevention policy and traditional Chinese medicine."

In March, the World Health Organization removed guidance on its site saying that herbal remedies were not effective against the virus and could be harmful, saying it was "too broad". And in May, the Beijing city government announced a draft law that would criminalize speech "defaming or slandering" traditional Chinese medicine. Now, the government is pushing traditional Chinese remedies as a treatment for COVID-19 overseas, sending pills and specialists to countries such as Iran, Italy, and the Philippines.

Other leaders have also spearheaded unproven and potentially risky remedies – notably U.S. President Donald Trump, who stumped for the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, which can cause heart rhythm problems, despite no evidence that it's effective against COVID-19. But China appears to be the first to force citizens — at least in Xinjiang — to take them.

The Chinese government's push for traditional medicine, given free to Xinjiang residents, is bolstering the fortunes of billionaires and padding state coffers. The family of Wu Yiling, the founder of the company that makes Lianhua Qingwen, has seen the value of their stake more than double in the past six months, netting them over a billion dollars. Also profiting: the Guangdong government, which owns a stake in Wu's company.

"It's a huge waste of money, these companies are making millions," said a public health expert who works closely with the Chinese government, declining to be identified out of fear of retribution. "But then again – why not take it? There's a placebo effect, it's not that harmful. Why bother? There's no point in fighting on this."

Measures vary widely by city and neighborhood, and not all residents are taking the medication. The Uighur woman says that despite the threats against her, she's flushing the liquid and pills down the toilet. A Han man whose parents are in Xinjiang told the AP that for them, the remedies are voluntary.

Though the measures are "extreme," he says, they're understandable.

"There's no other way if the government wants to control this epidemic," he said, declining to be named to avoid retribution. "We don't want our outbreak to become like Europe or America."

## Gaga's masks, Weeknd's advocacy and more top VMAs moments

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

The MTV Video Music Awards got a little creative trying to put on a somewhat live awards show from New York City in the middle of a pandemic. Sunday's show included performances with mask-wearing artists and fans and artists dancing in front the backdrop of the city's skyscrapers. But amid the celebration, the show also reflected the hardships of a tough year that has been marked by protests over systematic racism. Here are a few of the top moments from the show:

### MASK UP

This year's most fashionable accessory is the face mask, but the queen of over-the-top red carpet looks took it to another level at the VMAs.

Lady Gaga appeared in many different outfits and corresponding masks during Sunday night's show while she dominated the night with a performance with Ariana Grande.

Gaga donned a pink mask that strapped around head, a mask with pointy tusks and even an electronic display on a mask while she sang "Rain on Me" with Grande, who also sported her own black mask. She held the award for artist of the year wearing a white tulle and organdy coat by Valentino and a matching silver mask.

As if she hadn't made the point already, the singer encouraged fans to "be kind, mask up," during a performance of "Stupid Love," then later added that wearing a mask is a sign of respect.

Other performances also included masks including Maluma's backup dancers sporting bright colored

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masks for his technicolored drive-in concert and DaBaby performed with popular Vegas masked magicians Jabbawockeez.

In between performances, backstage cameras caught many of the artists also sporting masks off stage as well. Dr. Anthony Fauci would be proud.

## 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

When protests against racial injustice happening all across the country, artists at the VMAs used the platform to reflect how hard the year has been even as they came to celebrate achievements.

Host KeKe Palmer set the tone at the beginning by recognizing that strength comes amid struggle. She also dedicated the show to the late actor Chadwick Boseman, whose death from cancer at the age of 43 shocked many fans he earned for his portrayals of Black icons, including the Black Panther.

"With the Black Lives Matter movement, we've seen our generation step up, take to the streets and make sure our voices will be heard. Enough is enough," said Palmer, before mentioning the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin that has spawned nightly protests. "What we just witnessed in Kenosha, Wisconsin, is yet another devastating reminder that we can't stop, that we can never tolerate police brutality or any injustice. We must continue the fight to end systematic racism."

The Weeknd had the first performance of the night with "Blinding Lights" amid the skyscrapers of New York City. But he seemed heartbroken when he accepted two awards during the evening, including video of the year, saying it was hard to feel like celebrating, before asking for justice for Blake and Breonna Taylor, who was killed in Louisville.

H.E.R. won video for good for her song "I Can't Breathe," which used footage from demonstrations as well as listing the names and faces of those whose deaths sparked thousands to take action against systematic racism.

## THREE FACES OF GAGA

Most recording artists have been sidelined by the COVID-19 virus, but even a pandemic couldn't stop Lady Gaga from putting on a great show.

She was already racking up awards early in the evening before she took to the stage to perform a medley of her own songs and her duet with Ariana Grande "Rain on Me." She even managed to sound good singing and dancing while wearing a mask through multiple costume changes.

The singer and actress was recognized for philanthropy and her activism on LGBTQ rights, and she asked fans to think about what defines them.

"I wish for you to think right now of three things that define who you are and take a moment to reward yourself for your bravery," she said. "This has not been an easy year for a lot of people, but what I see in the world is a massive triumph of courage."

## DISCO FEVER FOR BTS

Pop all-stars BTS, who won multiple awards including best pop and best group, threw it back to the disco nights of NYC with their first ever performance at the VMAs.

With the debut of their English language song, "Dynamite," the seven band members showed off their impressive footwork while clad in wide bottomed suits and ties in front of images of famous city landmarks like Times Square and the Brooklyn Bridge.

Their highly anticipated performance definitely lit up the night just like the song has been lighting up the charts. The group shouted out to their worldwide fans, the BTS Army, after winning the best pop award.

## **Patriot Prayer no stranger to protests in Northwest**

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The man who was fatally shot in Portland, Oregon, as supporters of President Donald Trump skirmished with Black Lives Matter protesters was a supporter of a right-wing group called Patriot Prayer, which doesn't have a big national footprint but is well known in the Pacific Northwest.

Patriot Prayer's founder, Joey Gibson, has held pro-Trump rallies repeatedly in Portland and other cities since 2016. The events have drawn counterprotesters from around the region and had heightened ten-

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sions in Portland long before Black Lives Matter demonstrators began nearly 100 days of nightly protests over the police killing of George Floyd.

The shooting victim was identified by Gibson as Aaron "Jay" Danielson of Portland. Photos taken of the body show he was wearing a Patriot Prayer hat. Police have released few details and pleaded with the public on Sunday to come forward with any information about the shooting.

Danielson also went by the name Jay Bishop, according to a statement on Patriot Prayer's Facebook page. Gibson, a one-time Senate candidate, founded Patriot Prayer in 2016. In past interviews with The Associated Press, Gibson has said he and his group are not a hate group and simply want to exercise their freedom of speech without interference from left-wing groups or protesters.

The group became a prominent presence in Portland in the summer of 2017, when Gibson organized a large rally in the city less than a week after a white supremacist fatally stabbed two men who had come to the defense of two Black teenagers — including one wearing a Muslim head-covering — on a light-rail train.

The defendant Jeremy Christian, who was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences earlier this year, had attended a Patriot Prayer rally several months before, but was kicked out by organizers for flashing Nazi hand signs.

Patriot Prayer held several other marches and rallies in Portland in 2017 and 2018 and Gibson was arrested for felony rioting last summer on a charge related to a brawl that broke out between the group's supporters and left-wing activists at a pub after a May Day march in the city.

He has pleaded not guilty; a judge this week denied his motion for a change of venue at trial, according to court records.

In a video that was live-streamed on Facebook last summer after he was released on bail, Gibson urged his supporters to "show up one hundred-fold" at a rally scheduled for the following day in Portland that was organized by the Proud Boys — a group that's been designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center — and other right-wing groups such as the Three Percenters and the American Guard.

Gibson told the AP he was again present late Saturday in Portland when a caravan of about 600 Trump supporters drove through the city, sparking clashes in the streets with Black Lives Matter demonstrators.

Gibson did not appear to have a part in organizing the caravan, however. In a video on Twitter, organizer Alex Kyzik said before the rally that those who attended should not openly carry their weapons.

The same person organized a similar rally in Boise on Aug. 22. There were no public records available for a man named Alex Kyzik in Boise, Idaho, and it was unclear if that was his real name.

Videos taken before the shooting show people squaring off for fist fights and Trump supporters firing bear spray and paintballs at counterprotesters, who in return throw objects at the trucks and attempt to block their progress by standing in intersections.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said when Trump supporters want to come to Portland to rally, there is nothing the city can do to prevent them.

"It's no secret to anybody that I personally am not a Trump supporter, but I will defend to the death the right of a Trump supporter to stand outside my apartment and non-violently demonstrate in support of their candidate. That's core to American democracy," Wheeler said.

"So when people say they want to come into the city in a caravan supporting their presidential candidate, we cannot tell them no. They have constitutional rights to be here — rights, which I embrace and support. The violence, however, is the problem."

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

## Uncertainty dominates presidential campaign's final stretch

By STEVE PEOPLES, ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Within President Donald Trump's campaign, some privately feared the worst heading into the national conventions.

They worried a strong showing by Democrat Joe Biden, combined with an underwhelming performance by

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Trump, would lock in the certainty of a blowout loss that would essentially end the election by September.

But as the candidates move beyond trouble-free conventions and into the final phase of the 2020 election season, both sides acknowledge the contest is tightening. And after months of running an almost entirely virtual campaign because of the pandemic, Biden has decided to launch a new phase of in-person events to help blunt any Trump gains.

"This campaign has always known that it's going to be a close race, it's going to be a tough race," Biden's senior adviser Anita Dunn said, noting that no Democratic presidential candidate since 1964 has earned more than 52.9% of the vote.

She added: "It's a polarized nation and we expect this kind of tightening."

That leaves Democrats and Republicans preparing for a 64-day sprint to the finish that is widely expected to be one of the most turbulent and chaotic periods in modern American history.

Each side cast the other as an existential threat to America's future as they offered voters starkly different versions of reality over the last two weeks of carefully scripted conventions.

Democrats attacked Trump as an incompetent racist with autocratic tendencies who is failing to protect the nation from the pandemic as he actively undermines democracy. Republicans largely ignored the pandemic while attacking Joe Biden as a senile lifetime politician controlled by his party's far-left wing and incapable of protecting suburban voters from mobs of protesters.

"America doesn't feel like one country with all the chaos and division," former Democratic presidential contender Pete Buttigieg said in an interview.

"We should be ready for literally anything in the next couple months," he said. "2020 isn't done serving up shocks and surprises."

Rarely have such dire variables loomed over the closing weeks of an election.

A pandemic that has already killed 180,000 Americans shows little sign of slowing. A scuffling economy has pushed 28 million onto the unemployment rolls with tens of thousands of businesses feared permanently closed. Continued police violence against unarmed Black people has sparked sweeping civil rights protests and new incidents of protest-related violence on the streets.

There are the natural disasters: A hurricane pummeled the Gulf Coast last week, massive forest fires are burning California, and powerful derecho winds slammed Iowa's farming industry.

And what worries government watchdogs the most: Trump is openly undermining the integrity of the election by raising unfounded concerns about voting by mail to avoid long waits at polling places during the pandemic.

Amid the chaos, Miles Taylor, a lifetime Republican who previously served as chief of staff inside the Trump administration's Department of Homeland Security, warned there is nothing that the Republican president will not do or say to defeat Biden.

"Put nothing past Donald Trump," Taylor told The Associated Press. "He will do anything to win. If that means climbing over other people, climbing over his own people, or climbing over U.S. law, he will do it. People are right to be concerned."

Among the many crises shaping the fall campaign, racial tensions have emerged as a critical factor that could decide Trump's fate.

Trump's campaign believes it is benefiting from sometimes violent protests in Wisconsin that followed a white police officer shooting Jacob Black, a Black Man, seven times, leaving him paralyzed. The president has repeatedly cast protesters as angry mobs that threaten America's suburbs, an argument with racist undertones aimed at strengthening Trump's diminished standing with older voters and suburban women.

As part of his "law and order" message, Trump has consistently sided with police over their African American victims. He plans to visit the site of the latest violent clash, Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Tuesday.

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King III likened Trump's rhetoric on race — and his party's efforts to make it more difficult to vote this fall — to the efforts of Republican leaders like Richard Nixon prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. It's unclear if 2020 America will have as much tolerance for the message that resonated a half century ago.

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"It's just straight racism," King said of Trump's rhetoric and record. "The hands of the clock are going backwards."

Meanwhile, the candidates are unleashing dramatically different campaigns upon voters as they navigate the pandemic.

After almost completely avoiding campaign travel since early March, Biden will resume in-person campaigning on Monday in Pennsylvania. He'll make subsequent appearances in battleground states "where it's safe," Dunn confirmed, noting that some states have strict limits on public gatherings. Biden himself has cited plans to campaign in at least four states: Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota and Pennsylvania, although the specific schedule remains a work in progress.

He is expected to rely on smaller events in which attendees would adhere to strict social distancing measures and wear masks.

"You saw all those people at the White House the other night without masks," Dunn said. "You're not going to see that at a Joe Biden event."

Biden's team is not currently planning to resume in-person canvassing efforts, usually the lifeblood of campaigns, in which armies of paid staff and volunteers talk face-to-face with prospective supporters at their doorsteps. The campaign instead has more than 2,000 paid staff and many more volunteers making phone calls and messaging voters.

On the other side, Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel said the GOP has been actively courting voters in person for weeks and would continue to do so, despite the pandemic's mounting death toll.

"We've now ramped up to about 2 million volunteers that have been activated. We're knocking a million doors a week," McDaniel told The Associated Press. "Biden has chosen to forego that. They're knocking zero doors a week."

Trump plans to begin a breakneck campaign schedule featuring larger events in the coming days and weeks. He's grown fond of rallies inside airport hangars, which are arguably safer from a health perspective given they are partially open-air; they also allow the president to energize his crowds by pulling up in Air Force One.

The president will continue to highlight the civil unrest in response to police brutality in Wisconsin and elsewhere, according to Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien, who described the Republican message against their Democratic challenger this way: "We'll match the president's leadership and record against Joe Biden, who is a weak puppet of the extreme left, afraid to stand up to anti-police rioters, and bowing to radicals to raise taxes and drag the country toward socialism."

Trump aides privately crowed about Biden's decision to resume campaigning, believing it demonstrates concern about a tightening race that could lead to public stumbles from the gaff-prone former vice president.

They also pointed to Biden's plans to campaign in Minnesota, describing it as evidence of a narrowing race even in a state Trump lost four years ago. The president's position is improving throughout the Midwest, aides believe, although Minnesota and Michigan remain much steeper climbs than Wisconsin, Ohio or, further east, Pennsylvania.

Trump's team believes he can afford to lose Michigan and Pennsylvania, so long as he carries Wisconsin and the rest of his 2016 states — including one Maine congressional district.

Meanwhile, Biden is betting he can keep his party's many disparate factions united behind his White House bid.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who competed against Biden in the Democratic primary, hosted a series of online events over the weekend designed to refocus his party's final-weeks message on health care and income inequality.

"That's an issue I will talk about. I think other Democrats have got to talk about that also," Sanders said in an interview.

The Vermont senator's weekend appearances mark the beginning of what he described as a more active role designed to highlight progressive priorities.



"This is not only the most important election in our lifetimes, it is the most important election in modern American history," Sanders said. "Our job right now is to elect Biden. And the day after he is inaugurated we are going to rally the American people to make certain that we implement the most progressive agenda in modern American history."

Miller reported from Washington.

## In aftermath of Hurricane Laura, residents worry about help

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

LAKE CHARLES, La. (AP) — In a matter of hours last week, Hurricane Laura tore through the tire shop Layla Winbush's family started just under a year ago, reducing most of it to rubble and scattering hundreds of tires across the lot. The storm also damaged her home, which now reeks of mold.

Federal and state officials are now on the ground to help residents with home repairs and hotel stays. But Winbush said she feels alone, particularly after seeing a video of President Donald Trump, who visited the area Saturday, joking with Gulf Coast officials that they could sell copies of his signature for \$10,000.

"We can't depend on the president. We can't depend on nobody," she said. "We'll just take what we have and get it done."

As evacuated Lake Charles residents began returning home, many worried that they wouldn't have enough support from the both the federal and state governments as they face a rebuilding process certain to take several months, if not longer.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards on Sunday warned that residents were in for a long recovery.

"We're going to be working really, really hard on the power outages, on the water systems, on the housing," he said at a news conference. "But none of this is going to be easy. It's not going to happen as quickly as most people would like for sure."

Crews were starting to take chain saws to fallen trees and patch roofs, but most homes in Lake Charles wrecked by the storm were still untouched. The Category 4 hurricane, which made landfall Thursday just south of Lake Charles near Cameron, Louisiana, before abating nearly 12 hours later, packed 150-mph (240-kph) winds and a storm surge that officials said was as high as 15 feet (4.5 meters) in some areas.

So far 18 deaths in Texas and Louisiana have been attributed to the storm; more than half of those people were killed by carbon monoxide poisoning from the unsafe operation of generators.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency sent hundreds of workers to the region to help with search and rescue and other efforts. As of Sunday, more than 52,500 people had applied for FEMA assistance, and the agency had conducted over 200 home inspections and distributed more than \$650,000 in assistance, said Tony Robinson, FEMA's administrator for the region. The Louisiana National Guard, meanwhile, had handed out hundreds of thousands of bottles of water and meals and about 14,000 tarps, the governor said.

But the needs were substantial. In hard-hit Calcasieu Parish, some waited hours in line for tarps, water and other supplies at distribution sites, said parish spokesperson Tom Hoefler. The entire parish had been without power, and in many areas, including the parish seat of Lake Charles that's home to more than 78,000 people, water had not been flowing from taps, he said. Several residents Sunday said the water supply was still intermittent.

Crews will have to rebuild hundreds of transmission towers along with resetting downed power poles and lines, clearing debris and assessing damage, said Scott Aaronson, vice president of security and preparedness for the Edison Electric Institute, the association of investor-owned electric companies in the U.S. The association said roughly 409,000 customers were still without power late Sunday as a result of the storm.

Many people in Lake Charles were still staying outside town, but James Townley said he would remain in his home, as he did during the storm.

The front of his trailer had been blown away, leaving a single toilet exposed to the elements.

Townley lay on a sofa in front of a fan — connected to a neighbor's generator — circulating hot, humid air. The 56-year-old's shirt was off, revealing scars from the open-heart surgery he had several years ago.

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He said he was out of medication for his heart and kidneys and had requested aid from FEMA — but not heard back.

“I’m just going to sit here and do what I can do,” he said. “Maybe I’ll make it, maybe I won’t.”

One silver pickup truck winding through Lake Charles’ streets carried four generations of a single family — six people inside the cab and three riding on the flatbed along with suitcases and bags filled with belongings. The family was visiting the homes where they each lived for the first time since the storm, assessing what they had lost and what had been spared.

Driving the pickup was 53-year-old Patricia Mingo Lavergne. She was worried about how her home had fared, but also where everyone would sleep Sunday night.

When Lavergne parked outside the house she shares with her husband, a duplex just north of the train tracks bisecting the city, several family members began to pray and wipe away tears.

The pecan tree that long shaded her front yard had cracked and fallen in front of the front door. Insulation had burst through the ceiling and fallen in tufts over one bedroom. In another room, she pulled out two drawers filled with neatly folded clothes saved for her daughter’s child, due in January. She wiped a mix of sweat and tears with her shirt.

Eventually, everyone in the family was able to find a place to stay. They have requested help from FEMA, but Lavergne said she didn’t have a checking account in which to receive federal money.

“It’s frustrating,” she said. “I’ve already been going through a lot and this is a lot more on my shoulders.”

Winbush, 19, and her family were staying with relatives in Beaumont, Texas, over an hour’s drive away. Her mother, Monique Benjamin, stood with Winbush and two of her siblings in front of what was left of the tire shop.

Benjamin and Winbush stayed cheerful as they described all the services the shop offered and the successes they had building it. The business is insured.

“Even though we may cry in the restroom and wipe our faces later, we got to stay strong,” Benjamin said.

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Thanawala reported from Atlanta.

## Trump seizes on protests as Dems blame him for tensions

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats accused President Donald Trump of trying to inflame racial tensions and incite violence to benefit his campaign after he praised supporters who clashed with protesters during a deadly night in Portland, Oregon. and announced he will travel to Kenosha, Wisconsin, amid anger over the shooting of another Black man by police.

Trump unleashed a flurry of tweets and retweets the day after a man identified as a supporter of a right-wing group was shot and killed in Portland. The city has been the site of months of daily protests, and a large caravan of Trump supporters and Black Lives Matter protesters clashed Saturday night. Trump praised the caravan participants as “GREAT PATRIOTS!” and retweeted what appeared to be the dead man’s name along with a message to “Rest in peace.”

Trump also retweeted those who blamed the city’s Democratic mayor for the death.

“The people of Portland, like all other cities & parts of our great Country, want Law & Order,” Trump wrote Sunday. “The Radical Left Democrat Mayors, like the dummy running Portland, or the guy right now in his basement unwilling to lead or even speak out against crime, will never be able to do it!”

Trump has throughout the summer cast American cities as under siege by violence and lawlessness, despite the fact that most of the demonstrations against racial injustice have been largely peaceful. With about nine weeks until Election Day, some of his advisers see an aggressive “law and order” message as the best way for the president to turn voters against his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, and regain the support of suburban voters, particularly women, who have abandoned him. But Democrats accuse Trump of rooting for unrest and trying to stoke further violence for political gain instead of seeking to ratchet down tensions.

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"He may think that war in our streets is good for his reelection chances, but that is not presidential leadership — or even basic human compassion," Biden said in a statement responding to the shooting, in which he "unequivocally" condemned violence on all side, while accusing Trump of "recklessly encouraging" it.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, a Democrat, blamed Trump for the tensions.

"Do you seriously wonder, Mr. President, why this is the first time in decades that America has seen this level of violence?" he asked at a televised news conference. "It's you who have created the hate and the division."

Trump has cast the upcoming election as clash between "law and order" and anarchy, and he has denounced protesters as "thugs" while sharply defending police. That theme was front-and-center at last week's Republican National Convention, which used recent protest footage to paint a foreboding and violent picture of the future if Biden denies Trump a second term.

Trump is expected to continue to hit that theme when he travels Tuesday to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where tensions are still raw after police shot Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, in the back seven times, leaving him paralyzed. The shooting has ignited new demonstrations against racial injustice and police brutality months after George Floyd's death at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer touched off a wider reckoning on race.

Trump will be meeting with law enforcement officers and "surveying" the damage in the city, where businesses have been vandalized and some buildings burned during demonstrations, White House spokesman Judd Deere announced.

But Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, asked Trump to reconsider in a letter Sunday.

"I, along with other community leaders who have reached out, are concerned about what your presence will mean for Kenosha and our state. I am concerned your presence will only hinder our healing. I am concerned your presence will only delay our work to overcome division and move forward together," Evers wrote.

Earlier Sunday, Rep. Karen Bass, a California Democrat who leads the Congressional Black Caucus, said Trump is "doing everything he can to fan the flames."

"I think his visit has one purpose, and one purpose only. And that is to agitate things and to make things worse," Bass said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union." "It is clear his campaign is all about law and order. It is a throwback to the past. And he's going to do everything to disrupt law and order in this time period."

Deere responded to the critics saying, "The only people to blame for the violence and riots in our streets are liberal politicians and their incompetent policies that have failed to get control of these destructive situations."

It took days for Trump to weigh in on Blake's shooting, which was captured on cellphone video, and even then he had little to say.

"Well, I'm looking into it very strongly. I'll be getting reports," he said in an interview in New Hampshire Friday. "It was not a good sight. I didn't like the sight of it, certainly, and I think most people would agree with that."

Trump offered similar words — "We're looking at it very, very carefully" — when asked Saturday about Kyle Rittenhouse, the white 17-year-old who has been charged with fatally shooting two protesters and wounding a third Tuesday after he traveled to Kenosha, apparently to defend the city from protesters. Attorneys representing Rittenhouse, who was seen walking with an assault-style rifle, have said he acted in self-defense.

But Trump on Sunday appeared to lend support to the teenager when he liked a retweet of a series of messages that began, "Kyle Rittenhouse is a good example of why I decided to vote for Trump."

The circumstances of Saturday night's shooting in Portland remain unclear. Video from the city shows sporadic fighting between the groups, with Trump supporters firing paintball pellets at opponents and using bear spray as counterprotesters threw things at the Trump caravan.

The man killed was a member of Patriot Prayer, a right-wing group whose members have frequently clashed with protesters in Portland in the past, its founder, Joey Gibson, said Sunday. He identified the

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victim as Aaron "Jay" Danielson and called him a "good friend," but provided no details. Danielson apparently also went by the name Jay Bishop, according to Patriot Prayer's Facebook page.

Trump retweeted the victim's name and wrote, "Rest in peace Jay!"

Associated Press writers Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon; Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin; and Laurie Kellman and Will Weissert in Washington contributed to this report.

## Lady Gaga dominates at MTV VMAs, The Weeknd wins top award

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Lady Gaga cleaned house at the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards, while The Weeknd took home the top prize — and both pop stars sent important messages to viewers about the current state of the world: "Wear a mask" and "Justice for Jacob Blake and Breonna Taylor."

Gaga won five honors Sunday, most of them for her No. 1 hit with Ariana Grande, "Rain on Me," which the pop stars performed live for the first time.

"Wear a mask. It's a sign of respect," Gaga said during one of her several appearances onstage as she accepted awards like artist of the year, song of the year and the MTV Tricon award.

With an electronic mask, Gaga performed a medley of her songs, including "Stupid Love," "Chromatica II" and "911." She and Grande were joined by a number of background dancers all wearing masks.

The Weeknd, the first performer of the night, paid tribute to Blake and Taylor — two Black people who were shot by police officers — after winning video of the year and best R&B for "Blinding Lights."

"It's really hard for me to celebrate right now and enjoy this moment, so I'm just going to say: justice for Jacob Blake and justice for Breonna Taylor," he said.

The VMAs kicked off with another touching moment, as host Keke Palmer told viewers the show was dedicated to Chadwick Boseman, who died Friday at age 43 after privately battling colon cancer for four years.

"We dedicate tonight's show to a man whose spirit touched so many. He's a true hero, not just on-screen," Palmer said. "His impact lives forever."

The show also took moments to honor Juice WRLD and Pop Smoke, rappers who died in recent months though their current albums continue to dominate the pop charts and streaming services.

The Black Eyed Peas, who closed the two-hour-plus show with Nicky Jam and Tyga, ended their set by saying, "Black Lives Matter." And R&B star H.E.R. won the video for good award for her protest anthem about police brutality and systemic racism, "I Can't Breathe."

"I'm super proud of everybody speaking out on social injustice," H.E.R. said.

But most of the show was dedicated to fun performances — some pre-taped, some filmed in various locations in New York City, though the performance locations weren't always clear. The VMAs were originally supposed to be held at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, but plans changed because of the pandemic.

Colombian singer and best Latin winner Maluma sang from Brooklyn, while The Weeknd performed from Manhattan. Pop all-stars BTS, who won four awards including best pop and best group, performed from South Korea. They were top-notch during the pre-taped performance, which featured their signature, skilled choreography. The seven band members danced and sang in sharp suits, at some points with the backdrop of Times Square behind them.

DaBaby, backed by the dance crew Jabbawockeez, ran through several of his hits, including "Rock Star." During the latter track, he rapped while jumping on top of a police car, with a burning city as his backdrop. And Doja Cat, who was named Push best new artist, gave a futuristic performance of her hits "Say So" and "Like That."

Other performers included Latin boy band CNCO and Miley Cyrus, who ended her performance of "Midnight Sky" by sitting on top of a large disco ball, replicating her viral "Wrecking Ball" clip from 2013.

As for top honors, Grande tied BTS with four wins. Her No. 1 duet with Justin Bieber, "Stuck with U," won best music video from home — one of two new awards MTV established as artists have made shifts because of the pandemic. CNCO won best quarantine performance for "MTV Unplugged at Home."

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Megan Thee Stallion won best hip-hop for "Savage" and Taylor Swift won best direction for "The Man." "This is the very first video that I've ever directed on my own. And I just I'm so grateful for this," Swift said. "I wanted to take an opportunity to say thank to the team who believed in me as a first-time director and made this video with me."

## Trump, Portland mayor blame each other after deadly shooting

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The mayor of Portland, Oregon, and President Donald Trump engaged in a real-time argument Sunday as the president sent a flurry of critical tweets about Ted Wheeler as the mayor was holding a press conference about the fatal shooting of a right-wing supporter in his city the night before.

After Trump called Wheeler, a Democrat, a "fool" and blamed him for allowing violence to proliferate in the liberal city, the visibly angry mayor lashed out at the president, addressing him in the first person through the TV cameras.

"That's classic Trump. Mr. President, how can you think that a comment like that, if you're watching this, is in any way helpful? It's an aggressive stance, it is not collaborative. I certainly reached out, I believe in a collaborative manner, by saying earlier that you need to do your part and I need to do my part and then we both need to be held accountable," Wheeler said.

"Let's work together. Wouldn't that be a message? Donald Trump and Ted Wheeler working together to help move this country forward. Why don't we try that for a change?"

The testy news conference followed a chaotic and volatile 24 hours in Portland that began when a caravan of about 600 vehicles packed with Trump supporters drove through Portland and was met with counterprotesters. Skirmishes broke out between the groups and, about 15 minutes after the caravan left the city, a supporter of the right-wing group Patriot Prayer was fatally shot.

Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson identified the victim as Aaron "Jay" Danielson. He called the victim a "good friend," but provided no further details. Danielson apparently also went by the name Jay Bishop, according to Patriot Prayer's Facebook page.

"We love Jay and he had such a huge heart. God bless him and the life he lived," Gibson said in a Facebook post.

Trump retweeted the victim's name and wrote, "Rest in peace Jay!"

It wasn't clear if the shooting was related to the clashes between Trump supporters and counterprotesters in Portland, which has become a flashpoint in the national Black Lives Matter protests since George Floyd was killed in May and an increasing centerpiece in Trump's law-and-order re-election campaign theme.

Trump and other speakers at last week's Republican National Convention evoked a violent, dystopian future if Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden wins in November and pointed to Portland as a cautionary tale for what would be in store for Americans.

Police have released little information and Chief Chuck Lovell said Sunday that investigators are still gathering evidence, including surveillance video from area businesses. Earlier Sunday, the agency released a plea for any information related to the killing, including videos, photos or eyewitness accounts.

Patriot Prayer is based in Washington state and was founded in 2016. Since early 2017, its supporters have been periodically coming to Portland to hold rallies for Trump, ratcheting up tensions in the liberal city long before the national outrage over Floyd's death sparked more than three months of protests here.

Portland has seen nearly 100 consecutive nights of Black Lives Matter protests and many have ended with vandalism to federal and city property, including police precincts, a county jail, the federal courthouse and City Hall. In July, Trump sent more than 100 federal agents from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to safeguard federal property — a move that instead reinvigorated the protests.

Thousands of people clashed with the federal agents each night for two weeks, as agents lobbed tear gas canisters and pepper spray at the crowds and some protesters tossed fireworks at the agents and shined lasers in their eyes.

Those agents withdrew July 31 but smaller nightly protests have continued in pockets of the city. More than 600 people have been arrested since late May.

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On Sunday, Portland authorities urged people to stay away from the downtown as they try to de-escalate tensions and braced for what promised to be another night of violence. A protest was planned for Sunday night on the city's east side.

Late Sunday Oregon Gov. Kate Brown released details of a plan to address the violence in Portland while protecting free speech. She said the district attorney's office in Multnomah County, which includes Portland, will prosecute serious criminal offenses and the sheriff's office will work with other agencies to hold people arrested for violent behavior and ensure there is adequate jail space. Also, Brown said Oregon State Police will return to Portland to help local police and nearby law enforcement agencies will also be asked to assist.

Trump earlier Sunday appeared to be encouraging his supporters to move into Portland in the wake of the shooting. After the shooting, the president shared a video of his supporters driving into Portland and called those in Saturday's caravan "GREAT PATRIOTS!"

Wheeler begged those who wanted to come to Portland to "seek retribution" to stay away.

"If you're from out of town and you're reading something on social media — if you're reading any facts on social media — they're probably wrong because we don't have all the facts yet," Wheeler said. "They are still assembling the facts. This is not the time to get hotheaded because you read something on Twitter that some guy made up in his mother's basement."

Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf blamed local officials for failing "to protect their communities."

"I'm asking Portland officials, so that's the mayor, that's the governor and that's local law enforcement, to do their job to address any violent activity that is occurring in their streets," Wolf told CBS' "Face the Nation."

Wolf said the federal government was prepared to send agents to Portland and other cities to protect federal buildings and assist police.

Lovell and Wheeler said they had no plans to request National Guard troops but the city is seeking assistance from the sheriff's department and Oregon State Police.

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

## The Latest: Nearly 500K register for free tests in Hong Kong

By The Associated Press undefined

HONG KONG — Hong Kong authorities say nearly half a million people have registered for a free universal coronavirus testing program that is due to begin Tuesday.

Residents registering online have already booked out 80 testing sites located in gymnasiums and community centers for the initial day of the program, according to the government's website. It said other centers still have places if the number of those signing on rises above the 420,000 registered as of late Sunday.

Hong Kong launched the program in an effort to track down paths of infection that have consistently added to case numbers despite strict social distancing and other measures imposed on the densely populated semi-autonomous Chinese city of 7.5 million. All who wish to be tested can do so at no cost.

Hong Kong on Sunday reported another 15 cases of coronavirus and one additional COVID-19 fatality, bringing its totals to 4,801 cases and 88 deaths.

Mainland China on Monday reported 17 new cases found over the previous 24 hours, all of them brought from outside the country. China currently has 237 people being treated in hospital for COVID-19, with another 340 in isolation after testing positive for the virus without displaying symptoms. China has reported 4,634 deaths among 85,048 cases of COVID-19 since novel coronavirus was first detected late last year in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

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

— Fad or future? Telehealth expansion eyed beyond pandemic

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- What happens when pandemic locks down a globe-trotting pope?
- German leaders condemn far-right attempt to storm Reichstag
- Voting groups scramble to reach U.S. college students in pandemic

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

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has counted its 18th straight day of triple-digit daily jumps in coronavirus cases as its health minister warned about an increase in transmissions gone untraced, and infections among senior citizens.

The 248 new cases reported by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Monday brought the national caseload to 19,947, including 324 deaths.

KCDC said 187 of the new cases came from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, which have been at the center of the viral resurgence this month.

But infections were also reported in major cities across the country, including Busan, Daejeon, Ulsan and Daegu, which was the epicenter of the country's previous major outbreak in late February and March that was stabilized by April.

Health Minister Park Neung-hoo during a virus meeting said it has become difficult for epidemiological workers to track transmissions and predict infection routes, saying they haven't been able to trace the infection source of more than 20% of the cases found in the past two weeks.

Officials are also concerned that the death toll could rise because many of those who tested positive this month were 60 years or older, an age group that's more likely to experience serious health complications caused by the virus.

MELBOURNE, Australia — Victoria on Monday recorded its deadliest day of the pandemic as the Australian government urged the hot spot state to announce plans to lift lockdown restrictions.

Victoria's health department reported 41 deaths and 73 new COVID-19 infections in the latest 24-hour period.

The death toll eclipses the previous record of 25 set on Aug. 17. The tally of new infections is the lowest since 67 new cases were recorded on June 30 in the early weeks of the second wave of the pandemic.

A six-week lockdown in the state capital Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city, is due to be relaxed on Sept. 13. But the state government has not said how it will be relaxed or given any assurances that it won't be extended.

Australia's Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said on Monday he disagreed with the Victorian government that it was too early to announce plans to reopen the economy.

"Business is very frustrated because they haven't been told when can they open up, when can people get back to work," Frydenberg told Nine Network television.

Frydenberg pointed to a Treasury Department forecast that in the next three months more people in Victoria will be receiving pandemic employment subsidies than from the rest of Australia combined. Australia pays employers an allowance known as Job Keeper to continue paying staff who have no work to do.

Consumer spending had fallen 30% in Victoria due to the lockdown while spending had declined by only 3% across the rest of Australia.

LOGAN, Utah — Utah State University plans to test nearly 300 students for COVID-19 after wastewater samples from four dormitories showed elevated levels of the coronavirus, school officials said Sunday.

The 287 students who will be tested Sunday and Monday live in the Rich, Jones, Morgan and Davis dorms on the campus in Logan. There have been no reported positive tests for COVID-19 in those residence halls so far. Students in those dorms must quarantine until the test results are available, which could take

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up to four days.

They are also asked to fill out a form to ensure they receive academic support, food deliveries and other resources. Classes are scheduled to begin on Monday for about 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Utah State is one of a small handful of schools using wastewater sampling to help safeguard against a COVID-19 outbreak, The Salt Lake Tribune reported. Officials with the University of Arizona said Thursday the school used wastewater testing to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak on campus.

A test of just over 300 people in one dorm with elevated levels of coronavirus in the wastewater turned up two cases, said university President Robert Robbins. Neither student had symptoms. They were isolated.

**PHILADELPHIA** — Temple University has announced a two-week halt of in-person classes as Philadelphia officials called on all college and university students in the city to avoid all social gatherings with people outside their households.

Temple officials said Sunday that new test results over the weekend had pushed the number of active COVID-19 cases from the 58 reported Friday to 103 active cases, most of them among people with no symptoms and a small number with mild to moderate flu-like symptoms.

University president Richard Englert said officials believe they are seeing “new cases that result from small social gatherings happening off campus.” He said that prompted the two-week “pause” on in-person classes and a contact tracing effort.

Temple said in-person classes will go online starting Monday and continue online through Friday, Sept. 11, with only classes deemed essential by college deans held in person.

**ATHENS, Greece** — The confirmed number of new coronavirus cases in Greece has exceeded 10,000, and more than half of them were reported this month, Greek health authorities announced Sunday.

Over the past day, there have been 157 new cases confirmed, of which 41 were international arrivals. There were also two deaths.

The total number of cases is now 10,134, of which 5,657 were detected over the past month. The total number of deaths is 262, of which 56 occurred in the past month.

There are 35 patients on ventilators and 149 have exited intensive care.

The government will decide Tuesday on which day schools will open. It will choose between Sept. 7 or the following Monday, Sept. 14. Mask wearing will be mandatory, but some parents are opposed to this.

**OKLAHOMA CITY** — The number of reported coronavirus cases in Oklahoma has surpassed 58,000 and the number of related deaths is nearly 800, the Oklahoma State Department of Health said Sunday.

There are now 58,020 reported cases and 799 deaths due to COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus. The true number of cases in Oklahoma is likely higher because many people have not been tested, and studies suggest people can be infected and not feel sick.

On Friday, Gov. Kevin Stitt extended a state of emergency first issued March 15 in response to the virus outbreak in Oklahoma.

The order includes all 77 counties in the state and activates a provision in state law that allows absentee voters to mail their ballots by verifying their signatures with a copy of an approved identification. An approved ID includes a state driver’s license or a military or federally recognized Indian tribe or nation.

**ROME** — The number of COVID-19 patients in intensive care beds in Italy has been rising in the past few weeks.

On Sunday, 86 persons infected with the coronavirus occupied ICU beds, compared to 38 in late July, as returning vacationers drive up Italy’s numbers of day-to-day new caseloads as well as hospitalizations.

Italy registered 1,365 new infections since Saturday, according to Health Ministry figures. Still, those numbers are low when compared to the daily bulletin early in the pandemic, when thousands of Italians each day were testing positive for COVID-19, and a few thousand were needing intensive care, overwhelm-



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ing hospital staff.

Italy counts 268,218 confirmed infections and 35,477 known deaths, including four in the last 24 hours. After months in which the heaviest concentration of cases occurred in northern Italy, lately many southern regions are seeing sharply rising numbers. On Sunday, Campania, the region which includes the southern metropolis of Naples, had the most new cases in Italy – 270.

**ISLAMABAD** — Pakistani authorities have reported 264 new COVID-19 cases, the country's lowest daily count for the new coronavirus in more than four months.

In a statement Sunday, the national command and control center said only four people died from the new virus in the previous 24 hours, taking overall COVID-19 deaths to 6,288 since the start of the outbreak in February.

However, health officials are still trying to understand the reason for a steady decline in infections in Pakistan, which witnessed twin peaks in June when daily confirmed cases reached up to 6,825.

It was then when hospitals were full amid shortage of medicine, oxygen and ventilators, and even face masks were not easily available.

But the situation suddenly began improving after June and currently about 1,000 COVID-19 patients are being treated in Pakistan.

**PARIS** — Not all French classrooms can safely reopen Tuesday, the education minister acknowledged Sunday, amid a persistent rise in coronavirus infections that is threatening the government's push to get France's 12.9 million schoolchildren back in class.

"It's being decided by a day-by-day analysis based on the health situation of each territory," Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said Sunday on France-Info radio. Some classes will remain closed, he said, but "as few as possible."

A collective of doctors published an appeal Saturday saying the governments' school virus measures aren't strict enough. It urged mask requirements for children as young as six and a mix of online and in-person schooling.

The government wants to reopen all schools starting Tuesday to reduce learning gaps worsened by the spring lockdown, and to get parents back at work and revive the economy.

France reported 5,453 new daily infections Saturday, compared to several hundred a day in May and June. The national health service says the growth is exponential, and neighboring countries have imposed quarantines or testing for people arriving from parts or all of France.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases globally has topped 25 million, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

The U.S. leads the count with 5.9 million cases, followed by Brazil with 3.8 million and India with 3.5 million.

The real number of people infected by the virus around the world is believed to be much higher — perhaps 10 times higher in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — given testing limitations and the many mild cases that have gone unreported or unrecognized.

Global deaths from COVID-19 stand at over 842,000, with the U.S. having the highest number with 182,779, followed by Brazil with 120,262 and Mexico with 63,819.

**NEW DELHI** — India has registered a record new 78,761 coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, the worst single-day spike in the world, as the government continues to further ease pandemic restrictions nationwide.

The Health Ministry on Sunday also reported 948 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities to 63,498.

India now has the fastest-growing daily coronavirus caseload of any country in the world, and has re-

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ported more than 75,000 infections for the fourth consecutive day.

Sunday's surge has raised the country's total virus tally to over 3.5 million and comes at a time when India is reopening its subway networks and allowing sports and religious events in a limited manner from next month as part of efforts to revive the economy.

The crowded subway, a lifeline for millions of people in capital New Delhi, will be reopened in a phased manner from Sept. 7. Schools and colleges will, however, remain closed until the end of September.

The South Asian country has the third-highest caseload after the United States and Brazil, and its fatalities are the fourth-highest.

Even as eight Indian states remain among the worst-hit regions and contribute nearly 73% of the total infections, the virus is now spreading fast in the vast hinterlands, with experts warning that the month of September could be the most challenging.

## Key air monitors offline after Laura hits Louisiana gas hub

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

Hazardous emissions from a chlorine plant fire, abruptly shuttered oil and gas refineries and still-to-be assessed plant damage are seeping into the air after Hurricane Laura, regulators say, but some key state and federal monitors to alert the public of air dangers remain offline in Louisiana.

While the chlorine fire was being monitored as a potential health threat, Louisiana environmental spokesman Greg Langley says he knows of no other major industrial health risks from the storm in the state. He said restoring power and water was a bigger priority.

But some Louisiana residents and environmental advocates say a shortage of solid government information on the state of the air is typical. With dozens of petroleum, petrochemical and other industrial sites, Louisiana is home to communities with some of the nation's highest cancer risks, according to Environmental Protection Agency rankings.

In the Lake Charles area, with refineries, a major natural gas project and other industrial sites, residents "generally don't get any information except what the industry puts out," said Carla Chrisco, a Lake Charles lawyer who evacuated the city before Laura.

The area was among the hardest hit Thursday. Laura struck parts of the Texas-Louisiana coast with up to 150-mph (240 kph) winds and a storm surge that Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said rose as high as 15 feet (4.5 meters).

An electrical outage that deprived hundreds of thousands of people of power and is expected to last weeks has knocked offline the state's stationary air monitors in the storm-battered communities.

Oil and gas facilities that the U.S. Department of Energy says account for 13% of U.S. refinery capacity shut down as a precaution along an industrialized roughly 60-mile stretch from Port Arthur, Texas, to Lake Charles before the hurricane.

The abrupt shutdowns, and eventual restarts, for hurricanes typically mean the emission of up to millions of pounds of additional cancer-causing soot, heavy metals and other hazards from refinery smokestacks.

A fire at a plant making swimming pool chemicals in Westlake, part of the larger Lake Charles area, since Thursday has on occasion sent enough chlorine into the air to be detected by emergency workers' hand-held monitors, Langley said. Chlorine levels were not high enough to warrant evacuation, officials said, although residents of the industrial area around the plant were under orders to shelter inside their homes for days after Laura's landfall.

With debris clogging roads, industry still is assessing damage along the Texas-Louisiana coast. No word of any major industrial threat other than the chlorine plant fire had emerged by three days after Laura. After Hurricane Harvey hit Houston in 2017, confirmation of more than a hundred toxic spills into the air, land and water took days, weeks and months to become public, and many were never investigated.

"In a storm of this magnitude, there's going to be some leaks, there's going to be some spills," Langley said Saturday. "We're still in the process of assessing that. I don't know of anything personally that's major."

Texas has requested the EPA's help overall looking for any so-far undiscovered hazardous air releases

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after the hurricane, but Louisiana, with the exception of the chlorine plant fire, has not, EPA spokesman James Hewitt said.

"EPA stands ready to assist states and local governments who need help, and have already done so following Hurricane Laura," Hewitt said in an email.

Texas made a formal request for air-monitoring help through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hewitt said. As a result, EPA has sent a bus-mounted mobile lab to the Houston area to start monitoring and assessing air for any hazardous emission levels, he said.

Texas also has asked the EPA to deploy a monitoring plane over Port Arthur, where the aircraft will collect infrared images and air readings to help track any damage and releases from the storm damage.

"Information will be provided to the public as it becomes available which follows our standard procedures," the EPA spokesman said.

By Saturday, EPA contractors had left the area of the chlorine plant fire, said Langley, the Louisiana environmental spokesman. An environmental consulting firm would continue to do all air monitoring, he said.

State officials also would be flying over the damaged area to look for obvious leaks, sheens, wayward drums and any other signs of industrial threats, Langley said. "We have a lot of experience in hurricane response, looking for that," he said.

Christina Stephens, a spokeswoman for the Louisiana governor, said Sunday that in addition to hand-held monitors, Louisiana's Department of Environmental Quality also has mobile air labs, although it so far has not deployed them since the storm.

The agency "has the experienced team and the resources ... to assess and respond to environmental issues in the aftermath," Stephens said. If the state also needs EPA resources, "we will not hesitate to call on them."

But some environmental and public health advocates single out Louisiana for what they say is too lax vigilance over industrial threats to the public, even in the best of times.

Louisiana's response since Laura "sounds like it's about what it usually is. Not robust is putting it kindly," said Anne Rolfes in New Orleans, founder of the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, an environmental group.

People are worried about the possibility of toxic releases from the storm, Rolfes said. But over the years, she said, Louisiana residents have come to have "tremendously low expectations, for these institutions that are supposed to be protecting us."

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Knickmeyer reported from Oklahoma City. Associated Press writer Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to reflect that the name of the Louisiana environmental group is the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, not The Bucket Brigades.

## 'Fanning the flames': Dems accuse Trump of stoking violence

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats on Sunday accused President Donald Trump of trying to inflame racial tensions and incite violence to benefit his campaign as he praised supporters who clashed with protesters in Portland, Oregon, where one man died overnight, and announced he will travel to Kenosha, Wisconsin, amid anger over the shooting of another Black man by police.

Trump unleashed a flurry of tweets and retweets the day after a man identified as a supporter of a right-wing group was shot and killed in Portland, where a large caravan of Trump supporters and Black Lives Matter protesters clashed in the city's streets. Trump praised the caravan participants as "GREAT PATRIOTS!" and retweeted what appeared to be the dead man's name along with a message to "Rest in peace."

Trump also retweeted those who blamed the city's Democratic mayor for the death.

"The people of Portland, like all other cities & parts of our great Country, want Law & Order," Trump

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later tweeted. "The Radical Left Democrat Mayors, like the dummy running Portland, or the guy right now in his basement unwilling to lead or even speak out against crime, will never be able to do it!"

Trump has throughout the summer cast American cities as under siege by violence and lawlessness, despite the fact that most of the demonstrations against racial injustice have been largely peaceful. With about nine weeks until Election Day, some of his advisers see an aggressive "law and order" message as the best way for the president to turn voters against his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, and regain the support of suburban voters, particularly women, who have abandoned him. But Democrats accuse Trump of rooting for unrest and trying to stoke further violence for political gain instead of seeking to ratchet down tensions.

"He may think that war in our streets is good for his reelection chances, but that is not presidential leadership — or even basic human compassion," Biden said in a statement responding to the shooting, in which he "unequivocally" condemned violence on all sides, while accusing Trump of "recklessly encouraging" it.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, a Democrat, blamed Trump for the tensions.

"Do you seriously wonder, Mr. President, why this is the first time in decades that America has seen this level of violence?" he asked at a televised news conference. "It's you who have created the hate and the division."

Trump, who appeared to be watching, responded with real-time tweets labeling Wheeler a "wacky Radical Left Do Nothing Democrat."

After a reporter told Wheeler about the tweet, the mayor shot back, "I'd appreciate that the president support us or stay the hell out of the way."

Trump has cast the upcoming election as a clash between "law and order" and anarchy, and he has denounced protesters as "thugs" while sharply defending police. That theme was front-and-center at last week's Republican National Convention, which used recent protest footage to paint a foreboding and violent picture of the future if Biden denies Trump a second term.

Trump is expected to continue to hit that theme when he travels Tuesday to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where tensions are still raw after police shot Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, in the back seven times, leaving him paralyzed. The shooting has ignited new demonstrations against racial injustice and police brutality months after George Floyd's death at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer touched off a wider reckoning on race.

Trump will be meeting with law enforcement officers and "surveying" the damage in the city, where businesses have been vandalized and some buildings burned during demonstrations, White House spokesman Judd Deere announced.

But Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, asked Trump to reconsider in a letter Sunday.

"I, along with other community leaders who have reached out, are concerned about what your presence will mean for Kenosha and our state. I am concerned your presence will only hinder our healing. I am concerned your presence will only delay our work to overcome division and move forward together," Evers wrote in the letter, obtained by The Associated Press.

Earlier Sunday, Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, also expressed concerns about the visit. "I don't know how, given any of the previous statements that the president made, that he intends to come here to be helpful. And we absolutely don't need that right now," Barnes said in an interview with CNN.

Rep. Karen Bass, a California Democrat who leads the Congressional Black Caucus, said Trump is "doing everything he can to fan the flames."

"I think his visit has one purpose, and one purpose only. And that is to agitate things and to make things worse," Bass said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union." "It is clear his campaign is all about law and order. It is a throwback to the past. And he's going to do everything to disrupt law and order in this time period."

Deere responded to the critics saying, "The only people to blame for the violence and riots in our streets are liberal politicians and their incompetent policies that have failed to get control of these destructive situations."

It took days for Trump to weigh in on Blake's shooting, which was captured on cellphone video, and

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even then he had little to say.

"Well, I'm looking into it very strongly. I'll be getting reports," he said in an interview in New Hampshire Friday. "It was not a good sight. I didn't like the sight of it, certainly, and I think most people would agree with that."

Trump offered similar words — "We're looking at it very, very carefully" — when asked Saturday about Kyle Rittenhouse, the white 17-year-old who has been charged with fatally shooting two protesters and wounding a third Tuesday after he traveled to Kenosha, apparently to defend the city from protesters. Attorneys representing Rittenhouse, who was seen walking with an assault-style rifle, have said he acted in self-defense.

But Trump on Sunday appeared to lend support to the teenager when he liked a retweet of a series of messages that began, "Kyle Rittenhouse is a good example of why I decided to vote for Trump."

The circumstances of Saturday night's shooting in Portland remain unclear. Video from the city shows sporadic fighting between the groups, with Trump supporters firing paintball pellets at opponents and using bear spray as counterprotesters threw things at the Trump caravan.

The man killed was a member of Patriot Prayer, a right-wing group whose members have frequently clashed with protesters in Portland in the past, its founder, Joey Gibson, said Sunday. He identified the victim as Aaron "Jay" Danielson and called him a "good friend," but provided no details. Danielson apparently also went by the name Jay Bishop, according to Patriot Prayer's Facebook page.

Trump retweeted the victim's name and wrote, "Rest in peace Jay!"

The White House and its allies, meanwhile, continued to blame local leaders for allowing the protests to rage on night after night.

"When you encourage the disdain for the police, you encourage criminals. When you do little or nothing to stop rioting, you encourage anarchy. So when you are encouraging criminals and anarchy, people's lives are lost," Republican Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin said on CNN's "State of the Union."

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Associated Press writers Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon; Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin; and Laurie Kellman and Will Weissert and Washington contributed to this report.

## United says it will drop widely scorned ticket-change fees

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

United Airlines says it listened to customers and is dropping an unpopular \$200 fee for most people who change a ticket for travel within the United States.

"When we hear from customers about where we can improve, getting rid of fees is often the top request," United CEO Scott Kirby said in a video posted Sunday.

United's move will put pressure on American Airlines and Delta Air Lines to drop their change fees, also \$200 on domestic travel. Delta and American said they are waiving change fees for travel affected by the virus through the year's end. Southwest Airlines does not charge change fees, a policy which its CEO says has helped it gain more business.

United said that it eliminated change fees for people who buy a standard or premium economy ticket for U.S. travel.

United also said that it will extend a broad waiver of change fees — including for international travel — through Dec. 31. Customers who pay the lowest fares, called "basic economy," can also change tickets free because of the extended waiver announced Sunday.

And starting in January, it will let customers fly standby for free on other flights the same day as their booked flight.

The moves come as United and other airlines try desperately to lure people back to flying despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. U.S. air travel has recovered modestly since April, but passenger traffic remains down about 70% from a year ago.

The four largest U.S. airlines lost a combined \$10 billion from April through June. Airlines shared \$25

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billion in federal payroll aid under pandemic relief legislation and are lobbying for \$25 billion more.

United has warned 36,000 employees that they could be furloughed in October. It received \$5 billion in taxpayer money to keep workers on the payroll through September.

Consumer groups have long complained about the array of fees that airlines impose for things that were once part of the fare. Change fees draw particular scorn because, critics say, they far exceed airlines' costs of changing or canceling tickets with a few keystrokes.

Fees on checked bags and ticket changes gained widespread use during an industry downturn in 2008. Since then, airlines have added fees on seats with more legroom, priority boarding and other amenities.

They contributed to a highly profitable run that lasted for a decade, broken only by the pandemic. Now airlines are slashing flights and shrinking work forces to cope with the travel slump.

The United CEO acknowledged that airlines facing tough times have often "made difficult decisions to survive, sometimes at the expense of customer service." Kirby said United is looking to serve customers better this time.

Since 2010, Chicago-based United has scooped up nearly \$6.5 billion in change fees. Last year, it took in \$625 million, third behind Delta and American, according to Transportation Department figures.

In Washington, several lawmakers have launched periodic campaigns to outlaw change fees. In 2018, the Senate approved a bill to prohibit "unreasonable" fees for changing or canceling tickets, but the measure was scuttled in negotiations with the House.

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## For his father: A poignant Alaphilippe win at Tour de France

By JOHN LEICESTER and SAMUEL PETREQUIN AP Sports Writers

NICE, France (AP) — Racing across the finish line at the Tour de France, Julian Alaphilippe kissed his finger and raised it to the sky, dedicating his win Sunday on Stage 2 to his father who died in June.

"I promised myself that I'd win for him," the French rider said.

The tribute and the thrilling manner of his victory showed that even amid the coronavirus crisis, the Tour is still a mighty generator of emotions.

Many of its fans are heeding government pleas to watch the action on TV from the safety of their couches. Those still turning out in towns and villages as the race zooms past are being urged to keep their distance, to prevent the virus from contaminating the riders for whom they cheer through face masks.

And yet, despite all this, the opening weekend of the Tour still set hearts racing, with dramatic spills on the rain-slickened opening day followed by Alaphilippe's poignant win. No one can be sure that the race will negotiate its way through France's worsening infections to the finish in Paris on Sept. 20. Yet the show, for now at least, is most definitely on — with Alaphilippe back in the race leader's iconic yellow jersey, once again showing the way.

Having already done more than any other rider to turn the 2019 edition into a thriller, the darling of French cycling fans again showered the Tour with his class and guile in poaching victory in the picture-postcard Mediterranean city of Nice.

A final burst of acceleration timed with precision enabled Alaphilippe to shake two pursuers and hold off the main pack of riders furiously gaining ground on the finishing straight.

Deprived of wins since his fan-beguiling feats last summer left him drained, Alaphilippe is talking down any hope of winning the overall title in Paris. But he intends to cling to the prized jersey for as long as possible and proved last year that once on his shoulders, it's tough to peel off. He held the race lead for 14 days.

"The yellow jersey has to be respected," he said. "I will defend it with honor."

The stage win was his fifth in four Tours. Alaphilippe had identified the 186-kilometer (115.5-mile) Stage 2, looping over mountains to the north of Nice and with hill-climbs before the finish, as particularly suited to his punchy, aggressive style. He and his Deceuninck-Quick Step team executed their plan like clockwork.

With teammate Bob Jungels leading the way on the final climb, up to the Quatre Chemins pass on the

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outskirts of Nice, Alaphilippe first positioned himself in his slipstream. He then raced off with a sharp acceleration on a right-hand bend, quickly opening a gap. He was chased down by Swiss rider Marc Hirschi and Briton Adam Yates, setting up a three-way fight for the stage victory.

Speeding into central Nice, past huge yachts parked in its harbor and along the stunning seafront overlooking the Mediterranean's azure waters, they collaborated in a strong headwind to keep the chasing pack at bay.

Alaphilippe adjusted his helmet and tightened his shoes as the trio then played a waiting game to see which of them would be first to place the final winning burst of speed. Alaphilippe outfoxed his pursuers with his acceleration, holding off Hirschi's late charge. Yates was third.

"I asked my team to make the race hard," Alaphilippe said. "There weren't many riders left in the last climb. I gave it all. I had nothing to lose. This is the victory that I was missing. The yellow jersey is the icing on the cake."

Afterward, slumped by the roadside, he burst into tears. One of his teammates, Dries Devenyns, was awed by the manner of the win.

"I stopped on the side of the road to watch the last 500 meters on a spectator's smartphone," he said. "I shouted when he won. He already did two weeks in yellow last year, we have it again, we are going to protect it as much as we can."

Overall, Alaphilippe has a four-second lead over Yates, with Hirschi in third place three seconds further back ahead of Monday's hilly Stage 3 from Nice to Sisteron.

The race lost three riders to the spate of crashes on Stage 1. Many rode Sunday with bandages and painful injuries, including a broken rib for Dutch rider Wout Poels and a fracture at the base of the spine for David De La Cruz from Spain.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Home smashed: For one family, Hurricane Laura the 3rd strike

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

HACKBERRY, La. (AP) — Bradley Beard calls Hurricane Laura his third strike.

In 2005, Rita pushed a foot of floodwaters into his white, wooden home in Hackberry, Louisiana, a tiny Cameron Parish community 15 miles (24 kilometers) from the Gulf of Mexico.

Next came Ike in 2008, which pushed water up to the floor of the long mobile home where his daughter and two granddaughters live on the same property.

Laura outstripped them both. It tore his house entirely off its foundation and dropped it a few feet away. The trailer where his daughter, Nicole, lives with her two daughters was torn apart, the walls demolished to reveal a mix of clothes, belongings, and wooden planks. About the only things still in their place were a canoe and a garbage can, tied to a steel grill buried in the ground.

A retired welder who worked at many of the refineries that dot the Louisiana coast, the 62-year-old Beard climbed through the debris, laboring with two artificial knees. After several minutes working to turn off the property's water lines, he sat on a fallen log and wiped the sweat from his brow.

"I got no other place," he said. "This is all I got."

Across Cameron Parish, the coastal parish where Hurricane Laura crashed ashore early Thursday, residents dug through what was left of their belongings, covered now-stripped roofs with tarps, and took stock of the damage.

The Category 4 storm packed 150-mph (240-kph) winds and a storm surge that Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said was as high as 15 feet (4.5 meters). Louisiana officials reported two additional deaths on Sunday, bringing the total number of deaths attributed to the storm in Louisiana and Texas to 18; more than half of those were killed by carbon monoxide poisoning.

The deaths reported Sunday include a 57-year-old man in Calcasieu Parish who suffered a head injury after falling from a roof, the Louisiana Department of Health said. Another Calcasieu Parish resident died

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from carbon monoxide poisoning.

As of Sunday morning, roughly 460,000 customers were still without power, according to the Edison Electric Institute, the association of investor-owned electric companies in the U.S.

President Donald Trump visited Louisiana and Texas on Saturday to show his support and assess the damage.

Edwards called Laura the most powerful hurricane to strike Louisiana, a shocking assessment in a state where Hurricane Katrina made landfall on Aug. 29, 2005. Out in western Louisiana it is the storm that came ashore a month after Katrina — Hurricane Rita — that evokes strong memories.

The damage wrought by Laura reminded many residents of Rita, which made landfall in the parish and wiped out many communities entirely, leading to one of the largest evacuations in American history.

Nicole Beard had her second daughter by cesarean section two weeks before Rita hit.

"I evacuated for Rita with a newborn baby and stitches in my stomach," she said.

Many people never returned to Cameron Parish, whose population fell 30% in the 2010 census, the first taken after the storm. The Beards' next-door neighbors left for good. But the Beards stayed.

Most people in Cameron Parish said they got out ahead of Laura, a storm that forecasters warned was "unsurvivable."

Roberta Holmes, 67, was one of the very few who decided to ride out the hurricane on Gulf Breeze Beach, on the Cameron Parish shoreline. Standing on her deck overlooking the Gulf of Mexico on Saturday, Holmes described sitting in a red leather recliner next to a window facing the water. She was confident that the home rebuilt after Rita was strong enough to withstand this storm.

Her home ended up suffering just minor damage, though the storm did uproot two palm trees she planted in front — which she christened "Rita" and "Ike."

"I knew what it would take to survive," she said.

Now that the floodwaters have receded, Highway 27 leading from Lake Charles into Hackberry and the other small towns closer to the Gulf was a bustle of activity as utility workers and people pulling trailers or boats drove back and forth. The shelves were largely bare at Brown's Grocery Store, across the street from the Beards' property, and there's been no electricity to pump the gas.

Not far away is a sprawling liquefied natural gas facility that Trump visited in 2019.

The Beards weren't sure yet how they would rebuild. Bradley Beard lives on Social Security, and Nicole Beard works at a local alligator farm that ships hides internationally.

She has applied for federal aid and is hopeful that volunteers and faith groups that ordinarily respond to disasters will be able to help them clear the wreckage.

For now, they are sifting through their jumbled belongings for whatever can be salvaged, leaving food for their cat who has so far refused to come out from under the rubble. Nicole's daughters filled a garbage bag each with clothes. She found her high school graduation tassel inside the trailer, her class year of 1999 shining in gold against the blue thread.

Her daughters insist that they stay in Cameron Parish. But she said: "I don't know how many times you can restart from scratch."

## Fad or future? Telehealth expansion eyed beyond pandemic

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Telehealth is a bit of American ingenuity that seems to have paid off in the coronavirus pandemic. Medicare temporarily waived restrictions predating the smartphone era and now there's a push to make telemedicine widely available in the future.

Consultations via tablets, laptops and phones linked patients and doctors when society shut down in early spring. Telehealth visits dropped with the reopening, but they're still far more common than before.

Permanently expanding access will involve striking a balance between costs and quality, dealing with privacy concerns and potential fraud, and figuring out how telehealth can reach marginalized patients, including people with mental health problems.



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"I don't think it is ever going to replace in-person visits, because sometimes a doctor needs to put hands on a patient," said Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and the Trump administration's leading advocate for telehealth.

Caveats aside, "it's almost a modern-day house call," she added.

"It's fair to say that telemedicine was in its infancy prior to the pandemic, but it's come of age this year," said Murray Aitken of the data firm IQVIA, which tracks the impact.

In the depths of the coronavirus shutdown, telehealth accounted for more than 40% of primary care visits for patients with traditional Medicare, up from a tiny 0.1% sliver before the public health emergency. As the government's flagship health care program, Medicare covers more than 60 million people, including those age 65 and older, and younger disabled people.

A recent poll of older adults by the University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation found that more than 7 in 10 are interested in using telehealth for follow-ups with their doctor, and nearly 2 out of 3 feel comfortable with video conferences.

But privacy was an issue, especially for those who hadn't tried telehealth. The poll found 27% of older adults who had not had a telemedicine visit were concerned about privacy, compared with 17% of those who tried it.

Those who tried telehealth weren't completely sold. About 4 in 5 were concerned the doctor couldn't physically examine them, and 64% worried the quality wasn't as good.

"After the initial excitement, in the afterglow, patients realize 'I can't get my vaccine,' or 'You can't see this thing in the back of my throat over the computer,'" said Dr. Gary LeRoy of Dayton, Ohio, a primary care doctor and president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

For Medicare beneficiary Jean Grady of Westford, Vermont, telemedicine was a relief. She needed a checkup required by Medicare to continue receiving supplies for her wearable insulin pump. Being in a high risk group for COVID-19, Grady worried about potential exposure in a doctor's waiting room, and even more about losing her diabetes supplies if she missed Medicare's checkup deadline.

"I would have had to go back to taking insulin by syringe," she said.

Grady prepared for the virtual visit by calling her clinician's tech department and downloading teleconference software. She says she would do some future visits by video, but not all. For example, people with diabetes need periodic blood tests, and their feet must be checked for signs of circulatory problems.

Still, quite a few follow-ups "could be done very efficiently and be just as useful to the physician and myself as going in and seeing them in person," Grady said.

Many private insurance plans, including those in Medicare Advantage, offer some level of telemedicine coverage.

But traditional Medicare has restricted it to rural residents, who generally had to travel to specially designated sites to connect.

Under the coronavirus public health emergency, the administration temporarily waived Medicare's restrictions so enrollees anywhere could use telemedicine. Patients could connect from home. Making such changes permanent would require legislation from Congress, but there's bipartisan interest.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, says he'd like to see broader access, without breaking the bank.

"Our job should be to ensure that change is done with the goals of better outcomes and better patient experiences, at a lower cost," said Alexander, R-Tenn.

That's a tall order.

Payment will be a sticky obstacle. For now, Medicare is paying clinicians on par for virtual and in-person visits.

"Policymakers seems to be in a rush to pass legislation, but I think it is worth taking a little more time," said Juliette Cubanski, a Medicare expert with the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. "Fraud is one big area that policymakers need to be cognizant of."

Fraud-busters agree.

Telehealth is so new that "we don't have at this point a real sense of where the huge risks lie," said Andrew VanLandingham, a senior lawyer with the Health and Human Services inspector general's office.

"We are sort of in an experimental phase."

Despite the risks, advocates see opportunities.

Expanded Medicare telehealth could:

—help move the nation closer to a long-sought goal of treating mental health the same as physical conditions. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., wants to use telemedicine as a springboard to improve mental health care. IQVIA data shows 60% of psychiatric consults took place by telehealth during the shutdown.

—increase access for people living in remote communities, in low-income urban areas and even nursing homes. Medicare's research shows low-income beneficiaries have had similar patterns of using telehealth for primary care as program enrollees overall.

—improve coordination of care for people with chronic health conditions, a goal that requires patient and persistent monitoring. Chronic care accounts for most program spending.

University of Michigan health policy expert Mark Fendrick says Medicare should figure out what services add value for patients' health and taxpayers' wallets, and pay just for those.

Telehealth "was an overnight sensation," said Fendrick. "Hopefully it's not a one-hit wonder."

## French virus surge threatens nationwide back-to-school plan

By ANGELA CHARLTON and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Not all French classrooms can safely reopen Tuesday, the country's education minister acknowledged Sunday, as a persistent rise in coronavirus infections jeopardizes the government's push to get France's 12.9 million schoolchildren back into class this week.

Like many governments around the world, France and Britain want to reopen schools starting Tuesday to reduce the learning gaps between rich and poor students that were worsened by the virus lockdown this spring, and to get parents back to work and revive the ailing economy.

With several thousand new infections now reported in France every day, Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper that some classes will remain closed when the nationwide reopening begins Tuesday, but "as few as possible."

With less than 48 hours to go before the first French school bells ring, he said openings and closures were "being decided by a day-by-day analysis based on the health situation of each territory."

French doctors published an appeal Saturday saying that the government's anti-virus measures for schools aren't strict enough. They urged masks for children as young as six and a mix of online and in-person schooling.

Currently French schools are set to resume largely as normal, but with masks required all day for everyone 11 and over and some restrictions on movements and gatherings. In contrast, other European countries like Denmark and many school districts in the U.S. are undergoing a full school day revamp that includes smaller classes, more teachers, more separation between students and classes and a mix of in-class and online learning.

Teacher Cécile Cluchier is bracing to face the challenges in her preschool in the Paris suburb of Antony.

"Let's not fool ourselves," she said. "We know that with 25 pupils, we won't always be able to keep an eye on each of them," and ensure that every young child washes their hands constantly and keeps a proper distance from others.

She also wonders how she'll be able to teach early language skills and defuse tensions with her face hidden behind a mask.

"In preschool and in this underprivileged area, welcoming kids properly is very important," she said. "But now, they can't see my smile."

France reported 5,453 new daily infections Saturday, compared to several hundred a day in May and June. The national health service says the growth of COVID-19 cases is now exponential, and neighboring countries have imposed quarantines or testing requirements for people coming in from France.

The infections are also threatening the Tour de France, which kicked off Saturday amid unprecedented restrictions and worries that the world's premier cycling event won't make it to the finish line in Paris in

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three weeks if the virus keeps spreading so fast.

In Britain, officials sought Sunday to reassure parents that schools can safely reopen. In an open letter, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson stressed the importance of having all children back in classrooms for the new school year.

"If a child is not in school, they stand to lose far more than just a few months of learning. It could well put a huge dent in their future life chances," he said.

Meanwhile, the University and College Union, which represents academic staff in Britain, warned Sunday that the movement of an expected 1 million college students as they return to universities in the coming weeks could spark "a public health crisis."

Union general secretary Jo Grady told the BBC that tens of thousands of students will be arriving at cities like Manchester, Birmingham and Leicester — cities that have recently seen increased restrictions because of a spike in coronavirus cases.

"The very people who are increasingly getting infected by this virus are being encouraged in mass numbers to move all around the country and congregate and live together," she said.

The union wants college students to avoid campuses and face-to-face teaching until at least Christmas, unless a robust testing plan is in place.

Britain's Conservative government has been sharply criticized for its handling of the virus, which has left the country with Europe's highest confirmed virus toll of nearly 41,600 dead. France has the continent's third-highest death toll at over 30,600. Experts say all confirmed figures understate the true toll of the pandemic due to limited testing and other factors.

In Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia, the only state to have required students in secondary schools to wear face masks during lessons, is ending that practice Tuesday. Students will still have to wear masks at school outside of class.

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Alex Turnbull contributed from Paris.

## Huge protest on Belarus leader's birthday demands he resign

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied Sunday in the Belarusian capital of Minsk to begin the fourth week of daily protests demanding that the country's authoritarian president resign.

The protests began after an Aug. 9 presidential election that protesters say was rigged but that election officials say gave President Alexander Lukashenko a sixth term in office.

Protesters initially tried to gather at Independence Square in Minsk, but barriers and riot police blocked it off. They then streamed down one of the capital's main avenues, past hulking olive-green prisoner transport vehicles. Police detained some marchers and forced them into the transports.

Police said 125 people were arrested, but Ales Bilyatsky of the Viasna human rights organization said more than 200 were detained.

The marchers, chanting "Freedom!" and "Resign!" eventually reached the outskirts of the presidential palace, which was blocked off by shield-bearing riot police. There were no official figures on the crowd size, but some opposition sources claimed it exceeded 100,000.

The widespread protests arose after the election that officials say gave President Alexander Lukashenko a landslide 80% win over his main challenger, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, a former teacher and the wife of a popular jailed blogger.

Lukashenko, in office since 1994, has been defiant but beleaguered, unable to put down largest, most sustained wave of protests yet in this Eastern European nation of 9.5 million people. He has refused to rerun the election, which both the European Union and the United States have said was not free or fair, and also refused offers to help mediate the situation from Baltic nations.

Lukashenko says he has reached an agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin that Russia will send in security help if asked. But Russia has appeared hesitant to get involved deeply in the Belarus unrest.

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Putin and Lukashenko talked by phone on Sunday, but a Kremlin statement gave few details of the conversation, other than noting that Putin congratulated the Belarusian leader on his 66th birthday.

Tsikhaneuskaya, who fled to Lithuania after the election because of concerns about her security, gave a withering acknowledgement of the birthday.

"I wish him to overcome his fears, look truth in the eye, listen to the voice of the people and go away," she told The Associated Press by telephone from the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius.

Lukashenko has consistently blamed Western countries for encouraging the protests and contends that NATO is repositioning forces along Belarus' western border with the aim of intervening in the unrest, a claim the alliance strongly denies.

On Sunday, the Belarusian Defense Ministry said it was conducting military exercises in the Grodno region, near the borders of Poland and Lithuania, simulating defending against an invasion.

Belarus on Saturday cracked down hard on foreign news media that have been covering the protests, deporting at least four Russian journalists, including two from The Associated Press. The government also revoked the accreditation of many Belarusian journalists working for foreign news agencies, including journalists working for AP.

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Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this story.

## Wildfires again threaten business in California wine country

By BRIAN MELLEY and ARON RANEN Associated Press

HEALDSBURG, Calif. (AP) — With an early harvest already underway, a wildfire a few miles west of John Bucher's ranch added new urgency to getting his pinot noir grapes off the vine. If flames didn't do any damage to the delicate fruit, ash and smoke certainly could.

Bucher hired an extra crew, and they finished the task before dawn Wednesday in the quaint wine country destination of Healdsburg, remarkably early in the year for a grape that is often not harvested until the end of September.

"It was just a race to get it done," Bucher said, his voice hoarse after three days of almost no sleep and working in occasionally smoky conditions.

Fire has been cruel to Northern California wine country lately.

Three of the past four years, major wildfires have burned in Napa and Sonoma counties, charring vineyards, burning down a historic winery and sending plumes of smoke above the neatly tended rows of vines rolling across scenic hills.

While the majority of vineyards, winemaking facilities and tasting rooms that lure tourists from around the world have escaped damage, the perception of the area being on fire yet again has not helped business. Add restrictions on tastings and dining during the coronavirus pandemic, and winemakers say they are reeling.

"This year, you throw COVID on it, and what did we do to deserve this?" said Corey Beck, CEO and winemaking chief at Francis Ford Coppola Winery. "We really hurt more from the lack of tourists. That has been our Achilles' heel during this time."

Lightning-sparked wildfires west of Sonoma County and east of Napa two weeks ago coincided with the start of the harvest for some grape varieties. That's much earlier than devastating fires last year and in 2017 that erupted in October, when nearly all the grapes were off the vine and in the process of being converted to wine.

The early fires pose a threat if they persist and heavy smoke blankets the region for several days before grapes are picked. That can lead to "smoke taint," an undesirable burnt taste in wine made from grapes with skins permeated by smoke.

While Napa and Sonoma counties produce only about 10% of the state's wine, they have an outsized influence on California's position as the nation's leading wine producer. The neighboring counties have a

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combination of chic and rustic wineries — from chateau-style estates to those offering tastings in barns — and are the best known among California's many wine regions. The grapes grown there have the highest value.

Fires led to evacuation orders for some vineyards and closed down wineries that had pivoted to offering outdoor tastings and dining to meet state regulations during the pandemic.

While fires in recent years hurt tourism as smoke cast a pall over the verdant valleys bisected by rivers and surrounded by forested hillsides, most tasting rooms remained open and tourists still came.

But the landscape changed this year.

"You can't sit inside because of the pandemic, and you can't sit outside because of the smoke," said Janet Tupper of Napa, who runs Mercantile 12, a wholesale business that sells wine country-themed gifts, such as T-shirts, tea towels, tote bags and wine accessories, to gift shops and tasting rooms.

While large wine producers that sell to grocery chains and others with robust online sales have thrived during widespread business closures during the pandemic, wineries that sell high-end wines to restaurants and those that rely on tourists have suffered.

Given the large tourism losses since businesses shut down in March as COVID-19 spread, the impact of wildfires will be negligible in comparison, said James Lapsley, a researcher at the University of California's Agricultural Issues Center and a winemaker.

Vineyards have been largely resilient to fire because they generally don't burn and serve as firebreaks, Lapsley said. The bigger threat now is the possibility of smoke damage.

Some wineries that don't have their own vineyards are opting out of buying some grapes this year because the risk is too great that a vintage could be spoiled by smoke, said Tawny Tesconi, executive director of the Sonoma County Farm Bureau.

That creates a ripple effect in the economy that leads to fewer harvesting jobs and less wine to sell. While crop insurance provides some protection for growers, it's never enough to recoup the loss, Tesconi said.

Farmers, who are accustomed to coping with drought, flooding and labor shortages, now have to add wildfire to the challenges they face. When the Walbridge Fire broke out two weeks ago, part of the LNU Lightning Complex of fires around wine country, the Farm Bureau was holding a fire training program for members.

"It's almost like we've accepted that these situations are happening way too often in Sonoma County," Tesconi said. "The devastation that wildfire can bring unexpectedly in a short period of time is more of a concern because you just have no control over it."

Because of frost early in the year, cold temperatures in May and then extreme heat in August that threatened to shrivel grapes on the vine, Bucher had already begun to harvest his pinot noir fruit a few days before the fire ignited.

Bucher produces his own wine but also sells to 15 other winemakers. They were relying on his crop and became concerned as the fire burned and sometimes sent heavy smoke over his vineyards.

With extra workers, they completed the harvest in 12 days instead of the typical three to four weeks. Preliminary results show there is very little smoke taint, but he won't know until he can taste the wine after fermentation.

Hours after the harvest, the fires still burned in the distance but the winds had shifted and Bucher's ranch was under a clear sky. It was unclear how long it would last and what would happen in the weeks ahead when he has to harvest four more varieties of grapes.

## Lebanon's powerhouse Hezbollah hit by backlash after blast

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Sara Jaafar joined a group of political activists gathered on Aug. 4 to discuss strategies to challenge Lebanon's entrenched rulers when their building was shaken and the windows blasted out by the giant explosion that rocked Beirut.

She took cover from the flying debris, thoughts rushing through her head of past political assassinations

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in Lebanon. Her immediate reaction was that Hezbollah, the militant group that dominates power here, was targeting the dissidents' meeting.

The blast was in fact at the port of Beirut, caused by a stockpile of ammonium nitrate stored there for years. So far, it appears to be a result of longtime government mismanagement. No direct connection to Hezbollah has emerged in the explosion that wreaked destruction across the city and killed at least 190 people. Theories abound about what triggered the explosion, including even a possible Israeli strike against Hezbollah.

Jaafar's initial reaction reflected the fear Hezbollah has instilled among many Lebanese and the power it has succeeded in projecting over the past decade.

For many, the Iran-backed Hezbollah now stands at the top of Lebanon's sectarian-based system of power — and so is complicit in the corruption many blame for the port disaster and for driving the country into near bankruptcy.

"Who controls most of everything?" asked Jaafar, a secular Shiite. Hezbollah and its ally, President Michel Aoun, "are the people in charge. ... They bear the responsibility."

In the wake of the blast, Hezbollah has come under unprecedented public criticism and its role in Lebanese politics under intense scrutiny.

Cardboard effigies of Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and other politicians were hanged on nooses at a rally after the blast. Some accused Hezbollah of storing weapons at the port, a claim it denies. Hezbollah's political rivals seized the opportunity to fan hostilities against it and its allies.

Social media posts mocked Nasrallah's speeches. One noted how the U.S. killing of Iranian commander Qassim Soleimani in Iraq in January prompted Nasrallah to weep and threaten revenge — while in his first speech following the blast, he was smiling and calm.

"There is a paradox there with Hezbollah. They have never been more powerful politically and militarily. But they have never faced such an array of challenges as well," said Nicholas Blanford, a Beirut-based Hezbollah expert.

The season of discontent against Hezbollah comes as Lebanese suffer under an economic crash that has driven nearly half of the population into poverty. Rather than push for reform, critics say, Hezbollah has stood by its political allies who resist change. It also denied support to nationwide protests that erupted in October demanding the end of the dysfunctional political structure. U.S. sanctions against Iran and Hezbollah made things harder.

For years, Hezbollah maintained a clean reputation and distance from Lebanon's political elite.

It developed its power and resources as a resistance movement against Israel and became virtually a state within a state, heading a powerful military force and a welfare network for its Shiite supporters.

Hezbollah remains Lebanon's only armed force outside the military. It controls the borders and plays a crucial role in Iranian-backed wars in the region, like Syria's.

In 2005, an explosion killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and changed Lebanon's political course. The bombing, blamed on Hezbollah, sent nearly a million people into the streets, forcing Hezbollah's ally Syria to end its occupation of Lebanon.

After that, Hezbollah began seeping into the system — from having a handful of Parliament members to becoming Lebanon's most powerful political faction.

Hezbollah and its allies formed the last Cabinet. Its failures came to be seen as Hezbollah's, Blanford said.

And they were many: The government failed to enact reforms, stem the financial meltdown or reach a rescue package with the International Monetary Fund. It finally resigned after the explosion.

Hezbollah plays a significant role in forming the new government.

To deflect criticism, Nasrallah addressed supporters several times, denying Hezbollah had anything to do with the port explosion.

He made thinly veiled warnings to critics. In an Aug. 14 speech, Nasrallah warned repeatedly against pushing Lebanon toward civil war. He urged supporters to "hold onto their anger" over criticism, hinting it would be unleashed against opponents.

In Hezbollah's stronghold in the Beirut suburb Dahiyeh, supporters saw the explosion as a conspiracy to

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weaken Lebanon and the group.

"We had two places to bring money and assistance from: the port and the airport. Something had to happen somewhere so that the siege (on Lebanon) is tightened and so that these people rise against their rulers," said Issam Kaeen, a 42-year-old coffee shop owner.

Mohammed Abi Shakra, who owns a women's wear shop, said an Israeli attack on the port can't be ruled out. "This is a conspiracy against the Lebanese people to make them poor, to incite civil war," he said.

Meanwhile, social tensions are on the rise. Opponents of Hezbollah clashed twice with the group's supporters, including a gunfight on Thursday that killed two bystanders and wounded several. Gunmen reportedly opened fire over religious banners raised by Hezbollah supporters.

"There is no god but God, and Nasrallah is the enemy of God," mourners chanted at a funeral of one of the killed.

Following the explosion, Hezbollah made some internal changes, part of a shift inward after the nationwide protests and its receding role in Syria's war, an official with the group said. The group's security chief was given a bigger portfolio and the head of an agency that coordinates with allies was replaced. Media operations are also changing, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to confirm media reports.

After the blast, Jaafar and other victims demanded an international investigation. "We lost our homes, our kids, our fathers and our city. We lost everything," she said in an angry speech at a gathering near the port.

"All of them means all of them," the small crowd chanted, naming Nasrallah among other leaders they want out of power.

Her apartment in a landmark building nearby was devastated by the blast. An architect, Jaafar is considering leaving the destruction as a reminder of how it all went wrong.

Active since the October protests, Jaafar is frustrated by the small turnout in rallies since the blast but recognizes an outpouring of public anger is only one requisite for change. She, like many in Lebanon, sees her country's political crisis as a product of rivalry between Hezbollah's patron, Iran, and the U.S. and Gulf states. Only a resolution to that conflict will force change, she said.

"I understand why they exist. They filled the gap where the state failed," said Jaafar. But "we want a real nation, a real country," she said. "This is a jungle."

Jaafar said protest activists are realizing they must work with allies within the system for change — push for early elections and challenge Hezbollah and its allies in Parliament.

"We won't get rid of them in one election," she said.

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Associated Press writer Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed reporting.

## Chadwick Boseman's death leaves saddening mark on rough 2020

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kobe Bryant. Rep. John Lewis. And now, Chadwick Boseman.

So far, 2020 has been marred with bad news and tragedy with the deaths of several popular Black icons including Bryant, Lewis and recently Boseman, who died Friday. All three were viewed as leaders in their respective fields of sports, politics and film — places where people, particularly in the Black community, have often looked for inspiration during a year of racial tension and protests against the police brutality of unarmed Black people.

But for many, the loss of another major figure such as Boseman is taking a toll. The actor, who starred in the blockbuster superhero Marvel film "Black Panther," shockingly died at the age of 43 in his home in Los Angeles after he privately battled colon cancer for four years.

"These are pillars in our community," Rev. Al Sharpton said. "In times of instability, you depend on pillars. It's bad enough when there's a storm outside and you hear the lightning and thunder. It gets worse when the pillars that you're building and standing on (are) shaking. It's like they're chipping away at our foundation. The very building is shaking down, because the things that undergird and protect us from

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the storms are being removed.”

Sharpton called Boseman an important pillar that humanized several Black historical trailblazers in his roles — including color-line breaking baseball star Jackie Robinson, legendary singer James Brown and the first African American U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Boseman’s family said he endured “countless surgeries and chemotherapy” while portraying King T’Challa of Wakanda in the Oscar-nominated “Black Panther,” a film that proved a person of color could lead in a successful superhero film.

“For him to pass at this time when we are disproportionately affected by COVID and have all of these attacks by law enforcement, and him being the symbol bringing us to Wakanda, it’s just a blow,” Sharpton said. “To hear that our superhero who projected a positive light was now gone, it was a gut blow.”

Boseman was elevated to a stage that many Black actors don’t get the chance to occupy, said Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James. And his ability to be “transcendent” on that stage brought a comic book character to life for many in the Black community.

“Even though we knew that it was like a fictional story, it actually felt real. It actually felt like we finally had our Black superhero and nobody could touch us. So to lose that, it’s sad in our community,” James said, lamenting on the loss of “the Black Panther and the Black Mamba in the same year.”

In January, Bryant died in a helicopter crash involving eight others including his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna. Lewis died in July after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer last year.

Other notable deaths this year include actress Naya Rivera, civil rights leader C.T. Vivian and music executive Andre Harrell.

“The year 2020 has been up and down for everybody,” Milwaukee Bucks player Giannis Antetokounmpo said, adding that Boseman left “so much behind.”

“It’s a lot to unpack,” said Oklahoma City Thunder guard Chris Paul. “Chadwick was a special guy. I think everyone took it hard, especially the Black community. That was one of our black superheroes. I think ‘Black Panther’ was something so powerful, for myself along with my kids to see a superhero that looks like them and the way that he played it with such class and elegance. That was tough.”

Activist Martin Luther King III called Boseman’s death another “great loss.” But he encourages people not to lose hope even in a year of tumult.

“We could easily say ‘Oh my God. This is the most terrible year that existed.’ But I choose not to say that,” said the son of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. “Our ancestors had to go through so, so much. And yet, we’re still here. We are nowhere where we need to be, but we are always making progress and moving ahead.”

Gil Robertson, the co-founder and president of the African American Film Critics Association, said Black people are at a critical crossroads of their survival in America.

“We’re getting it from all sides of the fort,” Robertson said. “We’re losing these strong men. These men who operated with a level of integrity. A level of authenticity. I find all of this alarming. I hope that our community can really come together. ... Not just for one cause. Just to make a consistent effort to rehabilitate our community.”

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AP Sports Writer Brian Mahoney contributed to this report from Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

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Follow AP Entertainment Writer Jonathan Landrum Jr. on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/MrLandrum31>

## Postal chief DeJoy has long leveraged connections, dollars

By MATTHEW DALY, BRIAN SLODYSKO and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — During its search for a new postmaster general, the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors was presented with 53 candidates screened by an outside company. Not on the list: Louis DeJoy, who ultimately got the job.

Instead, in what Democrats call a breach of protocol and blatant cronyism, DeJoy’s name was added as a contender by the board member leading the search, John Barger. He was acting on behalf of the board’s



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chairman, Robert "Mike" Duncan, a former Republican National Committee chairman who knew DeJoy and his wife through work on a White House advisory group. DeJoy, Barger and Duncan were prominent donors to President Donald Trump and other Republicans.

How exactly DeJoy was hired is among the questions Congress is trying to unravel as lawmakers scrutinize a series of operational changes at the Postal Service that have resulted in widespread mail delays and fears that the agency will not be able to handle an expected surge in mail-in ballots this fall as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Democrats say they also want to learn more about the role of Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, who met with Duncan and other Republicans on the agency's board while the selection of the new postmaster general was underway.

The Trump administration denies any impropriety in the selection of DeJoy, a former supply chain CEO who is the first postmaster general in nearly two decades not to be a career postal employee. Mnuchin has said he had no involvement, though his heightened interest in the Postal Service has raised questions given Trump's focus on mail-in voting.

The Associated Press reviewed hundreds of pages of records related to DeJoy, revealing a driven businessman who turned his father's trucking company into a national logistics operator, clashed with labor unions and forged political connections that eased his path into lucrative government contracting.

His prolific giving to organizations and GOP candidates, including \$1.2 million to Trump, has also drawn a spotlight to the transactional appearance of some of his contributions. His wife, Aldona Wos, is a prominent donor as well, and has been nominated by Trump to serve as ambassador to Canada; her nomination is pending.

The records reviewed by the AP reveal a pattern of DeJoy's family winning coveted opportunities after making generous contributions.

In one instance, DeJoy's son, Andrew, secured a slot on Duke University's tennis team in 2014 while his parents wrote a series of large checks to the school's athletic department.

The team was ranked 14th in the nation by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association and drew a host of top national and international prospects. But Andrew DeJoy was not one of them when he joined as a walk-on freshman months after the season started.

"It was a dream of mine since I was very little, but I wasn't expecting to play," Andrew DeJoy said in an interview published by the school's athletic department in 2015. "I just emailed the coach and said I was willing to work hard over the summer if there was spot. Luckily ... In the fall, things just worked out."

In the years before Andrew DeJoy enrolled, the family's foundation donated several thousand dollars a year to Duke. But in 2014 they escalated their giving with a \$737,000 contribution, according to tax records. The money helped finance the Blue Devil Tower, a massive glass-encased addition to the school's football stadium, which includes the DeJoy Family Club, a "first-class" banquet hall overlooking the field with space for 600 people.

During Andrew DeJoy's second year on the team, his family gave another \$462,000 to Duke. The donations continued during the rest of his tenure at the school, totaling at least \$2.2 million.

Duke athletic department spokesman Art Chase declined to comment. A representative of the family's foundation did not respond to a request for comment.

It wasn't the first time the family tapped its largess before receiving positions of importance.

Wos, DeJoy's wife and a physician who immigrated to the U.S. from Poland, was appointed President George W. Bush's ambassador to Estonia after she helped raise over \$200,000 for his 2004 campaign. Granting ambassadorships is a common way presidents reward their top donors. She donated more than \$35,000 to Trump's reelection before he announced that he would nominate her to be his next ambassador to Canada.

Louis DeJoy also saw his federal work pick up while his wife served as Bush's envoy to Estonia. Between 2003 and 2009, his company New Breed Logistics was awarded contracts worth \$59 million, according to federal spending data

During the 2012 governor's election in North Carolina, DeJoy, Wos and more than 60 employees of New

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Breed from eight different states routed more than \$165,000 to the campaign of Republican Pat McCrory. The donations were made at a time when contribution limits prevented individual contributors from giving more than \$8,000 to a candidate in an election cycle.

"They've never asked for anything for their involvement," said McCrory, adding that DeJoy and Wos are also generous philanthropists and "don't just write checks" and "put their sweat equity behind everything they do."

Wos was selected in 2013 to serve as the head of North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services under McCrory, where she had a rocky tenure until stepping down in 2015. Her time there included the troubled roll out of a new computer system, which delayed the issuance of food stamps, sent Medicaid cards containing private information to the wrong recipients and put government funding in jeopardy.

There are also questions about DeJoy's relationship with labor while in the private sector, given that he now oversees an agency where many of his 650,000 workers are unionized. New Breed, the company he founded, was sanctioned multiple times by federal regulators for violating labor laws.

In 1994, the National Labor Relations Board found the company was "motivated by anti-union animus" when it quietly hired nonunion employees at a California facility, a finding upheld by a federal appellate court. The company was also ordered to pay \$22,000 in back wages to 23 workers in North Carolina in 2006 after it was cited for 40 labor and hour violations, records show.

In 2015, a federal appellate court upheld a \$1.5 million settlement the company was ordered to pay to four workers who were fired after reporting sexual harassment by a supervisor in 2008. The company had fought the claim for years, seeking to lower the amount it was required to pay.

Though DeJoy was a Trump donor, it remains unclear exactly how he emerged as the top contender to lead the Postal Service. Mnuchin has denied that he or other Treasury Department officials played a role in recruiting or suggesting DeJoy to the Postal Service board of governors, which is comprised of Trump appointees. In an Aug. 21 letter to Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York, Mnuchin that he was "surprised" to learn DeJoy was a finalist.

Still, Mnuchin has been keenly interested in postal operations since at least 2018, when Trump named him to lead a task force to evaluate ways to stem billions of dollars in losses at the agency. A December 2018 report urged removal of current price caps for mail and packages not deemed as "essential postal services."

David C. Williams, a former Postal Service inspector general who said he resigned as vice chairman of the board of governors in April after it became clear DeJoy would be hired, said Mnuchin was using a multibillion-dollar line of credit with the Postal Service as leverage to take effective control over labor agreements, prices and contracts with Amazon and other large shippers.

"The Treasury was using that responsibility to make demands that I believed would turn the Postal Service into a political tool, ending its long history as an apolitical public infrastructure," Williams told the Congressional Progressive Caucus at a forum last week.

In a "fact sheet" issued in response to Williams's claims, the Treasury said it plays an important role overseeing federal loans to the Postal Service. Outstanding loans to the agency stand at \$14.4 billion, with \$10 billion more in lending authority included in an economic rescue law approved by Congress in March. That loan should be finalized in coming weeks.

In its fact sheet, the Treasury said Mnuchin's dealings with the board of governors were routine and part of his obligation as the Postal Service's largest creditor.

But S. David Fineman, a former chairman of the board of governors, described Mnuchin's involvement with the service as "unprecedented" and said many questions remain about why drastic changes were put in place so soon after DeJoy became postmaster general.

"You put together this piece and you put together that piece and it just doesn't add up," Fineman said.

DeJoy "didn't strike me as a serious candidate," Williams said, calling DeJoy's initial job interviews unimpressive. "Governor Barger actually helped him finish a number of sentences before he got stuck" during one interview, Williams recalled.

Barger disputed that. "Louis DeJoy — after all of our interviews and our vetting and deep dives into his

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background — showed himself to be an uncommonly strong leader,” he told the Los Angeles Times.

DeJoy won unanimous, bipartisan support from the board of governors when he was hired in May.

Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-Va., said Mnuchin should testify before Congress — under subpoena if necessary — to explain his role in DeJoy’s hiring and the operational changes.

DeJoy “should never been hired,” Connolly said. “We don’t need a Trump donor at the Postal Service.”

The Associated Press produced this coverage with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Aug. 31, the 244th day of 2020. There are 122 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On August 31, 1997, Prince Charles brought Princess Diana home for the last time, escorting the body of his former wife to a Britain that was shocked, grief-stricken and angered by her death in a Paris traffic accident earlier that day.

On this date:

In 1881, the first U.S. tennis championships (for men only) began in Newport, Rhode Island.

In 1888, Mary Ann Nichols, believed to be the first victim of “Jack the Ripper,” was found slain in London’s East End.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an act prohibiting the export of U.S. arms to belligerents.

In 1969, boxer Rocky Marciano died in a light airplane crash in Iowa, a day before his 46th birthday.

In 1972, at the Munich (MYOO’-nik) Summer Olympics, American swimmer Mark Spitz won his fourth and fifth gold medals in the 100-meter butterfly and 800-meter freestyle relay; Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut won gold medals in floor exercise and the balance beam.

In 1980, Poland’s Solidarity labor movement was born with an agreement signed in Gdansk (guh-DANSK’) that ended a 17-day-old strike.

In 1986, 82 people were killed when an Aeromexico jetliner and a small private plane collided over Cerritos, California. The Soviet passenger ship Admiral Nakhimov collided with a merchant vessel in the Black Sea, causing both to sink; up to 448 people reportedly died.

In 1989, Britain’s Princess Anne and her husband, Capt. Mark Phillips, announced they were separating after 15 years of marriage.

In 1992, white separatist Randy Weaver surrendered to authorities in Naples, Idaho, ending an 11-day siege by federal agents that had claimed the lives of Weaver’s wife, son and a deputy U.S. marshal. (Weaver was acquitted of murder and all other charges in connection with the confrontation; he was convicted of failing to appear for trial on firearms charges and was sentenced to 18 months in prison but given credit for 14 months he’d already served.)

In 1994, the Irish Republican Army declared a cease-fire. Russia officially ended its military presence in the former East Germany and the Baltics after half a century.

In 1996, three adults and four children drowned when their vehicle rolled into John D. Long Lake in Union, South Carolina; they had gone to see a monument to the sons of Susan Smith, who had drowned the two boys in Oct. 1994.

In 2005, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin reported “a significant number of dead bodies in the water” following Hurricane Katrina; Nagin ordered virtually the entire police force to abandon search-and-rescue efforts and to instead stop increasingly hostile thieves.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama ended the U.S. combat mission in Iraq, declaring no victory after seven years of bloodshed and telling those divided over the war in his country and around the world: “It is time to turn the page.”

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, opening a three-day visit to Alaska, painted a doomsday scenario for the Arctic and beyond if climate change wasn’t dealt with quickly: entire nations submerged

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underwater, cities abandoned and refugees fleeing in droves as conflict broke out across the globe. The State Department released roughly 7,000 pages of Hillary Rodham Clinton's emails, including about 150 emails that were censored because they contained information deemed classified. Frazier Glenn Miller, a white supremacist who admitted killing three people at two suburban Kansas City Jewish sites, gave jurors in Olathe, Kansas, a Nazi salute after they convicted him of murder and other charges for the shootings. (The same jury sentenced Miller to death.)

One year ago: A gunman carried out a shooting rampage that stretched ten miles between the Texas communities of Midland and Odessa, leaving seven people dead before police killed the gunman outside a movie theater in Odessa. Defending champion Naomi Osaka ended the U.S. Open run by 15-year-old Coco Gauff, defeating the teen 6-3, 6-0 in the third round. Hurricane Dorian bore down on the northern Bahamas with howling winds and surging seas, forcing some evacuations and hotel closures.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Warren Berlinger is 83. Rock musician Jerry Allison (Buddy Holly and the Crickets) is 81. Actor Jack Thompson is 80. Violinist Itzhak Perlman is 75. Singer Van Morrison is 75. Rock musician Rudolf Schenker (The Scorpions) is 72. Actor Richard Gere is 71. Actor Stephen Henderson is 71. Olympic gold medal track and field athlete Edwin Moses is 65. Rock singer Glenn Tilbrook (Squeeze) is 63. Rock musician Gina Schock (The Go-Go's) is 63. Singer Tony DeFranco (The DeFranco Family) is 61. Rhythm-and-blues musician Larry Waddell (Mint Condition) is 57. Actor Jaime P. Gomez is 55. Rock musician Jeff Russo (Tonic) is 51. Singer-composer Deborah Gibson is 50. Rock musician Greg Richling (Wallflowers) is 50. Actor Zack Ward is 50. Golfer Padraig (PAH'-drig) Harrington is 49. Actor Chris Tucker is 48. Actor Sara Ramirez is 45. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tamara (Trina & Tamara) is 43.