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Council approves \$1.9 million budget

The Groton City Council met in regular session Tuesday evening where the second reading of the \$1.9 million 2021 budget was approved.

Some items of interest include a chip and seal project (which has been taken out of the budget for the past several years) for \$150,000. That is down from the requested \$250,000. A new patrol vehicle for \$45,000, wood chips for the park and baseball park playground update for \$3,000, Carpet cleaning at city hall for \$4,500, new meeting table and chairs at city hall for \$2,000, manhole rehab and lining for \$50,000, sewer cleaning for \$30,000, pump repairs and updates for \$20,000, tires for the yellow dump truck for \$4,500, new Bobcat mower for \$10,500, transformers for \$62,000 (original requested amount was \$90,000), replacement of the footboards for the lifeguard chairs at the pool for \$3,000, Cub Cadet zero turn 42" mower for the cemetery for \$6,000, and a sweeper lease for \$33,500.

Other items discussed were closing of Main Street and a portion of Railroad Avenue for downtown trick and treating from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Oct. 30. Finance Officer Hope Block said that she also invited the Trunk and Treat group to come downtown for the event.

First reading of the cemetery regulations was approved, cleaning up some of the language. And a pay request for \$100,561.50 was approved for Maguire Iron for the water tower replacement project.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Medical, recreational marijuana on the ballot

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

BROOKINGS — South Dakota voters aren't seeing double; marijuana is on the ballot twice in 2020.

Initiated Measure 26 lays out the parameters for starting and running a medical marijuana program. Constitutional Amendment A takes an omnibus approach, calling on the Legislature to make rules for medical marijuana and setting the standards for legalizing the use of recreational marijuana.

Organizers for the two ballot measures say that they complement each other, and that the passage of Amendment A would protect the initiated measure from meddling by the Legislature.

"There's always one legislator who thinks they know better than voters do," said Melissa Mentele, executive director of New Approach South Dakota which is advocating for the medical marijuana measure.

Organizers are wary of the Legislature after its reworking of IM22, an anti-corruption measure approved by voters in 2016.

"We learned that the South Dakota Legislature is very willing and perfectly able to essentially gut a ballot issue," said Drey Samuelson, political director of South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws which is championing Amendment A.

That argument is characterized as "garbage" by David Owen, president of the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a leader of the No Way on Amendment A coalition.

Lawmakers winnowed out the unconstitutional aspects of IM22, Owen said, and enacted legislation that provided for many of its anti-corruption features like an accountability board, limits on gifts to legislators and an increase in the time it takes to go from being a lawmaker to being a lobbyist.

"The voters' intent was preserved," Owen said. "It's a distortion to say the whole thing was repealed."

Workforce vs. economic development

Amendment A opponents are worried about the effect legalized recreational marijuana will have on the workforce. Owen explained that manufacturers in South Dakota rely on federal contracts which require a drug-free workforce.

"We're going to see a spike in people failing drug tests," Owen said, as well as an increase in businesses having to fire the people who fail those tests.

For his part, Samuelson predicts an "economic boom" with the passage of Amendment A as marijuana growing buildings and dispensaries are built.

A fiscal note on the attorney general's Amendment A explanation predicts that state revenues from licensing fees, sales tax and a 15% excise tax would total \$29.3 million in 2024. The revenues would be split with 50% for public schools and 50% for the state's general fund.

"That's a lot of money in a small state like South Dakota," Samuelson said.

Owen notes the many costs of legalizing marijuana which include the administrative costs of the program, increased social services and more traffic fatalities.

"There's a serious question how much of that \$30 million is going to get to schools or the general fund," Owen said. "We don't think it's the panacea proponents make it out to be."

Balancing risks and rewards

Eleven states have legalized the recreational use of marijuana and, according to Samuelson, it remains popular in those states. He notes that legalization doesn't necessarily lead to an increase in marijuana use but rather as a way to reduce opioid and heroin overdose deaths and defund drug dealers and cartels.

"You don't have to be pro marijuana use to believe that prohibition doesn't work," Samuelson said.

The risks of legalization are too great for Owen who notes, "This is an intoxicant." Legalization will lead to putting more youth at risk, traffic fatalities and abuse.

Medical marijuana on ballot, too

There are 37 states that have legalized medical marijuana, among them South Dakota's neighbors Iowa, North Dakota and Minnesota. It's also on the ballot in Nebraska this year.

IM26 backer Mentele said the measure was written to "help people with low incomes access medicine that

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can be very expensive." The measure also allows for the home cultivation of a small amount of marijuana.

Mentele's IM26 "pro" statement on the 2020 ballot question pamphlet quotes Gov. Kristi Noem on "trusting our citizens to exercise their personal responsibility to do what's best for themselves and their loved ones."

"That trust and weight should also be applied to cannabis," Mentele said, noting that the passage of IM26 would get people who are currently circumventing the law into a legal market.

"We're just trying to keep people out of prison," Mentele said. "The narrative that this will create new users is false. Just because it's legal doesn't mean you have to do it."

Medical group opposes IM26

"Medical marijuana is a misnomer," according to Benjamin Aaker, MD, president of the South Dakota State Medical Association. Aaker notes that marijuana has about 400 different chemicals.

Legitimate medications are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. "We have active ingredients identified," Aaker said. "We know the dose to give."

There are no prescriptions written for medical marijuana. A patient with a chronic ailment would get a card from the doctor that would allow the patient to purchase marijuana at a dispensary.

Aaker said that voters considering legalizing medical marijuana should know that what they are voting for already exists. Marinol uses synthetic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. It's an FDA-approved drug for the relief of post-chemotherapy nausea.

"We can give it as a legitimate drug," Aaker said. "We can already prescribe it right now."

The SDSMA also opposes Amendment A. Marijuana use has the same harmful effects as smoking, Aaker said, and can lead to decreased judgment and response time, impairs adolescent brain development and can lead to schizophrenia.

Aaker predicts that if recreational marijuana is legalized it will lead to increased traffic accidents and more psychiatric diagnoses.

Both questions – Amendment A and IM26 – are on the statewide ballot in the Nov. 3 general election. Absentee voting begins Sept. 18.

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August 2020

1st State Bank Checking Acct	\$ 1,907,771.99
General Cash	\$ 300.00
SD FIT Acct	\$ 1,452,124.38
1st State Bank Water CD	\$ 83,654.27
BB Trust CD	\$ 1,500.00
SD FIT CD	\$ 102,514.21
Cemetery Perp Care CD	\$ 32,876.69
Total	\$ 3,580,741.54

Invested In		
Cash	\$ 300.00	0.01%
1st State Bank	\$ 2,025,802.95	56.57%
SD Fit	\$ 1,554,638.59	43.42%
Total	\$ 3,580,741.54	100.00%

	Beginning Cash Balance	Receipts	Expenditures	Transfers	Ending Cash Balance
General	\$ 534,312.28	\$ 76,369.64	\$ 115,876.63		\$ 494,805.29
Bed, Board, Booze Tax	\$ 70,749.62	\$ 1,850.99			\$ 72,600.61
Baseball Uniforms	\$ 1,710.20				\$ 1,710.20
Airport	\$ 1,910.67		\$ 4,731.70		\$ (2,821.03)
**Debt Service	\$ 326,838.04	\$ 2,062.44	\$ -		\$ 328,900.48
Cemetery Perpetual Care	\$ 34,706.69				\$ 34,706.69
Water Tower	\$ 180,000.00				\$ 180,000.00
Water	\$ 189,093.69	\$ 45,451.04	\$ 28,975.88		\$ 205,568.85
Electric	\$ 1,701,714.14	\$ 146,459.93	\$ 107,418.09		\$ 1,740,755.98
Wastewater	\$ 313,507.13	\$ 16,936.07	\$ 8,427.43		\$ 322,015.77
Solid Waste	\$ 21,740.89	\$ 8,123.83	\$ 8,173.73		\$ 21,690.99
Family Crisis	\$ 7,361.58	\$ -	\$ 189.29		\$ 7,172.29
Sales Tax	\$ 18,147.32	\$ 9,307.66	\$ 10,082.54		\$ 17,372.44
Employment	\$ 2,018.05	\$ -	\$ 4,056.82		\$ (2,038.77)
Utility Prepayments	\$ 70,807.97	\$ 8,292.20	\$ 276.04		\$ 78,824.13
Utility Deposits	\$ 78,323.01	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 800.00		\$ 79,273.01
Other	\$ 204.61	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 204.61
Totals	\$ 3,553,145.89	\$ 316,603.80	\$ 289,008.15	\$ -	\$ 3,580,741.54

**Debt to be Paid		
**2015 Refinance	\$ 2,533,062.50	by 12/1/2035
**West Sewer	\$ 76,842.59	by 10/15/2022
**RR Sewer Crossing	\$ 43,563.71	by 7/15/22
Total Debt	\$ 2,653,468.80	

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Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

September 14, 2020

Groton Area High School Address. I received a phone call from the Brown County Zoning office last week about a discrepancy in the addressing system for the HS. The current address assigned by the City for the HS is 406 N 2nd Street. This was flagged in the 911 system as not in existence based on the GIS system. The reason for this is that there is no 2nd street between 4th and 5th. No action is required by us at this time. They are going to work with 911 dispatch on what they propose the resolution to be and will be back in contact.

CRF Funds. The Governor's office has announced that \$75 million in CRF Grant funding will be made available to public and non-public schools in South Dakota at the rate of \$500 per student based on the 2020 fall enrollment (Today's enrollment at 615). These are funds in addition to the CARES Act funding that we submitted an application for earlier. Further administrative guidance will be coming on the use of these funds. Here are a few parameters that have already been made available.

Payments can be used to "cover costs associated with providing distance learning (e.g., the cost of laptops to provide to students) or for in-person learning (e.g., the cost of acquiring personal protective equipment for students attending schools in-person or other costs associated with meeting Center for Disease Control guidelines).

The payments may only be used to cover costs that:

Are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);

Were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State of government; and

Were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.

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Principal's Report

MS/HS Building

Mrs. Sombke

September 14, 2020

1) Attendance Grades 6-12:

19-20 School Year-September

6-47

7-42

8-44

9-45

10-44

11-51

12-43

Total=316

20-21 School Year-September

6-43

7-48

8-50

9-44

10-47

11-51

12-51

Total=329

2) Teacher Effectiveness Schedule

Group A Timeline	Group B Timeline
August 28: Completed Self-Assessment	August 28: Completed Self-Assessment
September 11: Completed SLO #1	August-October: 2 Informal Observations
September 18: Completed SLO #2	August-May: Artifact Uploading
Sept 14-17: 1 st Formal/Non-Continuing	January-February: 2 Informal Observations
Sept 21-24: 1 st Formal/Continuing	May: Final Conference/Artifact Review
Oct 8: SLO#3 Approval	
October 12-15: 2 nd Formal/Non-Continuing	
October 16: SLO #4 (meet with Principal)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Rating TBA 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summative Conference TBA 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Informal Observations per school year TBA 	

- 15 Certified Teachers in Group A; these teachers will complete the entire formal evaluation process including the complete SLO process
- 10 Certified Teachers in Group B; these teachers will complete the Self-Assessment, Artifact Collection and Uploading, and Informal Observations
- All Certified Staff in Groups A and B will complete 4 Informal Observations throughout the school year

3) Dates to Know:

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September 15- Dual Credit tuition due for all students taking Dual Credit Courses through Lake Area Technical Institute

September 16- Midterm for 1st quarter

September 17- Deadline to register to take the **October 24 ACT here at GHS**; please see Mrs. Schwan or go to **act.org** for more information or assistance in registering for the October 24 test date

October 1- Last day to choose Remote Learning for the 2nd quarter

October 9- Staff Inservice No School

October 14- PSAT test: all juniors please see Mrs. Schwan to sign up or get more information

October 16- End of 1st quarter

October 20- Scholarships presentation in the Computer Lab @ 6pm

October 22- ASVAB test: all juniors please see Mrs. Schwan to sign up or get more information

October 27- Financial Aid Information Night will be online @ 6pm via zoom link from Mrs. Schwan; please email Mrs. Schwan @ jodi.schwan@k12.sd.us to be placed on the list to receive that information

4) On the Sunny Side ☺

Thank you for scrolling down and meeting me here to spend some time reading and reflecting on some of the great ways that people and even animals are working to make a difference in our world right now, such as:

- The Happiness Museum- there is a museum dedicated to happiness, and you can visit online! Just go to museumofhappiness.org to learn about ways you can support your own happiness, and your friends and families happiness journey as well.
- "At the Fridge Again"- Gospel singer takes some time during COVID19 quarantine to work out and record all the parts of her song about snacking during quarantine. Dare you not to sing and smile along with her at: <https://youtu.be/0oeWqoDIDY4>
- Canine to the Rescue- Read more about the certified crisis response therapy dog who is hard at work helping exhausted firefighters get the kind of comfort only a 4-legged friend can provide by going to: <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/dog-bringing-joy-to-firefighters-battling-california-blazes/>

Keep smiling everyone!

Mrs. Sombke

#205 in a series

Covid-19 Update:by Marie Miller

OK, so it's Tuesday, and I'm thinking we're seeing a fairly good reflection of what's really turning up around the country. Today, 38,900 new cases were reported, a 0.6% increase to 6,612,700. And there were 1144 deaths reported, a 0.6% increase to 195,501.

There is very little virus news today, so I'm going to give myself a break and post just this very brief Update tonight. That gives you all a break too.

I have a sobering note: Two law-enforcement nonprofits, the Officer Down Memorial Page and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, have compiled data on the effects of the pandemic on the health of law enforcement officers. Their data show Covid-19 has killed more police officers this year than all other causes combined, including car accidents and shootings. There have been 12 total line-of-duty deaths in 2020; top three causes were Covid-19 with 101 deaths, shooting with 31 deaths, and car accidents with 15 deaths. This includes only officers exposed to the virus at work, not those exposed while off-duty. The analysis is not yet complete; there are another 150 Covid-19 deaths which have not yet been classified as on-duty or off-duty. So the on-duty number has the potential to grow.

There is some interesting news out of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. A team there has isolated the smallest antibody molecule yet discovered which "completely and specifically neutralizes the SARS-CoV-2 virus." Antibodies, as a rule, are fairly large molecules consisting of two long (heavy) chains and two short (light) chains arranged in a sort of Y-shaped molecule. The business end of an antibody is out there in the two branches of the Y; that's the part that reacts with an antigen as part of an immune response. The tail of the Y is not really where the action is.

Well these guys have isolated just a tiny antibody fragment from the tip of one of those heavy chains, called the variable, heavy (VH) domain and fused it directly to the tail of the antibody with all the in-between stuff omitted; the resulting molecule is really small for an antibody. They're calling this creation Ab8, and what they've essentially done is produce the immune functions of a full-sized antibody in a much smaller molecule. These smaller molecules are going to be better at diffusing through tissues because they fit into lots of nooks and crannies, which should increase their efficacy in the body; they're also most likely going to be inhalable because they're small enough to cross mucous membranes and enter the tissues in the respiratory tract. An added benefit is that they don't seem to react with human cells at all, so there are unlikely to be side-effects.

Researchers identified this VH domain as important by sorting through huge libraries of antibody components, looking for likely candidates. It appears they had the services of one of the US National Labs' supercomputers, this one at the Galveston facility. Several of these supercomputers have been focused on supporting various Covid-19 research strategies in the past few months. After identifying the antibody, they then tested their candidates in mouse models using infective virus; their findings indicate Ab8 decreases the number of virus particles in the host by ten-fold. It was effective in preventing and treating SARS-CoV-2 infection in hamster models. Now is when I present the usual cautions that animals are not humans and we do not know whether we would see the same effects in people. Seems worth a good try though. This is one to watch.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, chief science officer at the World Health Organization (WHO) spoke to reporters today, and her words might bring some of us down to earth if we'd been getting overly optimistic about the miraculous effect of a vaccine. She said, "We're looking at 2022 at least before enough people start getting the vaccine to build immunity. So for a long time to come, we have to maintain the same kinds of measures that are currently being put in place with physical distancing, the masking and respiratory hygiene. Those will have to continue after the vaccine starts getting rolled out, because we need 60% to 70% of the population to have immunity before you will start seeing a dramatic reduction in transmission of this virus. We also don't know how long these vaccines will protect for—that's the other big question mark: How long does immunity last? And it's possible that you will need a booster." She added, just in case we didn't hear her the first time that, while no timeline is a sure thing, "I think it's safe to say that it

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could be 2022 when we will start thinking about going back to pre-Covid normal life.”
Sigh.

I’m sure you’ve seen alphorns—those very long wooden horns you probably associate with cowherders in some high-elevation meadow in Europe’s Alps. Those things can be ten feet or more long, which means they’d be sort of awkward to take around with you. Still, given their sound travels for miles, there may be a time and a place for them. Apparently, during this pandemic, the time was this past weekend, and the place was the Prohlis district of Dresden, Germany.

Musicians from the Dresdner Sinfoniker orchestra, 15 alphorns, nine trumpets, and four tubas held an open-air public concert Saturday, positioning themselves over 150 feet in the air on the rooftops of multistory apartment buildings in Dresden. There were drums and other percussionists on the roof of a parking ramp nearby. Organizers say the event is “an answer to the pandemic crisis;” musicians were hundreds of meters apart. The sound traveled very nicely to people in balconies and on the ground. The hour-long concert, entitled “Himmel über Prohlis” (The Sky above Prohlis), according to the organizers, featured compositions which “all embrace the idea that several groups of musicians communicate over great distances.” Among the songs they played were a fanfare composed for the 1984 Olympic games, a 400-year-old Venetian work, and a newly-commissioned piece, so there was plenty of variety.

So while live performances are necessarily still curtailed in many respects, artists continue to find safe ways to share their gifts and express themselves even in the face of some pretty serious odds. So they continue to reach out, drawing people together even when we’re apart—far apart--and showing us we remain part of the same community, even in challenging times. Hang on to that.

And keep yourself healthy. We’ll talk again.



New water tower progress

Work continues on the new Groton water tower. Above, the hole is dug for the base. Below, 260 ton of pea rock will be put in for the base. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15
Minnesota	81,608	81,868	82,249	82,659	83,588	84,311	84,949
Nebraska	36,477	36,917	37,373	37,841	38,108	38,188	38,642
Montana	8,381	8,468	8,663	8785	8925	9021	9,107
Colorado	59,674	59,920	60,185	60,492	60,907	61,324	61,699
Wyoming	3,483	3520	3559		3,635	3,679	3,723
North Dakota	13,872	14,110	14,443	14,684	15,151	15,577	15,831
South Dakota	15,403	15,571	15,834	16,117	16,437	16,638	16,801
United States	6,328,099	6,359,313	6,397,547	6,452,607	6,486,401	6,517,326	6,555,243
US Deaths	189,699	190,784	191,802	193,177	193,705	194,036	194,545

Minnesota	+383	+260	+381	+410	+929	+723	+638
Nebraska	+502	+440	+456	+468	+267	+80	+454
Montana	+65	+87	+195	+122	+140	+86	+86
Colorado	+187	+246	+265	+307	+415	+417	+375
Wyoming	+58	+37	+39		+76	+44	+44
North Dakota	+71	+238	+337	+244	+468	+431	+254
South Dakota	+105	+169	+263	+283	+320	+201	+163
United States	+28,930	+31,214	+38,234	+55,060	+33,794	+30,925	+37,917
US Deaths	+533	+1,085	+1,018	+1,375	+528	+331	+509

Minnesota	85,351
Nebraska	38,970
Montana	9,244
Colorado	62,099
Wyoming	3,762
North Dakota	16,066
South Dakota	16,994
United States	6,606,674
US Deaths	195,961

Minnesota	+402
Nebraska	+328
Montana	+137
Colorado	+400
Wyoming	+39
North Dakota	+ 235
South Dakota	+195
United States	+51,431
US Deaths	+1,416

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September 15 COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

There were 113 fewer active cases in South Dakota as the recovery numbers is up, Most counties experience more recoveries than positives.

Brown County had 27 recoveries and 15 positive leaving 127 active cases. Day County had two positive and two recoveries leaving nine active cases. Edmunds had four positive and eight recoveries leaving 25 positive cases. Marshall had one positive case leaving 10 active ones. McPherson had one recovered leaving five active cases. Spink had three recovered leaving 27 active cases. Those currently hospitalized increased by 23 today to 133. There were no deaths in South Dakota.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +15 (946) Positivity Rate: 17.2%
Total Tests: 80 (9,306)
Recovered: +27 (816)
Active Cases: -12 (127)

Ever Hospitalized: +5 (36)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 86.3% 84.7% (+1.6)

South Dakota:

Positive: +195 (16,994 total) Positivity Rates: 7.9%
Total Tests: 2,454 (226,171 total)
Hospitalized: +24 (1,195 total). 133 currently hospitalized (+23)
Deaths: +0 (184 total)
Recovered: +306 (14,424 total)
Active Cases: -113 (2,386)
Percent Recovered: 84.8% +.8
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 6% Covid, 48% Non-Covid, 46% Available
ICU Bed Capacity: 8% Covid, 65% Non-Covid, 27% Available
Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 16% Non-Covid, 79% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (lost Miner):
Aurora 42-42, Mellette 25-25, Sully 8-8.

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: Fully Recovered
Beadle (9): +1 positive, +3 recovered (25 active cases)
Bennett (1): +2 recovered (10 active cases)
Bon Homme (1): +1 recovered (16 active cases)

Brookings (1): +3 positive, +30 recovered (98 active cases)

Brown (3): +15 positive, +27 recovered (127 active cases)

Brule: +1 recovered (10 active cases)

Buffalo (3): 1 active case

Butte (1): +2 recovered (12 active cases)

Campbell: 1 active case

Charles Mix: +1 recovered (11 active cases)

Clark: +3 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)

Clay (4) +9 positive, +15 recovered (72 active cases)

Codington (2): +6 positive, +24 recovered (172 active cases)

Corson (1): 11 active cases

Custer (2): +1 recovered (51 active case)

Davison (2): +5 positive, +1 recovered (24 active cases)

Day: +2 positive, +2 recovered (9 active cases)

Deuel: +2 positive, +2 recovered (11 active cases)

Dewey: 46 active cases

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

Edmunds: +4 positive, +8 recovered (25 active cases)

Fall River (1): +1 recovered (19 active cases)

Faulk (1): +2 recovered (11 active cases)

Grant (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)

Gregory (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (26 active cases)

Haakon: +1 positive (5 active case)s

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Hamlin: +1 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)
Hand: +3 positive (7 active cases)
Hanson: 1 active case
Harding: 1 active case
Hughes (4): +3 positive, +5 recovered (20 active cases)
Hutchinson (1): 11 active cases
Hyde: 3 active cases
Jackson (1): 3 active cases
Jerauld (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (3 active cases)
Jones: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
Kingsbury: +3 recovered (6 active cases)
Lake (6): +4 positive, +4 recovered (31 active cases)
Lawrence (4): +9 recovered (51 active cases)
Lincoln (2): +21 positive, +22 recovered (152 active cases)
Lyman (3): +2 recovered (1 active cases)
Marshall: +1 positive (10 active cases)
McCook (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)
McPherson: +1 recovered (5 active case)
Meade (3): +13 positive, +14 recovered (83 active cases)
Mellette: Fully Recovered
Miner: 2 active cases
Minnehaha (74): +40 positive, +54 recovered (527 active cases)
Moody: +1 recovered (12 active cases)
Oglala Lakota (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)
Pennington (33): +27 positive, +35 recovered (351 active cases)
Perkins: +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)
Potter: +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)
Roberts (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (28 active cases)
Sanborn: 4 active cases
Spink: +3 recovered (27 active cases)
Stanley: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
Sully: Fully Recovered
Todd (5): +3 recovered (5 active cases)
Tripp: +5 positive, +1 recovered (17 active cases)
Turner: -1 positive, +2 recovered (14 active cases)
Union (5): +3 positive, +2 recovered (53 active cases)
Walworth: -1 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)

Yankton (3): +5 positive, +5 recovered (55 active cases)
Ziebach: 16 active cases

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
COVID-19 Daily Report, September 15:

- 5.76% rolling 14-day positivity
- 12.2% daily positivity
- 235 new positives
- 1,930 susceptible test encounters
- 62 currently hospitalized (-3)
- 2,564 active cases (-194)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	550	0
10-19 years	1830	0
20-29 years	4325	2
30-39 years	2980	7
40-49 years	2302	7
50-59 years	2266	20
60-69 years	1470	31
70-79 years	708	30
80+ years	563	87

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	8656	90
Male	8338	94

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	42	42	468	0	None
Beadle	666	632	2201	9	Substantial
Bennett	44	33	618	1	Substantial
Bon Homme	67	50	1047	1	Moderate
Brookings	603	504	4003	1	Substantial
Brown	946	816	6209	3	Substantial
Brule	80	70	940	0	Moderate
Buffalo	113	109	691	3	Minimal
Butte	65	52	1005	1	Moderate
Campbell	5	4	131	0	Minimal
Charles Mix	129	118	1874	0	Moderate
Clark	31	21	488	0	Moderate
Clay	517	441	2077	4	Substantial
Codington	597	423	4119	2	Substantial
Corson	75	63	668	1	Moderate
Custer	155	102	875	2	Substantial
Davison	176	150	3029	2	Moderate
Day	52	43	838	0	Moderate
Deuel	67	56	575	0	Substantial
Dewey	108	62	2643	0	Substantial
Douglas	44	31	492	0	Substantial
Edmunds	69	44	522	0	Substantial
Fall River	77	57	1205	1	Substantial
Faulk	51	39	270	1	Moderate
Grant	66	46	946	1	Substantial
Gregory	63	36	566	1	Substantial
Haakon	12	7	318	0	Moderate
Hamlin	77	67	883	0	Moderate
Hand	22	13	408	0	Moderate
Hanson	24	23	291	0	None
Harding	3	2	60	0	Minimal
Hughes	169	145	2412	4	Moderate
Hutchinson	64	52	1088	1	Moderate

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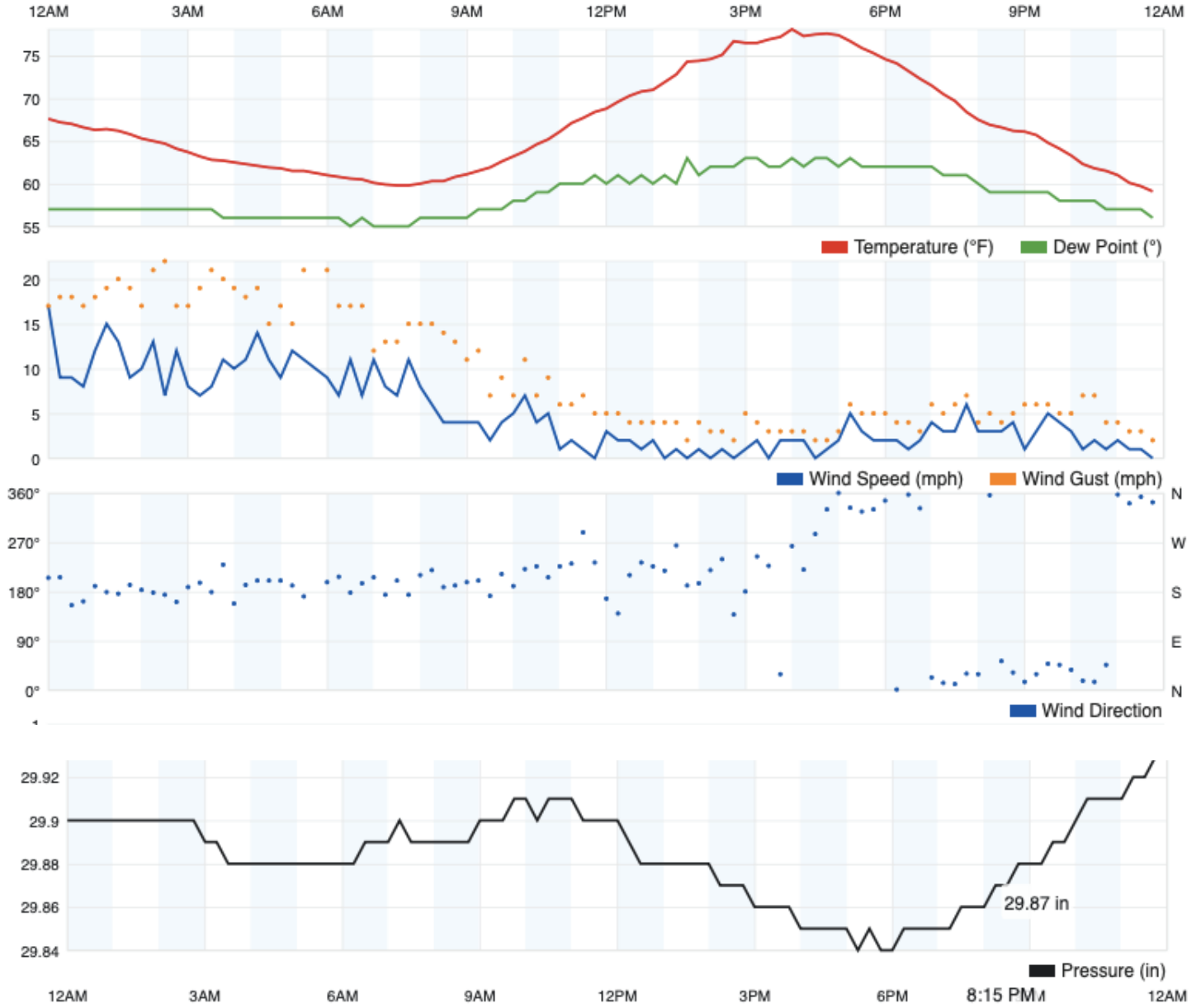
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Hyde	8	5	186	0	Minimal
Jackson	15	11	521	1	Minimal
Jerauld	51	47	308	1	Moderate
Jones	6	4	82	0	None
Kingsbury	32	26	713	0	Moderate
Lake	153	122	1159	6	Substantial
Lawrence	290	235	2505	4	Moderate
Lincoln	1108	954	9162	2	Substantial
Lyman	107	103	1129	3	Minimal
Marshall	28	18	581	0	Moderate
McCook	75	58	807	1	Substantial
McPherson	19	14	275	0	Moderate
Meade	405	319	2453	3	Substantial
Mellette	25	25	425	0	None
Miner	19	17	306	0	Minimal
Minnehaha	5938	5337	35224	74	Substantial
Moody	63	51	793	0	Moderate
Oglala Lakota	206	183	3156	3	Moderate
Pennington	1841	1490	13387	33	Substantial
Perkins	25	20	253	0	Minimal
Potter	31	20	395	0	Moderate
Roberts	128	99	2361	1	Substantial
Sanborn	17	15	287	0	Minimal
Spink	83	56	1387	0	Substantial
Stanley	27	23	351	0	Moderate
Sully	8	8	117	0	None
Todd	92	82	2619	5	Moderate
Tripp	45	28	748	0	Substantial
Turner	106	92	1161	0	Moderate
Union	332	274	2429	5	Substantial
Walworth	69	46	992	0	Substantial
Yankton	304	246	3933	3	Substantial
Ziebach	59	43	479	0	Moderate
Unassigned	0	0	14458	0	

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Thursday

Thursday
Night

Friday



Mostly Sunny



Mostly Clear



Mostly Sunny



Partly Cloudy



Mostly Sunny

High: 65 °F

Low: 44 °F

High: 64 °F

Low: 45 °F

High: 67 °F



Wednesday's Forecast

Sept 16, 2020

60-70° 

Dry. Skies may appear hazy due to smoke from western US wildfires. Lows in the 40s.

3 Day Outlook

THU



60-80°

FRI



62-76°

SAT



70-88°

Dry. Below average temps moderate by the weekend. Slight chance of precip Sunday.



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 9/16/2020 4:53 AM Central

Cool and dry weather will persist for the next few days, and you may continue to notice hazy skies as well. The weekend turns warmer however, and these near to above average temperatures will last into next week.

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Today in Weather History

September 16, 1965: A heavy snow event brought widespread snowfall across the region with snowfall accumulations of 1 inch in Colony and Devils Tower, 2.6 inches at the Rapid City Airport, 4 inches in Oelrichs, 5.1 inches in Redig, and 8 inches in Lead, Spearfish, and Sundance.

September 16, 2006: Two weak tornadoes touched down briefly west and north of Clark in the late afternoon. No damage occurred.

1881: Iowa's earliest measurable snow of record fell over western sections of the state. Four to six inches was reported between Stuart and Avoca.

1888: An estimated F2 tornado struck Washington, DC. The tornado first touched down on the south side of the city then moved up Maryland Avenue. The National Museum and Botanical Gardens were damaged before the tornado lifted off the ground.

1961: On September 16, 1961, Hurricane Esther was seeded by Navy planes in the inaugural experiment of what was to formally become Project STORMFURY next year. Esther was the first hurricane to be initially detected by satellite. On Sept. 10th, TIROS III imaged an area of disturbed weather a hundred miles southwest of the Cabo Verde Islands.

2004: Hurricane Ivan turned northward over cooler waters, and made landfall in southern Alabama on September 16 as a Category 3 storm. Hurricane Ivan had a very unusual track almost making a huge circle.

1928 - Hurricane San Felipe, a monster hurricane, which left 600 dead in Guadeloupe, and 300 dead in Puerto Rico, struck West Palm Beach FL causing enormous damage, and then headed for Lake Okeechobee. When the storm was over, the lake covered an area the size of the state of Delaware, and beneath its waters were 2000 victims. The only survivors were those who reached large hotels for safety, and a group of fifty people who got onto a raft to take their chances out in the middle of the lake. (David Ludlum)

1984 - The remains of Tropical Storm Edourd began to produce torrential rains in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Port Isabel reported more than 21 inches. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Overnight rains soaked Arkansas, with 5.25 inches reported at Bismarck. In the town of Malvern, up to four feet of water was reported over several downtown streets, with water entering some homes and businesses. Thunderstorms in Texas drenched Lufkin with 4.30 inches of rain in just three hours. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Missouri. A small tornado near Kirksville lifted a barn thirty feet into the air and then demolished it. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hurricane Gilbert moved ashore into Mexico. The hurricane established an all-time record for the western hemisphere with a barometric reading of 26.13 inches. Winds approached 200 mph, with higher gusts. Gilbert devastated Jamaica and the Yucatan Peninsula. (The Weather Channel) Hurricane Gilbert made landfall 120 miles south of Brownsville TX during the early evening. Winds gusted to 61 mph at Brownsville, and reached 82 mph at Padre Island. Six foot tides eroded three to four feet off beaches along the Lower Texas Coast, leaving the waterline seventy-five feet farther inland. Rainfall totals ranged up to 8.71 inches at Lamar TX. Gilbert caused three million dollars damage along the Lower Texas Coast, but less than a million dollars damage along the Middle Texas Coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms, representing what remained of Hurricane Octave, brought locally heavy rains to California, impeding the drying process for raisins and other crops. Sacramento CA was soaked with 1.53 inches of rain in six hours. At Phoenix AZ, the afternoon high of 107 degrees marked a record seventy-six days with afternoon highs 105 degrees or above. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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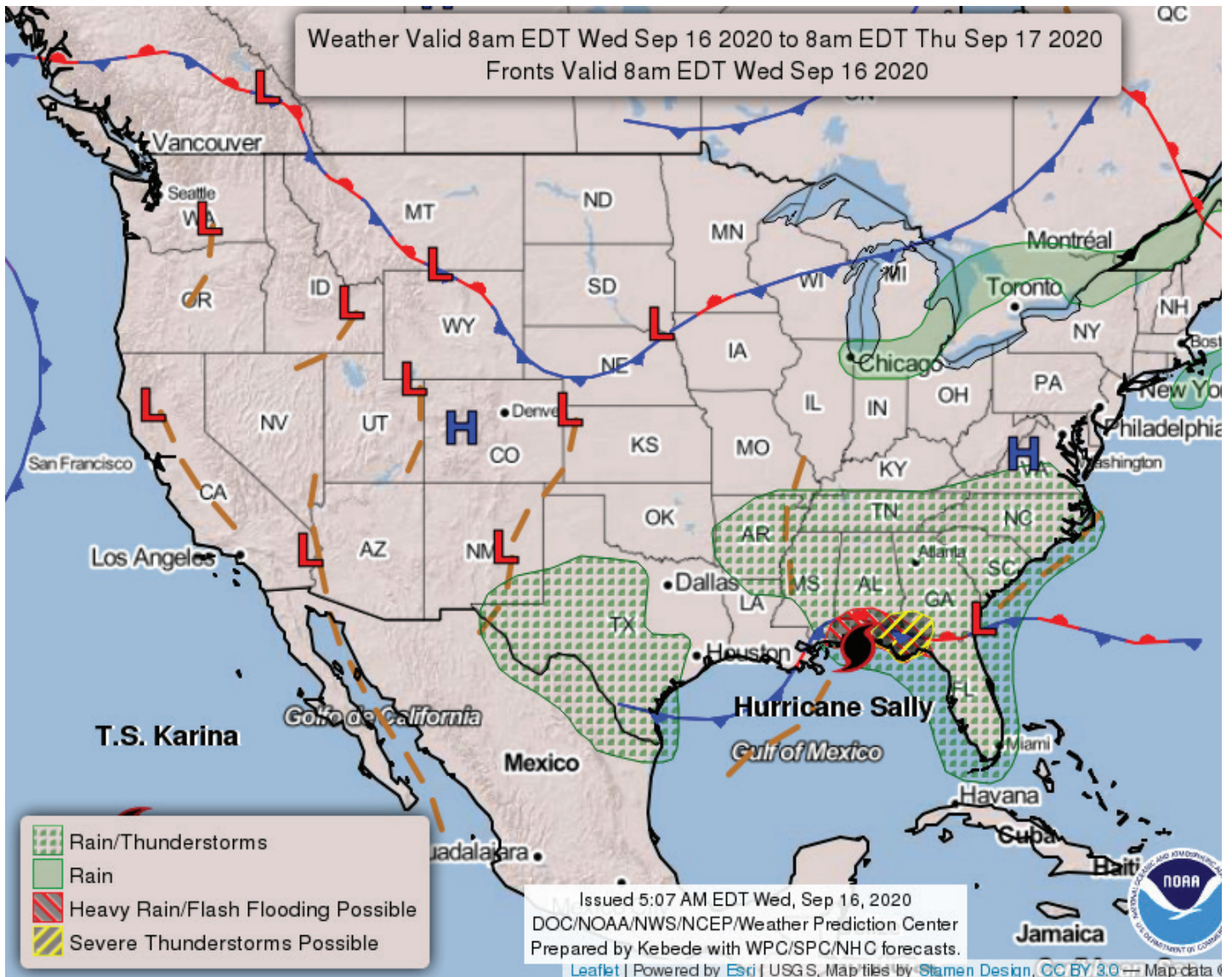
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 78.1 °F
Low Temp: 59.1 °F
Wind: 22 mph
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 96° in 1895, 1925
Record Low: 20° in 1916
Average High: 72°F
Average Low: 46°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 1.13
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.52
Average Precip to date: 17.42
Precip Year to Date: 14.87
Sunset Tonight: 7:42 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:15 a.m.



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THE MIRACLE WORKER

Twelve ministers boarded a flight in Miami for New York. Shortly after takeoff, the plane encountered a terrible unexpected storm. The people onboard became frightened as the aircraft bounced and shifted with the currents.

One of the clergymen called to a flight attendant and said, "Tell the Captain that everything will be okay because twelve ministers from Miami are onboard."

Politely excusing herself, she phoned the Captain with the news. A moment later, she returned to the minister and said, "The Captain asked that I tell you that he was honored to have all of you on board the flight. But he also asked that I tell you that he would rather have four dependable jet engines."

Jesus, our Savior, was a miracle worker. He specialized in accomplishing supernatural things for God through ordinary people and ordinary things. What He did then He can do now. Neither He nor his power has changed. What was then, is today, and will be forever.

When He fed the five thousand, He used the lunch of a small boy to feed the hungry crowd. He took that small insignificant gift and accomplished one of His greatest miracles. The lesson in that miracle for us? No one is ever too young and no gift too small for God to accept, bless, and use to accomplish great things that will honor Him.

Prayer: Father, may we realize that it is not the size of our gift that matters, but our willingness to allow You to do great things through us. Give us willing hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" John 6:1-14

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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)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** 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

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

25-28-38-59-62, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 4

(twenty-five, twenty-eight, thirty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty-two; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$119 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$94 million

Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Hamlin, 27-25, 15-25, 25-12, 25-22

Alcester-Hudson def. Centerville, 3-0

Arlington def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-13, 25-21, 25-11

Baltic def. West Central, 25-20, 25-21, 27-29, 25-16

Brandon Valley def. Harrisburg, 25-21, 25-23, 18-25, 10-25, 16-14

Bridgewater-Emery def. Freeman, 25-13, 25-19, 20-25, 25-17

Chester def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-23, 25-19, 13-25, 25-18

Colome def. Chamberlain, 25-15, 24-26, 25-21, 25-17

Corsica/Stickney def. Parkston, 23-25, 26-24, 25-19, 17-25, 15-11

Dakota Valley def. Yankton, 25-18, 25-21, 25-13

DeSmet def. Sioux Valley, 25-18, 16-25, 18-25, 26-24, 15-10

Deubrook def. Webster, 25-22, 25-16, 25-16

Edgemont def. Hemingford, Neb., 25-14, 16-25, 25-20, 25-23

Estelline/Hendricks def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-12, 22-25, 25-15, 25-12

Faulkton def. Leola/Frederick, 25-8, 25-22, 25-6

Florence/Henry def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-27, 25-22, 26-24, 25-20

Garretson def. Flandreau, 25-16, 25-22, 25-6

Gayville-Volin def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-12, 25-8, 25-7

Gregory def. Bennett County, 25-4, 25-23, 26-24

Harding County def. Hettinger/Scranton, N.D., 25-23, 25-17, 25-23

Highmore-Harrold def. Potter County, 25-13, 25-22, 25-20

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-22, 25-11, 26-24

Howard def. Menno, 25-23, 24-26, 25-12, 19-25, 15-12

Huron def. Aberdeen Central, 25-14, 19-25, 23-25, 25-15, 16-14

Irene-Wakonda def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-12, 25-10, 25-17

Kimball/White Lake def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 27-25, 22-25, 25-18, 20-25, 16-14

Lemmon def. Mott-Regent, N.D., 25-19, 25-12, 25-19

Lennox def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-22, 15-25, 26-24, 25-23

Mobridge-Pollock def. Timber Lake, 25-17, 25-14, 25-17

North Central Co-Op def. Langford, 25-18, 16-25, 25-21, 25-16

Northwestern def. Miller, 25-14, 25-13, 25-17

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Iroquois, 25-12, 25-18, 25-15

Parker def. Tea Area, 25-17, 25-16, 24-26, 26-24

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Rapid City Christian def. Philip, 25-19, 22-25, 25-13, 25-22
Scotland def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-8, 25-19, 25-9
Sioux Falls Christian def. McCook Central/Montrose, 25-11, 27-29, 25-15, 25-16
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Brookings, 25-23, 25-20, 25-20
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 27-25, 25-13, 25-14
Spearfish def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-13, 27-25, 25-17
St. Thomas More def. Custer, 25-16, 27-25, 25-20
Tri-Valley def. Beresford, 25-17, 25-8, 25-16
Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Bon Homme, 24-26, 23-25, 25-22, 25-18, 15-12
Wagner def. Avon, 25-21, 25-10, 27-25
Warner def. Ipswich, 25-16, 20-25, 25-11, 25-19
White River def. Jones County, 25-14, 25-16, 20-25, 25-22
Winner def. Lyman, 25-8, 25-8, 25-17
Wolsey-Wessington def. Mitchell Christian, 25-22, 14-25, 25-13, 25-13

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Iowa governor won't budge on masks even as virus deaths rise

By DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Plenty of Republican governors initially rejected mask mandates, but few have held to their skepticism amid soaring coronavirus cases with the tenacity of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds.

Reynolds scoffs at calls for a statewide mask order, calling them “feel-good” actions, and refuses to let city officials enforce local mandates, even as the small, largely rural state maintains one of the highest COVID-19 positivity rates and has topped 1,200 dead. While she implores residents to wear masks while indoors when social distancing isn't possible, she has said not everyone believes they're effective and frequently is photographed mingling at crowded events without a mask.

“I think the goal is to do what we can to reduce the spread of the virus,” Reynolds said last week. “I believe that is the end goal and that we can get there without a mask mandate. I believe that and that's what I'm going to consistently do.”

It's a stand that has frustrated public health experts and exasperated some mayors, but unlike governors in other states, Reynolds has made clear she's not budging.

Reynolds' argument against a mandate boils down to three points: a mask requirement can't be enforced, other factors are to blame for rising virus cases and people should have the freedom to make their own choices.

“I trust Iowans to do the right thing, and I think they are doing the right thing,” she said.

Faced with rising virus cases, other Republican governors took a decidedly different approach.

In Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott had for months said the state couldn't order people to wear masks, but in July after virus cases and hospitalizations soared, he ordered that face coverings be worn in public throughout most of the state.

It was a similar story in Mississippi, where Gov. Tate Reeves resisted a mandate before issuing an executive order requiring masks at public gatherings and in retail stores during August. He later extended the order through Sept. 14.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp also reversed course last month when he signed an executive order allowing local mask ordinances to be enforced on public property and on private property if the owner agrees.

The governors of North Dakota and South Dakota also have rejected mask mandates, but their stands are now being tested as coronavirus cases increase in both states.

In Iowa, calls to require masks have increased and now include the White House Coronavirus Task Force. The group late last month noted Iowa had the highest rate of new cases in the nation per 100,000 people and found more than a quarter of Iowa's 99 counties had high levels of transmission. Those rates have

since dropped slightly.

The task force called for a statewide mask mandate, closure of bars across the state, restricted restaurant attendance and limits on crowds to no more than 10 people in the worst 28 counties.

Reynolds closed bars in six counties but ignored the mask recommendation along with most of the other guidance.

Chantel Sloan, an associate professor at Brigham Young University who specializes in infectious disease epidemiology, said the problem with not imposing a mandate is that only 15% to 20% noncompliance in a population is enough to cause significant preventable outbreaks. States with mask mandates and careful testing and contact tracing to isolate those with the virus could see significant improvement in spread in three to four weeks, she said.

"I continually believe that we have this ability to unify if we choose and that this is completely up to us as a society," she said. "It's just a matter of compassion."

Photos of Reynolds at events without a mask frequently circulate on social media. Although Reynolds said it's often a case of her removing her mask only for a quick photo, some pictures show her with no mask while mingling with people, hugging individuals and holding conversations well within 6 feet of others.

"We'll take them off for not even a minute, snap a shot, and then we'll put them back on," Reynolds said. "I try to lead by example, but remember if you can, social distance. But if you can't, you should have one ready and you should put it on."

Often in the photos, Reynolds is at Republican events, where few people are wearing masks.

A survey released Sept. 10 by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation found that while 80% of respondents said wearing a mask helps to limit the spread of coronavirus, more than a third of Republicans said wearing a mask is harmful. That compared to 7% of Democrats and 17% of independents who said masks could be harmful.

The survey found that 32% of Republicans said masks do not help limit the spread of coronavirus while just 3% of Democrats and 17% of independents had that belief.

The survey of 1,199 adults had a statistical margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the full sample, 7 percentage points for the Republicans sample and 6 points for the Democratic and independents samples.

Despite such doubts, health experts say mask effectiveness is no longer a question. More than 300 Iowa doctors and other medical professionals sent Reynolds a letter in July pleading for a mask mandate and held a demonstration on the steps of the Iowa Capitol to emphasize the need for a mask requirement.

The CDC also recommends masks, saying they are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.

Officials in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, the state's largest cities, have instituted mask requirements along with at least eight other cities, even though Reynolds insisted the rules couldn't be enforced because she hasn't issued a statewide order.

Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie said he believes the mask requirement he enacted on Aug. 26 helped lead to a drop in the city's 14-day positivity rate from 20% to around 12%.

"It isn't about politics to me, it's about science," he said. "Taking a political position on it I think is wrong. My obligation as mayor to me is number one protecting the health and well-being of our citizens."

South Dakota AG was frequent traveler before fatal crash

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — For South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg spending Saturday driving hundreds of miles on the state's roads was not unusual. But by this past Sunday, it was clear that his latest trip was anything but routine: An investigation was underway that would reveal he struck and killed a man walking along a rural stretch of highway.

Ravensborg has said that he thought he had hit a large animal while driving home to Pierre from a Republican fundraiser some 110 miles (180 kilometers) away in Redfield. He said he realized he killed a man

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only after returning to the site the next morning.

Until then, Ravensborg had made few waves as the state's top law enforcement officer, garnering a reputation as a quiet prosecutor, but a relentless campaigner who developed personal connections in the state's Republican Party.

Ravnsborg crisscrossed South Dakota in his Ford Taurus, attending what are often small events known as Lincoln Day Dinners. He made the drive Saturday even though he does not face reelection for two years. Photos posted on the Spink County Republican Party's Facebook page show no more than two dozen people at Rooster's Bar & Grill.

It was Ravensborg's dutiful attendance of these events that propelled him from being a GOP outsider to winning the party's nomination for attorney general, said Republican state Sen. Lance Russell, who ran against him in 2018. Ravensborg had mounted an unsuccessful U.S. Senate campaign in 2014, garnering just over 2,000 votes in the primary. But South Dakota political parties decide their candidates for attorney general at conventions, meaning they gather support from party stalwarts.

Ravnsborg shaped his tough-on-crime pitch around repealing a program called presumptive probation, which gives nearly automatic probation to certain nonviolent, lower-level felonies, including drug possession.

Since 2014, he also accumulated eight traffic tickets, including six speeding tickets in different counties. But he was not in danger of losing his driver's license, and he has had no tickets since taking office in 2019.

Ravnsborg has been unsuccessful in his attack on presumptive probation, failing to get legislators to buy in and clashing with the governor on how much it would increase costs in the prison system.

The attorney general's office has often served as a springboard for gubernatorial hopefuls. But Ravensborg has so far taken a quieter approach than his predecessor, Marty Jackley, who made headlines by taking on a Native American tribe's plan for a marijuana resort and arguing another case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"He's pretty vanilla," Michael Card, a political science professor at the University of South Dakota, said of Ravensborg.

Card said that instead of bringing flash to the office, Ravensborg seems to have brought the order of an administrator — something Card attributed to Ravensborg's military experience. Ravensborg is an Army veteran who currently serves in the Army Reserves.

As attorney general, he overhauled the state's missing persons database and worked to develop rapport with Native American tribes.

Details were slow to emerge about what happened Saturday night. Ravensborg finally released a statement late Monday, giving his account of what happened along a stretch of U.S. Highway 14 with no lighting.

Running into a deer on a two-lane highway in the state is not unusual. State Farm Insurance ranked South Dakota as one of the most dangerous states for animal collisions.

But Card said it was that familiarity with the experience of colliding with a deer that has left many asking how the attorney general could hit a person and not realize it.

"If this is people's lived experience, then he may be convicted in the court of public opinion," Card said. "If they form a negative opinion collectively, he may not be able to get past this."

Republican Gov. Kristi Noem promised a transparent investigation Tuesday, saying she was bringing in outside investigators. A crash reconstruction expert from Wyoming and the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation are helping the state Highway Patrol with the investigation. Noem gave no timeline on when details would be released.

For the family of the man killed, 55-year-old Joseph Boever, it has already been too long. Boever's cousin Nick Nemec said relatives believe Boever was walking on the highway shoulder, toward his truck that had crashed earlier that same night.

"Cousin was just a quiet, meek, mild guy who minded his own business," Nemec said. "He grew jade plants and would give jade plants for gifts."

Boever had struggled with a bipolar disorder and worked irregularly as a nurse's assistant, said Victor Nemec, another cousin. Though in recent days, when the two cousins worked together on Victor Nemec's

farm, Boever had been doing well.

Nemec believed Boever had never met or interacted with the attorney general.

Vote to impeach Oglala Sioux tribal president has failed

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A vote to impeach the president of South Dakota's Oglala Sioux Tribe has failed. The tribal council needed a two-thirds vote, or 14 votes to impeach Julian Bear Runner. The vote Monday was 11-5 with five council members abstaining, KOTA-TV reported.

The council earlier suspended Bear Runner after he was accused of inappropriate sexual contact with a teenager. Bear Runner has denied the accusations.

The tribal president has also served a 30-day paid suspension because the tribal council could not reach him after he enacted a 72-hour coronavirus lockdown. He also pleaded not guilty after he was arrested in May for driving while drunk and threatening a man.

Hurricane Sally blasts ashore in Alabama with punishing rain

By JAY REEVES, ANGIE WANG and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP) — Hurricane Sally made landfall Wednesday near Gulf Shores, Alabama, as a Category 2 storm, pushing a surge of ocean water onto the coast and dumping torrential rain that forecasters said would cause dangerous flooding from the Florida Panhandle to Mississippi and well inland in the days ahead.

Moving at an agonizingly slow 3 mph, Sally finally came ashore at 4:45 a.m. local time with top winds of 105 mph (165 kmh), the National Hurricane Center said. Sally's northern eyewall had raked the Gulf Coast with hurricane-force winds and rain from Pensacola Beach, Florida, westward to Dauphin Island, Alabama, for hours before its center finally hit land.

Trees were bending over and flailing around in the howling winds in downtown Pensacola, where driving rain flooded streets up to the bumpers of parked cars. In downtown Mobile, Alabama, a street light snapped, swinging wildly on its cable.

Nearly 400,000 homes and businesses had lost electricity by early Wednesday, according to the power-outage.us site. A curfew was called in Gulf Shores due to life-threatening conditions. In the Panhandle's Escambia County, Chief Sheriff's Deputy Chip Simmons vowed to keep deputies out helping residents as long as physically possible. The county includes Pensacola, one of the largest cities on the Gulf Coast.

"The sheriff's office will be there until we can no longer safely be out there, and then and only then will we pull our deputies in," Simmons said at a storm briefing late Tuesday.

This for a storm that, during the weekend, appeared to be headed for New Orleans. "Obviously this shows what we've known for a long time with storms – they are unpredictable," Pensacola Mayor Grover Robinson IV said.

Stacy Stewart, a senior specialist with the hurricane center, told The Associated Press said the rainfall will be "catastrophic and life threatening" over portions of the Gulf Coast, Florida panhandle and southeastern Alabama, and will continue well after landfall, with the storm producing heavy rainfall Wednesday night and Thursday over portions of central and southern Georgia.

Sally was a rare storm that could make history, said Ed Rappaport, deputy director of the hurricane center. "Sally has a characteristic that isn't often seen and that's a slow forward speed and that's going to exacerbate the flooding," Rappaport told the AP.

He likened the storm's slow progression to that of Hurricane Harvey, which swamped Houston in 2017. Up to 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain could fall in some spots, and "that would be record-setting in some locations," Rappaport said in an interview Tuesday night.

Sally's impact was felt all along the northern Gulf Coast. Low lying properties in southeast Louisiana were swamped by the surge. Water covered Mississippi beaches and parts of the highway that runs parallel to them. Two large casino boats broke loose from a dock where they were undergoing construction work in

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Alabama.

In Orange Beach, Alabama, Chris Parks, a tourist from Nashua, New Hampshire, spent the night monitoring the storm and taking care of his infant child as strong winds battered his family's hotel room. Their return flight home was canceled, so they were stuck in Alabama until Friday.

"I'm just glad we are together," Parks said. "The wind is crazy. You can hear solid heavy objects blowing through the air and hitting the building."

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves urged people in the southern part of his state to prepare for flash flooding.

As Sally's outer bands reached the Gulf Coast, the manager of an alligator ranch in Moss Point, Mississippi, was hoping he wouldn't see a repeat of what happened at the gator farm in 2005, when about 250 alligators escaped their enclosures during Hurricane Katrina's storm surge.

Gulf Coast Gator Ranch & Tours Manager Tim Parker says Sally has been a stressful storm because forecasters were predicting a storm surge of as much as 9 feet in his area. He felt some relief after surge predictions shifted.

Sally was forecast to bring heavy downpours to parts of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas later in the week. Some inland residents weren't waiting, driving to the coast to experience Sally's power before it hit land.

With heavy rains pelting Navarre Beach, Fla., and the wind-whipped surf pounding, a steady stream of people walked down the wooden boardwalk at a park for a look at the scene Tuesday afternoon.

Rebecca Studstill, who lives inland, was wary of staying too long, noting that police close bridges once the wind and water get too high. With Hurricane Sally expected to dump rain for days, the problem could be worse than normal, she said.

"Just hunkering down would probably be the best thing for folks out here," she said.

Meanwhile, Tropical Storm Teddy has now become a hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 100 mph (160 kph) the National Hurricane Center said early Wednesday.

Teddy is located about 820 miles (1,335 km) east of the Lesser Antilles. Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 25 miles (40 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 175 miles (281 km).

Some strengthening is forecast during the next few days, and Teddy is likely to become a major hurricane later Wednesday and could reach Category 4 strength on Thursday.

Wang reported from Mobile, Alabama and Martin, from Marietta, Georgia. Associated Press contributors include Russ Bynum in Savannah, Georgia; Sophia Tulp and Haleluya Hadero in Atlanta; Tamara Lush in St. Petersburg, Florida; Rebecca Santana in New Orleans; Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi; Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Alabama; and Julie Walker in New York City.

Trump denies downplaying virus, casts doubt on mask usage

By ZEKE MILLER and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Fielding compelling questions about voters' real-world problems, President Donald Trump denied during a televised town hall that he had played down the threat of the coronavirus earlier this year, although there is an audio recording of him stating he did just that.

Trump, in what could well be a preview of his performance in the presidential debates less than two weeks away, cast doubt on the widely accepted scientific conclusions of his own administration strongly urging the use of face coverings and seemed to bat away the suggestion that the nation has racial inequities.

"Well, I hope there's not a race problem," Trump said Tuesday when asked about his campaign rhetoric seeming to ignore the historical injustices carried out against Black Americans.

Face-to-face with everyday voters for the first time in months, Trump was defensive but resisted agitation as he was pressed on his administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and why he doesn't more aggressively promote the use of masks to reduce the spread of the disease.

"There are people that don't think masks are good," Trump said, though his own Centers for Disease

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Control and Prevention strongly urges their use.

The event, hosted by ABC News' George Stephanopoulos, was a warmup of sorts before Trump faces Democratic nominee Joe Biden in the first presidential debate on Sept. 29. Taped at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, it featured Trump taking questions from an audience of just 21 voters to comply with state and local coronavirus regulations.

Trump sought to counter his admission to journalist Bob Woodward that he was deliberately "playing it down" when discussing the threat of COVID-19 to Americans earlier this year. Despite audio of his comments being released, Trump said: "Yeah, well, I didn't downplay it. I actually, in many ways, I up-played it, in terms of action."

"My action was very strong," Trump added. "I'm not looking to be dishonest. I don't want people to panic."

Trump also insisted he was not wrong when he praised China's response to the virus in January and February, saying he trusted Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader. "He told me that it was under control, that everything was and it turned out to be not true," Trump said,

Trump also suggested the virus would disappear without a vaccine, claiming the nation would develop a herd immunity with time, but he didn't mention the lives that would be lost along the way.

"It's going to be herd-developed, and that's going to happen. That will all happen," Trump said. "But with a vaccine, I think it will go away very quickly."

He concluded by praising his own handling the virus, saying it had enhanced the reputation of some governors and that "we've made a lot of people look good that shouldn't look good, to be honest with you."

The questions from uncommitted voters were pointed and poignant: a diabetic man who said he felt he'd been thrown "under the bus" by mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic; a Black woman with a disease that left her uninsurable until the Obama health care law came along who is worried that she could lose coverage again; a Black pastor who questioned Trump's campaign motto to "Make America Great Again."

"When has America been great for African Americans in the ghetto of America?" the pastor asked.

Asked about what he was doing to address protests against racial injustice, Trump lamented a "lack of respect" and the absence of "retribution" for those who clash with or carry out attacks against police officers. Trump on Sunday called for the death penalty for the individual who shot and critically injured two Los Angeles Sheriff's Department deputies over the weekend.

Trump has been unusually mum on his debate preparations ahead of the first debate, set to take place in Cleveland. On Tuesday, he told Fox News that he believes his day job is the best practice for his three scheduled showdowns with Biden.

"Well, I sort of prepare every day by just doing what I'm doing," Trump said. He noted that he had been in California on Monday and had been to other states before that to make the point that he's getting out and about more than Biden.

One person likely to study the replay: Biden. Returning from a long day of campaigning in Florida, Biden said at his plane that he was preparing for the debates mostly by going back through what Trump has said in the past. But he suggested he had yet to initiate mock debates, saying he was unaware who would play the role of Trump in his preparations.

TrCelebs join Instagram 'freeze' to protest Facebook inaction

BY KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Kim Kardashian West, Katy Perry and Leonardo DiCaprio are among celebrities taking part in a 24-hour Instagram "freeze" on Wednesday to protest against what they say is parent company Facebook's failure to tackle violent and hateful content and election misinformation.

They were among the high profile names lending their backing to the "#StopHateforProfit" movement's latest campaign. The movement asks people to put up a message highlighting what they called the damage Facebook does but otherwise refrain from posting on Instagram for a day.

"I can't sit by and stay silent while these platforms continue to allow the spreading of hate, propaganda and misinformation — created by groups to sow division and split America apart — only to take steps after people are killed," Kardashian West posted on her Instagram account on Tuesday.

Facebook declined to comment but pointed to recent announcements about what it's doing to limit the reach on its platform of groups that support violence and its efforts to protect the U.S. election in November.

With 188 million followers, Kardashian West is one of the most influential people on Instagram and support from her and other big names for the boycott saw Facebook shares slide in aftermarket trading late Tuesday. They were down 1.3% ahead of the market open on Wednesday.

The organizers behind "#StopHateforProfit," including civil rights groups such as the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP and Color Of Change, had previously led a campaign that got hundreds of companies and groups to join a Facebook advertising boycott in July.

Ashton Kutcher, Mark Ruffalo, Kerry Washington, Rosario Dawson, Jamie Foxx and Sacha Baron Cohen were among at least two dozen other Hollywood stars supporting the campaign, the organizers said.

DiCaprio said he was standing with the civil rights groups to call "on all users of Instagram and Facebook to protest the amplification of hate, racism, and the undermining of democracy on those platforms."

Social media companies, led by Facebook, are facing a reckoning over what critics call indefensible excuses for amplifying divisions, hate and misinformation on their platforms.

5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. SALLY COULD LEAD TO RECORD FLOODING The hurricane makes landfall near Gulf Shores, Alabama, as a Category 2 storm with torrential rain and damaging storm surge.

2. WHY WILDFIRES HAVE BEEN A TOUGH FIGHT Heat, drought and a strategic decision to attack the flames early combined with the coronavirus have put a historically heavy burden on West Coast firefighters.

3. INDIA CROSSES 5 MILLION CORONAVIRUS CASES The still soaring figure is testing the country's feeble health care system in tens of thousands of impoverished towns and villages.

4. 'THE PERCEIVED REALITY IS WHAT'S IMPORTANT' In Appleton, Wisconsin, the health of the economy is viewed through partisan lenses — filtered through facts voters want to see and hear, and those they don't.

5. REPORT BLASTS BOEING, FAA FOR CRASHES A House panel blames two deadly 737 Max jet crashes on the "horrific culmination" of failed government oversight, design flaws and a lack of action at Boeing despite knowing about problems.

ump, in the Fox interview, lowered expectations for his Democratic opponent's performance, judging Biden "a disaster" and "grossly incompetent" in the primary debates. He assessed Biden as "OK" and "fine" in his final one-on-one debate with Bernie Sanders before clinching the nomination.

Trump's rhetoric on Biden marked a departure from the traditional efforts by candidates to talk up their rivals' preparation for televised debates, in hopes of setting an unattainably high bar for their performance.

The second of the three scheduled debates, set to be held in Miami on Oct. 15, will feature a similar "town meeting" style.

Biden is to have his own opportunity to hone his skills taking questions from voters on Thursday, when he participates in a televised town hall hosted by CNN.

The visit to Pennsylvania is Trump's second to the battleground state in the last week, after he attended a Sept. 11 memorial event in Shanksville on Friday.

—
Miller reported from Washington. AP writer Will Weissert contributed from Orlando, Florida.

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020>

Japan's new PM Yoshihide Suga, self-made and strong-willed

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Before he got Japan's top government job, Yoshihide Suga was known as a "shadow" prime minister and the right-hand man for his long-serving predecessor.

When Shinzo Abe announced last month he would resign due to ill health, his chief Cabinet secretary, Suga, said he would come forward to pursue Abe's unfinished work.

The self-made politician was elected by Parliament on Wednesday as Japan's new prime minister, two days after he succeeded Abe as leader of the governing Liberal Democratic Party.

Suga's low-key image from government briefings contrasts with his behind-the-scenes work managing bureaucrats and pushing policies.

As the chief Cabinet spokesman under Abe, the straight-faced Suga offered bland commentary at twice-daily televised news briefings highlighted last year when he became known as "Uncle Reiwa" for unveiling Emperor Naruhito's imperial era name, Reiwa.

But behind the scenes, Suga is known for stubbornness, an iron-fist approach as a policy coordinator and influencing bureaucrats using the power of the prime minister's office, leading politics watchers to call him the "shadow prime minister."

Some bureaucrats who opposed his policies have said they were removed from government projects or transferred to other posts. Suga recently said he would continue to do so.

As his parents' eldest son, Suga defied tradition by leaving for Tokyo rather than taking over the family strawberry farm in Akita prefecture. He worked at a cardboard factory before entering university, paying his tuition by working part-time jobs, including one at the Tsukiji fish market.

His classmates remember Suga as quiet but a person of determination. Suga, who played baseball in junior high school, insisted on keeping his batting stance despite an instructor's advice, saying his style made better sense, his old friend Yuri Masashi told the Mainichi newspaper. Apparently Suga was not talking off the cuff, and practiced and mastered the technique of a pro baseball star from Akita. "Once he makes a decision, he never sways and he is still the same," Masashi said.

He was a secretary to former trade minister Hikosaburo Okonogi for 11 years before becoming a Yokohama city assemblyman in 1987.

"I jumped into politics, where I had no connection or relatives, literally starting from zero,(asterisk) he said Monday.

Suga was elected to the lower house of parliament in 1996 at age 47, a late start compared to politicians like Abe, a third-generation blue-blood politician elected to parliament at age 29.

Suga was a loyal supporter of Abe since Abe's first stint as prime minister from 2006 to 2007, and helped Abe return to power in 2012 and become Japan's longest-serving prime minister.

Suga has said his top priorities will be fighting the coronavirus and turning around a Japanese economy battered by the pandemic. He has repeatedly praised Abe's diplomacy and economic policies when asked about what he would like to accomplish as prime minister, but his vision of a future Japan remains unclear. He also defended favoritism and cronyism scandals that occurred under Abe, saying the investigations into the cases were properly handled.

Suga, at 71, says he is in good shape and fit for the leadership job. His disciplined daily routine includes sit-ups and walking — while wearing a business suit so he can immediately head to work in an emergency. He commutes from a parliamentary apartment and hardly goes to his home in Yokohama.

He says his weakness is sweets, especially sweet pancakes and daifuku mochi, a Japanese rice treat filled with sweet bean paste.

Suga says he is a reformist and has broken bureaucratic barriers to secure policy achievements. He credits himself for a boom in foreign tourism, which he hopes to revive when the coronavirus pandemic subsides, as well as lowering cellphone bills and bolstering agricultural exports.

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He is also known to support what would be a historic change in Japan's immigration policy to allow more foreign laborers to offset the decline in Japan's workforce as the country ages. Abe and his nationalistic supporters were not keen on the change.

Suga has pledged to target vested interests and rules hampering reforms to get more done. One such plan is to form a new agency to promote digital transformation, an area where Japan lags and has delayed efforts to fight the coronavirus.

"Where there is a will, there is a way," is Suga's motto. He says he seeks to build a nation of "self-support, mutual support, then public support,(asterisk) urging self-help for individuals, though that has raised concerns he envisions a government that is cold to the weak and the needy.

Compared to his political prowess at home, Suga has hardly traveled overseas and his diplomatic skills are unknown, though he is largely expected to pursue Abe's priorities. Suga said Abe's approach to diplomacy, including his personal contacts with U.S. President Donald Trump, is outstanding and that he may seek Abe's advice.

Suga also inherits other challenges, including China, which continues its assertive actions in regional seas. He will have to decide what to do with the Tokyo Olympics, postponed to next summer due to the pandemic, and establish a good relationship with whoever wins the U.S. presidential race.

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

How Bloomberg's \$100 million Florida bet may shape campaign

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When billionaire Mike Bloomberg ended his presidential campaign in March, he pledged to spend "whatever it takes" to help Democrats defeat President Donald Trump. Less than two months before the election, he's finally coming through.

Facing questions about whether he would fulfill his promise, Bloomberg over the weekend moved to direct \$100 million to Florida alone in support of Joe Biden. It's a massive sum on par with the resources he poured into helping Democrats retake the House in 2018 and could put Trump on defense in a state that is critical to his reelection.

Billionaire donors have long played a central role in supporting both parties. Yet no one has proposed pumping in so much cash to support a presidential campaign in a single state. Bloomberg's allies say the investment is in line with his longtime strategy in business and politics: to make the most impactful investment, based on the best data, at the right time.

"Mike Bloomberg is an impact player," said former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, who served as a co-chair of Bloomberg's presidential campaign. "He's looking across the field. He takes in the data. He looks at the evidence, does the analysis and then determines where to best have his impact to change the course of an election. That's why he decided to invest so heavily in Florida."

Bloomberg's advisers say his Florida investment offers multiple benefits for Democrats: It frees up Democratic cash, allowing the campaign and outside groups to focus on other key swing states; it requires Republicans to spend more heavily to make up for the disparity there; and a decisive win by Biden in Florida could help tamp down efforts most Democrats are expecting from Trump to discount the results of the election.

Florida election officials can start counting absentee ballots weeks before Election Day, which means they're typically able to report those results — which tend to favor Democrats — that night. And Trump has praised Florida's mail ballot system, meaning if Biden wins there, it will be tougher for Trump to reverse course on the state.

"It's pretty important for the democracy if Biden does win for us to be able to call Florida on election night," said Kevin Sheekey, Bloomberg's longtime adviser.

Still, Bloomberg isn't necessarily a natural fit to help Democrats. Initially a Democrat, he became a Republican in 2000 ahead of his first run for New York City mayor. He left the GOP in 2007 and wasn't

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affiliated with either party until registering as a Democrat again last year.

He won praise from some Democrats for his work during the midterms and in support of gun control. But his reputation took a hit during his presidential campaign when he faced scrutiny over past comments and treatment of women and Black people along with accusations that he was using his own money to buy the White House.

After spending \$1 billion on his own campaign, Bloomberg won just one primary contest: American Samoa.

He received more negative attention after leaving the race for laying off campaign staffers he'd promised to employ through November. And after an initial transfer of \$18 million in leftover campaign funds to the Democratic National Committee, many party leaders started to question whether he'd renege on his pledge to spend big defeating Trump as the months ticked down.

His Florida investment has tempered those criticisms, but some privately still grumble that it took him until the final months of the race to engage.

"The guy has an ego as large as anybody's. It took him a while to get his feelings unbruised," said John Morgan, a major Democratic fundraiser and plaintiffs' attorney in Florida, who added that Bloomberg nonetheless has the opportunity to deliver a "knockout blow" to Trump if Biden ends up winning Florida.

Bloomberg's aides argue that the billionaire businessman has been involved from the start of his own campaign, noting the money he spent on anti-Trump advertising — \$275 million, according to their tally.

And they say that, beyond Florida, Bloomberg is one of the Democratic Party's biggest funders.

He has contributed \$500,000 to Voto Latino to help register Latino voters, \$2 million to the group Collective Future to help register Black voters, and \$2 million to Swing Left, a group focused on electing Democrats in swing districts.

One of the groups he has founded and funds, Everytown for Gun Safety, has committed to spending \$60 million on elections this cycle, and Bloomberg himself has pledged another \$60 million to support Democrats in House races. He's already delivered \$11.4 million to House Majority PAC, the major Democratic super PAC helping elect Democrats to the House.

Bloomberg has also invested an additional \$35 million in Hawkfish, the voter data outfit he launched, to help Democrats counter Trump's massive digital organization. Hawkfish is working with the DNC and at least two major Democratic super PACs on their voter data and targeting operations.

And while the businessman has not yet committed any money to helping Democrats take back the Senate, Nutter said to stay tuned. Bloomberg's team, he said, is watching the data.

"There are a lot of things under consideration right now," he said.

Bloomberg's advisers say they are still working out the details of how they will spend the money in Florida. Much of it will go to TV and internet advertising, as well as Latino-focused get-out-the-vote efforts. They also plan to invest significantly in existing groups that have already built infrastructure, and Hawkfish will be involved in making a number of the spending and advertising decisions, particularly around educating voters on mail-in voting.

Some of the spending is aimed, however, at helping Biden make up for what some Democrats say is an unexpected deficit in Florida. Many say Biden, who visited the state on Tuesday for the first time since becoming the nominee, has not reached out enough to Hispanics in particular.

"It has gotten closer," said Manny Diaz, a former Miami mayor who is advising the new Bloomberg effort in Florida. "We see a narrowing because there is a vacuum right now. And what is going to be important over the next 50 to 60 days is to fill that vacuum."

And while national Democrats have eschewed knocking on doors because of the pandemic, some of that money will trickle down to groups that are actively doing so, Diaz said.

"People like to see that there's excitement," he said. "The TV at one point becomes just noise."

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

5M people infected, India's virus outbreak still soaring

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's confirmed coronavirus infections passed 5 million on Wednesday, still soaring and testing the feeble health care system in tens of thousands of impoverished towns and villages.

The world's second-most populous country has added more than 1 million cases this month alone and is expected to become the pandemic's worst-hit country within weeks, surpassing the United States, where more than 6.6 million people have been infected.

India's Health Ministry reported 90,123 new cases in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 5,020,359, about 0.35% of the nation's nearly 1.4 billion people. Its record daily high of 97,570 cases was reported on Sept. 11.

The ministry said 1,290 more people died in the past 24 hours, for a total of 82,066, which is the third-highest toll in the world. Experts warned that India's fatality rate could increase in coming weeks with lockdown restrictions relaxed except in high-risk areas.

But authorities ruled out imposing a second countrywide lockdown as recoveries were growing at more than 78%. Its fatality rate is 1.6%, far lower than 3% in the United States and Brazil, according to tallies by Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Gagandeep Kang, an infectious diseases expert from Christian Medical College in the southern Indian state of Vellore, said the increase in cases in India was inevitable. But she said the country still has a chance to limit the growth through a strategy of testing and isolating affected places.

She said "the goal was for India to do enough testing to bring down the test positivity rate, or fraction of tests that test positive to less than 5% or even less than 1%."

Most of India's deaths are concentrated in its large cities — Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Pune. But smaller urban centers in Maharashtra such as Nagpur or Jalgaon have also reported more than 1,000 deaths.

Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on Tuesday that only about 6% of the coronavirus patients in India were on oxygen — 0.31% on ventilators, 2.17% on intensive care unit beds with oxygen and 3.69% on oxygen beds.

Maharashtra state, with more than 1 million cases, remains the worst-affected region, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. These states account for more than 60% of coronavirus cases in the country.

Referring to media reports that some hospitals in Maharashtra state are facing a shortage of oxygen cylinders, Bhushan said the supplies are adequate in the country, but state governments should monitor the situation.

"The problem happens when at a facility level, there is no inventory management," Bhushan said.

The Health Ministry said 155 health workers, including 46 doctors, have died so far due to COVID-19.

India's meager health resources are poorly divided across the country. Nearly 600 million Indians live in rural areas, and with the virus spreading fast across India's vast hinterlands, health experts worry that hospitals could be overwhelmed.

Nationwide, India is testing more than 1 million samples per day, exceeding the World Health Organization's benchmark of 140 tests per 1 million people. But many of these are antigen tests, which look for virus proteins and are faster but less accurate than RT-PCR, which confirm the coronavirus by its genetic code.

With the economy contracting by a record 23.9% in the April-June quarter, leaving millions jobless, the Indian government is continuing to relax lockdown restrictions that were imposed in late March. The government in May announced a \$266 billion stimulus package, but consumer demand and manufacturing are yet to recover.

A large number of offices, shops, businesses, liquor shops, bars and restaurants have reopened. Restricted domestic and international evacuation flights are being operated along with train services.

Schools will reopen for high school students for consultation with teachers next week.

Associated Press Science Writer Aniruddha Ghosal contributed to this report.

Panel's report blasts Boeing, FAA for crashes, seeks reforms

By TOM KRISHER AP Business Writer

A House committee issued a scathing report Wednesday questioning whether Boeing and government regulators have recognized the problems that caused two deadly 737 Max jet crashes and whether either will be willing to make significant changes to fix them.

Staff members from the Democrat-controlled Transportation Committee blamed the crashes that killed 346 people on the "horrific culmination" of failed government oversight, design flaws and a lack of action at Boeing despite knowing about problems.

The committee identified many deficiencies in the Federal Aviation Administration approval process for new jetliners. But both the agency and Boeing have said certification of the Max complied with FAA regulations, the 246-page report said.

"The fact that a compliant airplane suffered from two deadly crashes in less than five months is clear evidence that the current regulatory system is fundamentally flawed and needs to be repaired," the staff wrote in the report released early Wednesday.

The report highlights the need for legislation to fix the approval process and deal with the FAA's delegation of some oversight tasks to aircraft manufacturer employees, said Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio, D-Oregon.

"Obviously the system is inadequate," DeFazio said. "We will be adopting significant reforms."

He wouldn't give details of possible changes, saying committee leaders are in talks with Republicans about legislation. He said the committee won't scrap the delegation program, and he hopes to reach agreement on reforms before year's end.

The Senate Commerce Committee on Wednesday could make changes to a bipartisan bill introduced in June giving the FAA more control over picking company employees who sign off on safety decisions. One improvement may be that a plane with significant changes from previous models would need more FAA review.

The House report stems from an 18-month investigation into the October 2018 crash of Lion Air flight 610 in Indonesia and the crash of Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 in March of 2019. The Max was grounded worldwide shortly after the Ethiopia crash. Regulators are testing planes with revamped flight control software, and Boeing hopes to get the Max flying again late this year or early in 2021.

The investigators mainly focused on the reason Boeing was able to get the jet approved with minimal pilot training: It convinced the FAA that the Max was an updated version of previous generation 737s.

But in fact, Boeing equipped the plane with software called MCAS, an acronym for Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, which automatically lowers the plane's nose to prevent an aerodynamic stall. Initially, pilots worldwide weren't told about the system, which Boeing said was needed because the Max had bigger, more powerful engines that were placed further forward on the wings than older 737s.

In both crashes, MCAS repeatedly pointed the nose down, forcing pilots into unsuccessful struggles to keep the planes aloft.

Committee investigators said they found several instances in which Boeing concealed information about MCAS from the FAA and airlines.

The Chicago-based company didn't disclose that MCAS worked off a single sensor called "angle of attack," which measures a plane's pitch. It also didn't disclose that a gauge that would have alerted pilots to a malfunctioning sensor didn't work on the vast majority of the jets.

Boeing also concealed that it took a company test pilot more than 10 seconds to determine that MCAS was operating and respond to it, a condition that the pilot found to be "catastrophic," according to the report. Federal guidelines assume pilots will respond to this condition within four seconds.

Four Boeing employees working as "authorized representatives" with permission to act on the FAA's behalf to validate aircraft systems knew about the test pilot's slow response. But there was no evidence

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that they reported this to the FAA, the report said.

Another authorized representative raised concerns in 2016 about hazards of MCAS repeatedly pointing the plane's nose down, but the concerns never made it to the FAA.

Repeated MCAS activation and faulty sensors "were the core contributing factors that led to the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes more than two years later," the report said.

According to the report, Boeing wanted to keep details about MCAS from the FAA so it wouldn't require additional pilot training. That would ruin Boeing's sales pitch for the Max, that pilots of older 737s wouldn't have to go through extensive simulator training to fly the new planes.

Investigators found that Boeing had a financial incentive to avoid more pilot training. Under a 2011 contract with Southwest Airlines, Boeing would have had to knock \$1 million off the price of each Max if simulator training was needed.

"That drove a whole lot of really bad decisions internally at Boeing, and also the FAA did not pick up on these things," DeFazio said.

He added that Boeing had an internal meeting in 2013 and agreed never to talk about MCAS outside the company. At one point, MCAS was listed in pilot training manuals, but an authorized representative signed off on removing it, he said.

In a statement, Boeing said it has worked to strengthen its safety culture and has cooperated with the committee. The company has incorporated many recommendations from committees and experts who have examined Max issues.

Boeing said it has learned from mistakes.

"Change is always hard and requires a daily commitment, but we as a company are dedicated to doing the work," the statement said.

The FAA said in a statement it looks forward to working with the committee to make improvements, and it's already making changes based on internal and independent reviews. "These initiatives are focused on advancing overall aviation safety by improving our organization, processes, and culture," the FAA said, adding that it is requiring a number of design changes to the Max before it can fly again.

When it came to FAA oversight, investigators said they found multiple examples of agency managers overruling technical and safety experts at the behest of Boeing. A draft internal FAA safety culture survey said that many in the FAA believe aviation safety leaders "are overly concerned with achieving the business oriented outcomes of industry stakeholders and are not held accountable for safety-related decisions," the report stated.

In an interview with investigators, Keith Leverkusen, former Boeing general manager for the Max who was promoted in the company, said he considered development of the Max a success despite the crashes.

"I do challenge the suggestion that the development was a failure," the report quotes him as saying.

Investigators wrote that this raised doubts about Boeing's ability to change.

"Only a genuine, holistic, and assertive commitment to changing the cultural issues unearthed in the committee's investigation ... can enhance aviation safety and truly help both Boeing and the FAA learn from the dire lessons of the 737 Max tragedies," the report said.

Airlines Writer David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

The Latest: Madrid to impose lockdowns in some areas

By The Associated Press undefined

MADRID — The Spanish capital will introduce selective lockdowns in urban areas where the coronavirus is spreading faster.

Deputy regional health chief Antonio Zapatero said Wednesday that the measures will most likely affect southern, working-class neighborhoods of Madrid where infection rates have been steadily soaring since August.

Zapatero said that Madrid wants to "flatten the curve before the arrival of autumn and the complications

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that cold weather could bring," adding that the measures to be taken will be decided by this weekend.

Madrid and its surrounding region of 6.6 million people have accounted for nearly one third of Spain's new cases, which have averaged 8,200 per day for the past week.

Overall, Spain has had more than 600,000 cases and just over 30,000 deaths.

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

- Trump denies downplaying virus threat, despite audio recording, and continues to cast doubt on masks
- India's virus cases pass 5 million and are still soaring, testing feeble health care system and closing in on US total
- Iowa governor won't budge on mandating masks even as virus deaths rise
- Doubts persist as NYC's hybrid school year is set to start

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

LONDON — The British government plans to ration coronavirus testing, giving priority to health workers and care home staff after widespread reports that people throughout the country were unable to schedule tests.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday will face questions about his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in the House of Commons and before a key committee amid the outcry over the shortage of testing.

Justice Secretary Robert Buckland says the government is in the process of drawing up a new priority list for testing, suggesting that students and their families could be next in line after the National Health Service and social care.

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis says the coronavirus pandemic has proved that our own health depends on the health of others and the environment, and that exploiting nature means exploiting others.

Francis doubled down on his insistence of the interconnectedness of people and the planet during his general audience Wednesday, held in a Vatican courtyard with the faithful spaced apart to limit contagion.

Francis said if people are unable to contemplate the beauty and majesty of nature without exploiting it, they will be similarly unable to contemplate others without taking advantage of them. He said: "He who lives to exploit nature ends up exploiting people and treating them like slaves. This is a universal law."

Francis is expected to elaborate on the themes of solidarity, fraternity and care for creation in an encyclical he's expected to sign Oct. 3 on living in the post-COVID world.

HANOI, Vietnam — Vietnam will resume international commercial flights connecting the country to several Asian destinations starting Friday, after a monthslong shutdown to curb the coronavirus outbreak.

The flights, however, are reserved for Vietnamese nationals, diplomats, experts, managers, skilled workers, investors and their families. They are not yet available for tourists.

The flights connecting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to destinations in South Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan will operate weekly, the government website announced. Flights connecting Vietnam's two largest cities with Cambodia and Laos will resume next week.

To board a flight, passengers must hold a certificate showing they have tested negative for the coronavirus no more than five days before the departure date. Upon arrival, they will be tested and quarantined, the report said.

Vietnam shut down international flights on April 1. National carrier Vietnam Airlines estimated last month that it would lose \$650 million in 2020.

Vietnam has reported 1,059 cases of the coronavirus. It managed to avoid any deaths until July, when the virus crept into the city of Da Nang, killing 35 people.

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But no new cases have been reported for two weeks. Last week, Da Nang lifted a travel restriction after two months.

PRAGUE — The Czech Republic has registered another steep rise in coronavirus infections, with the number of new confirmed cases surpassing 1,600 in one day for the first time.

The Health Ministry says the day-to-day increase reached a new record of 1,677 on Tuesday. The record was broken four times last week.

The capital of Prague has the highest number of people who tested positive, over 141 per 100,000. The surge has prompted some European countries, including Slovakia, Denmark, Britain and Switzerland to impose travel restrictions for travellers from the Czech Republic.

According to government figures released on Wednesday, 333 people needed hospitalization. That number was over 400 during the first wave of the pandemic in the spring.

The Czech Republic has had 38,896 people infected with 476 deaths.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's daily coronavirus tally has stayed below 200 for two weeks, but the government is urging people not to lower their guard.

Authorities said Wednesday that the 113 cases added in the last 24 hours took the country's total to 22,504, including 367 deaths.

Eighty-one of them were in the Seoul metropolitan area, the heart of a recent viral resurgence.

Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip called on people to refrain from having unnecessary gatherings and visiting crowded places.

UNITED NATIONS — The new president of the U.N. General Assembly is warning that unilateralism will only strengthen the COVID-19 pandemic and is calling for a new commitment to global cooperation including on the fair and equitable distribution of vaccines.

Turkish diplomat and politician Volkan Bozkir, who took over the reins of the 193-member world body on Tuesday, announced that the General Assembly will hold a high-level special session on the COVID-19 pandemic in early November, though diplomats said the date may slip.

Bozkir takes over from outgoing General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, who presided over a unique year-old session that he said was "defined by a pandemic" and included virtual meetings and new voting procedures.

Bozkir told diplomats from U.N. member nations, seated at socially distanced spaces in the assembly chamber, that "confronting the effects of the coronavirus in all their dimensions will be an overarching priority for my presidency."

He said "no state can combat this pandemic alone," and it is the members' responsibility "to strengthen people's faith in multilateral cooperation and international institutions, with the U.N. at their center."

Yoshihide Suga named Japan's prime minister, succeeding Abe

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's Parliament elected Yoshihide Suga as prime minister Wednesday, replacing long-serving leader Shinzo Abe with his right-hand man.

Keeping his usual straight face, Suga bowed deeply several times when the results were announced as his fellow ruling party lawmakers applauded in Parliament's lower house, the more powerful of the two chambers where he has a seat. He was also confirmed in the upper house.

Suga, who was chief Cabinet secretary and the top government spokesman under Abe, selected a Cabinet that is a mix of fresh faces and current or former ministers. They hold their first meeting later Wednesday.

Suga has stressed his background as a farmer's son and a self-made politician in promising to serve the interests of ordinary people and rural communities. He has said he will pursue Abe's unfinished policies and that his priorities will be fighting the coronavirus and turning around an economy battered by the pandemic.

Abe said before the change was official that as a lawmaker, he will support Suga's government and he

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thanked the people for their understanding and their strong support for Suga.

"I devoted my body and soul for the economic recovery and diplomacy to protect Japan's national interest every single day since we returned to power," Abe told reporters at the prime minister's office before heading into his final Cabinet meeting. "During this time, I was able to tackle various challenges together with the people, and I'm proud of myself."

In a brief farewell ceremony, Abe was presented with a bouquet as all Prime Minister's Office staff and Suga lined up and applauded until he disappeared into his car. Abe, 65, said last month he was resigning because his treatment for ulcerative colitis would be ongoing and cause physical weakness.

Suga was a loyal supporter since Abe's first stint as prime minister from 2006 to 2007 and helped him return to the job in 2012. He gained early support from party heavyweights on expectations he would continue Abe's line, and his election to lead the ruling party on Monday virtually assured he would be chosen prime minister by Parliament.

Suga, 71, praised Abe's diplomacy and economic policies when asked what he would like to accomplish himself and says he will set up a new government agency to speed up Japan's lagging digital transformation.

He said he will break down vested interests and rules that hamper reforms. In reshuffling key posts with the party, however, Suga evenly allocated top posts to key factions, a balancing act seen as returning the favor for their support in the leadership race.

Suga said he will appoint "reform-minded, hard-working people" to the new Cabinet. Fifteen of the 20 expected posts are new; 11 members in the last Abe administration are to be retained or shifted to different ministerial posts and had served one of reshuffled Abe Cabinets.

Finance Minister Taro Aso, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Olympic Minister Seiko Hashimoto, and Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, the son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, were retained.

Suga picked Katsunobu Kato, a former health minister and finance official, to succeed him as chief Cabinet secretary. Abe's younger brother, Nobuo Kishi, who has close ties with Taiwan, was appointed defense minister, replacing Taro Kono who was shifted to administrative reforms minister.

Hashimoto and Yoko Kamikawa are the only Cabinet ministers who are women. Kamikawa in her last stint as justice minister in 2018 ordered the executions of 13 Aum Shinrikyo cultists for the 1995 gas attacks of Tokyo subways.

While Kato, as top government spokesman, read out the lineup for the Suga Cabinet, the ministers arrived at the prime minister's office ahead of the palace ceremony to be sworn-in by Emperor Naruhito. Suga will then hold a press conference later Wednesday and have his first Cabinet meeting.

Compared to his political prowess at home, Suga has hardly traveled overseas and his diplomatic skills are unknown, though he is largely expected to pursue Abe's priorities.

The new prime minister will inherit a range of challenges, including relations with China, which continues its assertive actions in the contested East China Sea, and what to do with the Tokyo Olympics, which were postponed to next summer due to the coronavirus. And he will have to establish a good relationship with whomever wins the U.S. presidential race.

'Nothing left in the bucket': Wildfire resources run thin

By JAMES ANDERSON and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

Justin Silvera came off the fire lines in Northern California after a grueling 36 straight days battling wildfires and evacuating residents ahead of the flames. Before that, he and his crew had worked for 20 days, followed by a three-day break.

Silvera, a 43-year-old battalion chief with Cal Fire, California's state firefighting agency, said he's lost track of the blazes he's fought this year. He and his crew have sometimes been on duty for 64 hours at a stretch, their only rest coming in 20-minute catnaps.

"I've been at this 23 years, and by far this is the worst I've seen," Silvera said before bunking down at a motel for 24 hours. After working in Santa Cruz County, his next assignment was to head north to attack wildfires near the Oregon border.

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His exhaustion reflects the situation up and down the West Coast fire lines: This year's blazes have taxed the human, mechanical and financial resources of the nation's wildfire fighting forces to an extraordinary degree. And half of the fire season is yet to come. Heat, drought and a strategic decision to attack the flames early combined with the coronavirus to put a historically heavy burden on fire teams.

"There's never enough resources," said Silvera, one of nearly 17,000 firefighters in California. "Typically with Cal Fire we're able to attack — air tankers, choppers, dozers. We're good at doing that. But these conditions in the field, the drought, the wind, this stuff is just taking off. We can't contain one before another erupts."

Washington State Forester George Geissler says there are hundreds of unfulfilled requests for help throughout the West. Agencies are constantly seeking firefighters, aircraft, engines and support personnel.

Fire crews have been summoned from at least nine states and other countries, including Canada and Israel. Hundreds of agreements for agencies to offer mutual assistance have been maxed out at the federal, state and local levels, he said.

"We know that there's really nothing left in the bucket," Geissler said. "Our sister agencies to the south in California and Oregon are really struggling."

Demand for firefighting resources has been high since mid-August, when fire officials bumped the national preparedness level to critical, meaning at least 80% of crews were already committed to fighting fires, and there were few personnel and little equipment to spare.

Because of the extreme fire behavior, "you can't say for sure having more resources would make a difference," said Carrie Bilbao, a spokesperson for the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise.

Andy Stahl, a forester who runs Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, an advocacy group in Oregon, said it would have been impossible to stop some of the most destructive blazes, a task he compared to "dropping a bucket of water on an atomic bomb."

But Stahl contends the damage could have been less if government agencies were not so keen to put out every blaze. By stamping out smaller fires and those that ignite during wetter months, Stahl said officials have allowed fuels to build up, setting the stage for bigger fires during times of drought and hot, windy weather.

That's been exacerbated this year by the coronavirus pandemic, which prompted U.S. Forest Service Chief Vickie Christiansen to issue a directive in June to fight all fires aggressively, reversing a decades-long trend of allowing some to burn. The idea was to minimize large concentrations of firefighters by extinguishing blazes quickly.

Fighting the flames from the air was key to the strategy, with 35 air tankers and 200 helicopters being used, Forest Service spokesperson Kaari Carpenter said.

Yet by Aug. 30, following the deaths of some firefighters, including four aviators, and several close calls, fire officials in Boise warned that long-term fatigue was setting in. They called for a "tactical pause" so fire commanders could reinforce safe practices.

Tim Ingalsbee, a member of the advocacy group Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics and Ecology, said the June directive from Christiansen returned the forest service to a mindset prevalent for much of the last century that focused on putting out fires as quickly as possible. He said allowing more fires to burn when they are not threatening life or property would free up firefighters for the most dangerous blazes.

With no end in sight to the pandemic, Ingalsbee worried the focus on aggressively attacking every fire could prove lasting.

"More crews, more air tankers, more engines and dozers still can't overcome this powerful force of nature," he said. "The crews are beat up and fatigued and spread thin, and we're barely halfway through the traditional fire season."

Cal Fire's roughly 8,000 personnel have been fighting blazes from the Oregon border to the Mexico border, repeatedly bouncing from blaze to blaze, said Tim Edwards, president of the union for Cal Fire, the nation's second largest firefighting agency.

"We're battle-hardened, but it seems year after year, it gets tougher, and at some point in time we won't be able to cope. We'll reach a breaking point," said Edwards, a 25-year veteran.

The immediate dangers of the fires are compounded by worries about COVID in camp and at home. Firefighters "see all this destruction and the fatigue, and then they're getting those calls from home, where their families are dealing with school and child care because of COVID. It's stressing them out, and we have to keep their heads in the game," he said.

COVID also has limited the state's use of inmate fire crews — either because of early inmate releases to prevent outbreaks in prisons or because many are under quarantine in those prisons, both Berland and Geissler said.

Aside from the human toll, the conflagrations in Colorado and Utah, New Mexico and Arizona, and now California and the Pacific Northwest have cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

California alone has spent \$529 million since July 1 on wildfires, said Daniel Berlant, assistant deputy director of Cal Fire. By comparison, the state spent \$691 million the entire fiscal year that ended June 30. The U.S. government will reimburse most state costs for the biggest disasters.

Back in the field, Silvera and his crew saved two people at the beginning of their 26-day duty tour. The two hikers encountered the crew after the firefighters themselves were briefly trapped while trying to save the headquarters building at Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

"We got in a bad spot, and there were a few hours there we didn't know if we'd make it," Silvera said. "Those people found us, and we wouldn't have been in there."

"That's what you sign up for."

Murray, Jokic help Denver stun Clippers 104-89 in Game 7

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP) — Nikola Jokic picked out two birthday presents for his coach. He just didn't know which one he would be wrapping.

"Before the game I told him, 'Coach, I'm going to give you a really good present — I'm going to get you home or I'm going to get you to the conference finals,'" the Nuggets center said.

Michael Malone was thrilled with the present he received.

Denver's dynamic duo of Jamal Murray and Jokic led another stunning turnaround as the Nuggets advanced to the Western Conference finals for the first time since 2009.

Murray scored 40 points, Jokic had a triple-double by the third quarter and Denver again overcame a double-digit deficit to shock the Los Angeles Clippers 104-89 in Game 7 on Tuesday night.

Denver became the first team in NBA history to rally from a 3-1 series deficit twice in the same post-season. The team beat Utah in Game 7 in the first round.

"Those guys stepped up on the biggest moment," said Malone, who turned 49 on Tuesday. "You find out a lot about people in these moments. Man, did we pass the character test or what?"

Even more history: The Nuggets are the third team in the U.S. major pro sports to rally from a pair of 3-1 deficits in the same playoffs, joining the 1985 Kansas City Royals and 2003 Minnesota Wild.

Denver will face LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers in the conference finals. They'll be the underdogs, of course. That's fine with Murray.

"It's fun to silence everybody," said Murray, who scored 25 in the first half.

They certainly quieted the noise around the Clippers, who hoped the additions of Kawhi Leonard and Paul George would lead them to their first-ever conference finals — and beyond. But LA's stars fell flat.

"It hurts. It hurts. But we move on," George said. "Year 1 together, first run together, of course we wanted to win this. But we've been very optimistic about us being together and building something going down the road."

Leonard finished with 14 points on 6-of-22 shooting, while George had 10 points on 4-of-16 shooting. The Clippers fell to 0-8 all-time in games where they could clinch a trip to the conference finals.

This marked the third time that coach Doc Rivers was on the losing end of a series where his team led 3-1. It also happened when he was with Orlando against Detroit in 2003, and with the Clippers against Houston in 2015.

"I'm the coach and I'll take any blame for it. But we didn't meet our expectations, clearly," Rivers said.

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The Nuggets celebrated in style after the game, dumping water on each other and jumping around in the locker room.

"This is a really interesting team," Jokic said. "We don't have many superstars."

That's debatable.

The 7-foot Jokic had a monster game with 16 points, 13 assists and 22 rebounds, which were the most by a Nuggets player in an NBA playoff game. He broke his record of 19 that he set last season and shared with Marcus Camby.

In a familiar trend, the Nuggets found themselves down by 12 in the first half. They also trailed 61-54 with 10:50 left in the third when they caught fire. The Nuggets went on a 35-13 run to build a 15-point lead in the fourth quarter.

They led by as many as 20.

Denver also rallied from double-digit deficits in its last two games to stun the Clippers.

"We were right there. There's no excuses," Leonard said. "We should have finished it off. Like I said, the last three games pretty much mirrored each other."

Jokic insisted the third-seeded Nuggets weren't feeling any pressure. He said Game 7 was just another game. After all, this was Denver's fourth straight Game 7 dating to the playoffs last season.

"Honestly, you could just see the difference in the two teams. That team's been together," Rivers said. "We haven't. And you could see it as the games went on."

Denver's plans were to enjoy the moment — briefly, anyway, before getting ready for the Lakers.

"You have to celebrate the moments," Malone said. "This is a moment. It's my birthday. We're going to go party."

TIP-INS

Nuggets: Jerami Grant and Gary Harris each had 14 points.

Clippers: G Landry Shamet turned his right ankle in the first quarter, limped down the floor, hit a 3-pointer and then hobbled to the locker room. He returned just before halftime. ... Montrezl Harrell led the Clippers with 20 points.

FASHION FORWARD

The Nuggets coaching staff went with their customary all-black outfits (a nod to singer Johnny Cash). The Clippers wore salmon-colored polo shirts that have been lucky for them inside the bubble.

Just coaches being a little superstitious.

"I worked with coaches that knew the record of the ties they wore," Malone said. "Yes, we are a weird group. We'll look at any advantage necessary. As the jump ball goes up, it doesn't matter what we're wearing."

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

After Beirut blast, a young surgeon finds new sense of duty

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — It was a night Dr. Bassam Osman says changed his life. At around 6 p.m. on Aug. 4, the 27-year-old surgical resident was about to leave his daily hospital shift. Then a massive explosion shook Beirut.

The floodgates opened and hundreds of wounded poured into the American University of Beirut Medical Center, one of Lebanon's best hospitals.

The medical staff of around 100 doctors, nurses and aides juggled priorities and space in treating the torn-up and bloodied men, women and children. They sutured wounds by mobile phone lights when electricity conked out. The wounded kept streaming in because several other hospitals closer to the port were knocked out of service by the blast.

Veteran doctors who had worked through Lebanon's civil war said they'd never seen anything like it. In six hours, they used up a year and a half's worth of emergency supplies.

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Osman ended up working the next 52 hours straight. He treated more than two dozen patients. He lost one.

"There was no moment in my life where I felt more in touch with my own and my surrounding humanity," Osman said of those 52 hours in a tweet afterward.

Osman, at the beginning of his career, finds himself in a medical field far different from what he expected when he entered the profession.

Lebanon's health facilities were once considered among the region's best. In a short time, they have been brought to near collapse, battered by Lebanon's financial meltdown and a surge in coronavirus cases, then smashed by the Beirut explosion.

But the blast has also given Osman a greater sense of duty. That day's trauma, he says, forged a deeper emotional bond between doctors and patients, left with no one else to trust in a country where politicians and public institutions take no responsibility.

The disaster, caused by explosive chemicals left untended for years at Beirut's port, has stoked anger at Lebanon's corrupt officials, who are also blamed for driving the country of 5 million into near bankruptcy. More than 190 people were killed in the explosion, thousands hurt, and tens of thousands of homes were wrecked.

"Day by day, these (crises) are becoming our normal life," Osman told the AP. "We are tired... It feels like one long marathon."

Harder days may be ahead, he feels.

The blast exacerbated shortages in medical supplies caused by the financial crisis. Replacement supplies are not coming fast enough.

In one of Osman's recent operations, lack of supplies nearly turned a small but critical procedure into invasive surgery. Osman and the other surgeons didn't have the right size balloon to expand the patient's arteries and were about to open her chest, before they found a way to improvise a replacement.

Medical facilities hit by the economic meltdown are laying off staff. More doctors are emigrating. Osman's salary, denominated in Lebanese pounds, dropped in value from nearly \$1,300 to just around \$200 a month because of the local currency's crash.

It will cost nearly \$30 million to repair health facilities damaged by the blast, the World Health Organization estimates. Eight hospitals and 20 clinics sustained partial or heavy structural damage. Two hospitals remain largely out of service. One, deemed totally unsafe, has to be leveled and rebuilt.

The blast damaged the WHO's main warehouse for medical supplies, destroying a shipment of COVID-19 protective equipment. It destroyed an COVID-19 isolation center used for migrant workers and vulnerable groups, and damaged centers for HIV and tuberculosis.

The strained health system faces a coronavirus surge. Since the Aug. 4 blast, there has been a 220% increase in reported infections, according to the International Rescue Committee.

COVID-19 patients are filling hospital and ICU beds. More than 25,000 confirmed cases have been reported, and 8% of all tests are coming back positive, according to the lead COVID-19 doctor Firas Abiad. More than 250 people have died. The number is expected to rise, with 115 patients in ICU, up from single digits before July.

The increase is partly due to the explosion's after-effects, including overcrowding in health facilities, displaced people sheltering with family and friends, and disrupted water networks and loss of hygiene items, said Christina Bethke, a WHO coordinator of the emergency response.

Hit by the financial crisis, many cannot afford medical treatment. In the weeks preceding the explosion, Osman said he and his colleagues thought things had hit their worst when they saw people leaving the hospital because they couldn't pay for admission.

Then the blast came.

Osman can't forget the patient he lost that day.

The young man came in with a hole in his heart and was whisked to the operating room. When the hole was closed, the team noticed bleeding in the abdomen and tended to that. But he also had a brain hemorrhage. In the chaos, the doctors had no time for imaging to detect it. The patient died.

Osman knows only the first digits of his medical number: Patient AAA. He's trying to find out his identity — at least his name, or where he was when the blast went off, or whether he has family looking for him.

"I feel like I need to find closure for this operation, especially because we tried so hard," he said.

Since the blast, there is a new "intensity of emotion" between doctors and patients, Osman said.

One woman reached out to Osman on social media, seeking advice for a plastic surgeon because her wounds were stitched badly on the day of the blast — not realizing he was the one who did the stitching.

Osman admitted responsibility, saying the sutures were done under mobile phone lights. He invited her to return. She did, for coffee. He got to apologize in person, and she, in an Instagram post, thanked him for "putting her back together" and saving her life.

Osman called it one of the most rewarding and heartwarming experiences.

Another difference: Patients want to talk. Needing to unburden themselves, they talk about how they lost their homes, what happened to them in the blast, how they can't afford treatment — "then they start talking about the whole situation in the country," he said.

"People can trust us, not only with their health but also their emotions ... I think the emotional injury is much more severe than the physical one," he said.

Osman said he welcomes it. "I try to make it personal with patients," he said. "I'm not here just to do my job and leave."

Osman has two more years in his residency, then he plans to go on a fellowship abroad. He said that previously it was "a question mark" whether he would return to Lebanon when it was over.

After the explosion, he is certain he will.

"After I witnessed how much potential there is to give as a doctor in a country like Lebanon ... I realized that the question marks have all gone away."

'Huge rainmaker': Hurricane Sally threatens historic floods

By JAY REEVES and ANGIE WANG Associated Press

NAVARRE BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Heavy rain, pounding surf and flash floods hit parts of the Florida Panhandle and the Alabama coast on Tuesday as Hurricane Sally lumbered toward land at a painfully slow pace, threatening as much as 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain and dangerous, historic flooding.

The storm's center churned offshore 65 miles (105 kilometers) south-southeast of Mobile, Alabama, as Sally crept north-northeast toward an expected Wednesday landfall at 2 mph (3 kph), according to the National Hurricane Center. The forecast map showed the center likely coming ashore in Alabama, near the Florida line.

Hurricane force winds extended 40 miles (65 kilometers). Rain fell sideways and began covering roads in Pensacola, Florida, and Mobile. More than 80,000 power customers were without electricity, according to poweroutage.us .

Up to a foot (more than 30 centimeters) of rain had fallen already on the coast by Tuesday night and Sally's lumbering pace meant there would likely be extended deluges.

"A hurricane moving at 2 mph is stalled for all intents and purposes," said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami. "If they aren't moving along and they just kind of sit there, you're going to get a ridiculous amount of rain."

Sally strengthened late Tuesday, with sustained winds reaching 90 mph (145 kph). Winds had reached 100 mph (161 kph) on Monday. The National Hurricane Center expected Sally to remain a Category 1 hurricane when it comes ashore, adding "historic life-threatening flash flooding is likely."

By Tuesday night, hurricane warnings stretched from coastal Mississippi to the Florida Panhandle. There also was a threat the storm could spawn tornadoes and dump isolated rain accumulations of 30 inches (76 centimeters) in spots from the Florida Panhandle to southeast Mississippi.

Heavy rain and surf pounded the barrier island of Navarre Beach, Florida, on Tuesday and road signs wobbled in the wind. Rebecca Studstill, who lives inland, was wary of getting stuck on the island, saying police close bridges once the wind and water get too high. "Just hunkering down would probably be the

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best thing for folks out here," she said.

Two large casino boats broke loose Tuesday from a dock where they were undergoing construction work in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. M.J. Bosarge, who lives near the shipyard, said at least one of the riverboats had done considerable damage to the dock.

"You really want to get them secured because with wind and rain like this, the water is constantly rising," Bosarge said.

In Orange Beach, Alabama, towering waves crashed onshore as Crystal Smith and her young daughter, Taylor, watched before nightfall. They drove more than an hour to take in the sight.

"It's beautiful, I love it," Crystal Smith said amid whipping wind. "But they are high. Hardly any of the beach isn't covered."

Capt. Michael Thomas, an Orange Beach fishing guide, secured boats and made other last-minute preparations. He estimated up to 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain had fallen in as many hours.

"I'm as prepared as I can be," Thomas said.

Stacy Stewart, a hurricane center senior specialist, warned that floods could be deadly.

"This is going to be historic flooding along with the historic rainfall," Stewart said. "If people live near rivers, small streams and creeks, they need to evacuate and go somewhere else."

Forecasters warned that Sally could unleash flooding similar to what Hurricane Harvey inflicted in 2017 in swamping the Houston metropolitan area.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves urged people in the southern part of the state to prepare for the potential for flash flooding. He said about 120 people were in shelters in Mississippi.

As rain grew heavier Tuesday, many businesses appeared to be closed at exits along the Interstate 10 highway running along the Gulf Coast from Louisiana to Florida.

In Gulfport, Mississippi, white plastic bags hung over some gas station pumps that were out of fuel. Along a bayou inland from the Gulf, three shrimp boats were tied up as shrimpers tried to protect their boats from waves. Metal storm shutters or plywood covered the windows of many businesses.

In Alabama, officials closed the causeway to Dauphin Island and the commuter tunnel that runs beneath the Mobile River.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey urged residents near Mobile Bay and low-lying areas near rivers to evacuate if conditions still permitted a safe escape. Revised forecasts late Tuesday predicted that storm surge along Alabama's coast could reach 6 feet (1.8 meters) at Dauphin Island and as much as 4 feet (1.2 meters) at Mobile Bay.

"This is not worth risking your life," Ivey said.

Once ashore, Sally was forecast to cause flash floods and minor to moderate river flooding across inland portions of Mississippi, Alabama, northern Georgia and the western Carolinas over ensuing days.

President Donald Trump issued emergency declarations for parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama on Monday, and tweeted that residents should listen to state and local leaders.

On the barrier island of Pensacola Beach, Florida, the Sandshaker Lounge was open Tuesday afternoon, filled with about 30 locals and tourists staying at nearby hotels.

"I think I'm the only business open," said bartender Kyra Smith. She said most locals have lived in the area for decades and have weathered many storms bigger than Sally.

"We're just going to ride it out," she said.

Wang reported from Pascagoula, Mississippi. Associated Press reporters Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; Russ Bynum in Savannah, Georgia; Sophia Tulp in Atlanta; Tamara Lush in St. Petersburg, Florida; Rebecca Santana in New Orleans; Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi and Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Alabama, contributed to this report.

Politics creates economic illusion in Houdini's hometown

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

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APPLETON, Wis. (AP) — Nothing can shake Scott Rice's faith that President Donald Trump will save the U.S. economy — not seeing businesses close or friends furloughed, not even his own hellish bout with the novel coronavirus.

Rice reveres the president the way Wisconsin loves the Green Bay Packers. He has painted "T-R-U-M-P" on his lawn, spelled it out with Christmas lights on his roof and painted it on his steel-toed shoes.

He was also a virus skeptic, believing it was a hoax meant to hurt Trump and the economy. But then the disease seeped into the paper mill where he works, and he was stricken, suddenly losing his appetite, even for his favorite Taco Bell. He lay in bed, feverish, drenched in sweat. Two air-conditioner units didn't cool him. His body seemed at war with itself.

After 16 days at home, Rice told his co-workers that the disease was scary and real. But Trump held onto his vote for one reason: The stock market was climbing.

"The 401(k)s, just the economy," Rice said. "He got jobs going. Just accumulated a lot of jobs, being a businessman."

Rice's belief represents the foundation of Trump's hopes — that Americans believe the economy is strong enough to deliver him a second term.

But in Appleton, a predominately white city of 75,000 people along the Fox River, the health of the economy isn't judged on jobs numbers, personal bank accounts or union contracts. Instead, it's viewed through partisan lenses — filtered through the facts voters want to see and hear, and those they don't.

By almost any measure, Trump's promises of an economic revival in places like Appleton have gone unfulfilled. The area has lost about 8,000 jobs since he was elected.

Even before the pandemic, Wisconsin's economy was fragile, as job losses began in August 2019 and a recovery in hiring had just begun when the virus struck. The state that is vital for Trump's victory had more jobs a decade ago when the country was still ailing from the Great Recession than it did in July.

While supporters like Rice are immovable, others have had enough. President Barack Obama won here in 2012, but voters flipped to Trump four years later, and Trump cannot afford much erosion in a state that he won by only 22,000 votes out of more than 2.8 million.

Democratic candidate Joe Biden holds a slight lead over Trump in the latest Marquette Law School poll of Wisconsin voters. Trump's disapproval rating has risen to 54% from 49% at the start the year. But 52% of Wisconsin voters applaud Trump on the economy, while 56% dislike his handling of the pandemic that pulled the nation into recession.

Even Rice concedes that the economy is not just an argument for Trump — it's also an argument against him. His 20-year-old daughter, Cassidy, tells him so. She is studying public health at George Washington University and will cast her first presidential vote for Biden.

"The fact that there was a pandemic and the fact that it had those consequences on the economy should be an eye opener, like, hey, maybe we're not doing this correctly," she said.

Trump won the presidency by wringing tens of thousands of votes out of small towns and medium-size cities across Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

He did it in places like Appleton. The city of stone and brick hugs the Fox River, its currents powering the smoke-stacked paper mills that built fortunes. Steamboats and trains brought the trappings of Victorian-era comfort. The nation's second co-educational college, Lawrence University, occupies 84 acres at the edge of downtown. The end of World War II brought a suburban buildout, and teenagers increasingly left dairy farms for union jobs at mills and foundries.

But as the need for paper waned two decades ago, the city began a slow evolution. Now condos, cafes, offices and a jogging trail line the riverbank.

The trail ends downtown at Houdini Plaza, a monument to the city's most famous offspring, illusionist Harry Houdini. His words are inscribed on the monument where his childhood home once stood: "What the eyes see and the ears hear, the mind believes."

There may be no better explanation of American politics in this confounding moment.

Trump voters listen to his cheerleading for the economy and believe the businessman president has

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worked his magic. Many write off the pandemic as a speed bump for accelerating prosperity. Biden's backers see an illusion — an economy that was recovering under Obama, but now, with the pandemic, is trying to crawl back to health, with no real plan from Trump.

The two realities are clear in national surveys. In August, 80% of Democrats call economic conditions "poor," while 63% of Republicans describe them as "good" in a survey conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

In Appleton, perhaps the only shared view is a deep anxiety about the future. Restaurants and bars worry about customers vanishing once cooler temperatures return. The high costs of childcare and health insurance make it hard to attract workers, despite the downturn.

People cannot even agree on the terms of the economic debate to come up with a solution.

"What we've done with politics is gotten into a tribal war that looks only at elections when we should be looking at policies and results," said John Burke, CEO and chairman of Wisconsin-based Trek Bicycles, one of the state's most prominent business leaders.

How enduring the divide will be is one of the central tests of the presidential election. Will emotional ties to Trump override assessments of his job performance?

After 2016, local Democrats wasted no time mourning. Lee Snodgrass became chair of the local party and began a blitz of door-knocking to build up volunteers and voters, a task that led her into areas that were firmly for Trump.

As a candidate now for the state legislature, she has tried to bridge the partisan divide, but often finds few Republican takers.

"It's like watching a car accident in slow motion," said Snodgrass. "The behavior and choices that people make in this pandemic reflect fundamental differences between the Democratic Party of today and the Republican Party of today."

Wearing a T-shirt that said "VOTE," Snodgrass walked through a neighborhood that leans for Trump. She recited facts about the economy and the pandemic — several millions jobs lost, a rising body count — and Republicans would defend Trump.

She would then try to steer the conversation to common ground, like the need to reduce health care costs, and end by summarizing their conversation by saying, "Here are the things that we agree on."

These Republican voters found Trump's demeanor crude. But the unemployment rate was a strong 3.5% before the pandemic. Trump had updated and replaced the North American Free Trade Agreement. They give Trump credit, although he inherited a healthy 4.7% unemployment rate and the trade deficit with Mexico on goods had jumped to \$101 billion last year — higher than in any year under Obama.

"There are things that he said he would do," said Candice Meyer, a retired legal assistant. "And he has done that. He's done it with a big mouth and a show-off, 13-year-old personality, and he can't keep his mouth shut. And he's rude. But he has come through with a lot of his platform."

The pandemic and recession showed just how ingrained politics was in what people saw, heard and believed. Their partisan loyalties became their realities about how to address the coronavirus and help the economy.

"What really surprised me is how quickly things got polarized," said Jonathan Rothwell, the principal economist at Gallup. "The pandemic got instantly framed as a piece of good or bad news for the president, much like the jobs report."

How people feel about the economy increasingly mirrors their politics. AP-NORC found that only 34% of Republicans believed the economy was in good shape in April 2016 when a Democrat was in the White House, a number that swiftly shot upward after Trump's election to reach 89% this January before the pandemic.

At the Midwest Paper Group, where Scott Rice works, there is a story of recovery, but one where credit lay with the union and the Outagamie County executive, not with Trump. Between 2001 and 2016, Wisconsin's paper industry lost 15,000 jobs. Midwest Paper Group sunk into receivership in 2017 as demand

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flagged in for crisp white paper.

More than 600 workers were handed pink slips in anticipation of the mill being shuttered, in an area where nearly one in five jobs are still in factories.

"Most were resigned to fate," said Tom Nelson, the county executive. "The paper industry was deemed old and outdated, uncompetitive because of imports, unfair trade deals, electronic substitution."

A Democrat with tortoise-shell glasses, Nelson won his first election in Appleton in 2005 and still has a boyish appearance at the age of 44, with curly hair that has grown long during the pandemic. By his estimate, the county would have lost a catastrophic 2,000 jobs as collateral damage if the mill closed.

Nelson, the workers and their union representation lobbied the bankruptcy court and struck a deal. "If it were not for the fact that the mill was unionized, it would be a trash heap," Nelson said.

Instead, the mill added new machines to make materials for cardboard, capitalizing on the growing number of people shopping online at Amazon. For 12 hours a day, Rice mans the control room in a red face mask that says "USA."

There are other winners in the local economy — the Menard's home improvement store, grocers, fast-food chains. Bike stores are sold out of Treks, which were built in the factory 87 miles away in Waterloo.

Trek's three U.S. warehouses were emptied by August because of all the buying, yet Burke, its CEO, was agonizing about the fate of the broader economy.

Burke, 58, pedals 110 miles on his standard Saturday ride, long enough for the nation's problems to turn over in his mind. After his own college graduation, Burke took a day to get his wisdom teeth pulled and started the next at Trek. He's remained there for the past 37 years.

He decided to write a book in 2016 and updated it this year, "Presidential Playbook 2020: 16 Nonpartisan Solutions to Save America."

As Burke sees it, Trump has governed with a dangerous set of blind spots that threaten long-term growth.

There were the hurricanes and wildfires unleashed by climate change. Federal debt has surged. Not enough money is being invested in education and children. And Trump initially downplayed the virus and offered the prospect of unsafe remedies like injecting disinfectant to kill coronavirus.

Appleton is testimony to the lack of simple solutions to the pandemic.

Nearly 40% of the city's leisure and hospitality jobs have been lost. Restaurants have been closed, hotels vacant. The banquet hall attached to the Longcheng Marketplace that serves the area's population of 5,000 Hmong immigrants has sat empty since March.

The downtown had been evolving as young parents moved back to Wisconsin from Minneapolis and Chicago. Restaurants and boutiques popped up along College Avenue, catering to the professors and students at Lawrence University. The oil services firm U.S. Ventures announced it would build a new headquarters on a city bluff — 500 office workers who could be regulars at Mondo! wine bar.

Then the pandemic struck.

The status of the U.S. Ventures headquarters is now uncertain, but it certainly won't open as announced in 2022. Mondo! is getting by with retail sales and outdoor seating, until the weather changes.

Since 2017, David Oliver used Instagram to steadily draw people to Appleton's first skyscraper (1932) and a bar designed to be as airy and light as an afternoon rosé.

Oliver, 59, would rather keep his politics corked. But he said American businesses desperately need another round of aid. Because the virus has lingered, so have the revenue shortfalls and Oliver blames the president.

"They're supposed to be pro-business," Oliver said. "But so much of the Republican Party has reverted to this magical thinking that Trump has that the economy is fine and the virus is going away. They are delusional."

Oliver worries about a dark time in which future generations feel it's too risky to start a small business in their hometown. He can't support the president.

"This event will impact generations of Americans — just like the Great Depression," Oliver said. "It's going

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to make it much harder to try and take the chance. Because, what happens if there is another pandemic?"

Other businesses are struggling to find workers. Trisha Kostelny, who runs Fischer-Ulman Construction, could only get five people to apply to lay concrete, even though the job paid \$29 an hour with health, dental and a matching 401(k). She only found two of the applicants qualified.

"We're so short of applicants I've wondered if I needed to go out there and do the work myself," she said.

More than 9,600 people in the Appleton area are still without work.

The Trump administration argues the problem is that the government has been too generous with laid-off workers as officials said that the extra \$600 a week in unemployment benefit kept most people from seeking jobs, so their expiration in August should cause a rush of applicants and hiring.

But to Kostelny, the problem is that workers need even more help from the government. Her only way to get more applications is to focus on minorities and women, employees who will likely need to pay for childcare. As of now, she can only afford to cover two-thirds of her 25 employees' health insurance costs.

If she boosted wages and benefits on her own, she would put her business at risk. She now favors an increase in the minimum wage and some form of universal health care.

Kostelny plans to vote Democratic, as she did in 2016. But her customers and company span the entire political spectrum and she believes the economy is being hurt by the hyper partisanship.

"The more we are divisive — in no way is that good for business," she said. "That can't be good for business."

Matt Albert, chair of the local Republicans, also sees the economic polarization. Businesses were initially less excited about declaring their enthusiasm for Trump and possibly offending Democrats, but those worries faded after the unrest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, after police shot a Black man seven times.

"They had been concerned about losing customers for putting signs up," Albert said. "But they now feel like if Trump doesn't get in, they won't have a business. ... The riots will shut them down. The regulations will shut them down."

Still, Republicans here say that Trump propelled the country to new heights with tax and regulatory cuts, only to be brought low by the force majeure of a virus, and that most voters will hold him blameless.

Republicans' knock on Joe Biden is that he would raise taxes that could suffocate growth (nearly \$4 trillion over 10 years that would largely come from the wealthy).

While Republicans remain confident Trump will carry the county again, some concede the race could be tighter. If he loses cities like Appleton, it could spell trouble for the president.

"I think it will be closer because he's losing some of the positive momentum that I think he created," said State Rep. Mike Rohrkaste, who is not seeking reelection. "The pandemic has knocked him off his message."

Several lawmakers and voters asserted that Biden would become the pawn of socialists and Marxists — a jarring claim in a community whose most notorious native son is Sen. Joe McCarthy, who falsely claimed that the U.S. government was full of communists and whose chief counsel would later become the personal lawyer for a young New York City real estate scion who is now president.

"The COVID has put so much pessimism into the economy — that's the big killer," said Marvin Murphy, the 80-year-old owner of Fox Cities magazine. He estimates he has spoken with every business within 70 miles of Appleton over the years.

Only the wealthiest companies with access to cheap capital are likely to survive, Murphy said. He nicknamed the disease the "McVirus," he said, because McDonalds could not have engineered a "better way to kill off small, independent restaurants."

A libertarian who said he votes Republican unhappily because "there is nothing else," Murphy sipped a fresh cup of coffee in his backyard overlooking the Wolf River and lamented that so many people only process the world based on what they see and hear on TV.

"Reality is not the most important thing," Murphy said. "The perceived reality is what's important."

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

Seeping under doors, bad air from West's fires won't ease up

By SARA CLINE and GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Dangerously dirty air spewing from the West Coast wildfires is seeping into homes and businesses, sneaking into cars through air conditioning vents and preventing people already shut away by the coronavirus pandemic from enjoying a walk or trip to the park.

People in Oregon, Washington state and California have been struggling for a week or longer under some of the most unhealthy air on the planet. The acrid yellow-green smog may linger for days or weeks, scientists and forecasters said.

It is also a sign of things to come. With wildfires getting larger and more destructive because of climate change and more people living closer to areas that burn, smoke will likely shroud the sky more often in the future.

"I don't think that we should be outside, but at the same time, we've been cooped up in the house already for months, so it's kind of hard to dictate what's good and what's bad. I mean, we shouldn't be outside period," Portland resident Issa Ubidia-Luckett said Monday.

The hazy air closed businesses like Whole Foods and the iconic Powell's Books in Portland and suspended garbage pickup in some communities. Pollution and fire evacuations canceled online school and closed some college campuses in Oregon.

"It is so bad that you can likely smell (smoke) inside your house," said Sarah Present, the health officer for Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. "In some areas, the air quality is so hazardous it is off the charts of the EPA's rating scale."

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Air Quality Index is considered hazardous between 301 and 500. Values above 500 — which multiple Oregon cities have reported during the past week — are beyond the index's scale.

The air quality agency extended an alert to Thursday, and the air was so thick that Alaska Airlines stopped flights to Portland and Spokane, Washington, until Tuesday afternoon.

Zoe Flanagan, who has lived in Portland for 12 years, braved the smog to walk her two dogs Monday. In desperation, she and her husband turned on the heater a day earlier because it has a better filter than their air conditioner.

She said the air made her feel hungover, despite not drinking. She could not get enough water, and she had a headache. With health officials urging people to stay inside, the poor air also took away the simple pleasure of being outdoors during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Those backyard hangouts that we all got so used to as our one saving grace are now totally gone, and we just have to keep practicing letting go of what normal is," Flanagan said.

Smoke can irritate the eyes and lungs and worsen some medical conditions. Health experts warned that young children, adults over 65, pregnant women and people with heart disease, asthma or other respiratory conditions were especially vulnerable.

"The lasting effects of breathing the small particulates in the wildfire smoke can be extremely dangerous," Present said. "It can lead to heart attacks, irregular heart rhythms and even death."

The region has had a significant increase in visits to emergency rooms due to air quality, officials said Tuesday.

Smoke from dozens of wildfires is pooling in California's Central Valley, an agricultural region that has some of the state's worst air quality even when there are no flames. Some parts of central California are not likely to see relief until October, said Dan Borsum, the incident meteorologist for a fire in Northern California.

"It's going to take a substantially strong weather pattern to move all the smoke," Borsum said at a briefing Sunday.

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Joe Smith, advocacy director for Sacramento Loaves & Fishes, which helps homeless people, said California's capital city has not seen consistent blue skies in weeks. People without homes have been grappling with an onslaught of disasters this year.

"Some of the toughest folks you'll ever meet are people who live outdoors, unhoused, but it is getting to them," Smith said. "We've got COVID-19, followed by excessive heat wave, followed by smoke. What's going to start falling out of the air next on these poor folks?"

Twana James, who lives in a tent in Sacramento, coughed several times, trying to clear her throat, saying her voice is not usually so hoarse.

"Everything is covered in ashes," she said by phone Monday. "It's hard to breathe."

Places like the Oregon Convention Center in downtown Portland are being used as shelters for people who need a dose of healthy air. Typically during wildfires, people can escape to other areas of the state to breathe easy, said Dylan Darling, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

"That's what's standing out — there just isn't a place in Oregon right now to find fresh air," Darling said. The level of pollution lingering for so long and so widely "really stands out in the state's history," he said.

Oregon needs a "perfect balance" of winds to disperse smoke but not exacerbate the fires, said Tyler Kranz, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Portland office.

"We need the winds to get the smoke out of here," Kranz said. "We just don't want them to be too strong, because then they could fan those flames, and all of a sudden, those fires are spreading again."

Ubidia-Luckett was eating outside Monday at a popular burger place east of Portland with her 6-year-old son, but they moved inside because of the bad air, which had postponed the boy's first day of kindergarten for the second time.

"That's the hard part for little kids. They're so cooped up so what do you do?" she asked. "Eventually, they want to go outside."

Associated Press writers Janie Har and Juliet Williams in San Francisco contributed to this report. Cline reported from Salem, Oregon, and is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

Israel signs pacts with 2 Arab states: A 'new' Mideast?

By DEB RIECHMANN, MATTHEW LEE and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Israel on Tuesday signed historic diplomatic pacts with two Gulf Arab states at a White House ceremony that President Donald Trump declared will mark the "dawn of a new Middle East," casting himself as an international peacemaker at the height of his reelection campaign.

The bilateral agreements formalize the normalization of Israel's already thawing relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in line with their common opposition to Iran. But the agreements do not address the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, who view the pacts as a stab in the back from their fellow Arabs and a betrayal of their cause for a Palestinian state.

Hundreds of people massed on the sun-washed South Lawn to witness the signing of agreements in a festive atmosphere little marked by the coronavirus pandemic. Attendees did not practice social distancing and most guests didn't wear masks.

"We're here this afternoon to change the course of history," Trump said from a balcony overlooking the South Lawn. "After decades of division and conflict, we mark the dawn of a new Middle East."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the day "is a pivot of history. It heralds a new dawn of peace."

Neither Netanyahu nor Trump mentioned the Palestinians in their remarks, but both the UAE and Bahraini foreign ministers spoke of the importance of creating a Palestinian state.

Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the brother of Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, even thanked Netanyahu for "halting the annexation" of West Bank land claimed by the Palestinians

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in exchange for Emirati recognition. Netanyahu, however, has insisted that Israel has only suspended its plans to annex West Bank settlements.

"Today, we are already witnessing a change in the heart of the Middle East — a change that will send hope around the world," al-Nahyan said.

Bahrani Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani said Bahrain would stand with the Palestinians. "Today is a truly historic occasion," he said. "A moment for hope and opportunity."

But in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian militants fired two rockets into Israel, apparently meant to coincide with the ceremony. The Israeli military said the rockets were fired from Gaza and one was intercepted by air defenses. Earlier in the day, Palestinian activists held small demonstrations in the West Bank and in Gaza, where they trampled and set fire to pictures of Trump, Netanyahu and the leaders of the UAE and Bahrain.

Israel and the U.S. hope the agreements can usher in a major shift in the region should other Arab nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, follow suit. That could have implications for Iran, Syria and Lebanon. Until now, Israel has had peace deals only with Egypt and Jordan.

Other Arab countries believed to be close to recognizing Israel include Oman, Sudan and Morocco.

"We are very down the road with about five different countries," Trump told reporters before the ceremony.

Many longtime Mideast analysts and former officials, among others, have expressed doubts about the impact of the signings.

In addition to the bilateral agreements signed by Israel, the UAE and Bahrain, all three signed a document dubbed the "Abraham Accords" after the patriarch of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

The "Abraham Accords" and the bilateral agreement signed by Israel and Bahrain fell short of more detailed formal treaties that are the diplomatic norm. Both documents were made up of general statements pledging to advance diplomacy, mutual cooperation and regional peace.

The most detailed of the agreements was the one between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. The nations agreed to approve bilateral agreements on 15 areas of mutual interest, including finance, trade, aviation, energy, telecommunications, health, agriculture and water.

During the signing ceremony, the leaders were seated at a long table where President Harry S. Truman once held weekly luncheon meetings with his Cabinet. Discussions about the Truman Doctrine to restrain Soviet expansion during the Cold War and the Marshall Plan to send billions in economic aid to Western Europe after World War II were held at the table.

The stagecraft, including live music and flags was meant to evoke previous Middle East agreements. Trump's political backers are looking to boost his standing as a statesman with just seven weeks to go before Election Day. Until now, foreign policy has not had a major role in a campaign dominated by the coronavirus, racial issues and the economy.

Besides Republicans, a few House Democrats attended the event, a notable development at a time when their leader, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is barely on speaking terms with the president. Many Democrats, including presidential nominee Joe Biden, support the deal.

"It is good to see others in the Middle East recognizing Israel and even welcoming it as a partner," Biden said in a statement released Wednesday night. "A Biden-Harris Administration will build on these steps, challenge other nations to keep pace, and work to leverage these growing ties into progress toward a two-state solution and a more stable, peaceful region."

Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., said she accepted the White House invitation immediately on receiving it over the weekend. "It definitely was a monumental event, and the ceremony was very fitting for that," Luria, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a telephone interview afterward.

Like Luria, some other Democrats in attendance, such as Rep. Anthony Brindisi of New York, are freshmen in tough reelection races. Still others, such as Florida Reps. Ted Deutch and Stephanie Murphy hail from districts with large numbers of Jewish constituents.

Questions remain, however, about the significance of the agreements. Even in Israel, where the accords have received widespread acclaim, there is concern they might result in U.S. sales of sophisticated weaponry to the UAE and Bahrain, thus potentially upsetting Israel's qualitative military edge in the region.

Trump said he is OK with selling military aircraft to the UAE. Pelosi also welcomed the agreements but said she wants to learn details, specifically what the Trump administration has told the UAE about buying American-made F-35 aircraft and about Israel agreeing to freeze efforts to annex portions of the West Bank.

The UAE and Bahrain have a history of suppressing dissent and critical public opinion, but there have been indications that the agreements are not nearly as popular or well-received as they are in Israel. Neither country sent its head of state or government to sign the deals with Netanyahu.

Bahrain's largest Shiite-dominated opposition group, Al-Wefaq, which the government ordered dissolved in 2016 amid a yearslong crackdown on dissent, said there is widespread rejection of normalization.

The ceremony followed months of intricate diplomacy headed by Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, and the president's envoy for international negotiations, Avi Berkowitz. On Aug. 13, the Israel-UAE deal was announced. That was followed by the first direct commercial flight between the countries, and then the Sept. 11 announcement of the Bahrain-Israel agreement.

Associated Press writers Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Laurie Kellman in Washington; and Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

Science mag makes first endorsement in 175 years, taps Biden

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Even though Scientific American had never endorsed a presidential candidate in the magazine's 175-year history, its top editor said Tuesday there was little internal debate over a decision to back Democrat Joe Biden.

Editor-in-Chief Laura Helmuth said President Donald Trump's administration was much worse for the scientific community than the magazine had feared.

The magazine's endorsement was posted online Tuesday, a day after Trump questioned the science of climate change in relation to the California wildfires. Helmuth said the timing was coincidental and the editorial was written during the past two months.

Scientific American said that "the evidence and the science show that Donald Trump has basically damaged the United States and its people because he rejects evidence and science."

The editorial by senior editor Josh Fischman sharply condemned Trump for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic. The magazine criticized Trump for seeking cutbacks in scientific funding and hobbling the U.S. response to climate change.

Biden, the magazine said, "has a record of following the data and being guided by science."

There was no immediate reply to a request for comment from the Trump campaign.

There's been some pushback. Helmuth said the magazine has been monitoring requests for canceled subscriptions and has received some — many from people who weren't subscribers, anyway.

Conservative columnist S.E. Cupp tweeted that while she agreed with the magazine's arguments and planned to vote for Biden, "I do have mixed feelings on whether this is a good use of scientific clout and credibility."

University of New Mexico psychology professor and author Geoffrey Miller said that the magazine was betraying 175 years of principled bipartisanship "for the sake of some cheap, short-sighted, opportunistic virtue signaling."

"I'm old enough to remember when your magazine had some integrity," he tweeted.

But Helmuth said the magazine has not ignored politics; the Atomic Energy Commission burned 3,000 copies of an issue in the 1950s because of its stance against the hydrogen bomb. The magazine has been running more opinion pieces lately, and, in 2016, wrote an editorial questioning Trump's fitness to be president, although it didn't endorse Hillary Clinton.

"Part of our magazine's mission is to show people how the world works — whether it's black holes, evolution, viruses, or systemic racism," Helmuth said. "We felt it was our duty as part of that mission to warn people that Trump has been disastrous for research, science, health and the environment."

The magazine hopes it doesn't have to make a presidential endorsement again, she said.

On Monday, Trump was confronted during the California briefing about a need to address climate change, and he said that the Earth would get cooler.

"I wish science agreed with you," responded Wade Crowfoot, secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency.

"Well, I don't think science knows, actually," the president said.

Trump denies downplaying virus, casts doubt on mask usage

By ZEKE MILLER and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Fielding compelling questions about voters' real-world problems, President Donald Trump denied during a televised town hall Tuesday that he had played down the threat of the coronavirus earlier this year, although there is an audio recording of him stating he did just that.

Trump, in what could well be a preview of his performance in the presidential debates less than two weeks away, cast doubt on the widely accepted scientific conclusions of his own administration strongly urging the use of face coverings and seemed to bat away the suggestion that the nation has racial inequities.

"Well, I hope there's not a race problem," Trump said when asked about his campaign rhetoric seeming to ignore the historical injustices carried out against Black Americans.

Face-to-face with everyday voters for the first time in months, Trump was defensive but resisted agitation as he was pressed on his administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and why he doesn't more aggressively promote the use of masks to reduce the spread of the disease.

"There are people that don't think masks are good," Trump said, though his own Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly urges their use.

The event, hosted by ABC News' George Stephanopoulos, was a warmup of sorts before Trump faces Democratic nominee Joe Biden in the first presidential debate on Sept. 29. Taped at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, it featured Trump taking questions from an audience of just 21 voters to comply with state and local coronavirus regulations.

Trump sought to counter his admission to journalist Bob Woodward that he was deliberately "playing it down" when discussing the threat of COVID-19 to Americans earlier this year. Despite audio of his comments being released, Trump said: "Yeah, well, I didn't downplay it. I actually, in many ways, I up-played it, in terms of action."

"My action was very strong," Trump added. "I'm not looking to be dishonest. I don't want people to panic."

Trump also insisted he was not wrong when he praised China's response to the virus in January and February, saying he trusted Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader. "He told me that it was under control, that everything was and it turned out to be not true," Trump said,

Trump also suggested the virus would disappear without a vaccine, claiming the nation would develop a herd immunity with time, but he didn't mention the lives that would be lost along the way.

"It's going to be herd-developed, and that's going to happen. That will all happen," Trump said. "But with a vaccine, I think it will go away very quickly."

The questions from uncommitted voters were pointed and poignant: a diabetic man who said he felt he'd been thrown "under the bus" by mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic; a Black woman with a disease that left her uninsurable until the Obama health care law came along who is worried that she could lose coverage again; a Black pastor who questioned Trump's campaign motto to "Make America Great Again."

"When has America been great for African Americans in the ghetto of America?" the pastor asked.

Asked about what he was doing to address protests against racial injustice, Trump lamented a "lack of respect" and the absence of "retribution" for those who clash with or carry out attacks against police officers. Trump on Sunday called for the death penalty for the individual who shot and critically injured two Los Angeles Sheriff's Department deputies over the weekend.

Trump has been unusually mum on his debate preparations ahead of the first debate, set to take place in Cleveland. On Tuesday, he told Fox News that he believes his day job is the best practice for his three

scheduled showdowns with Biden.

"Well, I sort of prepare every day by just doing what I'm doing," Trump said. He noted that he had been in California on Monday and had been to other states before that to make the point that he's getting out and about more than Biden.

One person likely to study the replay: Biden. Returning from a long day of campaigning in Florida, Biden said at his plane that he was preparing for the debates mostly by going back through what Trump has said in the past. But he suggested he had yet to initiate mock debates, saying he was unaware who would play the role of Trump in his preparations.

Trump, in the Fox interview, lowered expectations for his Democratic opponent's performance, judging Biden "a disaster" and "grossly incompetent" in the primary debates. He assessed Biden as "OK" and "fine" in his final one-on-one debate with Bernie Sanders before clinching the nomination.

Trump's rhetoric on Biden marked a departure from the traditional efforts by candidates to talk up their rivals' preparation for televised debates, in hopes of setting an unattainably high bar for their performance.

The second of the three scheduled debates, set to be held in Miami on Oct. 15, will feature a similar "town meeting" style.

Biden is to have his own opportunity to hone his skills taking questions from voters on Thursday, when he participates in a televised town hall hosted by CNN.

The visit to Pennsylvania is Trump's second to the battleground state in the last week, after he attended a Sept. 11 memorial event in Shanksville on Friday.

—
Miller reported from Washington. AP writer Will Weissert contributed from Orlando, Florida.

'Say her name': City to pay \$12M to Breonna Taylor's family

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Months after the police killing of Breonna Taylor thrust her name to the forefront of a national reckoning on race, the city of Louisville agreed to pay the Black woman's family \$12 million and reform police practices as part of a settlement announced Tuesday.

But Taylor's mother and others who have taken up her cause said much more must be done to right the wrongs of racial injustice in America.

"Please continue to say her name," Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, declared at an emotional news conference, evoking the call that has become a national refrain for those outraged by the shooting and police violence.

Taylor's death sparked months of protests in Louisville and calls nationwide for the officers to be criminally charged. The state's attorney general, Daniel Cameron, is investigating police actions in the March 13 fatal shooting.

"I cannot begin to imagine Ms. Palmer's pain, and I am deeply, deeply sorry for Breonna's death," said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer in announcing the terms of the lawsuit settlement.

Standing nearby as the mayor spoke, Palmer said the police reforms were not enough.

"We must not lose focus on what the real job is, and with that being said, it's time to move forward with the criminal charges, because she deserves that and much more," Palmer said. "As significant as today is, it's only the beginning of getting full justice for Breonna."

The lawsuit, filed by Palmer in April, accused police of using flawed information when they obtained a "no-knock" warrant to enter the 26-year-old woman's apartment. Taylor and her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, were roused from bed by police, and Walker said he fired once at the officers, thinking they were intruders. Investigators say police were returning fire when they shot Taylor several times. No drugs were found at her home.

Dissatisfaction with the settlement extended to "Injustice Square" in downtown Louisville, where demonstrators have gathered daily for 113 days, demanding justice for Taylor. Some who listened to the announcement over a loudspeaker near a memorial for Taylor said the price for a life seemed low, the

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promised reforms too little and too late.

"It's just not enough," said Holly McGlawn, who noted how much Taylor might have made had she lived. She was young, she could have worked for another 40 or 50 years, she said.

"You can't put a price on a Black woman being able to sleep at night and know she's not going to get murdered," McGlawn said.

"Justice delayed is justice denied. There was a better way to handle this," agreed Shameka Parrish-Wright who has been part of the daily demonstrations where the city often faced peaceful protesters with force. "I'm hearing apologies now that should have happened early on."

Palmer left the news conference with one of her attorneys, Ben Crump, and met with protesters at the nearby park. She surveyed the original art of her daughter, prayed and wiped away tears.

She had just two words to say: "Pressure applied," a saying her daughter often used as an emergency medical tech.

Crump said the \$12 million payout is the largest such settlement given out for a Black woman killed by police.

The settlement, "sets a precedent for Black people," he said. "When (police) kill us we expect full justice. We expect justice for the civil rights that you took from this human being. And then we expect full justice from the criminal justice system."

In the time since Taylor's shooting, her death — along with George Floyd and others — has become a rallying cry for protesters seeking a reckoning on racial justice and police reform. High-profile celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and LeBron James have called for the officers to be charged in Taylor's death.

Palmer's lawsuit accuses three Louisville police officers of blindly firing into Taylor's apartment the night of the raid, striking Taylor several times. One of the officers, Jonathan Mattingly, went into the home after the door was broken down and was struck in the leg by the gunshot from Walker.

The warrant was one of five issued in a wide-ranging investigation of a drug trafficking suspect who was a former boyfriend of Taylor's. That man, Jamarcus Glover, was arrested at a different location about 10 miles (16 kilometers) away from Taylor's apartment on the same evening.

The settlement includes reforms on how warrants are handled by police, Mayor Fischer said.

Other reforms seek to build stronger community connections by establishing a housing credit program to encourage officers to live in certain low-income areas in the city. Officers will also be encouraged to perform two paid hours of volunteer work every two weeks in the communities where they serve. The city will also track police use-of-force incidents and citizen complaints.

The city has already taken some other reform measures, including passing a law named for Taylor that bans the use of the no-knock warrants. Police typically use them in drug cases over concern that evidence could be destroyed if they announce their arrival.

Fischer fired former police chief Steve Conrad in June and last week named Yvette Gentry, a former deputy chief, as the new interim police chief. Gentry would be the first Black woman to lead the force of about 1,200 sworn officers. The department has also fired Brett Hankison, one of the three officers who fired shots at Taylor's apartment that night. Hankison is appealing the dismissal.

The largest settlement previously paid in a Louisville police misconduct case was \$8.5 million in 2012, to a man who spent nine years in prison for a crime he did not commit, according to news reports.

Associated Press reporter Claire Galofaro contributed to this report.

Biden courts Latino voters in 1st trip to Florida as nominee

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

KISSIMMEE, Fla. (AP) — Joe Biden made his first trip to Florida as the Democratic presidential nominee on Tuesday with an urgent mission to boost support among Latinos who could decide the election in one of the nation's fiercest battleground states.

"More than any other time, the Hispanic community, Latino community holds in the palm of their hand

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the destiny of this country," Biden said during a Hispanic Heritage Month kickoff event in Kissimmee. "You can decide the direction of this country."

A win for Biden in Florida would dramatically narrow Trump's path to reelection. But in a state where elections are often decided by a percentage point, there are mounting concerns that Biden may be slipping, particularly with the state's influential Latino voters.

An NBC-Marist poll released last week found Latinos in the state about evenly divided between Biden and Trump. Democrat Hillary Clinton led Trump by a 59% to 36% margin among Latinos in the same poll in 2016 — and Trump won Florida by about 1 percentage point.

To regain lost ground, Biden made the case Tuesday night that he would be a better president for Hispanics than Trump, touting his commitment to immigration reform and a new plan to support Puerto Rico's economy.

"Donald Trump has failed the Hispanic community time and time again, and that's not a secret," Biden said. "Whether it's in his heinous act of separating children from their families at our border, or his repeated attacks on Dreamers, or his neglect of the people of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, or his repeated failures to make sure essential workers have the personal protective equipment they need."

Still, Hispanic voters in Florida tend to be somewhat more Republican-leaning than Hispanic voters nationwide because of the state's Cuban American population. Nationally, little public polling is available to measure the opinions of Latino voters this year and whether they differ from four years ago.

But Democrats aren't taking chances. Billionaire Mike Bloomberg has pledged to spend at least \$100 million to defeat Trump in Florida.

And by spending his day along the Interstate 4 corridor, Biden is devoting time to one of the most critical regions of the state. While Republicans typically post big numbers in the northern and southwestern parts of the state and Democrats are strong in coastal cities, campaigns typically battle it out for every vote in central Florida.

Biden's first event, in Tampa, focused on veterans and was aimed at pushing a potential opening with military voters, who broadly supported Trump in 2016 but are seen as potentially persuadable because of controversial remarks the president reportedly made mocking American war dead as "losers" and "suckers." Trump has denied making the remarks, first reported through anonymous sources by The Atlantic, but many of the comments were later confirmed by The Associated Press.

"Nowhere are his faults more glaring and more offensive, to me at least, than when it comes to his denigration of our service members, veterans, wounded warriors who have fallen," Biden said. Speaking of his late son Beau, who served overseas as a Delaware Army National Guard member, Biden said, "He's gone now, but he's no sucker."

Biden's decision to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in Kissimmee reflects a focus on the state's rapidly growing Puerto Rican community. Many Puerto Ricans relocated to Florida after Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017.

The campaign announced a new plan Tuesday focused on boosting Puerto Rico's economy and helping the island recover from Maria. Biden would create a federal working group focused on aiding Puerto Rico in rebuilding and would forgive disaster relief loans to Puerto Rican towns and invest in Puerto Rico's power and schooling infrastructure and health care services, among other things. He also expressed support for Puerto Rican statehood Tuesday night.

"I happen to believe statehood would be the most effective means of ensuring that residents of Puerto Rico are treated equally, with equal representation on a federal level, but the people of Puerto Rico must decide, and the United States federal government must respect and act on that," he said.

Puerto Ricans may be more open to Biden than Cuban Americans concentrated in Miami are. Many of them are attuned to Trump's message that the Democratic ticket would embrace socialism.

Indeed, surrogates for the Trump campaign focused on Cuban immigrants during a call with reporters. Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nunez, a Republican, accused Biden of trying to "feign interest in the Hispanic community" after "neglecting us."

She said a Biden presidency would, among other things, appease and enrich Cuba's leadership at the expense of the people. Some foreign policy analysts, however, say the Trump administration's tough economic restrictions on Cuba only contribute to the oppression of the Cuban people.

Biden, who hasn't been to Florida since last October, has struggled with Latinos in part because of the record-setting number of deportations when President Barack Obama was in the White House. Biden has apologized for that policy.

But unlike his Democratic rival Bernie Sanders, who used strong support among Latinos to notch key primary victories in Nevada and California, Biden has refused to adopt the most liberal positions in his party — especially when it comes to calling for decriminalizing illegal crossings of the U.S.-Mexico border and halting all deportations indefinitely. He supports a 100-day moratorium on deportations.

As for Trump, despite many of his anti-immigration policies, some Latino voters have responded positively to the president's embrace of religious conservative positions and his warnings of protest-related violence and socialism. Trump also frequently visits his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, and the president votes absentee in the state.

Ana Navarro-Cárdenas, a former Republican strategist who has endorsed Biden and spoke at one of his campaign events, said the Tuesday night event "signaled Biden plans to fight for and work for Hispanic support."

But she added that she hopes to see the Biden campaign ramp up their outreach to Hispanic voters in Florida to mitigate any damage done by the Trump campaign.

"Joe needs to come to South Florida, look us in the eye and combat the ridiculous Republican narrative that he's some sort of socialist," she said. "He needs to call out the lies and Trump's hypocrisy."

Jaffe reported from Washington.

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

Bill Gates Sr., father of Microsoft co-founder, dies at 94

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — William H. Gates II, a lawyer and philanthropist best known as the father of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, has died at 94.

Gates died peacefully Monday at his beach home in Washington state from Alzheimer's disease, the family announced Tuesday.

In an obituary the family credited the patriarch with a "deep commitment to social and economic equity," noting that he was responsible for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's first efforts to improve global health as well as his advocacy for progressive taxation, especially unsuccessful efforts to pass a state income tax on the wealthy in Washington.

"My dad's wisdom, generosity, empathy, and humility had a huge influence on people around the world," Bill Gates wrote in a tribute.

Born in 1925, Gates Sr. grew up in Bremerton, Washington, where his parents owned a furniture store. He joined the Army following his freshman year at the University of Washington and was en route to Japan when it surrendered in 1945.

He served a year in war-torn Tokyo before returning to the United States and resuming his education, his family said. After earning his law degree in 1950, he began working in private practice and as a part-time Bremerton city attorney.

He formed a Seattle law firm with two other partners that eventually became Preston Gates and Ellis — now known as K & L Gates, one of the world's largest law firms. The firm was one of the first to work with the region's technology industry.

Gates Sr. met his first wife, Mary Maxwell, at the University of Washington. They had two daughters and

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a son — Gates Jr. — and remained married until her death in 1994. Two years later he married Mimi Gardner, then the director of the Seattle Art Museum, with whom he spent the last quarter-century of his life.

"When I was a kid, he wasn't prescriptive or domineering, and yet he never let me coast along at things I was good at, and he always pushed me to try things I hated or didn't think I could do (swimming and soccer, for example)," Gates Jr. wrote in the tribute. "And he modeled an amazing work ethic. He was one of the hardest-working and most respected lawyers in Seattle, as well as a major civic leader in our region."

That civic work included serving as a trustee of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Planned Parenthood and United Way, and as a regent of the University of Washington, where he led fundraising drives. He also served as the president of the state and local bar associations and in the leadership of the American Bar Association, helping create diversity scholarships and promoting legal services for the poor.

"Bill Sr. was a person who cared about the plight of many, and he had the resources and never-ending civic commitment to do something about it," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said in a statement. "He made the choice to use his wealth and influence to advocate for and improve equity in our communities."

Gates Sr. was a towering figure by reputation and in person — he stood 6-foot-7 (2 meters) tall — and his counsel was often sought. Former Starbucks Chairman Howard Schultz has said that when he was struggling to raise the money to buy the six-store coffee chain in 1987, Gates Sr. stepped in to rescue him from a rival buyer — not only by investing, but by personally taking Schultz to visit the rival, demanding as he loomed over the rival's desk: "You are going to stand down and this kid is going to realize his dream. Do you understand me?"

Gates retired from law in 1998 and took on prominent roles with the Gates Foundation, helping launch its work in global health.

The family said that due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a memorial service would be held later.

Police leaders pressed Rochester to keep Prude video secret

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

Rochester police commanders urged city officials to hold off on publicly releasing body camera footage of Daniel Prude's suffocation death because they feared violent blowback if the video came out during nationwide protests over the police killing of George Floyd, newly released emails show.

Deputy Chief Mark Simmons cited the "current climate" in the city and the nation in a June 4 email advising then-Chief La'ron Singletary to press the city's lawyers to deny a Prude family lawyer's public records request for the footage of the March 23 encounter that led to his death.

The video, finally made public by Prude's family on Sept. 4, shows Prude handcuffed and naked with a spit hood over his head as an officer pushes his face against the ground, while another officer presses a knee to his back. The officers held him down for about two minutes until he stopped breathing. He was taken off life support a week later.

"We certainly do not want people to misinterpret the officers' actions and conflate this incident with any recent killings of unarmed black men by law enforcement nationally," Simmons wrote. "That would simply be a false narrative, and could create animosity and potentially violent blow back in this community as a result."

The Western New York city released the emails, police reports and other documents on Monday as Mayor Lovely Warren fired Singletary and suspended Corporation Counsel Tim Curtin and Communications Director Justin Roj without pay for 30 days amid continuing fallout from Prude's death. Simmons was named interim chief of the police department.

Simmons' email seeking to have the city deny the Freedom of Information Law request echoed emails from other police officials worried about releasing video of the March 23 encounter as demonstrators were taking to the streets of Rochester and elsewhere to protest Floyd's May 25 death in Minneapolis and other police killings of Black people.

Lt. Mike Perkowski told a city lawyer on June 4 that he was "very concerned about releasing this prematurely in light of what is going on" and Capt. Frank Umbrino told another police official "any release of

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information should be in conjunction with and coordinated with the Mayor and the Chief as it very well have some intense ramifications.”

Simmons forwarded both emails to Singletary with his message advising the chief to have the Prude family lawyer’s public records request squashed, according to the documents released Monday. Simmons suggested that the city deny the request because the case was still under investigation by the state attorney general’s office.

“I totally agree,” Singletary replied, according to the emails.

Later on June 4, as discussion of the records request continued, city lawyer Stephanie Prince told Curtin of a way to buy more time: allowing the attorney general’s office to show the family the video, as it has done in other cases, but not give them a copy of it.

“This way, the City is not releasing anything pertaining to the case for at least a month (more like 2), and it will not be publicly available,” Prince wrote.

Warren maintains that she did not see the body camera footage until city lawyers played it for her on Aug. 4 and that Singletary initially misled her about the circumstances of Prude’s death.

After seeing the video, Warren emailed Singletary that she was “outraged” at the conduct of the officer who pressed Prude’s head against the ground, Mark Vaughn, and that he should face an immediate disciplinary investigation.

In an unsent draft of that email, Warren excoriated Singletary for having “grossly underplayed” Prude’s death by first describing it to her a drug overdose. In the draft, prepared with Deputy Mayor James Smith’s help, Warren said she strongly believed Vaughn should be fired and that she would have asked for Vaughn’s termination in March, had she seen the footage then. She suspended Vaughn and six other officers last week.

“Quite frankly, I would have expected the Chief of Police to have shown me this video in March,” Warren wrote in the draft. The toned down version sent to Singletary did not include that criticism.

“I should have known. Everyone is right. I should have known,” Warren told WHEC-TV on Tuesday. “But this incident — an unfortunate and tragic situation — had been downplayed from the very beginning as a PCP overdose.”

A cursory management review that Smith conducted on the city’s handling of Prude’s death found that stalling the release of the body camera video because of concerns about optics cost did “considerable damage” to work the city has done to improve relations between the police and the public.

“It is hard to rationalize how anyone who saw the video of Mr. Prude’s encounter with the RPD did not fully equate these events beyond a few mentions of bad publicity, politics, process or a ‘false narrative,’” Smith wrote. “Rochester is in desperate need of healing. We lost almost six months of opportunity to begin that process.”

The City Council voted Tuesday night to repeal its decision to build a new \$16 million police station, WHEC-TV reported.

Singletary announced his retirement last week as part of a major shakeup of the city’s police leadership but had planned to stay on through the end of the month. In announcing his retirement Sept. 8, the outgoing chief accused critics of trying to “destroy my character and integrity.”

Prude’s death has sparked nearly two weeks of nightly protests and calls for Warren’s resignation. His family has filed a federal lawsuit alleging the police department sought to cover up the true nature of Prude’s death.

Associated Press writers Michael Hill and Carolyn Thompson contributed to this report.

Follow Michael Sisak on Twitter at twitter.com/mikesisak

Democrats to investigate forced surgery claims in Georgia

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and JEFF AMY Associated Press

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ATLANTA (AP) — Leading congressional Democrats reacted furiously Tuesday to lightly substantiated claims that immigrants held at a detention center in Georgia are undergoing questionable hysterectomies.

In a complaint filed Monday, a nurse alleges that the Irwin County Detention Center performed questionable hysterectomies, refused to test detainees for COVID-19 and shredded medical records.

A top medical official with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement released a statement “vehemently” disputing the claims, saying only two women have been referred for hysterectomies from the facility since 2018.

The statement came after Democrats seized on nurse’s allegations that a gynecologist she called the “uterus collector” was performing “mass hysterectomies” — declaring they would investigate the matter.

A follow-up news conference Tuesday in Atlanta provided little information to substantiate the claims. Lawyers for the nurse, Dawn Wooten, refused to release her full statement that she made to the Department of Homeland Security’s Inspector General. She declined to take questions after making a statement with no reference to mass hysterectomies.

Wooten worked full-time as a licensed practical nurse at the immigration jail until July, when she was demoted.

Dr. Ada Rivera, medical director of the ICE Health Service Corps, said both surgeries had been approved by ICE officials.

“To be clear, medical care decisions concerning detainees are made by medical personnel, not by law enforcement personnel,” Rivera said in the statement. “Detainees are afforded informed consent, and a medical procedure like a hysterectomy would never be performed against a detainee’s will.”

Rivera said ICE would fully cooperate with any resulting investigation by the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Inspector General, but said it wished Wooten had brought claims to ICE officials first.

The doctor is not named in the complaint, but lawyers who represent women at the jail said their clients have been taken to a local gynecologist named Dr. Mahendra Amin. Scott Grubman, a lawyer for Amin, said in a statement that he was confident the doctor would be cleared of any wrongdoing. Amin was previously accused by state and federal authorities of falsely billing Medicare and Medicaid in an investigation that led to a \$520,000 settlement in 2015.

Democrats were quick to jump on the allegations after spending the last three years condemning the Trump administration’s treatment of immigrants, including the separation of families and the detention of children in squalid conditions at the border.

“If true, the appalling conditions described in the whistleblower complaint — including allegations of mass hysterectomies being performed on vulnerable immigrant women — are a staggering abuse of human rights,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, said in a statement.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat who chairs the House Homeland Security Committee, said the panel is conducting an ongoing investigation about the conditions at ICE contractor facilities “and will be examining these new and incredibly serious allegations.”

It was unclear to Wooten if women knowingly consented to the operations. She said nurses raised concerns about the doctor.

“Everybody he sees has a hysterectomy — just about everybody,” Wooten said in the complaint. “He’s even taken out the wrong ovary on a young lady.”

Amin told The Intercept in a story published Tuesday that he had performed “one or two hysterectomies” in the last three years. His lawyer, Grubman, declined to say exactly how many procedures he had performed, but said Amin would “vigorously deny” any allegations of misconduct.

“Dr. Amin is a highly respected physician who has dedicated his adult life to treating a high-risk, underserved population in rural Georgia,” Grubman said.

The facility in Ocilla, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) south of Atlanta, houses men and women detainees for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as inmates for the U.S. Marshals Service and Irwin County. It’s run by the private LaSalle Corrections, a Louisiana company.

Wooten spoke little about the hysterectomy allegation during the news conference, instead focusing

on her concerns that the facility wasn't testing detainees for COVID-19, that the detention center wasn't being sanitized, and that little protective equipment was available for employees.

While the 27-page complaint filed by advocacy group Project South quotes unidentified detainees extensively, it also includes detailed comments from Wooten. The complaint says Wooten was demoted after missing work with coronavirus symptoms, which she believes was retaliation for raising questions about COVID-19.

"I know I was demoted because I raised questions about why," Wooten said during the news conference. "I was told not to tell officers that there were detainees they dealt with day in and day out that were positive."

Wooten said the number of detainees infected was much higher than reported because there was no active testing and not all cases were reported, according to the complaint. The New York Times reported in June that inmates engaged in protests because of concerns about poor COVID-19 protections.

Wooten is quoted as saying she saw the sick call nurse shred a box of detainee complaints without looking at them and sometimes fabricated seeing detainees in person. She also said nurses ignored detainees reporting COVID-19 symptoms.

If detainees reported a fever, nurses would put them on an over-the-counter cold medication for seven days without testing them for COVID-19, she said.

Wooten said the facility declined to use two rapid-testing COVID-19 machines that ICE purchased for \$14,000 each. No medical staff had been trained on them and she saw the machines used only once.

LaSalle Corrections did not immediately respond to a request for comment late Monday.

As of Sunday, 42 detainees at the facility had tested positive for the virus, according to ICE. Nationwide, 5,772 detainees were positive.

Spagat reported from San Diego.

Apology, no firing: Official said US scientists hurt Trump

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and RICHARD LARDNER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Trump health appointee who is accused of trying to muzzle an important scientific publication in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic apologized Tuesday for a separate video in which he reportedly says scientists battling the virus are conspiring against President Donald Trump and warns of shooting in America if Trump loses the election.

Michael Caputo, the top spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services, apologized to his staff for the Facebook video, said an administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters.

The department is standing by Caputo so far in the face of calls by congressional Democrats for his dismissal — and for the resignation of his boss, HHS Secretary Alex Azar. But Caputo, a Trump loyalist and former New York political operative, has become a significant new problem for a White House that has struggled all year with its coronavirus response.

He can be heard on an HHS podcast asserting that Democrats don't want a coronavirus vaccine before the election in order to punish Trump. Although Trump has made the same assertion, with no evidence to support it, such broadsides are not in a department spokesman's normal portfolio.

News reports alleged last week that Caputo's office tried to take over and muzzle a scientific weekly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that publishes what is supposed to be authoritative, unvarnished information about disease-fighting efforts, including, most importantly at present, COVID-19.

Then on Monday came an account of the video on Caputo's personal Facebook page in which he accused government scientists of conspiring against Trump and suggested violence could break out after the election.

Caputo was named the top HHS spokesman in April, during a tense period in relations between the White House and HHS Secretary Alex Azar.

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On a taxpayer-funded podcast earlier this summer he accused Democrats and the media of not wanting a coronavirus vaccine until after the elections in order to defeat Trump.

"There are people in the United States government on the Democrats' side ... (who) do not want a vaccine," he said.

"They don't want a vaccine until November 4th," he added, citing the day after the presidential election. It's highly unusual to use an agency communications platform for such a blatantly political message.

Over the weekend, Caputo made headlines when Politico and The New York Times reported that his office had tried to gain control over a CDC publication known as the MMWR, or Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. In previous administrations, political appointees in the HHS secretary's office maintained a hands-off policy.

The story took a strange turn Monday, after the Times reported about a live video hosted by Caputo on his personal Facebook page. In it, Caputo reportedly accused government scientists of conspiring against Trump as part of a "resistance."

The message turned apocalyptic when Caputo reportedly predicted that Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden would refuse to concede defeat to Trump in the election, and violence would break out. The Associated Press was unable to independently view the video.

HHS supported Caputo, with a statement calling him a "critical, integral part of the president's coronavirus response, leading on public messaging as Americans need public health information to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic."

There was no immediate statement from the White House.

Attempts to interview Caputo were unsuccessful.

On Capitol Hill, Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., called on Azar to fire Caputo, accusing the spokesman of trying to interfere with CDC reports. And Senate Minority leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called on Azar himself to resign, citing interference with the CDC as one example of what he termed the administration's failures.

Officials at CDC have privately complained of recent efforts by political appointees at HHS to try to edit or press for changes in the agency's weekly MMWR publications, a go-to resource for public health professionals.

MMWR articles are technical, but they reveal telling details. One published earlier this year noted that while Trump's travel restrictions dramatically reduced travel from China in February, nothing was being done at that time to restrict travel from Italy and Europe, where the coronavirus was spreading widely and rapidly. Analysis of virus samples from hard-hit New York in March suggested it was introduced there from Europe and other parts of the U.S., the CDC article reported.

Caputo is an unswerving Trump loyalist. His recent book, "The Ukraine Hoax," claims the president's "phony" impeachment was rooted in a vast conspiracy.

His appointment at HHS was seen as an attempt by the White House to exert more control over Azar, whom other administration officials were trying to blame for the government's slow response in the initial weeks of the pandemic.

At HHS, he's been closely affiliated with Operation Warp Speed, the government's effort to have millions of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine ready for distribution as soon as one is approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Caputo interviewed Dr. Moncef Slaoui, a top outside adviser to the vaccine effort, on an HHS podcast July 31. Commiserating with Slaoui over Democrats and news articles that were critical of the doctor, Caputo said:

"I know that's hard to believe, but the people who are abusing you, and who are beating down Operation Warp Speed, and the incredible historic work that's going on, they don't want a vaccine until November 4th. I don't want to talk about politics here, but November 3rd is an important day. They don't want a vaccine now because of politics, sir."

—

Associated Press news researcher Jennifer Farrar contributed to this report.

Pelosi: House to stay in session until COVID-19 rescue pact

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Tuesday the House will remain in session until lawmakers deliver another round of COVID-19 relief, a move that came as Democrats from swing districts signaled discontent with a standoff that could force them to face voters without delivering more aid.

“We are committed to staying here until we have an agreement, an agreement that meets the needs of the American people,” Pelosi said on CNBC.

Pelosi told her Democratic colleagues on a morning conference call that “we have to stay here until we have a bill.” That’s according to a Democratic aide speaking on condition of anonymity but authorized to quote her remarks.

The move highlighted the extent to which coronavirus legislation has settled into a kind of suspended animation in the final legislative weeks before the November election. Both parties insist they want action, keeping the idea of new relief alive, but negotiations between Democrats and the White House remain frozen, with both sides entrenched in their positions.

Pelosi’s comments came as moderate Democrats, many from areas won by President Donald Trump four years ago, signed on to a \$1.5 trillion rescue package endorsed by the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, a group of about 50 lawmakers who seek common solutions to issues.

The plan contains many elements of COVID rescue packages devised by both House Democrats and Republicans controlling the Senate, including aid to schools, funding for state and local governments, and renewal of lapsed COVID-related jobless benefits.

The price tag is significantly less than the \$2.2 trillion figure cited by Pelosi but it’s also well above an approximately \$650 billion Senate GOP plan that failed last week due to Democratic opposition.

Talks between Pelosi and the Trump administration broke down last month and there had been little optimism they would rekindle before Election Day. And last week, Senate Democrats scuttled a scaled-back GOP coronavirus rescue package.

Pelosi has maintained a hard line in negotiations and has been at odds with White House chief of staff Mark Meadows. She orchestrated passage of a \$3.4 trillion COVID rescue package back in May, but the effort was immediately dismissed by Senate Republicans and the Trump administration.

Tuesday’s remarks, said Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill, don’t mean that the speaker is adopting a more flexible position. She instead seems to be signaling continued determination to press ahead and won’t adjourn the House without an agreement with the administration.

Success is by no means guaranteed, and many people on Capitol Hill remain skeptical that an agreement between the White House and Democrats is likely before the election.

“My sense is the clock is running out,” said Senate GOP Whip John Thune of South Dakota. “I don’t see any intention or desire on the part of the Democrat leadership at the moment — regardless of what their members are saying — to cooperate and to work together on a solution. I think they feel like they’ve got the issue and they want to try and ride it in November.”

As the leadership talks collapsed, some moderate Democrats have been agitating for greater compromise. Their talks with pragmatic Republicans yielded common ground but the group does not have much of a track record of broadening their efforts and producing results.

“This is how Congress is supposed to work,” said Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., a member of the Problem Solvers group, describing a lengthy, bipartisan negotiation that produced a consensus. The group hopes the package illustrates the kinds of compromises that top Democrats and the administration would have to make to get a measure passed and signed into law.

“I hope our leadership is paying attention. I hope our leadership is looking hard at what we’re doing,” said Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore. “We consider this the basic tenets of any package that comes out of the House and the Senate and is signed by the president of the United States.”

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No. 2 House Democrat Steny Hoyer of Maryland said the moderates had developed “useful ideas, important ideas” but said the proposal did not do enough to address the ongoing needs of helping the economy recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

“We believe that getting to a compromise is absolutely essential,” Hoyer told reporters Tuesday. “Getting to a compromise that does not deal with the problems, however, is not useful, because the longer you delay addressing many of the problems, the greater you weaken both the economy and the response to COVID-19.”

And a set of powerful Democratic committee chairs swung against the moderates’ proposal as well, saying it “leaves too many needs unmet” — a leadership effort that signals that the Problem Solvers bill is going nowhere.

“I hope we can get a deal. It’s really up to the president. As I said, we have agreed to come down a trillion (dollars),” said top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York. “They come up a trillion and then we’re close, that’s very clear. And the bottom line is, they haven’t done that.”

The Problem Solvers measure contains another round of \$1,200 direct payments favored by Trump and Democrats but rejected by Senate Republicans in their most recent bill. It contains a liability shield against lawsuits brought against businesses that have reopened their doors that’s favored by Republicans but opposed by Pelosi and trial lawyers.

It also offers a two-month extension of bonus pandemic jobless benefits that splits the difference between the Pelosi-backed extension of the expired \$600 weekly benefit that lapsed at the end of July and the \$300 benefit favored by Senate Republicans. After two months, the benefit would increase back to \$600 but not if that benefit causes a worker to exceed their wages.

While income in the US rose in 2019, so did the uninsured

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — In 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic hit and the U.S. economy crashed, median household income was the highest ever on record, but the number of U.S. residents without health insurance also increased, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Tuesday.

Median household income in 2019 was \$68,703, an increase of 6.8% from the previous year. That figure surpassed past boom-before-the-bust years in 2007, when it was \$62,090 in 2019 dollars and in 1999, when it was \$62,641 in 2019 dollars, according to the Census Bureau.

The poverty rate in 2019 was 10.5%, a decrease from 11.8% in 2018. It was the fifth consecutive annual decline in the national poverty rate, according to the Census Bureau.

The number of people without health insurance increased last year to 29.6 million residents, or about 9.2% of the U.S. population from 28.6 million residents, or about 8.9% of the population, in 2018. That was primarily due to a decrease in the number of people covered by Medicaid, which provides health coverage to low-income adults, children, pregnant women and people with disabilities.

Hispanics saw the greatest jump in the uninsured of any racial or ethnic group, going from 17.9% in 2018 to 18.7% in 2019. The percentage of non-Hispanic whites and Asians without health insurance grew by less than half a percentage point from 2018 to 2019, and there was no statistical change for Blacks.

Though the median household income in 2019 was the highest on record, the Census Bureau warned it may be difficult to compare with past years since there have been changes in the survey used to compile the data. The statistical agency also said there may have been an upward bias in the 2019 estimate because the survey took place in the early months of the pandemic, which forced the Census Bureau to suspend in-person interviews.

But even taking into consideration that bias, median household income in 2019 would have been 4.1% higher than it was in 2018, showing that the median household income last year was the highest on record, the Census Bureau concluded.

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

Experts worry as US virus restrictions are eased or violated

By MICHELLE R. SMITH, BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and WILSON RING Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — State and local officials around the U.S. are rolling back social-distancing rules again after an abortive effort over the summer, allowing bars, restaurants and gyms to open. Fans are gathering mask-free at football games. President Donald Trump is holding crowded indoor rallies.

While some Americans may see such things as a welcome step closer to normal, public health experts warn the U.S. is setting itself up for failure — again.

“Folks are becoming very cavalier about the pandemic,” said Mark Rupp, professor and chief of infectious diseases at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Nebraska’s governor ended nearly all of his state’s restrictions on Monday, even with new cases of the coronavirus on the rise.

“I think it is setting us up for further transmission and more people getting ill and, unfortunately, more people dying,” Rupp said.

The virus is blamed for more than 6.5 million confirmed infections and 195,000 deaths in the U.S., by far the highest totals of any country, according to the count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

While case numbers have fallen from a peak average of 67,000 new infections per day in late July to about 36,000 now, the numbers remain staggeringly high. Deaths are running at about 750 a day, down from a peak of over 2,200 in late April.

In recent days, Mississippi has allowed restaurants to expand their customer capacity to 75%. New Jersey reopened gyms and indoor dining at restaurants, though with limited capacity. Michigan’s governor allowed gyms to reopen and organized sports to resume. County commissioners in Pinellas County, Florida, on Thursday are set to discuss whether to repeal their mask ordinance.

Public health experts noted that it is safe to resume certain activities in communities where there are low levels of infection.

The nation’s top infectious-disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, appeared via video at Vermont Gov. Phil Scott’s virus briefing Tuesday and praised the state’s response and its steps to reopen safely. He chalked it up to Vermont’s emphasis on wearing masks, avoiding crowds and taking other simple precautions.

But elsewhere, experts said, case counts are too high to resume higher-risk activities, such as going to bars, gyms, theaters and stadiums, participating in close contact sports or eating inside a restaurant.

In most communities in Florida, bars were allowed to reopen at 50 percent capacity on Monday, while keeping some precautions in place. But Florida’s three biggest counties — Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach — are keeping their bars closed because of high case numbers.

Even in places where drinking establishments have been given the OK to reopen, some owners and customers alike are hesitant.

At The Leon Pub, a smoky bar a mile up the road from Florida’s Capitol in Tallahassee, the Monday night crowd was sparse, as it has been for much of the long, oppressive summer.

“It’s been crickets and tumbleweeds,” said bartender Lauren Bryant.

Among the few there were Allie Preston and her husband. “We’ve been cooped up for a while. It was nice to have normalcy,” she said.

Florida bars were shuttered on St. Patrick’s Day in March, allowed to reopen in June, then ordered closed again about two weeks later as virus cases surged. The Leon Pub was allowed to reopen in July because it had a restaurant license.

Jim Smith, owner of Poor Paul’s Pourhouse in Tallahassee, intends to keep his place closed until the outbreak is over.

“I miss going to work every day. I miss seeing the customers and employees,” he said. “We have to get this thing under control.”

It’s not just government officials who are letting up on restrictions. In Milwaukee, the Roman Catholic archbishop said he will no longer excuse people from in-person worship unless they are ill or are caring for someone who is sick. Meanwhile, cases in Wisconsin are on the rise.

Some local officials are cracking down as they see cases climb.

In Wichita, Kansas, health officials made bar curfews and mask wearing mandatory. In Framingham, Massachusetts, officials said they have starting issuing \$500 fines to property owners who violate the rules on gatherings and mask-wearing.

Public health experts said they worry they are seeing a pattern: A drop in cases leads officials and regular Americans to relax measures to stay safe, and infections and deaths make a comeback.

"Please, you've done so well, don't let your guard down," Fauci said during a call-in news conference during the video call with Vermont's governor. "Because if we do, we are going to see surges that are going to put us back to where we were months ago."

Calvan reported from Tallahassee, Florida, Ring reported from Stowe, Vermont. Associated Press reporters from around the United States contributed to this report.

Gloria Estefan, Alex Rodriguez mark Latino impact on media

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Gloria Estefan, Alex Rodriguez and Eva Longoria will be among the participants in a monthlong online celebration of Latino contributions to television.

The Paley Center for Media's tribute to the work of actors, journalists and other notable Latinos begins Wednesday and will be held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic. It's the first such event by Paley to coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

The inaugural celebration will feature "conversations and events that spotlight critically acclaimed, groundbreaking, and culturally influential Hispanic personalities and rising stars who demonstrate the power of the community" and its cultural impact, the center said in its announcement Tuesday.

Maureen J. Reidy, the center's president and CEO, called it a "a must-see celebration for the whole family that informs, educates, and entertains."

A bilingual component with education programs, interactive trivia and other elements is available at paleycenter.org through Oct. 15.

Among the highlights of the event (all times Eastern):

— "A Tribute to Hispanic Achievements on Television," 8 p.m. Wednesday on Yahoo Entertainment. Estefan, Longoria, Edward James Olmos, Jimmy Smits and George Lopez are among those participating, with Soledad O'Brien as moderator.

— "Alex Rodriguez in Conversation," 8 p.m. Thursday, Yahoo Entertainment and Yahoo Sports. The baseball great discusses his career in and out of sports, with Natalie Morales as moderator.

— "Telemundo's 'La Reina del Sur': A Conversation with the Stars," Oct. 2, Yahoo Entertainment and Yahoo en Español. Series lead Kate del Castillo and cast members Isabella Sierra and Alejandro Calva join in a Spanish- and English-language panel about the hit telenovela and its upcoming third season.

— "Hispanic Voices in Media," 8 p.m. Oct. 8, Yahoo News. Journalists Ana Cabrera, Ilija Calderón, Jose Diaz-Balart, Tom Llamas and Juan Williams discuss TV's role in informing Hispanic Americans and issues including politics, the pandemic and immigration. Mariana Atencio is the moderator.

Apple debuts discount watch, but no new iPhones ... yet

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN RAMON, Calif. (AP) — Apple introduced a cheaper version of its smartwatch, its latest attempt to broaden the appeal of its trend-setting products while many consumers are forced to scrimp during the coronavirus pandemic.

The scaled-down Apple Watch follows on the heels of a budget iPhone the company released five months ago as the economy cratered and unemployment rates rose above the levels reached during the Great Recession more than a decade ago.

Apple also took the wraps off a new high-end watch model, a next-generation iPad and a couple of new

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subscription services during a virtual event held Tuesday. The company normally also rolls out its new iPhones at this time of year, but production problems caused by the pandemic have delayed their release until at least October.

CEO Tim Cook didn't mention iPhones during Tuesday's one-hour presentation recorded at the company's massive, but now mostly empty, headquarters in Cupertino, California.

The Apple Watch has never come close to rivaling the iPhone's popularity, but it does dominate the market for smartwatches. Canaccord Genuity analyst T. Michael Walkley estimates about 51 million Apple Watches will be sold this year, a 5% increase from last year. The research firm GlobalData pegs Apple's share of the \$64 billion smartwatch market at roughly 60%.

The new discount model, called the Apple Watch SE, will sell for \$279 and be available beginning Friday. The price is a markdown from the \$399 that Apple is asking for the next version of its higher end watch, the Series 6. Apple watches have been selling for an average of \$377, based on Walkley's calculations.

Apple added more features to help the watch monitor its owner's health, including a sensor that can read blood oxygen levels. The feature, specific to the Series 6, could be timely, given that COVID-19 frequently attacks the lungs.

Apple also announced a new fitness subscription service tailored for its watches for \$10 per month, as well as a new option that will bundle its existing music, video, news and gaming services into a package that will cost \$15 to \$30 per month.

Tens of millions of people already subscribe to Apple's various services, helping the company double its revenue during the past four years within a division that creates products for the more than 1 billion iPhones, iPads, watches and other devices that the people already use.

The services division also includes Apple's app store, which is under regulatory scrutiny for charging a commission of up to 30% for products sold through other companies who have no other option but to use the store to reach the mostly affluent consumers who buy iPhone products.

States face pressure to ban race-based hairstyle prejudice

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS Associated Press

RIO RANCHO, N.M. (AP) — A growing number of states are facing pressure to ban race-based discrimination against hair texture and hairstyles in schools and the workplace.

Advocates this week presented a draft proposal to New Mexico state lawmakers that would outlaw employers and schools from discriminating against Black and Native American women's hairstyles. It's the latest state targeted by a national campaign.

Devont'e Kurt Watson, a member of Black Lives Matter in Albuquerque, told New Mexico lawmakers on Monday that the state should amend its Human Rights law to protect people with Afros, cornrows, dreadlocks and headwraps. The state should also provide protections for Native Americans who face hair discrimination, he said.

"Passing the (the proposal) in New Mexico will have far-reaching implications to protect our diverse community from egregious acts of hatred," Watson said. "Hair discrimination is racial discrimination."

New Mexico Black Lawyers Association President Aja Brooks said job offers have been rescinded to Black women in other states because of hairstyles and that students in New Mexico and in other states have been told in class by teachers their hair was a distraction.

"Hair discrimination for people of color in New Mexico is real," Brooks said.

The draft evaluated by a New Mexico legislative interim committee was the first step for a bill that is expected to be introduced in January. New Mexico's Legislature is dominated by Democrats and the state has a Democratic governor.

Earlier this year, Democratic Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill that made Washington the latest state to pass a version of the CROWN Act.

It stands for "Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair" and is part of a national campaign promoted by Dove, the National Urban League, Color Of Change and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

California, Colorado, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Virginia have already passed similar laws, according to people involved in the campaign. Other states, such as Connecticut, have considered similar proposals but they have not passed.

Earlier this year, the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico sued the state's largest school district and a former teacher over a 2018 episode where the teacher allegedly cut a Native American student's hair during class on Halloween and asked another student if she was dressed as a "bloody Indian."

The ACLU's complaint against Albuquerque Public Schools and the former teacher, Mary Jane Eastin, claims she created a hostile learning environment and discriminated against McKenzie Johnson, who is Navajo.

The school district's superintendent issued a public apology after the allegations emerged and told parents that Eastin would not return to Cibola High School, where she taught English.

School officials declined to comment on the lawsuit. Eastin's attorney, Barry Berenberg, did not immediately respond to an email Tuesday seeking comment.

Russell Contreras is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity Team. Follow him on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/russcontreras>

\$1M bail set for Lancaster police shooting demonstrators

By MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

Thirteen people who are accused of committing crimes while participating in a civil disturbance in Lancaster on Sunday night sat behind bars Tuesday, with bail for seven of them set at \$1 million.

The eight for whom charging documents have been made public are accused of being instigators during demonstrations over the fatal police shooting of an armed man. Authorities said the protests degenerated into rioting that damaged Lancaster's police headquarters and produced an arson fire that blocked a downtown intersection.

Police in Lancaster, a diverse city of nearly 60,000 in the heart of Pennsylvania Amish country, said Tuesday that they arrested five others on similar charges, a group that was awaiting arraignment and to have bail set. The 13 defendants range from 16 to 43 years old and live in Lancaster and surrounding communities, as well as in York, Camp Hill and Mercersburg.

Among the eight for whom charging documents were available, not all face identical charges, accusations that include arson, rioting and institutional vandalism. One has been charged with carrying a concealed weapon without a permit.

The father of Kathryn Patterson, 20, an undergraduate student at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, said she was acting as a medic, as she has at other protests in the recent past.

Chip Patterson called Kathryn Patterson's \$1 million bail, set by a magisterial district justice, "obscene." "Everything that I know so far, which is not a lot, indicates that Kat is not guilty of those charges. But then again, we'll have to wait and see," said Chip Patterson, who lives in Mercersburg, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Lancaster.

He said he has not been able to reach his daughter since her arrest.

"I cannot tell you how long this night has been," he said Tuesday afternoon. "I think regardless of what these people did or didn't do, the bail amount is just outrageous and clearly against the Eighth Amendment," which addresses bail.

The protests concerned the shooting death by police of a Ricardo Munoz, whose sister had called authorities in hopes of having him involuntarily committed for mental health treatment.

Police have made public the officer's body camera video. It showed Munoz, 27, approaching the officer with the knife in what appeared to be a menacing manner, before the officer, who has not been publicly identified, shot and killed him.

Munoz had been out on bond, awaiting trial for allegations he stabbed four people last year, including a teenage boy who was stabbed in the face.

Navalny posts hospital photo of himself, plans Russia return

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV and DAVID RISING Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Tuesday posted a picture of himself from his hospital bed in Germany where he's recuperating from being poisoned with a nerve agent, wryly joking about being able to breathe on his own.

"Hi, this is Navalny," he wrote in the Russian-language post on Instagram in the first image of the 44-year-old since he was taken to Berlin's Charite hospital. The photo shows him being given a hug by his wife Yulia and flanked by his two children as he sits upright in his bed in a hospital gown.

"I have been missing you. I still can't do almost anything on my own, but yesterday I managed to breathe on my own for the entire day," he added in the post, which got over 1.1 million likes in several hours.

Separately, Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh tweeted that once he has recovered, Navalny plans to return to Russia, where he has supported opposition candidates and waged anti-corruption battles. "No other option has ever been considered," she wrote.

Navalny fell ill on a flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20 and treated at a hospital in the city of Omsk. Two days later, he was flown to the German hospital, where he was kept in an induced coma for more than two weeks as he was treated with an antidote. On Sept. 7, doctors said his condition had improved enough for him to be brought out of the coma.

On Monday, the hospital said he had been removed from a ventilator and was able to leave his bed for "short periods of time."

In his Instagram statement, Navalny displayed his well-known sarcastic humor when he talked about being able to breathe without a ventilator.

"Just on my own, no extra help, I didn't even use the simplest valve in my throat," he said. "I liked it very much. It's a remarkable process that is underestimated by many. Strongly recommended."

Despite his recovery, doctors have said they cannot rule out long-term health issues associated with the poisoning.

Leonid Volkov, a top associate of Navalny, refused to give any details on his condition or his possible return when reached by The Associated Press.

A German military lab has determined that Navalny was poisoned with Novichok, the same class of Soviet-era agent that Britain said was used on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, England, in 2018. On Monday, the German government said independent tests by labs in France and Sweden backed up its findings.

The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons also is taking steps to have samples from Navalny tested at its designated labs, Germany has said.

The Kremlin has bristled at calls from German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other leaders to answer questions about the poisoning, denying any official involvement.

French President Emmanuel Macron's office said he had expressed "deep concern over the criminal act" that targeted Navalny directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday. The Kremlin said Putin in the call "underlined the impropriety of unfounded accusations against the Russian side" and emphasized Russia's demand for Germany to hand over analyses and samples.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Tuesday that Russia is puzzled by Germany's refusal to share Navalny's analyses and other medical data, or compare notes with the Russian doctors who said they found no trace of poison in his system while he was at a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk.

"Russia has been absolutely open for cooperation in determining what happened," Peskov said. "Russia needs cooperation with the German side in getting the patient's biological samples to be able to advance."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who canceled a scheduled trip Tuesday to Berlin, said Russian authorities have conducted a preliminary inquiry and documented the meetings Navalny had before falling ill, but he emphasized they need to see the evidence of his poisoning to launch a full criminal investigation.

Lavrov said Navalny's life was saved by the pilots of the plane who quickly landed in Omsk after he collapsed on board and by the rapid action of doctors there. He accused the West of trying to smear Russia and use the incident as a pretext for new sanctions against Moscow.

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In a phone call Tuesday with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, Lavrov warned him against politicizing the situation with Navalny, the Russian Foreign Ministry said. Lavrov said Moscow would view Germany's continued stonewalling of Russia's request for analyses and samples as a "lack of desire to help determine the truth as part of an objective and thorough investigation."

Berlin has rejected suggestions from Moscow that it is dragging its heels on sharing evidence. Asked why no samples from Navalny have been given to Russia, a German Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Monday that "Mr. Navalny was in Russian treatment in a hospital for 48 hours."

Sergei Naryshkin, the director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, said that studies by Russian labs found no indication Navalny was poisoned while still in Russia.

"It's a fact that at the moment when Navalny was leaving Russia, there were no toxic agents in his body," Naryshkin said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies. "In that context, we have many questions to ask the German side."

He emphasized that Russia has fully met its obligations under the international chemical weapons ban and completely destroyed its chemical weapons stockpiles.

"It's disinformation to say that Russia has production assets or old stockpiles of military nerve agents," he said.

Most of Germany's political parties have joined Merkel in calling for an investigation, but leaders in the far-right Alternative for Germany, known for its pro-Moscow sympathies, have said Berlin should not be involved. On Tuesday, it invited media to a discussion with a Russian lawmaker on "the Russian view of the Navalny case."

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Isachenkov reported from Moscow.

John Boyega quits perfume ambassador role over Chinese ad

LONDON (AP) — Black actor John Boyega has stepped down from his role as a global ambassador for perfume brand Jo Malone after the company decided to hire a Chinese actor to replace him in an ad he created.

The "Star Wars" star wrote Tuesday on Twitter that the brand's decision to "replace my campaign in China by using my concepts and substituting a local brand ambassador for me, without either my consent or prior notice, was wrong."

Jo Malone, an upscale British perfume brand owned by Estée Lauder, has said that replacing Boyega with Chinese star Liu Haoran in the ad campaign was a misstep. It has removed the ad and apologized.

The original ad starring Boyega, 28, aired last year and was called "The London Gent." It features the London-born actor walking around the neighborhood where he grew up and riding a horse in a park, and it makes a reference to his Nigerian heritage in a scene featuring West African attire.

"The film celebrated my personal story — showcasing my hometown, including my friends and featuring my family," Boyega wrote. "While many brands understandably use a variety of global and local ambassadors, dismissively trading out one's culture this way is not something I can condone."

It's not the first time Boyega has been deleted from a China-based ad. He played a leading role as Finn in 2015's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," but he and other non-white characters were removed or diminished from a Chinese poster for the blockbuster movie.

Boyega recently told GQ that Black characters have been "pushed to the side" in Disney's "Star Wars" franchise. In June, the star made an emotional speech on racism when he joined Black Lives Matter protests in London.

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Follow all AP stories on racial injustice at <https://apnews.com/Racialinjustice>

World isn't meeting biodiversity goals, UN report finds

By CHRISTINA LARSON and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

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A decade-long global effort to save Earth's disappearing species and declining ecosystems has mostly stumbled, with fragile habitats like coral reefs and tropical forests in more trouble than ever, researchers said in a report Tuesday.

In 2010, more than 150 countries agreed to goals to protect nature, but the new United Nations scorecard found that the world has largely failed to meet 20 different targets to safeguard species and ecosystems.

Six of those 20 goals were "partially achieved," and the rest were not.

If this were a school and these were tests, the world has flunked, said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, executive secretary of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity, which released the report.

Inger Andersen, who leads the U.N. environment program, called it a global failure.

"From COVID-19 to massive wildfires, floods, melting glaciers and unprecedented heat, our failure to meet the Aichi (biodiversity) targets — protect our our home — has very real consequences," Andersen said. "We can no longer afford to cast nature to the side."

In a Tuesday interview with The Associated Press, former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon connected the problems to "a lack of global partnership and political leadership." He said multilateralism has been under attack, citing the United States' withdrawal from the Paris climate change agreement as an example.

The U.N. team and report authors said the study is not meant to stoke despair, but to galvanize governments to take stronger actions over the next decade to protect the diversity of life.

"Some progress has been made, but inadequate progress. A lot still needs to be done," Mrema said. "The key is to get the political will and the commitment."

Duke University ecologist Stuart Pimm, who was not involved in the new report, said it's good that countries are getting together to examine their biodiversity goals but some of the targets are nebulous. Reducing "everything on the planet to single scores" obscures the fact that the picture may look different in different places, he said.

For years, conservation activists have used the polar bear as a poster child for species in trouble — especially those threatened by climate change, which the report connects to biodiversity loss. But Mrema and lead author David Cooper said the world should think about a different poster animal: humans.

"A lot of things civilizations depend on are certainly threatened," he said.

The report was originally slated to be released at a U.N. conference to set biodiversity targets for the next decade, but the event in Kunming, China, was postponed until next year due to the pandemic.

Last week, the World Wide Fund for Nature released new research detailing how monitored populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish have declined, on average, 68%, between 1970 and 2016.

"With pandemic deaths surging and wildfires raging across the entire West Coast, never have the consequences of our misuse and abuse of the natural world been more clear," said Julia Baum, a biologist at Canada's University of Victoria who wasn't part of the report.

As countries prepare to restart their economies after combating the coronavirus, there's an opportunity to do better — or much worse — for the planet, Cooper said.

"Some countries are relaxing environmental regulations, but others are investing in a green recovery," he said.

One of the challenges in meeting global biodiversity targets is a mismatch between countries with abundant natural assets — such as large tracts of intact tropical forests — and those with money to enforce protections.

"The biodiversity hotspots tend to be in poorer countries," and wealthy countries need to be willing to provide financial or practical support to help other nations, Cooper said.

Dalhousie University marine biologist Boris Worm, who also wasn't part of the report, said the world is at a crossroads.

"We still have the chance to save most of the world's endangered species and vulnerable ecosystems," Worm said. "Now we face a historic choice to either seize this opportunity, and rebuild what has been lost, or to let the world's species slide further into oblivion."

He said it's striking that Earth's biodiversity took millions of years to evolve, "yet we could destroy much of it in a matter of decades — or safeguard it for generations to come."

"It's our choice," he added.

AP writer Elias Meseret contributed from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Follow Larson on Twitter at @larsonchristina and Borenstein at @borenbears .

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

US tariffs on China are illegal, says world trade body

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — A World Trade Organization panel ruled Tuesday that Trump administration tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods are illegal, vindicating Beijing even if the United States has all but incapacitated the WTO's ability to hand down a final, binding verdict.

The decision marks the first time that the Geneva-based trade body has ruled against a series of high-profile tariffs that President Donald Trump's government has imposed on a number of countries — allies and rivals alike. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the WTO treats the U.S. unfairly.

The ruling, in theory, would allow China to impose retaliatory tariffs on billions' worth of U.S. goods. But it is unlikely to have much practical impact, at least in the short term, because the U.S. can appeal the decision and the WTO's appeals court is currently no longer functioning — largely because of Washington's single-handed refusal to accept new members for it.

In its decision, the WTO's dispute settlement body ruled against the U.S. government's argument that China has wrongly engaged in practices harmful to U.S. interests on issues including intellectual property theft and technology transfer — and it quickly drew criticism of U.S. trade representative Robert Lighthizer.

"This panel report confirms what the Trump administration has been saying for four years: The WTO is completely inadequate to stop China's harmful technology practices," Lighthizer said in a statement. He said the United States had presented "extensive evidence" of China's intellectual property theft and the WTO has offered no fixes for it.

"The United States must be allowed to defend itself against unfair trade practices, and the Trump administration will not let China use the WTO to take advantage of American workers, businesses, farmers and ranchers," he added.

The Chinese ministry of commerce said the ruling was "objective and fair" and called on the U.S. to respect it.

The appeals court issues final rulings in trade cases and stopped functioning last year when the terms of two of its last three judges expired with no replacements. That means the United States can appeal the decision "into the void," said Timothy Keeler, a lawyer at Mayer Brown and former chief of staff for the U.S. trade representative.

The U.S. tariffs target two batches of Chinese products. Duties of 10% were imposed on some \$200 billion worth of goods in September 2018, and were jacked up to 25% eight months later. An additional 25% duties were imposed in June 2018 against Chinese goods worth about \$34 billion in annual trade, targeting industrial products and items like airplane propellers, water purifiers and motorcycles.

The Trump administration has justified the sanctions under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, once a common tool used by the U.S. government to impose sanctions and recently revived by Trump. The U.S. argued that China's actions had amounted to "state-sanctioned theft" and "misappropriation" of U.S. technology, intellectual property and commercial secrets.

Trade lawyer Mark Herlach, a partner with the firm Eversheds Sutherland, said there has been a long-standing controversy over whether the 301 law is consistent with WTO rules.

"It's not surprising that a WTO panel didn't like what the U.S. was doing," he said.

The WTO panel ruled that the U.S. measures violated longstanding international trade rules because they

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only applied to products from China, and that Washington had not adequately substantiated its claim that the Chinese products hit with the extra duties had benefited from the allegedly unfair Chinese practices.

Paul Wiseman in Washington contributed to this report.

Asia Today: India adds over 83,000 cases, nears 5 million

NEW DELHI (AP) — India confirmed more than 83,000 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday, bringing its total caseload to nearly 5 million.

The Health Ministry also reported 1,054 new deaths, driving total fatalities up to 80,776.

With 4.93 million confirmed cases, India has the second-highest total in the world after the U.S. Infections have maintained an upward surge amid an ease in coronavirus restrictions nationwide. More than 600,000 new cases have been confirmed in the last week alone.

Maharashtra, with more than 1 million cases, remains the worst-affected state in India, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

India, however, also has the highest number of recovered patients in the world, according to Johns Hopkins University. The country's recovery rate stands at 77.8%, with nearly 3.8 million people recovering from the virus so far, according to the Health Ministry.

India's Parliament, which reopened Monday after being shut down for more than five months due to the coronavirus, said that more than 10 million migrant laborers had made their way back to their home states from various corners of the country during a strict nationwide lockdown. It said there was no data available for the number of migrant deaths.

A flood of migrant workers, out of money and fearing starvation, poured out of cities and headed back to villages when Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered the nationwide lockdown on March 24. The unprecedented migration was one key reason that the virus spread to the far reaches of the country.

The lockdown also caused a severe economic crisis. India's economy contracted nearly 24% in the second quarter, the worst among the world's top economies.

Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region:

— Nearly 1.8 million Hong Kong residents took voluntary coronavirus tests as part of a massive community testing program, resulting in 42 cases being identified, the government said Tuesday. The two-week testing program, which ended Monday, was aimed at identifying silent carriers of the coronavirus to reduce a wave of cases that began in July. Although the total number of people tested fell short of the government's initial estimate of four to five million, officials say the program met its objectives. "We have identified confirmed cases, we've isolated them and given them treatment to cut the transmission chain," Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said at a news conference. China's central government provided resources and staff for the testing program, and many Hong Kong residents expressed fear that DNA might be collected despite the Hong Kong government dismissing such concerns. Hong Kong reported no new local coronavirus infections on Tuesday for the first time in over two months. The government said it would further relax social-distancing measures, allowing bars, amusement parks and swimming pools to reopen. Restaurants will also be allowed to serve customers until midnight. However, a ban on public gatherings of more than four people remains in place. Hong Kong has recorded 4,976 infections, including 101 deaths.

— Thailand's Cabinet has approved in principle a plan to begin reopening the country to foreign tourists by issuing special renewable 90-day visas and limiting their numbers to 1,200 a month. Deputy Government Spokeswoman Traisulee Traisaranakul said Tuesday that the program, proposed to begin next month, is an effort to boost the coronavirus-battered tourism sector, a major revenue earner. Traisulee said the program is expected to generate about 1 billion baht (\$32 million) a month. Thailand in early April barred scheduled commercial passenger flights from abroad, though some airlines have resumed limited repatriation flights. Under the plan, whose details have not been finalized, visitors would have to pay to stay in quarantine at a hotel or hospital for 14 days on arrival, and show confirmation that they have made arrangements for long-term accommodation. The cost of the special tourist visa would be 2,000 baht

(\$64), with the same charge for each of two allowed renewals. Health officials on Tuesday reported five new cases of coronavirus, all people already quarantined after arriving from abroad, bringing the total to 3,480, including 58 deaths.

— China has reported eight new coronavirus cases, all from people who entered the country, including two Myanmar nationals who crossed the land border at the Chinese city of Ruili. Myanmar has seen a surge in new cases. On Friday, it reimposed tough measures to control the disease. Ruili was placed under lockdown on Monday evening, with people banned from leaving the city and residents quarantined at home for a week. A government statement said all residents of the city would be tested for the virus and authorities would crack down on the area's notorious cross-border smuggling trade. The border itself was closed and additional restrictions placed on outlying villages. China has gone a month without new cases of domestic infection.

— South Korea's daily coronavirus tally has stayed in the low 100s for a third consecutive day, maintaining a downward trajectory. The 106 cases added Tuesday brought the country's total to 22,391, including 367 deaths. South Korea's daily jump has remained in triple digits for more than a month, but its caseload has recently gradually slowed down in the wake of stringent social distancing rules. The government on Monday relaxed physical distancing guidelines in the greater Seoul area, the heart of a recent viral resurgence.

Petalo, not Charmin: Virus brings Mexican toilet paper to US

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Toilet paper is back on store shelves. But you may not recognize some of the brands. Demand for toilet paper has been so high during the pandemic that in order to keep their shelves stocked, retailers are buying up foreign toilet paper brands, mostly from Mexico. Major chains, across the country, including CVS, Piggly Wiggly, Safeway, 7-Eleven and others, are carrying the international brands.

In recent weeks, a CVS in New York has been selling three Mexican brands: Regio, Hoteles Elite and Daisy Soft. Mexico's Petalo was on the shelves of a Piggly Wiggly in Sister Bay, Wisconsin. And a Safeway supermarket in Fremont, California, had those same brands, plus Vogue, whose label says in Spanish that it smells like chamomile.

The stores said they needed to get creative during the pandemic and started working with new suppliers to get shoppers what they needed. But don't worry about popular U.S. brands like Charmin — they aren't going to disappear. Supply chain experts expect the Mexican and other foreign-made rolls to be on store shelves only temporarily, until U.S. manufacturers catch up with demand.

Americans use much more toilet paper than other countries, according to Patrick Penfield, a supply chain professor at the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University — which is why Mexico can handle shipping more rolls to the United States. Stores have done this with other products during the pandemic, he said, bringing Mexican-made hand sanitizer to the U.S. when there was a shortage.

Americans, of course, buy products that are made all over the world, but most of the toilet paper they use is made in the U.S. Toilet paper is inexpensive and takes up a lot of space in trucks and ships, making it not worth the cost of importing from other countries. That's left the toilet paper aisle with the same familiar brands, causing some shoppers to do a double take when they see the unfamiliar stuff.

Oliver Olsen wasn't even in the market for toilet paper, but he had to stop and take a closer look at what he saw in the aisles last month at a Hannaford supermarket in Londonderry, Vermont.

Instead of Charmin and Cottonelle, there was Vogue and Delsey from Mexico. Next to them were rolls of Cashmere from Canada and King Blue from Trinidad and Tobago.

"It really just jumped out at me," said Olsen, who works in the software industry and is a former state representative. "I didn't know any of these."

Ericka Dodge, a spokeswoman for Hannaford, a chain owned by supermarket operator Ahold Delhaize, said the grocer worked with new suppliers to get toilet paper on the shelf faster.

Some U.S. manufacturers also stopped making the many varieties of toilet paper they usually make, like sheets that are stronger or infused with aloe, so they could focus on the basics and get it to stores

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quicker. But Dodge said those varieties are starting to return to retailers' shelves.

Penfield, the Syracuse University professor, expects American manufacturers to struggle to keep up with demand for the next three to five months.

Part of the reason: People are doing more of their bathroom business at home instead of at work or school. Bathroom tissue sales are up 22% so far this year, according to research firm Nielsen.

The companies that make the Mexican toilet paper were surprised their rolls were spotted north of the border.

"It's unexpected that it would be found in any U.S. retailers," said Amy Bellcourt, a spokeswoman for Essity, a Swiss tissue company that makes Regio in Mexico.

Petalo, Vogue and Delsey are made in Mexico by Kimberly-Clark, the same company that makes Cottonelle and Scott. But Kimberly-Clark said it had no role in importing its Mexican brands to the U.S.

Selling unknown toilet paper brands in a pandemic is not hard, even though they're not as fluffy as Charmin or Cottonelle.

"American consumers, in times of plenty, are very picky," said Erika Marsillac, an associate professor of supply chain management at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. "If the shelves are running low or empty you'll grab whatever you can grab."

Some don't have a choice.

Jennifer Jackson ordered aloe-infused Cottonelle from the website of Texas supermarket chain H-E-B, but it was out of stock, and she realized it was swapped out for Vogue when she picked up her order at the store.

She thought the flowery scent was "kind of fun," but it was missing some heft.

"Vogue is so thin, it kind of falls apart," said Jackson, a lawyer in Austin, Texas. "And that's a dicey situation in the bathroom."

Follow Joseph Pisani at <http://twitter.com/josephpisani>

400 years later, a new Mayflower will sail without humans

By JAMES BROOKS and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, England (AP) — The Mayflower is taking to the water in Plymouth harbor.

It's not the ship that left this southwest England port 400 years ago carrying Pilgrim settlers to America. The sleek vessel being readied Tuesday for its official launch has no passengers, no crew — but like its predecessor, an ambitious mission.

The 50-foot (15-meter) trimaran has "no one on board, no captain, no place to eat, no place to sleep," said Brett Phaneuf, co-director of the Mayflower Autonomous Ship project. "It's sophisticated artificial intelligence that will captain the ship across the ocean."

The ship is set to follow in its forebear's footsteps by crossing the Atlantic from Plymouth, England, to Plymouth, Massachusetts, this time on a marine research trip. Its creators hope it will be the first in a new generation of high-tech vessels that can explore ocean regions which have been too difficult or dangerous for people to go.

Built by the nonprofit marine research organization ProMare and computing giant IBM, the vessel will be launched and christened on Wednesday, 400 years to the day since the original Mayflower left Plymouth. The ceremony will be attended by officials from Britain, the U.S. — the 17th-century colonists' origin and destination — and the Netherlands, where the Puritan pilgrims lived in exile before their voyage.

It's part of 400th anniversary commemorations of the voyage involving the British, Americans, Dutch — and the Wampanoag people native to what is now New England. Wampanoag stories have been marginalized on past anniversaries, but this year play a central role in events and exhibitions on both sides of the Atlantic.

Now, as in 1620, not everything has gone to plan. The Pilgrim colonists set sail for America from Southampton, further along England's south coast, but had to stop in Plymouth for repairs before finally setting

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out on Sept. 16, 1620.

The coronavirus pandemic delayed construction of the autonomous ship, and the vessel's trans-Atlantic voyage has been postponed until 2021. It will undertake six months of sea trials and short trips before setting out across the Atlantic next spring.

People will be able to follow the ship's voyages and research online. If successful, the 1 million pound (\$1.3 million) ship will become the largest-ever autonomous vessel to cross the Atlantic.

Like the original Mayflower, it is powered by the elements — in this case a mix of sun and wind, with a backup diesel generator.

The vessel is packed with instruments to measure ocean health, including water sampling devices to monitor for micro-plastics and an acoustic payload to listen for whales and dolphins.

A range of technologies will help the boat sense the world around it, including cameras and radar to detect hazards. Computing and artificial intelligence systems supplied by IBM — and more commonly used by financial services firms — enable it to make decisions at sea with no human intervention.

"In a way, this ship actually has more to do with like a modern bank than it does with the old Mayflower," said Don Scott, the project's chief technology officer.

It's hoped the vessel could herald a new era for automated research ships. There are plans to build two similar ships, one to work in the Arctic. Such vessels could be particularly useful amid the current global uncertainty, as the coronavirus pandemic cancels research trips and halts vital science field work.

Rosie Lickorish, an IBM software engineer and oceanographer, said the pandemic has had "a real negative effect on the scientific community."

"So having autonomous ships where we don't need to rely on people to be on board, that means that we can continue to do that vital research and collect that really important data," she said.

Despite the pandemic-related setbacks, those involved in the project feel a huge sense of accomplishment — and anticipation.

Phaneuf sees a strong parallel between the two Mayflower voyages four centuries apart: "Neither of us are sure we were going to make it."

"But our risk is much smaller than their risk -- if we don't make it, no one will be injured, no one will die," he said. "But we're going to learn a tremendous amount, no matter how far we get."

Lawless reported from London. Jo Kearney in Plymouth, England contributed.

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

VIRUS DIARY: Alone, craving change, but above all grateful

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — For what feels like the first time in my life I'm craving change, longing for something different. But the start of each month aches like I'm repeatedly waking up and reliving the same nightmares from the previous month.

The headlines read another business shut down, another family member gone too soon, another Black person taken, another celebrity lost. All the while another day goes by and it still feels like we are in March — for the seventh time.

Who could have predicted that "after the pandemic" would still seemingly be just as far away as before?

It is especially hard on those who immerse themselves endlessly in today's events. But it is not without purpose and definitely not without reflection. I see the calendar changing, but it is hard to see time passing. And despite it all, I'm grateful.

We made it through half a year in a pandemic. Can you believe it? Some of you may have picked up a new hobby, read books, finally finished that home project, reconnected with friends and family.

Me? All of the above.

I live alone in a studio no more than 700 square feet (65 square meters) in downtown Phoenix. It has given me nothing but time to myself.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to wake up every day, grateful I have a routine to adhere to — and, most importantly, grateful for time.

Today I stopped and smelled the roses. And by roses, I mean what I thought would be fresh air from my balcony. I was instead greeted with an uncomfortable whoosh of hot wind and a warm kiss from the sun. It's almost fall.

Every year I decorate for the seasons. This year was especially important to remind myself that time is passing. I'm bringing out the haystacks and the scarecrows. It's a little early for pumpkins — but why not?

I open up my planner, light my leaf-scented candle and pour a mug of hot chocolate. This is the season when I map out my yearly plans; that is what six years in higher education conditions do to you.

But this time, instead of planning, which has made my work-from-home life a little less spontaneous, I've decided to just embrace time. It is exhausting thinking about what could have been this year. Multiple vacations, concerts and weddings are all crossed out of my planner.

Instead, I'm thinking about what this year has taught me so far, about myself and who I want to be. I decided to leave my planner blank.

I have worked for The Associated Press for more than a year now. I've written about 2,000 stories. I'm a working woman at 25 years old, and I'm nothing but grateful.

I know people who were laid off from their jobs, threatened with payments they weren't sure how to make, sick with COVID-19, grieving the loss of a friend or family member and harassed because of the color of their skin. This year has been tough on everyone, and right now I'm just blessed to be able to wake up. It's not a luxury that everyone has been given this year.

This moment seems endless. But as I look at my fall decorations, I'm reminded that time continues and we should be grateful, knowing there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. Follow Phoenix-based AP West Desk news associate Cheyanne Mumphrey on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/cheymumph>

Zimbabwe government abuses critics, allege rights groups

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Godfrey Kurauone, a Zimbabwean opposition official, sang a protest song at the funeral of a party member in July. For that, and other political charges, he spent 42 days in jail before the prosecution dropped one charge, and acquitted him of another charge of blocking traffic.

Hopewell Chin'ono, an investigative journalist who used his Twitter account to expose alleged government corruption, was held in the notorious Chikurubi maximum security prison for nearly six weeks before being granted bail on charges of inciting violence for tweeting his support for an anti-government protest.

Internationally acclaimed author and filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga spent a night in detention for standing by a Harare road and holding up a placard that said "We Want Better. Reform Our Institutions."

All face court cases for publicly challenging Zimbabwe's government.

From tweeting to Whatsapp texting, singing in public or marching in the streets, those who speak out against President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government are finding themselves in trouble. Some have been abducted and tortured, according to human rights groups.

Zimbabwe's deteriorating economy and reports of alleged corruption involving the procurement of COVID-19 protective equipment and drugs have stoked peoples' anger at a government that promised reform and prosperity when it took power in 2017.

It appears the government is using restrictions imposed to combat the coronavirus to suppress political criticism, say human rights defenders.

"While the government lockdown has been extended indefinitely, human rights violations have steadily

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increased, suggesting that the government is using COVID-19 as a cover for violating fundamental freedoms and attacking perceived opponents," said the local human rights group Zimrights in a joint statement with the International Federation for Human Rights.

Opposition officials, human rights groups and some analysts accuse Mnangagwa of abusing the rights of critics, using tactics as harsh as his predecessor, the late Robert Mugabe.

Mnangagwa and his officials deny the charges, saying they have carried out democratic reforms and they are justified in taking measures against people who are seeking to illegally overthrow the government.

Dozens of people — including lawyers, journalists, nurses, doctors, opposition members of parliament, and human rights activists — have been arrested and charged with violating COVID-19 lockdown rules, or for protesting on the streets and on social media.

ZimRights, a local organization, says it has recorded 820 "human rights violations" such as arbitrary arrests, assaults by state agents, attacks on journalists, abductions, "gunshot assaults" and dog bites between the end of March when the lockdown was introduced and August 9.

"These cases reveal a trend of human rights violations consisting of acts aiming to morally exhaust, silence, punish, impoverish, sometimes physically injure the targeted individuals, and exposing them to the risk of contracting the virus while arbitrarily detained in prisons," said Zimrights in a joint statement with the International Federation for Human Rights.

It's not even safe to criticize the president in bars, on public transport or on social media, according to the lawyers' group, which said it has represented about 60 people charged with insulting the president since Mnangagwa took over following a coup that deposed Mugabe in 2017.

They include Milton Murairwa, a 31-year old police officer. He posted that "ED and his team must go," on a Whatsapp group for police family members. Mnangagwa is popularly known by his initials ED. Now the police officer faces up to a year in jail or a fine if convicted on charges of "undermining the authority of or insulting" the president.

"We are seeing an increasingly worrying trend where authorities are abusing the law to persecute people perceived to hold views different to those of the establishment," said Kumbirai Mafunda, spokesman for Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, which is providing lawyers to many of those arrested in the crackdown. Authorities, he said, "are using pre-trial detention as a form of punishment," pointing to cases where those arrested are denied bail for lengthy periods.

Other government critics have faced insulting verbal attacks. The ruling party spokesman Patrick Chinamasa called the U.S ambassador Brian Nichols "a thug." The country's Catholic bishops were branded "evil" by the information minister, while the president challenged them to form their own party after they issued a pastoral letter accusing the government of political and economic mismanagement.

Hopes that neighboring South Africa, the region's economic powerhouse, would help to find a resolution are vanishing after a delegation from the ruling African National Congress party came to Zimbabwe but only met ruling party officials and not the opposition and or civic organizations.

Zimbabwe's government and the ruling party are not relenting.

Mnangagwa told party officials over the weekend that there is no crisis in Zimbabwe needing intervention and that the South Africans would not meet the opposition and NGOs.

Chinamasa, the ruling party spokesman, last week warned opposition leaders that "they should not be like children playing with fire. It will be very dangerous for them." He accused the main opposition MDC Alliance party of training "renegades" overseas "to come and cause mayhem and violence."

MDC Alliance president Nelson Chamisa denied the charges.

"It's all part of tactics to wipe us out. We are being treated like a banned organization, we can't even hold meetings without risking arrest," he told The Associated Press, calling on neighboring countries to "help solve our crisis."

Some activists are pushing back. A group held a street protest wearing replicas of red and white striped prison sweaters in August. Others are wearing the sweaters and posting pictures on social media.

Chin'ono, the journalist, walked out of Chikurubi Maximum Prison wearing his prison jersey when he was

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released on bail early September.

"It was a symbolism that yes, I might be out of Chikurubi but the current government has created a giant prison for all of us," he told the AP. "Instead of being intimidated we are taking ownership of those symbols and making them ours."

Emmy predictions when predicting the future is folly

By LYNN ELBER and MARK KENNEDY Associated Press

Stipulated: "Watchmen" will win the Emmy Award for best limited series and Regina King, its indomitable center, will be honored at Sunday's largely virtual ceremony hosted by Jimmy Kimmel.

Most everything else about the 72nd Primetime Emmy Awards is a question mark, including how smoothly the pandemic-constrained telecast (8 p.m. EDT, ABC) will unfold.

The show's producers were still working out their final strategy as the TV industry's big night nears. But housebound nominees, formally dressed or not, will be poised to go live on-screen and discover whether they've won or lost.

The potential for glitches alone will provide suspense, but so will the honors. With the coronavirus turning so many of us into morose shut-ins, the small screen's wealth of shows and performances has provided a key distraction.

TV academy voters have a chance to reward the best of the best and to recognize change. The streaming-induced growth of content opened doors to more trophy-worthy projects from those too often ignored, including people of color and women.

Against that backdrop, Associated Press Television Writer Lynn Elber and AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy offer their predictions in the top categories — but accept zero blame for virtual office-pool betting losses.

DRAMA SERIES

Nominees: "Better Call Saul"; "The Crown"; "Killing Eve"; "The Handmaid's Tale"; "The Mandalorian"; "Ozark"; "Stranger Things"; "Succession."

ELBER:

Should win: "Ozark." Like the much-honored "Breaking Bad," this morality play is woven out of family dysfunction and brutal criminality, masterfully written and acted.

Will win: "Succession." A brassy, sexy power struggle that has the scope Emmy voters expect from a top drama, with bonus points for the au courant media empire setting.

KENNEDY:

Should win: "The Crown," There's simply been no dip in service from this historical drama, with the writing and acting consistently superb. Last season was quirky, ranging from Prince Charles awkwardly learning Welsh to the way it handled the disaster at a coal-mining town. I bow.

Will win: "Succession." Think of this show as our American version of "The Crown," except we do our successions noisily and arrogantly and the Brits do it by blood and far more elegantly.

COMEDY SERIES

Nominees: "Curb Your Enthusiasm"; "Dead to Me"; "The Good Place"; "Insecure"; "The Kominsky Method"; "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"; "Schitt's Creek"; "What We Do in the Shadows."

ELBER:

Should win: "Schitt's Creek." It's silly, loving and open-minded. Can't we all use that good medicine now?

Will win: "Schitt's Creek." No way I would have said so before last year's surprise (and far worthier) "Fleabag" victory, but Emmy voters have a soft spot for idiosyncrasy.

KENNEDY:

Should win: "Schitt's Creek," but not enthusiastically.

Will win: "Schitt's Creek." In a weak category this year with lots of one-trick ponies and repetitive skits, this fish-out-of-water show is the only one really beloved by voters. Not necessarily for its content, mind you.

ACTOR, DRAMA SERIES

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Nominees: Jason Bateman, "Ozark"; Sterling K. Brown, "This is Us"; Billy Porter, "Pose"; Jeremy Strong, "Succession"; Brian Cox, "Succession"; Steve Carell, "The Morning Show."

ELBER:

Should win: Porter. His victory last year, as the first openly gay man to be honored as best drama actor, was both historic and artistic. He deserves it again.

Will win: Strong. His emotional tapdance as the wannabe heir is worthy, but I'll use my caveat chit here: He and Cox could split the "Succession" vote, giving gear-shifting Carell an opening.

KENNEDY:

Should win: Carell and Bateman both showed, again, that in addition to having huge comedy chops, they are also excellent dramatic actors. I give the edge to Carell, who adds a ferociousness to his disgraced character.

Will win: Strong. His hangdog, needy and slightly dim bro role on "Succession" is exactly what we need right now.

ACTRESS, DRAMA SERIES

Nominees: Jennifer Aniston, "The Morning Show"; Olivia Colman, "The Crown"; Jodie Comer, "Killing Eve"; Laura Linney, "Ozark"; Sandra Oh, "Killing Eve"; Zendaya, "Euphoria."

ELBER:

Should win: Linney. An actor of impeccable subtlety gets to sink her teeth into a deeply flawed character. Lucky us.

Will win: Linney. She lost out last year to Comer, but this season of "Ozark" was her showcase and she'll prevail despite an impressive field that includes Aniston in an against-type role.

KENNEDY:

Should win: Zendaya. Zendaya. Zendaya. In "Euphoria," she is remarkable.

Will win: Linney. One of the most underappreciated actors working today.

ACTOR, COMEDY SERIES

Nominees: Anthony Anderson, "black-ish"; Don Cheadle, "Black Monday"; Ted Danson, "The Good Place"; Michael Douglas, "The Kominsky Method"; Eugene Levy, "Schitt's Creek"; Ramy Youssef, "Ramy."

ELBER:

Should win: Danson. Dying is easy, comedy is hard — except to this effortless master of the sitcom, whether based in a bar ("Cheers") or the afterlife.

Will win: Levy. He's playing new notes in his longstanding, finely tuned comedic partnership with co-star Catherine O'Hara, and it will pay off.

KENNEDY:

Should win: Anderson. He has never won an acting Emmy for "black-ish" and that's not cool. His blustery, stubborn and yet entirely sweet patriarch is at the center of the show.

Will win: Levy. He simply has the most expressive eyebrows on TV.

ACTRESS, COMEDY SERIES

Nominees: Christina Applegate, "Dead to Me"; Rachel Brosnahan, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"; Linda Cardellini, "Dead to Me"; Catherine O'Hara, "Schitt's Creek"; Issa Rae, "Insecure"; Tracee Ellis Ross, "black-ish."

ELBER:

Should win: O'Hara. As I said last year, although no one listened, her "delectably self-absorbed, absurd Moira" stands atop a Mount Rushmore of her inventive portrayals.

Will win: O'Hara. Resistance is futile, Emmy, despite perhaps the strongest of all fields this year. You belong to her.

KENNEDY:

Should win: Rae. The HBO comedy's creator and star's work on "Insecure" needs to be celebrated.

Will win: O'Hara. Like it was said before, resistance is futile.

LIMITED SERIES

Nominees: "Little Fires Everywhere"; "Mrs. America"; "Unbelievable"; "Unorthodox"; "Watchmen."

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ELBER:

Should win: "Watchmen." An ambitious interpretation of a highly regarded graphic novel, one prescient in its connection with today's bleak zeitgeist.

Will win: "Watchmen." While second-wave feminist history "Mrs. America" is worthy competition, the daring and currency of "Watchmen" is insurmountable.

KENNEDY:

Should win: "Watchmen" — bold, complex storytelling. But it may be a little too enigmatic for a mainstream audience. A warning was that it earned not even a single Golden Globe nod.

Will win: "Watchmen," though "Little Fires Everywhere," in a surprise, could pull it out. That show ruthlessly explored class, race, privilege and separated families — how very, very 2020.

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 16, the 260th day of 2020. There are 106 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Sept. 16, 1974, President Gerald R. Ford announced a conditional amnesty program for Vietnam war deserters and draft-evaders.

On this date:

In 1630, the Massachusetts village of Shawmut changed its name to Boston.

In 1810, Mexico began its revolt against Spanish rule.

In 1966, the Metropolitan Opera officially opened its new opera house at New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts with the world premiere of Samuel Barber's "Antony and Cleopatra."

In 1982, the massacre of between 1,200 and 1,400 Palestinian men, women and children at the hands of Israeli-allied Christian Phalange militiamen began in west Beirut's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

In 1987, two dozen countries signed the Montreal Protocol, a treaty designed to save the Earth's ozone layer by calling on nations to reduce emissions of harmful chemicals by the year 2000.

In 1994, a federal jury in Anchorage, Alaska, ordered Exxon Corp. to pay \$5 billion in punitive damages for the 1989 Exxon Valdez (val-DEEZ') oil spill (the U.S Supreme Court later reduced that amount to \$507.5 million). Two astronauts from the space shuttle Discovery went on the first untethered spacewalk in ten years.

In 2001, President George W. Bush, speaking on the South Lawn of the White House, said there was "no question" Osama bin Laden and his followers were the prime suspects in the Sept. 11 attacks; Bush pledged the government would "find them, get them running and hunt them down."

In 2005, President George W. Bush ruled out raising taxes to pay the massive costs of Gulf Coast reconstruction in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, saying other government spending had to be cut to pay for the recovery effort.

In 2007, contractors for the U.S. security firm Blackwater USA guarding a U.S. State Department convoy in Baghdad opened fire on civilian vehicles, mistakenly believing they were under attack; 14 Iraqis died. O.J. Simpson was arrested in the alleged armed robbery of sports memorabilia collectors in Las Vegas. (Simpson was later convicted of kidnapping and armed robbery and sentenced to nine to 33 years in prison; he was released in 2017.)

In 2009, Mary Travers, 72, part of the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, died in Danbury, Connecticut.

In 2013, Aaron Alexis, a former U.S. Navy reservist, went on a shooting rampage inside the Washington

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Navy Yard, killing 12 people before being shot dead by police.

In 2014, President Barack Obama declared that the Ebola epidemic in West Africa could threaten security around the world and ordered 3,000 U.S. troops to the region in emergency aid muscle.

Ten years ago: Pope Benedict XVI began a controversial state visit to Britain, acknowledging the Catholic Church had failed to act decisively or quickly enough to deal with priests who raped and molested children. The Seattle Storm completed their undefeated march through the postseason, beating the Atlanta Dream 87-84 for a three-game sweep in the WNBA finals. John "Jack" Goeken, founder of telecommunications giant MCI and father of air-to-ground telephone communications, died in Joliet, Illinois, at age 80.

Five years ago: Eleven Republican presidential candidates debated at the Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, wrangling over immigration, gay marriage and foreign affairs. Baton-wielding Hungarian riot police unleashed tear gas and water cannons against hundreds of migrants after they broke through a razor-wire fence and tried to surge into the country from Serbia. Country singer Sturgill Simpson and singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams, both eclectic genre-bending artists, took home top honors at the Americana Honors and Awards show in Nashville.

One year ago: More than 49,000 members of the United Auto Workers went on strike against General Motors, bringing more than 50 factories and parts warehouses to a standstill. (The strike ended after 40 days when workers ratified a new contract.) "Saturday Night Live" said it had rescinded its invitation to Shane Gillis to join the cast; he was found to have posted a video in which he used a racial slur for Chinese people. The Pittsburgh Steelers announced that quarterback Ben Roethlisberger would undergo surgery on his right elbow, ending the 37-year-old quarterback's 16th NFL season just two weeks in. Former television newsman Sander Vanocur died in California at the age of 91; he'd been a questioner at the first Kennedy/Nixon debate in 1960.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Janis Paige is 98. Actor George Chakiris is 88. Bluesman Billy Boy Arnold is 85. Movie director Jim McBride is 79. Actor Linda Miller is 78. Rhythm-and-blues singer Betty Kelley (Martha & the Vandellas) is 76. Musician Kenney Jones (Small Faces; Faces; The Who) is 72. Actor Susan Ruttan is 72. Rock musician Ron Blair (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers; Mudcrutch) is 72. Actor Ed Begley Jr. is 71. Country singer David Bellamy (The Bellamy Brothers) is 70. Country singer-songwriter Phil Lee is 69. Actor Mickey Rourke is 68. Actor-comedian Lenny Clarke is 67. Actor Kurt Fuller is 67. Jazz musician Earl Klugh is 67. Actor Christopher Rich is 67. TV personality Mark McEwen is 66. Baseball Hall of Famer Robin Yount is 65. Magician David Copperfield is 64. Country singer-songwriter Terry McBride is 62. Actor Jennifer Tilly is 62. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Orel Hershiser is 62. Baseball Hall of Famer Tim Lincecum is 61. Actor Jayne Brook is 60. Singer Richard Marx is 57. Comedian Molly Shannon is 56. Singer Marc Anthony is 52. News anchor/talk show host Tamron Hall is 50. Comedian-actor Amy Poehler is 49. Actor Toks Olagundoye (tohks oh-lah-GOON'-doh-yay) is 45. Country singer Matt Stillwell is 45. Singer Musiq (MYOO'-sihk) is 43. Actor Michael Mosley is 42. Rapper Flo Rida is 41. Actor Alexis Bledel is 39. Actor Sabrina Bryan is 36. Actor Madeline Zima is 35. Actor Ian Harding is 34. Actor Kyla Pratt is 34. Actor Daren Kagasoff is 33. Rock singer Teddy Geiger is 32. Actor-dancer Bailey De Young is 31. Rock singer-musician Nick Jonas (The Jonas Brothers) is 28. Actor Elena Kampouris is 23.