Children in Spain relish outdoor hour

By Joseph Wilson and Geir Moulson
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Shrieks of joy rang out in the streets of Spain as children were allowed to go outside and play Sunday for first time in six weeks, while people in Italy and France were eager to hear their leaders' plans for easing some of the world's strictest coronavirus lockdowns.

“This is wonderful! I can't believe it has been six weeks,” Susana Sabate, a mother of 3-year-old twin boys, said in Barcelona. “My boys are very active. Today when they saw the front door and we gave them their scooters, they were thrilled.”

Wary of igniting new infection flare-ups, nations have been taking divergent paths on how and when to reopen their economies after weeks at a standstill.

The official death toll from the virus topped 200,000 worldwide, with 2.9 million confirmed infections, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Those figures underscore the enormity of the crisis, because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and some governments' efforts to underplay their outbreaks.

SEE OUTDOOR ON PAGE 7

Ready to deliver
US gunships prepared to make good on Trump's warning to Iran

By Tony Capaccio
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Even before President Donald Trump's vow to “shoot down” Iranian speedboats if they harass American ships in international waters, the U.S. Navy was bolstering its ability to call in AC-130 gunships and Apache attack helicopters to defend its presence in the Persian Gulf.

A practice run for the new tactics on April 15 drew 11 gunboats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that crossed the bows and sterns of American vessels at close range. And that prompted Trump's tweet on April 22 saying he'd “instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea.”

Going back to the Obama administration, Revolutionary Guard members in small but agile speedboats have harassed U.S. ships, but the encounters usually have ended with warnings from the Americans to back off. As far back as 2007, the Office of Naval Intelligence estimated Iran had a fleet of 1,000 small boats that was growing. In early January 2017 a U.S. Navy guided-missile naval destroyer fired warning shots at four Iranian rapid-attack craft in the Strait of Hormuz.

While attention has turned on the latest confrontation at sea between Iran and the U.S. — and on Trump's vow to

SEE DELIVER ON PAGE 6

MILITARY
Army moving forward with plans for summer troop rotations
Page 3

PACIFIC
Mystery surrounding location of N. Korean leader deepens
Page 5

FACES
Country music star Church preaches safety in video
Page 16

NBA players will get access to team facilities in some areas >> Back page
BUSINESS/WEATHER

Boeing ends deal, angering Brazilian jet maker

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Boeing announced Saturday that it terminated an agreement to join forces with Embraer, prompting an angry response from the Brazilian jet maker, which threatened to seek damages. They had planned to work on Embraer’s commercial aviation business and to develop new markets for its C-390 Millennium aircraft.

Boeing ended the agreement after Embraer did not meet conditions laid out by the deal, in which Boeing would have held a majority ownership. The companies had “productive but ultimately unsuccessful negotiations” about the unsatisfied conditions, which was “deeply disappointing,” said Marc Allen, Boeing’s president of Embraer partnership and group operations.

Embraer issued a statement saying that it “believes strongly that Boeing has wrongfully terminated” the mutual transaction agreement and “that it has manufactured false claims as a pretext to seek to avoid its commitments to close the transaction and pay Embraer the U.S. $4.2 billion purchase price.

“We believe Boeing has engaged in a systematic pattern of delay and repeated violations of the MTA (master transaction agreement), because of its unwillingness to complete the transaction in light of its own financial condition and 737 Max and other business and reputational problems,” it added.

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
F-16 jet at Spangdahlem first in Europe to hit 10,000 flight hours

By Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes

An F-16 combat jet at Spangdahlem Air Base achieved a landmark 10,000 flight hours Thursday, nearly 27 years after it rolled off the production line and began flying for the 52nd Fighter Wing.

The aircraft — Tail No. 343 — is the first Block 50 Fighting Falcon in Europe and the only second F-16 in the U.S. Air Force’s inventory to reach the historic milestone, something maintainers hailed as a testament to its durability and their dedicated labor.

An F-16 at Misawa Air Base in northern Japan hit the mark a year ago, but that jet was delivered a year earlier than Spangdahlem’s, maintainers said. It took 26 years and 11 months to reach 10,000 hours — two months longer than No. 343.

“It takes a lot of work and a lot of dedication to have a lot of very thorough inspections to keep the (aircraft) safe and ready to fly,” said Senior Master Sgt. Andrew Yates of the 480th Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Spangdahlem.

“The plane’s been flying since before about 75% of the people in this building were even born — definitely before any of us even joined the military,” he said.

Both are true for 1Lt. Christina Nunley, 25, the assistant officer in charge of the 480th AMU.

“This aircraft has been at Spangdahlem longer than I have been alive,” she said. “Obviously, there are struggles that come with having an older aircraft, but the history behind it is a huge motivating factor and it’s something that we take a lot of pride in.”

Chief Master Sgt. Chris Yager, 45, is part of that history. His first assignment out of tech school in 1997 was at Spangdahlem, where he worked on the jet and saw it reach 2,000 flight hours.

“Back then, there were those crusty guys that were out there training me how to work on aircraft and sometimes I wondered why they were training me the way they were,” said Yager, the 52nd Maintenance Group superintendent. With Thursday’s milestone, Yager said he sees “the fruits of that labor.”

Keeping No. 343 airworthy involved about 190,000 hours of work by ground crews, maintainers said. The F-16 on average requires 19 hours of maintenance for every hour of flying time — a figure that includes thorough inspections, refueling and basic maintenance such as changing tires and oil.

The wing’s vice commander, Col. Jason Hokaj, took the jet up Thursday afternoon for less than an hour to reach the milestone. Base firefighters hosed down the aircraft as it taxied down the flightline after landing.

“With the aircraft being just a part of it,” Hokaj said in a statement. “To think about the amount of hands and minds used to get us here, to keep this machine flying, it’s a testament to the professionalism of the 52nd Maintenance Group.”

The Lockheed Martin Block 50 F-16s that the 48th Fighter Squadron flies were initially designed to last 8,000 flight hours, Yates said. But a series of upgrades have kept many of them going past that mark, he said.

Yager likened the F-16 to the Air Force’s Cold War-era B-52 bomber, which is still in service after more than 50 years. “It was only designed for so many hours but it keeps going and going,” he said.

Lockheed Martin’s F-35A Lightning II is the planned replacement for the F-16 across the service, but due to delays in the program, the F-16s are expected to receive service-life extension upgrades to keep them airworthy until 2048 and beyond.

No. 343 was part of the 480th’s deployment for Operation Inherent Resolve to Iraq and Syria in 2016 when the squadron broke a record for number of munitions dropped by an F-16 unit within a six-month period.

“It’s just been a good, durable aircraft,” Yates said. “There’s a lot of superstition in the maintenance community — rubbing the bellies and certain things — but really, the biggest reason is … making sure all the required inspections for this aircraft are complied with.”

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Army is moving forward with plans for summer troop rotations to Europe, Iraq and Afghanistan even as the military grapples with the disruptive effects of the global coronavirus pandemic, the service announced Thursday.

The announcement came days after the Pentagon issued the latest version of a sweeping stop-movement order, aimed at stemming the spread of the coronavirus among troops.

The latest order, which is scheduled to last through June 30, allows senior service officials to grant exemptions for service members whose new assignments are deemed essential to the Defense Department’s overall mission.

Headed to Iraq are the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 22nd Airborne Division stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., as part of a regular rotation of forces to support the ongoing campaign against Islamic State.

“Paratroopers are honored to answer our nation’s call to deploy and work alongside the international coalition in support of Operation Inherent Resolve,” said Maj. Gen. Mark H. Landes, head of the 2nd BCT, in a statement.

The 4th Security Forces Assistance Brigade out of Fort Carson in Colorado will head to Afghanistan to replace the 3rd Security Forces Assistance Brigade.

SFABs, specialized Army units launched three years ago, are designated to provide higher-end training to partners. In Afghanistan, SFABs have been involved in combat operations.


The 4th Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., also is headed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

And the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, will deploy to Kuwait as part of a regular rotation focused on maintaining ready forces in the greater Middle East.

Russian aggression. They will replace the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, currently on rotation in Poland and Turkey along NATO’s eastern flank.

Overseeing the Atlantic Resolve campaign will be the 1st Cavalry Division commander, Maj. Gen. Jeffery Broadwater, in a statement.

The 101st Airborne Division Combat Aviation Brigade stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., is also bound for Europe to replace the 3rd Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, out of Fort Carson, Colo., as part of a regular rotation of forces to support the ongoing campaign against Islamic State.

We have trained for many months to prepare to serve in Europe and we are excited to work directly with our allies,” said Maj. Gen. Jeffery Broadwater, in a statement.

As the Pentagon continues to make wide-ranging adjustments, including canceling exercises and delaying troop movements, to try to curb the spread of the coronavirus, some units, such as the 322nd Airborne Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team, which was rushed to Kuwait after Christmas amid escalating tensions with Iran, have had their deployments extended as the coronavirus pandemic led to widespread restrictions on civil and military movement around the world.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver
BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Some internet providers at U.S. military bases are slashing overage fees or providing free service to troops in lockdown or quarantine due to the coronavirus.

Americable, which serves bases in Japan, announced April 17 it would reduce overage fees from $12.50 to $6.25 for every 50 gigabytes beyond the limits on customers’ data plans in April and May.

The announcement followed the surge in internet traffic after students were sent home from school and base workers began teleworking in March and April. The changes affect Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Yokosuka Naval Base, Naval Air Station Atsugi and Sasebo Naval Base, where peak traffic hours now last an entire day instead of in the evening or on weekends, said James Smith, president of Americable International Inc., in an email Friday to Stars and Stripes.

“In a typical month, between 8-10% of customers exceed the data limits for their subscribed plan,” he said. “However, had we not waived the overage fees last month that number would have been much higher.”

Boingo, another internet service provider for service members in the United States, Japan and South Korea, is offering broadband service for free to those living in quarantine barracks, said spokeswoman Melody Walker in an emailed statement on Wednesday. This free service covers more than 7,000 beds.

“Boingo is, and always has been, an unlimited data service provider — we don’t have data caps, charge late fees, install fees or cancellation fees,” she said.

Smith, in his April 17 letter to customers that was shared over base-affiliated social media accounts, reminded service members and their families that Americable’s service is a finite resource constrained by bandwidth availability.

Echoing the requests of base commanders, he implored customers to limit their screen time and to log onto their accounts regularly to monitor their usage to ensure everyone stays within their limits.

bolinger.james@stripes.com
Twitter: @bolinger3004

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A company run by a former Air Force medic, AirMid Critical Care Products, pitched an idea for manual ventilators to help with shortages in COVID-19 response efforts, said Matthew Willis, the Army’s director for laboratory management.

The announcement followed the surge in internet traffic after students were sent home from school and base workers began teleworking in March and April.

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Twitter: @bolinger3004

BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

KAIERSLAUTERN, Germany — Germany has not committed to buying 45 American jets to replace some of its Tornado fighter-bombers, the country’s top defense official said last week amid accusations that she formally indicated to the Pentagon that the multibillion-dollar deal would go ahead.

“No decision has been taken (on which planes will be chosen) and, in any case, the ministry can’t take that decision — only parliament can,” Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer told reporters after a 90-minute, closed-door meeting with a parliamentary defense committee Wednesday.

Kramp-Karrenbauer has been under fire since a report in Der Spiegel news magazine Sunday said she sent Defense Secretary Mark Esper an email recently, announcing that Germany planned to buy 30 Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and 15 EA-18G Growlers to replace 45 of its Panavia Tornados, which have been in service since the 1970s.

Some in the political opposition have questioned whether the email was a formal declaration of Germany’s intent to purchase the American planes, media reports said.

Kramp-Karrenbauer said the defense ministry has only suggested that Germany purchase the 45 Boeing planes along with 93 Eurofighter Typhoons, made by a consortium of European companies.

“The suggestion that we purchase Eurofighters … and a much smaller number of F-18s is a compromise that will allow us to make new planes available to the Luftwaffe, or German air force, by 2030, when the Tornado is due to be taken out of service.

The replacement aircraft must ‘seamlessly’ fill the aging Tornado’s role as a fighter-bomber in conventional warfare and maintaining the capability to carry U.S. nuclear weapons as required under NATO’s nuclear-sharing terms, Kramp-Karrenbauer said.

The ministry is in preliminary talks with Airbus and Boeing so that a decision could be possible during the 2022-23 legislative period. Kramp-Karrenbauer said.

The Super Hornets have been selected to be part of the package since “only U.S. manufacturers are offering” the capacity to carry nuclear weapons, as required under NATO’s nuclear-sharing terms, Kramp-Karrenbauer told the Suddeutsche Zeitung on Tuesday.

The Tornados are currently the only planes in the German air force certified by NATO to carry U.S. nuclear bombs.

Although none of the jets in the running to replace the Tornado are dual-capability aircraft, the U.S. government told the Germans that Boeing’s fighter could be certified more rapidly than the Typhoon to carry the U.S. B61 nuclear gravity bomb, media reports said last month.

The Tornado’s replacement would be a stopgap measure before the planned introduction in the next decade of the Future Combat Air System, a sixth-generation multirole jet made by a consortium of French, Spanish and German companies.

Stars and Stripes reporters Marcus Kloeckner and Slabodan Lekic contributed to this story.

zeitvogel.karin@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripeszeit


Stars and Stripes

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A company run by a former Air Force medic, AirMid Critical Care Products, pitched an idea for manual ventilators, shown in this artistic rendering, and won a $100,000 prize announced Friday.

Former USAF medic wins Army’s contest for ventilators

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

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Mystery deepens over N. Korea leader’s location

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The mystery over Kim Jong Un’s whereabouts deepened this weekend as satellite images showed a train probably belonging to the North Korean leader at his coastal compound amid speculation about his health.

The images, which were released by the monitoring website 38 North, showed that the 820-foot train has been at the compound near the eastern city of Wonsan since April 21. The website stressed that the train’s presence doesn’t confirm the 36-year-old leader’s location or indicate anything about his health, “but it does lend weight to reports that Kim is staying at an elite area on the country’s eastern coast.”

The train wasn’t at the Leadership railway station, which serves the Wonsan compound, April 15, but was there April 21 and April 23, according to the analysis published Saturday by experts Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky and Jenny Town.

“Imagery indicates the train arrived sometime before April 21 and was still present on April 23, when it appeared to be repotted for departure. However, there was no indication a week that departure might take place,” it added.

The Wonsan compound has been described as a palatial playground for Kim by past visitor former Chicago Bulls star Dennis Rodman. It includes a large main building, nine large guesthouses, a recreation center, a covered dock that is believed to be for his yacht, according to 38 North.

The report was the latest piece of the puzzle surrounding Kim’s prolonged absence from the public eye, heightened by his failure to appear at celebrations marking April 15 — his late grandfather and the country’s founder, Kim II Sung.

Reuters, citing three people familiar with the situation, also reported this weekend that China has dispatched a team of doctors and officials to advise on Kim, although it provided few details.

The delegation led by a senior member of the Chinese Communist Party’s international liaison department left Beijing for North Korea on Thursday, according to a senior U.S. official, adding that it was unable to determine what the trip signaled in terms of Kim’s health.

The experts have insisted that no unusual signs have been detected to indicate that Kim is seriously ill.

President Donald Trump has also dismissed unconfirmed reports that Kim had been incapacitated after cardiovascular surgery. “I think the report was incorrect. We just put it that way,” Trump said Thursday in response to a question about Kim’s condition. “I hear the report was an incorrect report. I hope it was an incorrect report.”

But concern has intensified as the spread of the coronavirus and appointment his sister, Kim Yo Jong, as an alternate member of the political bureau, according to the report.

He was also shown inspecting an air defense unit that weekend.

KCNA reportedly that Kim sent separate messages to the leaders of Syria and Cuba last week, but released no photos.

Experts have urged caution since it’s virtually impossible to confirm information about the North Korean leader’s health, which has long been a topic of concern because of his weight, a heavy smoking habit and a family history of heart disease.

The most recent photos of him on state-run media were of him reportedly chairing an April 11 meeting of the ruling Workers’ Party’s political bureau.

The world did not learn that Kim’s father, Kim Jong Il, had died of a heart attack in 2011 until it was announced publicly two days later.

Kim Jong Un, who assumed power after his father died, also disappeared once before in 2014, but reappeared with a cane after about six weeks. South Korea’s intelligence agency said that he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

The stakes are high, as the Kim family has ruled the nuclear-armed nation since it was founded in 1948. While they have been accused of widespread human rights abuses, many fear that an abrupt change in leadership could spark chaos in the region.

It also raises questions about what would happen to already dead circulate on social media. Kim has not been seen since he reportedly visited a military unit on April 12, raising speculation about his condition.

The group says that it has membership in 120 countries, and has “full recognition from the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and is the worldwide leading organization of its supporters.”

The group organizes tours to North Korea, and Cao regularly travels to the country. He was featured in the 2015 documentary “The Propaganda Game,” a case study on propaganda that focuses on North Korea.

The association’s website describes Cao as a special delegate of North Korea’s Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

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N. Korean sympathizer calls news on Kim’s health ‘false’

BY SHAMIM ADAM
Bloomberg News

The head of the Korean Friendship Association, a group that says it receives official information from North Korea, called news reports that Kim Jong Un is gravely ill untrue.

Alejandro Cao de Benos said that “information about the serious state of health of our Marshal Kim Jong Un is false and malicious,” according to a post on Twitter. Cao did not say where he got information from North Korea, called news reports that Kim Jong Un is gravely ill untrue.

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US asks Afghans to halt disputes, focus on virus

By Kathy Gannon

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The U.S. peace envoy to Afghanistan on Sunday called on the country’s feuding leaders to set their differences aside to combat the coronavirus pandemic and advance a stalled peace agreement signed with the Taliban earlier this year.

“The well-being of the Afghan people and the country itself depend on all parties devoting their full energy to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the shared enemy of all,” Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted early Sunday.

He said Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah, who each declared himself the victor in September’s election, should “put the interest of the country ahead of their own” during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began last week.

He urged the government and the Taliban, what he called the insurgent group, to negotiate a “countrywide ceasefire” in intra-Afghan talks. Those negotiations were supposed to have begun within 10 days of the Feb. 29 deal but are still on hold because of the political bickering in Kabul.

The Taliban are continuing to attack security outposts, even as the U.S. and NATO proceed with a full troop withdrawal that is set to be completed next year. The Taliban have carried out 262 attacks since the agreement was signed, Jawed Faisal, spokesman for the national security adviser’s office, said Saturday.

But many in Afghanistan’s health care system have been heavily degraded by decades of war and would be ill-equipped to contain a major outbreak. Testing has been sporadic, in part because of local stigma surrounding the disease.

Deliver: US military runs exercises to showcase range of capabilities

FROM FRONT PAGE

stop such close encounters — there’s been little focus on the recent moves by the U.S. Central Command to come better-armed with joint Navy, Air Force and Army systems for spotting targets and transferring data.

The live-fire gunship exercises began in March as a first-time effort at coordination between Navy patrol coastal ships, the service’s P-8A Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft and the Air Force’s special operations AC-130 gunships, which are capable of nighttime attacks. Armed with a 30 mm Gatling gun and precision-guided munitions, the famed gunships have been used to attack ground targets — but not naval targets — from Vietnam to Grenada, Panama, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Then on April 15, Navy vessels were practicing coordinated operations with Army AH-64E Apache tank-busting attack helicopters when the U.S, says Iran’s Revolutionary Guards came within 50 yards of the USS Lewis B. Puller and within 10 yards of the bow of the Coast Guard cutter Maui.

Under the new approach, the Apaches can be stationed on the Puller, the Navy’s first specially designed floating sea base. The Puller, a destroyer and other, smaller U.S. vessels were practicing spotting targets for the Apaches and transmitting the information. The exercises continued through April 19.

The Apache exercise shows how the Army “can use naval platforms as lily pads to extend their operational range along with providing security in its region of operation,” Cmdr. Rebecca Robach, the spokeswoman for the Navy’s 5th Fleet, said in an email. “The security acts as a deterrent for any threats against the U.S. and allied watercraft.”

The Apaches can fire Hellfire laser-guided missiles or shot guns, said Bryan Clark, a former special assistant to the chief of naval operations who’s now a naval analyst for the Hudson Institute.

“Since the helicopter can move fast and is shooting down at the boats, they have an easier time hitting than surface ships trying to hit a fast boat that is bouncing on the water,” The AC-130 “essentially can strafe the boats,” he said.

Paratroopers to return home after rapid deployment to Mideast

By Chad Garland

Stars and Stripes

Some 2,500 members of the 82nd Airborne Division will return home soon after being rapidly deployed to the Middle East amid growing tensions with Iran, just after Christmas.

Paratroopers with the division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team were sent to bolster security in the U.S. Central Command area of operations on short notice after a rocket attack killed an American contractor in Iraq and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad was stormed by an Iran-backed Shi’ite militia the Defense Department had hit with retaliatory strikes.

In a Facebook video last week, brigade commander Col. Andrew O. Saslav said the troops had been approved to return home to Fort Bragg, N.C., “in the coming weeks.”

Some 800 had returned in February, before the outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic forced the military to restrict movement around the world, but officials said late last month that the remaining thousands of paratroopers would remain deployed indefinitely, as tensions in the region remained high.

In a livestream on Friday, Lt. Col. Doug Massey, the commander of the brigade’s rear detachment, said timelines of the brigade’s return would not be discussed publicly. None of the paratroopers with the brigade had tested positive for COVID-19, Massey said, but all would be subject to a 14-day quarantine upon their return stateside.

The soldiers had seen a drop in quality of life due to the closure of gyms, some dining facilities and other services at Central Command bases, meant to combat the spread of the virus. The unknown date of return was also causing increased stress for many who were separated from their families during the pandemic, one paratrooper told Stars and Stripes in March.

Though they will be in quarantine, they will be able to be home with their families upon their return, Massey said.

But they won’t get the typical welcome home reception at the “green ramp,” said the rear detachment’s Command Sgt. Maj. Cory Bell in the livestream. Instead, there will be a parade at the base’s four-acre Pike Field, where the troops will be in buses and families will be gathered, while maintaining appropriate distancing.

“I highly encourage any family member within the Devil Brigade to go out and line the road there with flags, banners, streamers, whatever it is to welcome home our Devil Brigade paratroopers,” Bell said.

As the U.S. military’s Immediate Response Force Brigade, the 1st Brigade sent its first battalion to the Middle East within 18 hours of receiving orders in late December. It was the first such rapid deployment since soldiers were called up in response to a devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Much of the brigade stayed in Kuwait during its deployment, where some conducted training. Some others operated in Iraq, including bolstering security at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, officials have said.

But by late March, the soldiers remaining in Kuwait had complained of a lack of mission set and a family member told Stars and Stripes that they hadn’t done anything for weeks other than sit around in tents and go to chow.

But, as tensions between the U.S. and Iran remained high, including a fatal rocket attack in mid-March that killed two American service members and a British soldier, military officials said they were continuing to evaluate whether to redeploy the brigade andwhen.

In the video message announcing they had been approved to come home, Saslav said he “can’t begin to tell you how proud” he and the unit’s top enlisted soldier were continuing to evaluate whether to redeploy the brigade and when.

In the video message announcing they had been approved to come home, Saslav said he “can’t begin to tell you how proud” he and the unit’s top enlisted soldier were of their troops.

“The paratroopers and our families have had a historic deployment and now we can’t wait to be back in your arms again,” he said.

garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland
WHO warns you may catch virus more than once

By Patrick Henry
Bloomberg News

Catching COVID-19 once may not actually protect you from getting it again, according to the World Health Organization, a finding that could jeopardize efforts to allow people to return to work after recovering from the virus.

"There is currently no evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection," the United Nations agency said in a recent statement.

The WHO guidance came after some governments suggested that people who have antibodies to the coronavirus have an "immunity passport" or "risk-free certificate" that would allow them to travel or return to work based on the assumption that they were safe from reinfection, according to the statement, issued Friday. People given such a certificate could ignore public health guidance, increasing the risk of the disease spreading further.

Chile was the first country to announce plans to issue immunity cards based partly on antibody tests. This has raised concerns because the tests have proven unreliable elsewhere, and some people may get deliberately ill in order to obtain the card. The U.S. and others have nonetheless said that they're looking into the option.

While there's a consensus that the key to ending the coronavirus pandemic is establishing so-called herd immunity, there are unknowns. One is whether researchers can develop a safe and effective vaccine. Another is how long people who've recovered have immunity; reinfection after months or years is common with other human coronaviruses. Finally, it's not clear what percentage of people must be immune to protect the "herd." That depends on the contagiousness of the virus.

The WHO said that it's reviewing the scientific evidence on antibody responses to coronaviruses, but no study has evaluated whether the presence of antibodies "confers immunity to subsequent infection by this virus in humans" as of yet. And while many countries are currently testing for antibodies, these studies aren't designed to determine whether people recovered from the disease acquire immunity, the agency said.

"As the hunt for a vaccine continues around the world, the WHO has formed an international alliance to ensure that treatments are distributed fairly," French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the U.S. and Melinda Gates Foundation are among those involved in the alliance.

FROM FRONT PAGE

Two weeks after being released from a London hospital, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson — the only major world leader so far to fall ill with COVID-19 — plans to return to work Monday.

Spain, Italy and France, which have Europe's highest death tolls from the virus, all imposed tough lockdown rules in March. All have reported significant progress in bringing down infection rates and are ready — wary — to start giving citizens more freedom.

"Maximum caution will be our guideline for the rollback," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said as he announced that Spaniards will be allowed to leave their homes for short walks and exercise starting May 2. "We must be very prudent, because there is no manual, no road map, to follow."

Until now, adults in Spain were allowed out only for essential shopping or to go to work. Children under 14 were in complete seclusion for 44 days, but as of Sunday they were allowed to take walks with one parent for up to an hour. They must stay within 0.6 miles of their homes, take only one toy out and cannot play with other youngsters.

"The sound of children shouting and the rattle of bikes on the pavement soon returned." In Barcelona, Sabah's sons wore child-size face masks as they went out. "Now we will see how long they stay on," she said.

The prime minister plans to present a detailed plan Tuesday for the “de-escalation” of Spain's lockdown.

In France, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said that he will unveil a “national deconfinement strategy” on the same day. That follows weeks of work by experts seeking a balance between restarting the eurozone's second-largest economy and preventing a second wave of infections that could overwhelm France's intensive care units.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte is expected to announce more details on easing the lockdown in the coming days for the first European country to see a large-scale coronavirus outbreak. Conte said that priorities include restarting construction projects and export industries. He confirmed that school classes won't resume until September.

Outdoor: Nations around the world considering different reopening plans

Dutch students complete Atlantic crossing forced by restrictions

By Aleksandar Furtula
Associated Press

HARLINGEN, Netherlands — Greeted by relieved parents, pet dogs, flares and a cloud of orange smoke, a group of 25 Dutch high school students with very little sailing experience ended a trans-Atlantic voyage Sunday that was forced on them by coronavirus restrictions.

The children, ages 14 to 17, watched over by 12 experienced crew members and three teachers, were on an educational cruise of the Caribbean when the pandemic forced them to radically change their plans for returning home in March.

That gave one of the young sailors, 17-year-old Floor Hurkmans, one of the biggest lessons of her impromptu adventure.

"Being flexible, because everything is changing all the time," she said as she sat foot on dry land again. "The arrival time changed like 100 times. Being flexible is really important."

Instead of flying back from Cuba as originally planned, the students and students stocked up on supplies and warm clothes, and set sail for the northern Dutch port of Harlingen, a five-week voyage of nearly 4,350 miles, on board the 200-foot top sail schooner Wylde Swan.

As they arrived home, the students hung up a self-made banner saying “Bucket List” with ticks in boxes for Atlantic Ocean crossing, mid-ocean swim and surviving the Bermuda triangle.

The teens hugged and chatted as they all packed up their cars alongside the yacht one by one to adhere to social distancing rules imposed to rein in the spread of the virus that forced the students into their long trip home.

For Hurkmans, the impossibility of any kind of social distancing took some getting used to.

"At home, you just have some moments for yourself, but here, you have to be social all the time to everyone because you’re sleeping with them, you’re eating with them, you’re just doing everything with them, so you can’t really just relax," she said.

Her mother, Renee Scholte-meijer, said that she expects her daughter to miss life on the open sea once she encounters coronavirus containment measures in the Netherlands.

"I think that after two days she’ll want to go back on the boat, because life is very boring back at home," she said. "There’s nothing to do, she can’t visit friends, so it’s very boring."

The twin-masted Wylde Swan glided into Harlingen harbor late morning Sunday, its sails nearly stowed. Onlookers gathered on a sea wall to watch the arrival set off flares and a smoke grenade that sent an orange cloud drifting over the glassy water.

Masterskip, the company that organized the cruise, runs five educational voyages for about 150 students in all each year. Crossing the Atlantic is nothing new for the Wylde Swan, which has made the trip about 20 times.

The company’s director, Christophe Meijer, said that the students were monitored for the coronavirus in March to ensure nobody was infected.

He said that he was pleased the students had adapted to life on board and kept up their education on the long voyage.

"The children learned a lot about adaptivity, also about media attention, but also their normal school work."

Christophe Meijer
Director of Masterskip

"The children learned a lot about adaptivity, also about media attention, but also their normal school work."

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"The children learned a lot about adaptivity, also about media attention, but also their normal school work."
**VIRUS OUTBREAK**

Navy hospital ship readies to leave NY as numbers dip

By Michael R. Sisak

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A Navy hospital ship is offloading patients as it prepares to leave New York City, the first hospital ship to return to its home port since it became a mobile hospital last month. The hospital ship, the Comfort, is scheduled to depart early next week, according to the Department of Defense. The ship was deployed to help treat patients with COVID-19 in New York City.
VIRUS OUTBREAK

In Trump’s shadow, Congress-at-home eyes a reboot

By Lisa Mascaro
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They long for what’s being lost — the ability to publicly question officials at committee hearings, to chat across the aisle, to speak from the House and Senate floor for all of America, and history, to hear.

Congress wants its voice back.

With no real plan to return Capitol Hill any time soon, the coronavirus shutdown poses an existential threat that’s pushing Congress ever so reluctantly toward the 21st-century option of remote legislating from home.

“It’s the ability to be an equal branch of government,” said Rep. Katie Porter, a freshman Democrat from California.

Divisions are fierce, but so too is the sense of what is being lost. Every day lawmakers shelter at home, their public role is being visibly diminished. While they are approving record sums of virus aid, they are ceding authority to oversee the effort and tackle next steps.

It’s an imbalance of power for all to see: President Donald Trump’s daily public briefings without a robust response from Capitol Hill, though there have been discussions within the White House about changing the format of the briefings to curtail his role.

“This is a time where oversight is really important,” said Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Wash, a leader of the moderate New Democrats caucus.

The pandemic “begs for Congress’s engagement, virtual or otherwise,” he said.

Changing the rules to allow lawmakers to cast votes or hold hearings from home would be unprecedented in House and Senate history. The Constitution requires lawmakers be “present” for most history. The Constitution requires lawmakers be “present” for most.

Changing the rules to allow lawmakers to cast votes or hold hearings from home would be unprecedented in House and Senate history. The Constitution requires lawmakers be “present” for most.

The simmering debate cuts across political fault lines. Some lawmakers want to stick with tradition, while others are tech-savvy and favor a vocal band of conservatives insists that Congress must reopen now, despite public health warnings, echoing Trump’s push to end the shutdown. Others have no interest in returning to the crowded Capitol complex until it’s safer.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., shelved a proposal for remote voting this past week after Republicans opposed. Once resistant to what she called “Congress by Zoom” meeting, she tapped a bipartisan task force to present fresh ideas.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., rejected a GOP remote vote proposal. He expects to resume to return May 4, as planned.

The reluctance to change is leaving the legislative branch between a rock and a hard place.

Last week, the Supreme Court announced that it would hear oral arguments by teleconference as stay-home rules reorder civic life.

“It’s a huge can of worms,” said Sarah Binder, a professor at George Washington University.

She said that the pandemic provides a set of issues far beyond the logistics of working remotely. Among them: Is it safe to return to Capitol Hill? Can you be “present” if you appear on a computer screen?

But she also said, “They need a solution if they’re not going to be able to come back.”

Lawmakers have said that they can only do so much on conference calls and virtual town hall meetings as they assess $3 trillion in coronavirus aid and consider annual spending, defense, and other bills.

While the 100 senators can usually command attention when they are on the floor, the 435 rank-and-file House members have a harder time being heard.

As a safety opportunity is time allotted to lawmakers at committee hearings.

It may be just five minutes on C-SPAN, but for members of Congress, the committee means everything. It’s their chance to make their presence known.

Porter knows firsthand what’s being lost with Congress away.

As the pandemic emerged, she wrote a letter asking the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide free virus testing as the country scrambled to slow the spread of COVID-19.

“They blew us off,” she said.

But when CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield appeared before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Porter had her moment. In a video that went viral, she gripped Redfield on whether he would commit to invoking authority under federal law to declare pandemic testing free.

He said yes.

“It wasn’t until we got Dr. Redfield in front of me, and I had my five minutes with the cameras on him, in front of the American people, that I was able to get an answer,” she said.

She said House rules, committees usually need members to be physically present to meet. While several committees have been conducting briefing calls with key administration officials, it’s mostly out of public view.

Virus creates unprecedented Maryland congressional election

By Brian Witte
Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Ballots cast in person in Maryland’s special congressional election between Democrat Kweisi Mfume and Republican Kimberly Klacik will be counted for all three races Tuesday.

The winner will run as an independent, the state’s third candidate.

The winner will run as an independent, the state’s third candidate.

Kweisi Mfume, Democratic nominee for Maryland’s 7th Congressional District, raises his fist at a February victory party in Baltimore.

With no real plan to return Capitol Hill any time soon, the coronavirus shutdown poses an existential threat that’s pushing Congress ever so reluctantly toward the 21st-century option of remote legislating from home.

“Just that seems a little strange and foreign. It’s because it really is,” Mfume said. “We’ve never had anything like this in the state before.”
California’s Catalina Island struggles without tourism

By John Rogers and Chris Carlson
Associated Press

AVALON, Calif. — When the gates to California’s “island of romance” were all but locked to lovers and pretty much everybody else last month it may have saved the 4,000 residents from a coronavirus outbreak but it destroyed an economy based almost solely on tourism.

The stay-at-home order instituted across California isolated tiny Santa Catalina Island from the virus that was spreading rapidly on the mainland. The ocean-front city of Avalon, whose picturesque beauty has sold millions of postcards over the years, has been turned into a ghost town.

The hotels are empty, the bars along the strand have shut down, almost all the restaurants are closed and the street signs offer constant reminders of what is and isn’t permitted.

Parking lots, playgrounds, restrooms and restaurants all remain closed, as does the Ventura pier, which separates city and state beaches that are operating under slightly different rules.

“We’re coordinating so they’re consistent,” Higgins said.

The rules forbid beachgoers from sitting or lying on the sand, but that wasn’t being strictly enforced Saturday.

At midday, Ventura police Sgt. Mike Angelino walked along the sand politely asking people with children to take their umbrellas down but allowing them to sunbathe.

“Technically you’re not supposed to sit down. But they’re with kids. I’m not going to ask some 50-year-old parents to run around with kids all day,” Angelino said. The lack of shade, he added, would encourage them to move on.

The goal, Higgins said, was to apply common sense and seek cooperation rather than issue citations.

“We’re in a mode of educating right now,” he said.

Even dogs were given a long leash, allowed to wander freely as a solitary lifeguard in a red bathing suit stood outside her tower scanning the turquoise water with binoculars.

Although few people — including the lifeguard and police — wore masks, most observed social-distancing rules, reminded to stay six feet apart by a flashing road sign outside Santa Barbara State Beach.

At the north end of the beach, several dozen surfers fought to get atop the 3- to 4-foot swells.

By midafternoon, with the beach largely emptied, Robin Hoag and Paige Leichtnam finally made their way over from their nearby home.

They have been hiking county trails and riding their bikes to work since their favorite beach was closed last month, but they waited for the visitors from L.A. County, where beaches are still closed, to leave before coming back Saturday to play paddle ball.

“It’s pretty laid-back now,” Hoag said. “People will go wherever it’s open.”

Heather Rangel, media information officer for the Newport Beach Police Department, said there had been no arrests or citations related to the stay-at-home orders, despite an uptick in beachgoers.

“The beaches are crowded and look like a summer day in Newport Beach,” she said in an email.

Huntington Beach also elected to open its coastline, though the pier, beach parking lot and some metered parking remain closed.

Angie Bennett, spokeswoman for the Huntington Beach Police Department, said that beaches appeared somewhat busy, but there were no significant incidents, and no one was cited for violating social-distancing guidelines.

Crowds flock to Calif. beaches amid restrictions

By Kevin Baxter and Alex Wigglesworth
Los Angeles Times

Ventura and Orange county beaches in Southern California that were open Saturday drew big crowds hoping to cool off and enjoy the views.

Officials reported few incidents and said people were doing their best to social distance.

In Ventura, the opening of city and state beaches brought out hundreds, an unusually large crowd, said Ventura Police Cmdr. Tom Higgins.

Most people, drawn by comfortable temperatures that hovered in the mid 70s under pale-blue skies, stuck to the bike and running paths just above the sand. But hundreds also made their way down to the water’s edge.

“A lot of them, we think it’s cold. After a grocery trip,” said Ventura police Sgt. Mike Angelino. “We’re dying here,” said 25-year resident Carole Cotter, pulling off her protective mask to talk after a grocery trip. “We’re used to being around other people last month it may have saved this bailout money to help us,” she said.

In the weeks that the city’s normally bustling Avalon port has been closed, Mayor Ann Marshall estimates the harbor alone has lost nearly $2 million in business.

“We are seriously looking for some of this bailout money to help us,” she said.

Meanwhile, many people say they are getting antsy to return to work at the bait and tackle stores, surf shops, kayak-rental places and other businesses that ferry people around the island on glass-bottom boats or trams, allowing them to watch the buffalo roam the island’s back country or the deer and the dolphins play. And not just because they want to start making money again.

“At this point, we really do miss all of our visitors,” said Megan Wright, owner of the Cafe Metropole near the beach.

“We’re used to seeing the same people every year,” she added, noting that during her 10 years on the island many of them have become friends as well.
Pastor J. Arte Stuckey has cut or eliminated every staff salary at his small Mississippi church. He’s nervously watching the financial shape even before the virus wiped out more than a third of all Sunday offerings. About a third of all small houses of worship: their finances. About a third of all small houses of worship. These are places where members typically seek guidance and comfort, but members are now finding closed buildings and desperate pleas for funds. It’s one that consumes all of them. Besides wondering if they may be infected with an illness that has killed more than 18,000 in the two states, there is a desire to protect family members who may be even more susceptible. Alexander is a senior in high school, aware he may miss out on prom night, a graduation ceremony and so much more that was supposed to make this springtime so fun. He’s been accepted to college but doesn’t know where that stands, because he isn’t sure if or when he can take the placement exams that are supposed to determine his classes. But he has much bigger concerns. He shares a room in his family’s home with his 72-year-old grandmother, who is diabetic. With pain in his lungs that was so severe that he switched from sleeping on his stomach to his back, he was certain he would be like his mother, who had already tested positive. He did, though he’s now feeling better.
Supreme Court will hear cases over the phone

BY MARK SHERMAN AND JESSICA GRESKO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — This is how the Supreme Court embraces technology. Slowly.

It took a worldwide pandemic for the court to agree to hear arguments over the telephone, with audio available live for the first time. C-SPAN plans to carry the arguments.

Just two years ago, case filings were made available online, decades after other courts. Other forays into technology, including posting opinions online, have not always gone smoothly.

Chief Justice John Roberts acknowledged in 2014 that courts will always be cautious when it comes to embracing the “next big thing” in technology.

And even the decision to hold arguments via telephone is “sort of retro,” given much of the country and other courts are doing meetings and arguments using video conferencing, said Clare Cushman, the director of publications at the Supreme Court Historical Society.

But the decision remains a “giant leap forward,” Cushman said, for a court that has shunned technology in favor of tradition.

The court used an obsolete document delivery system, pneumatic tubes, until 1971. It was slow to add computers, and late in transitioning from printing opinions in the court’s basement on Linotype machines, which used metal type, to electronic printing in the early 1980s.

Before the coronavirus outbreak, the justices circulated messages and opinion drafts on paper rather than by email.

Still, most of the nine justices — six of them over the age of 65 — seem perfectly comfortable with modern technology in their own lives. Justice Elena Kagan has said she is on Twitter, and Justice Samuel Alito has described reading briefs on an iPad.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wears an electronic sensor that monitors her diabetes. And Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh have teenagers and pre-teen children who might be expected to text their fathers.

Even the court’s two oldest justices are somewhat tech-savvy.

This month, 81-year-old Justice Stephen Breyer used Zoom to talk to students at a New York school. His background: a picture of the court.

And 87-year-old Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said she reads her email on an iPhone and uses an iPad, though not perhaps to its maximum advantage — she told an audience in 2016 that she uses the iPad as a sound machine to help her sleep.

The court has come a long way since 1993, when Justice Anthony Kennedy, now retired, marveled over a new device in his home and invited two colleagues who lived nearby to come use it.

“In my lower level office at home I have a FAIX machine. The thing works 24 hours a day. You can use it to send and receive any time you like,” Kennedy wrote in a note now in the Library of Congress archives.

Still, the decision to hold 10 arguments in cases via telephone during six days in May and let the public listen in was unimaginable even two months ago.

The dramatic change is a product of efforts to slow the spread of the virus, recognize the reality that most of the justices are at risk because of their age and decide significant cases by the court’s traditional summer break.

This year, those cases include President Donald Trump’s effort to shield his tax and other financial records and whether presidential electors must cast their Electoral College ballots for their states’ winners.

The new arrangement might be good for one month only, assuming the justices can return to courtroom arguments when their new term begins in October. But several advocates of greater transparency hope the justices will allow simultaneous broadcasting of arguments even after the pandemic is over.

Court reinstates California ammunition purchase law

SAN FRANCISCO — An appeals court has reinstated a California law requiring background checks for people buying ammunition, reversing a federal judge’s decision to stop the checks that he said violate the constitutional right to bear arms.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday granted the state attorney general’s request to stay the judge’s order.

The law means that the same restrictions that have been previously in effect regarding ammunition in California are back for the time being, the National Rifle Association, which hailed the judge’s injunction, said in a news release.

The law, which took effect in July, requires Californians to pass an in-store background check before buying ammunition, which involves running buyers’ names through a California Department of Justice database that tracks legal purchases of guns.

Gun rights activists complained the law’s red tape and database errors unfairly limited legal purchases of ammunition.

U.S. District Judge Roger T. Benitez in San Diego ruled in their favor, saying the law “defies common sense while unduly and severely burdening the Second Amendment rights of every responsible, gun-owning citizen desiring to lawfully buy ammunition.”

While it is intended to keep ammunition from criminals, it blocked sales to legitimate, law-abiding buyers about 16% of the time, Benitez wrote. Moreover, he ruled that the state’s ban on importing ammunition from outside California violates federal interstate commerce laws.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in a court filing earlier this month that the background checks stopped more than 750 people from buying bullets illegally from July 2019 through January 2020, not including those who didn’t even try because they knew they weren’t eligible.

The law requires buyers who already are in the state’s firearm background check database to pay a $1 fee each time they buy ammunition, while others can buy longer-term licenses if they do not have certain criminal convictions or mental health commitments.

It took an average of fewer than five minutes to complete the background checks, according to state court filings.

Man sentenced to 18 months in prison for threatening to kill Trump

DALLAS — A 36-year-old Texas man has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for threatening to assassinate President Donald Trump, prosecutors said.

According to plea documents, Gedlu admitted he threatened Trump’s life on social media, stating on YouTube: “I am waiting for Trump to visit Dallas before I attempt to assassinate him.”

During court proceedings, prosecutors said that on May 31, 2018, Gedlu was observed across the street from Dallas’ Adolphus Hotel just 30 minutes before Trump arrived there for a fundraiser. Dallas police officers noticed Gedlu holding a “Kill Trump” sign and detained him as he screamed, “kill the president.”

Prosecutors said the U.S. Secret Service conducted an investigation with the assistance of the Dallas police.
Poland suspects Russia in disinformation attack

**BY VANESSA GERA**  
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — A Polish government official says Poland has been hit by a “complex disinformation operation” that appears aimed at weakening the Polish-U.S. alliance and is consistent with previous Russian cyberattacks.

Stanislaw Zaryn, spokesman for the head of the country’s security services, said Saturday that Poland continues to investigate and has no final evidence that the attack was directed by Russia. But he said it bears all the hallmarks of a Kremlin-led campaign.

“Poland has been a target of Russian propaganda for many years,” Zaryn told The Associated Press in an emailed statement. “Lately these kinds of efforts are intensifying more and more.”

Zaryn on Twitter described a cyberattack on the website of the War Studies Institute in Warsaw, a defense academy that trains Polish military leaders. He said cyberattackers posted a fake letter in the name of the school’s rector calling on Polish soldiers to fight the “American occupation.”

The letter’s message was amplified by being reported on news portals, including one known for pushing disinformation, he said.

“The content of the letter matched the main narratives Russian propaganda constantly pushes against Poland and the United States,” Zaryn wrote.

Zaryn said that Polish authorities believe the purpose of the attacks is to sow information chaos, undermine the morale of Polish soldiers and stir up anti-American sentiment, among other reasons.

He alleged that the Kremlin is trying to use the coronavirus crisis to free itself from its international isolation and persuade the West to lift sanctions imposed over Russian activity in Ukraine. He said “the Kremlin tries to slander Poland” because it is “one of the hardliners” on sanctions.

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**Tribune News Service**

MOSCOW — A Russian cargo ship docked with the International Space Station Saturday in Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

The uncrewed Russian Progress MS-14 cargo spacecraft blasts off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Friday evening.

It arrived at the space station, delivering more supplies to space station Russia sends 2.5 tons of supplies to space station Saturday in Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

The Progress MS-14 was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 20 minutes, the Russian space a journey that lasted 3 hours and a day evening.

The uncrewed Russian Progress MS-14 cargo spacecraft blasts off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Friday evening.

The uncrewed Russian Progress MS-14 cargo spacecraft blasts off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Friday evening.

A German minister backs right to work from home

**BERLIN — Germany’s labor minister wants to enshrine in law the right to work from home if it is feasible to do so, even after the coronavirus pandemic subsides.**

Labor Minister Hubertus Heil told Sunday’s edition of the Bild am Sonntag newspaper that he aims to put forward such legislation this fall. He said initial estimates suggest the proportion of the work force working from home has risen from 12% to 25% during the virus crisis, to around 8 million people.

“Everyone who wants to and whose job allows it should be able to work in a home office, even when the corona pandemic is over,” Heil was quoted as saying.

“We are learning in the pandemic how much work can be done from home these days.”

He stressed that “we want to enable more home working, but not force it.” He said people should choose to switch entirely to working from home, or do so for only one or two days per week.

**German minister backs right to work from home**

**Associated Press**

BERLIN — Germany’s labor minister wants to enshrine in law the right to work from home if it is feasible to do so, even after the coronavirus pandemic subsides.

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“Heil stressed that “we want to enable more home working, but not force it.” He said people should choose to switch entirely to working from home, or do so for only one or two days per week.

**Lightning kills at least 10 villagers in India**

**PATNA, India — Lightning killed at least 10 villagers during thunderstorms and heavy rain in eastern India on Sunday, a government official said.**

Pratay Amrit, a Bihar state disaster management official, said nine villagers died in Khalupura, a village in Bihar state’s Saran district. They were plucking vegetables in farms, about 35 miles north of Patna, the state capital.

Amrit said nine villagers died on the spot and one later died in a hospital. In July last year, lightning killed 39 people in Bihar state during the monsoon season.

**Lightning kills at least 10 villagers in India**

**Associated Press**

Lightning killed at least 10 villagers during thunderstorms and heavy rain in eastern India on Sunday, a government official said.

Pratay Amrit, a Bihar state disaster management official, said nine others suffered injuries after lightning struck them in Khalupura, a village in Bihar state’s Saran district. They were plucking vegetables in farms, about 35 miles north of Patna, the state capital.

Amrit said nine villagers died on the spot and one later died in a hospital. In July last year, lightning killed 39 people in Bihar state during the monsoon season.

**Lightning kills at least 10 villagers in India**

**Associated Press**

**Lightning kills at least 10 villagers in India**

**Associated Press**

Lightning killed at least 10 villagers during thunderstorms and heavy rain in eastern India on Sunday, a government official said.

Pratay Amrit, a Bihar state disaster management official, said nine others suffered injuries after lightning struck them in Khalupura, a village in Bihar state’s Saran district. They were plucking vegetables in farms, about 35 miles north of Patna, the state capital.

Amrit said nine villagers died on the spot and one later died in a hospital. In July last year, lightning killed 39 people in Bihar state during the monsoon season.

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**German minister backs right to work from home**

**Associated Press**

BERLIN — Germany’s labor minister wants to enshrine in law the right to work from home if it is feasible to do so, even after the coronavirus pandemic subsides.

Labor Minister Hubertus Heil told Sunday’s edition of the Bild am Sonntag newspaper that he aims to put forward such legislation this fall. He said initial estimates suggest the proportion of the work force working from home has risen from 12% to 25% during the virus crisis, to around 8 million people.

“Everyone who wants to and whose job allows it should be able to work in a home office, even when the corona pandemic is over,” Heil was quoted as saying. “We are learning in the pandemic how much work can be done from home these days.”

Heil stressed that “we want to enable more home working, but not force it.” He said people should choose to switch entirely to working from home, or do so for only one or two days per week.
The virtual reality

By Barbara Ortutay
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Amid the coronavirus pandemic, this has become an era of Zoom birthdays, virtual happy hours, FaceTime story times and GoTo classes. Our friends, coworkers, teachers — and doctors, if we’re lucky — now largely exist as faces in rectangles on our phones and computer screens.

With people’s social lives moved indefinitely online, a bevy of big and small tech companies want to unseat fast-rising Zoom from its perch atop the heap, given security concerns and other issues with the video-calling service. There were already several smaller contenders for the throne, and now there’s a big one as well: Facebook.

Zoom, which boasts 300 million users, had the luck to be in the right place at the right time just as millions of employees around the world suddenly found themselves ordered to work from home. But the service has always been focused on business users, and it shows. Inviting people to video chats is cumbersome — for instance, Zoom generates an invitation more than 20 lines long that offers a bewildering number of ways to connect (H.323/SIP protocol, anyone?). Its text-chat system is rudimentary and it gives people exactly two emojis for reacting to others in video — a wave and a thumbs-up.

Smaller services like Houseparty, which launched in 2016, think this gives them an opening. The app, owned by Fortnite maker Epic Games, lets up to eight people video chat together in virtual rooms, send video messages called “Facemail” and play games. Houseparty pivoted in late April that it had 50 million new sign-ups in the past month — a figure that’s around 70 times above normal in some areas.

Facebook’s WhatsApp, Apple’s FaceTime and similar Google apps offer group video chat as well, although FaceTime is limited to iPhones and other Apple devices. So do a variety of more business-focused companies: Cisco with WebEx, Microsoft with Skype and Teams, and the smaller company 8x8 with its open-source service Jitsi.

Now Facebook aims to make a bigger splash in the field, although it will have to contend with privacy concerns and the question of whether it will ultimately show ads alongside video chat.

Called Messenger Rooms, the Facebook service announced Friday uses virtual rooms similar to those that exist for text chat within Messenger. These let you open the door to your friends in swing by unannounced, or schedule a dinner party for 8 p.m. on a Friday. People without Facebook accounts can be included, and the company says they won’t have to create accounts.

The tool will live on Facebook’s main app and on Messenger; it will eventually spread to WhatsApp, Instagram Direct and the company’s Portal video calling device as well.

“It’s really nice because during this period when we are all home, a lot of people you probably won’t call directly,” said Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, speaking to The Associated Press via a Messenger video call from his home in Palo Alto, Calif. “There is not really another piece of software out today that would create that kind of spontaneous serendipity.”

Zuckerberg said Facebook had been working on the service before the pandemic forced people around the world to confine themselves in their homes. And he thinks the trend toward video communication will stay after it’s over, even if it is at an “unnatural peak” right now. The company is also expanding the number of people who can join WhatsApp video calls from four to eight and adding a “virtual” option to its dating service.

“Certainly having everyone at home has shifted how we think about this,” Zuckerberg said.

While Facebook has enjoyed a bit of a resurgence in usage amid the pandemic, it is not yet clear if that will stick if and when people return to normal. “Even though Zoom has had a hilarious assortment of security issues, Facebook strikes us as even less trustworthy,” said Carole Elaine Furr, an accountant in Richmond, Vt., who is a frequent Zoom user.

Zoom’s meteoric rise has come with some growing pains. Hackers have invaded meeting rooms to make threats, intercept racist, anti-gay or anti-Semitic messages, or show pornographic images, although the company has taken steps to prevent that. It also faced privacy concerns, such as an “attention tracking” feature that zoom eventually removed earlier this month. Zoom was also sued in California for sharing user data with Facebook — another practice it now says it has stopped.

The COVID-19 pandemic has “rewritten the rules for interpersonal communication,” said Ian Greenblatt, managing director and head of the J.D. Power technology, media and telecom intelligence business. For some companies, he said, this could mean a rare chance to build awareness and consumer loyalty. For others, the sudden influx of users — and new ways of using their tools — means new challenges.

Facebook says it will not listen into video calls or record what people say or tell. For this reason, should a virtual date veer X-rated, the company is unlikely to step in unless someone complains. Facebook says it has no plans right now to show ads on video calls or use information from them to target users with ads. Of course, that could change.

Facebook’s new video chat service, called Messenger Rooms, is seen on a mobile phone.
City upgraded with 20 focused tornado sirens

TN — Nashville — Nashville is adding 20 tornado sirens in a system upgrade that will let the warnings go off in specific areas, instead of throughout all of the city.

The Metro Office of Emergency Management said in a news release that it will begin work on the next phase of a $1.9 million upgrade to Nashville's tornado warning system alongside Metro Information Technology Services.

Officials expect to finish the project this year. Nashville will then have 113 sirens that will provide more focused alerts based on National Weather Service information. When completed, sirens will only sound inside a warned area, instead of throughout Nashville's city-county boundaries.

Woman traps fox in pot used to scald chickens

ME — A fox that was attacking a Maine woman quickly found that its goose was cooked when she wrestled it into a pot meant for scalding chickens.

Eliza Ruth Watson, 37, of Gray tried to scare the fox away while she was gardening. Instead, the animal ran toward her, the Sun Journal reported.

The fox bit Watson's hand, and she grabbed it by the neck to keep it from biting her again. After a struggle, she found a pot used to scald birds for plucking, shoved the fox in and closed the lid. She then called 911.

An ambulance took Watson to a hospital, where her cuts were cleaned and she received five rabies vaccine injections.

Game wardens later trapped the fox, which was taken to Augusta to be tested for rabies.

Bigfoot statue urging focused tornado sirens

MA — Brimfield — Police in one Massachusetts town are on the hunt for Bigfoot.

A statue of the legendary ape creature was stolen from outside a woman's home in Brimfield, a small town 20 miles east of Springfield. The Worcester Telegram reported that the roadside Big-foot-sized statue had lately been outfitted with signs reminding people to observe social distancing guidelines amid the coronavirus outbreak. It even sported a face covering.

Bigfoot's owner has offered a $200 reward for the statue, which he said has a value of $2,400.

Mayor reports woman hiding in his cellar

KY — Bowling Green — A Kentucky mayor said he found a woman hiding in his cellar.

Bowling Green Mayor Bruce Wilkinson said he found the woman after he heard noises and smelled cigarettes smoke outside a home he was renovating, WNKY-TV reported.

Wilkerson said he found the woman when he went back to the cellar a second time after the electricity in his house went out, the Bowling Green Daily News reported. He said a young woman with dark hair told him she was "hiding from someone" before she ran away into the street.

The mayor said he doesn't know when the woman started living in his cellar but noted that she did not steal anything from the house.

Man faces charges for hurling Molotov cocktail

DC — Washington — Federal prosecutors announced charges against a man they say threw a lit Molotov cocktail at a police officer sitting in an unmarked car in the nation's capital.

Ashton Nesmith, 23, was accused of walking up to a policeman who had just entered the vehicle outside a police station in northeast Washington, lighting flammable liquid in a bottle and throwing it at the officer, according to federal prosecutors.

The Molotov cocktail hit the police car, bounced off and then exploded, officials said. No one was injured.

Police said Nesmith fled from the scene, but officers chased him on foot and took him into custody. He was charged with arson, using and discharging a destructive device during a crime of violence and possessing a destructive device.

Driver in freeway chase faces multiple charges

AZ — Phoenix — A driver who led authorities on a slow-speed freeway car chase from Gilbert through Phoenix has faced multiple charges.

Arizona Department of Public Safety officials said Binh Thien Nguyen, 40, was being held on suspicion of charges of unlawful flight from law enforcement, DUI, possession of drug paraphernalia and criminal damage.

They said Nguyen likely faces more charges from Gilbert police, who say the suspect reportedly was yellling and screaming in a parking lot before getting into a Smart Car and driving away.

Police said they tried multiple times to pull Nguyen over, but he didn't stop.

DPS troopers used spiked sticks to puncture the small car's tires and then used a maneuver to stop the vehicle and make an arrest.

In-line skating bandit robs Dunkin' Donuts

NY — Hicksville — A robber wearing in-line skates skated off into the night after sticking up a Dunkin' Donuts on Long Island, police said.

Nassau County police said the suspect glided into the Hicksville shop, bought a cup of coffee and then demanded cash while making it seem like he had a gun under his clothing.

The man got away with an undetermined amount of money and was last seen heading in the direction of a Long Island Rail Road station a few blocks away.

Some residents now need to dial 10 digits

SC — Columbia — South Carolinians in the 803 area code will now have to dial those three extra digits to make a call.

The 10-digit dialing requirement went into effect April 25 because starting in May, a new 839 area code will be added to the region, news outlets reported.

The 803 area code covers York, Lancaster, Chester, Lexington, Richland, Fairfield and Kershaw counties.

The new area code will only affect brand new phone numbers. The 839 area code will be the fifth in the state, joining 864 in the Upstate, 803 in the Midlands and 843 and 854 along the coast.

City to end horse-drawn carriage rides next year

IL — Chicago — The Chicago City Council voted to end horse-drawn carriage rides in the city after Dec. 31.

Alderman Brendan Reilly, whose ward includes the city's central business district, said he has tried to persuade carriage operators to "treat their animals in a humane way." When the violations continued, he had no choice but to push to ban them from city streets, Reilly said.

With the vote, Chicago joins cities such as Salt Lake City and Camden, N.J., that have also banned horse-drawn carriages.
**Rolling Stones think new song 'resonates'**

The legendary band released the four-minute slow-burning bluesy and harmonica-driven “Living in a Ghost Town” on April 23.

“I’m a ghost / Living in a ghost town / You can’t look for me / But I can’t be found,” sings frontman Mick Jagger, who wrote it with guitarist Keith Richards.

Jagger explained that the song was one they were working on long before the global lockdown and the band decided to revisit it in isolation, thinking it “would resonate through time and that it was living in right now.” Richards added: “Mick and I decided this one really needed to go to work right now.”

The lyrics do certainly sound timely: “I’m going nowhere/ Shut up all alone / So much time to lose / Just staring at my window,”

From The Associated Press

**Church preaches safety**

**FACES**

Video from country star urges fans not to panic

**Church**

Country star Eric Church doesn't know when concerts might resume in the United States after the spread of the coronavirus, but he wants people to feel safe when they return to hear live music.

The singer known for his often-worn sunglasses sent a message to fans in a new video and tease of a new song that offers his belief in the American resolve to overcome the pandemic.

With echoes of the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas in his mind, Church recorded his latest release, "Through My Ray Bans," co-written with Luke Laird and Barry Dean, in February about seeing people standing shoulder to shoulder, "like an army of Friday night soldiers."

"It could be sports. It could be music. It could be church. It's that fellowship that we have that makes life worth living," Church said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The virus reminded him of the fear that many people, even himself, felt after the Route 91 Harvest music festival, where Church had played the night before the shooting.

"The thing that shook me about Vegas was that there was my safe place," Church said. "As messed up as the world is, I never in a million years thought that could be a danger area."

Now as tours and festivals are canceled or rescheduled or postponed indefinitely, Church wants to remind fans that concerts and gatherings will resume eventually, but urged people in his new video not to give into fear and panic.

"When people come back, they have to feel that it's OK to be there, that they can experience it the way they want to experience it," Church said. "They should be able to go up and throw their arms around the person next to them. They should not be scared about being three feet away and not six."

But Church said he thinks major festivals and touring could be delayed as far out as next year.

"For me, I think it's summer or fall of '21. I am going on the possibility of a vaccine. I'm going on the possibility of a therapeutic that could change the game," Church said.

The virus has also upended a lot of plans for album releases this year, including his own. Prior to the virus spread, Church voluntarily secluded himself in a makeshift studio in the North Carolina mountains to record for a full month with several writers and his band. He wrote and recorded a song each day, ending up with about 28 songs. “It’s always intrigued me, a kind of old rock ‘n’ roll model," Church said. "You write the song in the studio. You record the song the same day.”

Even though he hasn’t released any songs for download or streaming or to radio yet, he’s been living with them a lot longer than he normally does before the public or even the people at his label or management has heard them.

"I don’t know if this is an album, if it’s two albums, if it’s three," he said. "I feel confident enough with the material that people will get to hear all of these songs at some point."

A recent video from country singer Eric Church teases new music, including a song called “Through My Ray Bans.”

From The Associated Press

**Tribbett's new tune sends positive vibes**

Grammy-winning gospel singer Tye Tribbett has fused Kendrick Lamar’s hit song “Alright” into a new tune to send a message to people during the coronavirus pandemic: We are going to be alright.

Tribbett won the best gospel album and best gospel song Grammys at the 2014 show.

He said he’s hoping people will get to hear all of these songs at some point.

Gospel singer Tye Tribbett’s new song is called “We Gon’ Be Alright”

From The Associated Press

**Parks and Recreation’ cast reunites for fundraiser**

The original cast members of “Parks and Recreation” are getting back to work for a coronavirus-related fundraising special.

Amy Poehler, Rashida Jones, Aziz Ansari, Nick Offerman and Adam Scott are among the sitcom’s stars to be featured in the half-hour special airing Thursday on NBC.

The story reflects the real-life crisis, with Poehler’s Leslie Knope striving to stay in touch with her friends while observing social distancing.

“Like a lot of other people, we were looking for ways to help and felt that bringing these characters back for a night could raise some money,” said executive producer Michael Schur. “I sent a hopeful email to the cast and they all got back to me within 45 minutes.”

Viewers’ donations will go to Feeding America’s COVID-19 Response Fund, which is helping food banks serve vulnerable community members, NBC said. Up to $500,000 in donations made through May 21 will be matched with contributions from NBC Universal, the sitcom’s cast, writers and producers, and State Farm and Subaru of America.


**The Chi’ star arrested for drugs, weapons in Mississippi**

A fired star of the hit Showtime series “The Chi” who was also featured in the Academy Award-nominated film “Straight Outta Compton” has been arrested on drugs and weapons charges on Mississippi’s coast.

Jason Mitchell, who portrayed Brandon Johnson on the cable series’ first two seasons, was arrested Wednesday during a traffic stop in Gulfport, Harrison County Sheriff Troy Peterson announced.

Deputies searched Mitchell’s SUV and found about 2 pounds of marijuana wrapped in separate packages along with a bag of 1,300 dosage units of Ecstasy, Peterson said. Deputies also found an AK-47 rifle and a Glock 9mm pistol with extended magazines, he said.

Mitchell, 37, of Chicago, faces multiple counts, including possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute and possession of a firearm by a felon.

Mitchell achieved critical acclaim for his role as rapper Eazy-E in “Straight Outta Compton,” the story about the rise of the rap group N.W.A and its success as well as for his work in 2017’s “Mudbound.”

A third season of “The Chi,” a drama about life on the South Side of Chicago, is planned without Mitchell, who was fired amid allegations of misconduct.

Other news

- Shirley Knight, a Kansas-born actress whose roles for two Oscars early in her career and went on to play an astonishing variety of roles in movies, TV and the stage, died April 22. She was 83. Knight was nominated for two Tonys, winning one.

- Beyoncé is focusing her coronavirus relief efforts on initiatives that are helping communities of color that have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, the superstar announced April 23 that her BeyGOOD charity will partner with Twitter’s Jack Dorsey’s Start Small campaign to provide $6 million in relief funds to a variety of groups working to provide basic necessities in cities like Detroit, Houston, New York and New Orleans.

From The Associated Press
A Chinese conglomerate recently acquired the Los Angeles Times, a writer in New York's Hudson Valley

Daniel Akst, a former columnist and editor at The Los Angeles Times, is a writer in New York's Hudson Valley.
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 Auctioneer’s cry
5 Valentine’s Day mo.
8 Streetcar
12 John of “Saturday Night Fever”
14 Fury
15 “Wonder Woman” publisher
16 “Understood”
17 Knock
18 Potpourri bag
20 Whale’s home
23 iPhone voice
24 Chat
25 MRI alternatives
28 Three, in Rome
29 Marina sights
30 Tic-tac-toe win
32 Lots for mobile homes
34 Get bigger
35 Suffix for billion
36 Hopping mad
37 Gift giver’s words
40 Mil. morale booster
41 On the rocks
42 Old IBM product knockoffs
47 The Mets’ old home
48 Put on the air
49 Sacred
50 Salt source

51 Right on the map?

DOWN
1 Norm (Abbr.)
2 Tolkien monster
3 Varnish ingredient
4 “New World Symphony” composer
5 Coin toss
6 And so on (Abbr.)
7 Members of rock bands
8 One of the Nixons
9 Impetuous
10 Pulitzer winner
11 Bump into
12 State sch.
13 Bee follower
14 Actress Vardalos
15 Golden
16 Capri, e.g.
17 Go angling
18 Twice cuatro
19 Sluggers Mel
20 Novelist Caleb
21 Hgt.
22 Tent securer
23 Taints
24 Asta’s feeder
25 Chimney buildup
26 Scott of “Happy Days”
27 Have debts
28 Check-in time?
29 Stagger
30 Go on
31 Roman
count
32 Constipation
33 Irish
34 Earrings
35 Greek
36 On the

Answer to Previous Puzzle
M U S S  S P A R  C N N
B R I O  W I L D  L A Y
A G A L  E F F S  E T E
S E M I  A S A  L O O T
D S T  G S T
S P E C K S  A C Q U I T
A S T Y O U  S O U N C E
F A E L A  G U I L D E D
A L E  A D D
J E E P  N O R  S E E P
I N K  T E N  O L D E
M I C R A  R A C E  A L G A
A D S  U S E R  P A V S

CRYPTOQUIP
Y W D D R  M A Z G A E  T K A  Q P G Q
Z E A Q Q - I U H H U M  A D  G K U  Y I A E
T K P I U  G E U F G P D H  C F G P U D G Q:
G K U  I A G W Q  C K R Q P Z P F D.
Saturday’s Cryptoquip: IF A MONASTERY HEAD MAKES A MONK FINISH A TEDIOUS CHORE, IT’S BEEN DONE BY FORCE OF ABBOT.
Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: D equals N
Get the news that matters to you, from the source you trust.

Daily Headlines | Veterans News | Military History | and more

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stripes.com/newsletters
The San Francisco 49ers acquired their first Pro Bowl left tackle and said goodbye to another. The defending NFC champion 49ers acquired seven-time Pro Bowl left tackle from the Washington Redskins on Saturday for a pair of draft picks and announced that longtime Pro Bowl Joe Staley is retiring.

“He’s as good as a player and warrior and person as any player I’ve ever been around,” coach Kyle Shanahan said. “I love the guy. It was really hard on us when we realized he wasn’t going to play this year.”

But it made the easier that the 49ers were able to finally replace them. They sent a fifth-round pick in this year’s draft and a 2021 third-rounder to acquire Williams. He still has three years left on his contract, but for the 49ers, it was a physical for the trade to be finalized.

The 49ers had a big need at left tackle and believed that if he was available they planned to retire. He announced it later Saturday, saying a deteriorating neck injury led to his decision to retire at age 33. Staley also missed nine games last season with injuries to his leg and fingers. The value of a Pro Bowl tight end to replace retiring Staley

NFL DRAFT

1 (4) Mekhi Becton, ot, Louisville.
2 (13) Tristan Wirfs, ot, Iowa.
3 (32) Clyde Edwards-Helaire, rb, LSU.
4 (110) Darnay Holmes, cb, UCLA.
5 (162) Khaleke Hudson, lb, Michigan.
6 (199) Saahdiq Charles, ot, LSU.
7 (244) Nate Stanley, qb, Iowa.
8 (255) Tae Crowder, lb, Georgia.
9 (250) Tremayne Anchrum, g, Clemson.
10 (229) James普Lynch, de, Baylor.
11 (251) Carlos Davis, dt, Nebraska.
12 (210) Prince Tega Wanogho, ot, Auburn.
13 (211) Alex Highsmith, lb, Charlotte.
14 (252) Chase Claypool, wr, Notre Dame.
15 (243) K.J. Hill, wr, Ohio State.
16 (215) Travis Etienne, rb, Clemson.
17 (230) Freddie Swain, wr, Florida.
18 (232) Carlos Davis, dt, Nebraska.
19 (240) Ross Blacklock, dl, TCU.
20 (209) Ross Blacklock, dl, TCU.
21 (239) Dane Jackson, cb, Pittsburgh.
22 (242) Tyler Jordan, lb, Tennessee.
23 (238) T.J. Brunson, lb, South Carolina.
25 (205) Josh Metellus, s, Michigan.
26 (221) K.J. Osborn, wr, Miami.
27 (231) Damien Lewis, g, LSU.
28 (237) Jordyn Brooks, lb, Texas Tech.
29 (225) Kenny Willekes, de, Michigan State.
30 (213) Chase Claypool, wr, Notre Dame.
31 (233) Tyler Dye, lb, Oregon.
32 (214) Troy Dye, lb, Oregon.
33 (247) Cameron DaSilva, ol, Mississippi State.
34 (245) Bryan Mone, dt, Notre Dame.
35 (222) James Plackis, ot, Utah State.
36 (246) Justin Herron, g, Wake Forest.
37 (228) J.C. Létourneau-T苔lah, ol, Penn State.
38 (254) Cash Creek, wr, Wyoming.
39 (253) Sam Tecklenburg, g, Central Michigan.
40 (236) K.J. Jones, lb, Michigan State.
41 (234) Darrell Young, ol, Buffalo.
42 (235) Karl Joseph, db, West Virginia.
43 (237) Jerry Jacobs, db, Mississippi State.
44 (238) Chuba Hubbard, rb, NC State.
45 (239) Tyler Jordan, lb, Tennessee.
46 (240) Sam Tecklenburg, g, Central Michigan.
47 (241) Julian Okwara, de, Notre Dame.
48 (242) Joseph Ossai, lb, Penn State.
49 (243) Joe Giles-Harris, ol, Penn State.
50 (244) Ben Bredeson, g, Michigan.
51 (245) Tyler Jordan, lb, Tennessee.
52 (246) Zack Moss, rb, Utah.
53 (247) J.K. Dobbins, rb, Ohio State.
54 (248) J.K. Dobbins, rb, Ohio State.
55 (249) J.K. Dobbins, rb, Ohio State.
56 (250) Jaylon Johnson, cb, Utah.
57 (251) Jaylon Johnson, cb, Utah.
58 (252) Jaylon Johnson, cb, Utah.
59 (253) Jaylon Johnson, cb, Utah.
60 (254) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
61 (255) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
62 (256) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
63 (257) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
64 (258) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
65 (259) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
66 (251) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
67 (252) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
68 (253) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
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75 (260) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
76 (261) Lavisha Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
77 (262) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
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101 (286) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
102 (287) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
103 (288) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
104 (289) Laviska Shenault Jr., wr, Colorado.
Southeastern Conference runs away with the most number of picks again

By Barry Wilner
Associated Press

Maybe the Southeastern Conference should simply hold onto its players and become part of the NFL.

The home of national champion LSU and perennial contenders Alabama, Georgia and Auburn, the SEC dominated the first four rounds of the NFL Draft before the flow of talent slowed to a trickle. Or the conference finally began running out of top prospects.

The top four rounds are where the vast majority of pro starters are found. So beginning with LSU quarterback Joe Burrow, who went first overall to the Bengals, the SEC provided the mother lode. And by the time this draft was over, 63 players had come from its 14 teams — well, 13, because Ole Miss was ignored. LSU sent 14, tying the most in a seven-round draft, followed by Alabama with nine. Not quite a record, because the SEC had 64 selectees a year ago. But this grab bag was further proof of its place atop college football.

“I think it’s really easy to see NFL players when you watch as many players get drafted from the SEC and from that conference,” Titans coach Mike Vrabel said after his team grabbed Georgia tackle Isaiah Wilson and LSU cornerback Kristian Fulton. “But there’s great players in every conference. It’s just you don’t have to look too far to see them play against some really talented players.”

The Lions noticed. They took Georgia running back D’Andre Swift and Kentucky guard Logan Stenberg.

“The SEC, I would argue, is one of the top one or two conferences in college football. I think a lot of people say it is in fact the best conference,” Detroit general manager Bob Quinn said. “The competition that’s in that conference — from LSU to Alabama to Auburn to Georgia to all those schools — and some of the other teams have really, really good players. So the level of competition, they get the high recruits, they really do.”

Nearly every NFL club will have an LSU Tiger or member of the Crimson Tide on its roster by next week.

“Frankly,” Goodell has insisted the sport is the best in the world needed the draft to be held on time. And the amount of eyeballs watching has been, well, an eye-opening number. Late in Saturday’s final round, the league said it had gone over $100 million in total funds raised in all its efforts to battle the coronavirus. The telethon accompanying the draft raised more than $8.6 million for six organizations involved in coronavirus relief.

NFL general managers also put together donations, initiated by the Eagles’ Howie Roseman, with each giving at least $8,000 for every selection in this draft.

The NFL matched every telethon donation on Friday and Saturday.

“We’re forced to adapt here and change and do this differently, but it’s actually been a lot of great learning,” Goodell said. “We’ve seen some things that we’ve maybe called ‘stumbled on’ that really, I think, will be elements of drafts going into the future. The ability to use the virtual platform in a way that we really didn’t think about until we were forced.

“And so I think we’re really going to be able to make future drafts even better because we’re going to be able to combine it with the core elements that we’ve had. But I think that’s one of the things about the draft, it just keeps evolving and it keeps getting better because we keep learning.”

The league even awarded the 2022 draft Las Vegas after all events on the Strip for this year were canceled due to the nationwide shutdown of large gatherings to curb the spread of the virus.

To open Saturday, Appalachian State had its second player chosen, linebacker Akeem Davis-Gaither, who went to Cincinnati. The Sun Belt’s defensive player of the year was a standout at the Senior Bowl — a game the Bengals coaching staff worked.

The Redskins dealt their unhappy veteran tackle Trent Williams to San Francisco on Saturday morning, and then chose LSU’s Saquon Charles, who has been plagued by off-field issues and served a six-game suspension.

The Niners, who later announced the retirement of long-time standout left tackle Joe Staley, sent a fifth-round pick in this year’s draft and a 2021 third-rounder to acquire Williams.

The first quarterback chosen on Day 3 was Washington’s Jacob Eason, who went to Indianapolis. The Colts, of course, signed Philip Rivers as a free agent and still have incumbent Jacoby Brissett. Both have contracts only through 2020, though.

Eason lost out to Jake Fromm at Georgia, then transferred to Washington. Fromm finally went 167th overall to Buffalo, which has a young QB in Josh Allen. Fromm likely was hurt by a mediocre combine performance. He was taken well after the Jets got Florida International QB James Morgan at 125th.

Carolina pulled off a new one by choosing nothing but defensive players, seven in all. Including, naturally, the seventh overall choice, DT Derrick Brown of Auburn. Of the SEC.

SEC players taken in the 2020 NFL Draft, the most of any conference, one shy of the SEC’s 2019 record.

By the numbers

63 SEC players taken this year, most of any team, matching the record set by Ohio State in 2004.

14 LSU players selected this year, most of any team, including linebacker Terrell Lewis, who was taken 10th overall.

The second round of the draft, one of 14 LSU players taken.

Cornerback Kristian Fulton was selected by the Tennessee Titans in the second round of the draft, one of 14 LSU players taken.

Alabama linebacker Terrell Lewis hits LSU quarterback Joe Burrow during a Nov. 9 game in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Burrow was the first player taken in the NFL Draft and Lewis went in the third round.

SOURCE: Associated Press
Hands off: Pack keeps away from receivers in draft

By Steve Megargee  Associated Press

The Green Bay Packers acquired Aaron Rodgers’ potential successor but didn’t give their star quarterback any new wide receivers.

In a draft heralded for its receiving depth, the Packers opted against taking a single player at a position that was widely considered a major need.

The Packers traded up four spots in the first round to take Utah State quarterback Jordan Love with the 26th overall pick. By the time they drafted again late in the second round, 13 receivers already had been taken.

“An opportunity to improve our team next year,” general manager Brian Gutekunst said.

“I don’t know as we went through the middle and the end, that it felt as strong as maybe others did.”

“I thought the top was one of the strongest drafts at the wide receiver class that I can remember, but the runs went pretty early, and once we got to a certain spot, with the group that we had coming back, it wasn’t like we weren’t looking to add to that competition. We just felt there weren’t a lot of great candidates that were locks to make our team next year.”

Davante Adams is the only receiver who caught as many as 50 passes in a season for the Packers, but the run game was the team’s calling card.

“Essentially the starters for the majority of the year,” Gutekunst cautioned against reading too much into that.

“I don’t really think a lot of the personnel acquisitions that we made over the last three days were an attempt to kind of tran- sition that,” Gutekunst said.

“They were the right players at the right time.”

The Packers will have solid depth at running back with Dil- lon joining Jones and Jamaal Willi- ams, both of whom could become free agents next year.

“Najee (Davis) also can help with his ability to play fullback and H-back.”

Family ties

Runyan is the son of former NFL offensive tackle Jon Run- yan, who played from 1996-2009 before serving two terms as a Re- publican congressman from New Jersey. The elder Runyan now is

NFL DRAFT

Patriots don’t select QB, but address several other needs

By Kyle Hightower  Associated Press

BOSTON — The Patriots didn’t find a replacement for Tom Brady in the draft, if that was even possible.

But they did address almost every other one of their needs.

New England entered the draft with 12 picks and after making several trades over three days wound up selecting 10 players.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick acknowledged the team made an attempt to add a third quarterback, but it simply didn’t work out.

“The bottom line is we’re evaluating the position along with all the other ones,” he said. “If we feel like we meet the right situation, we certainly draft them. We’ve drafted them in multiple years in multiple points in the draft. It didn’t work out the last three or four years. It wasn’t by design. It could have, but it didn’t.”

Belichick said the Patriots would address the position via the undrafted free agent market.

For now, second-year player Jarrett Stidham and former Brady backup Brian Hoyer remain the only quarterbacks on the roster.

New England made four picks on defense, which was hit hard in free agency by the departures of inside linebackers Kyle Van Noy, Jamie Collins and Eland- on Roberts, safety Duron Harmon and defensive tackle Danny Shelton.

The Patriots began by selecting safety Kyle Dug- ger from Division II Lenoir-Rhyne and added three linebackers with various skill sets in Michigan’s John Uche, Alabama’s Anfernee Jennings and Wy- mington’s Cash Maluia.

Offensive line help

The remaining picks were used to target offensive needs, with three used to bolster the line.

The right end position fell off significantly last season following the retirement of Rob Gronkows- ki, who came out of retirement before the draft to rejoin Brady in Tampa Bay. New England hopes Devin Asiasi (UCLA) and Dalton Keene (Virginia Tech) can provide a longer-term solution after Matt LaCosse, Ben Watson and Ryan Izzo combined for 36 catches and two touchdowns last season.

The line will get some size with the selection of 340-pound guard Michael Onwenu (Michigan) and guard Justin Herron (Wake Forest) in the sixth round.

New England also took Memphis center Dustin Woodard in the seventh round with its final pick.

Woodard has a great shot to make the team. He played in every game during his time at Mem- phis, including 52 consecutive starts.

Old school: Steelers focus on seniors

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pitts- burgh Steelers love to pick young- er players. In this year’s draft, not so much.

While general manager Kevin Colbert stressed it was coinciden- tial that the Steelers used five of their six picks on seniors, if there ever was a spring to tilt toward prospects with an extra year of seasoning, this might be it.

Neither Colbert nor head coach Mike Tomlin — or the rest of the NFL for that matter — knows how things will shake out over the next few months, with the U.S. among the hardest-hit countries in the global coronavirus pandemic.

Adjusting from college to the pros can be difficult during a normal offseason. And there is nothing normal about this one.

Still, Colbert insisted the deci- sion to take wide receiver Chase Claypool, linebacker Alex High- smith, offensive lineman Kevin Dotson, safety Antoine Brooks and defensive tackle Carlos Davis — all of whom are on pace to gradu- ate by the end of the summer — was based on their potential, not necessarily their experience.

“It’s just the way it broke for us this year,” Colbert said Sat- urday. “We’re very comfortable with that. We always try to catch them younger because they’re a little fresher. The senior usually comes in at a different maturity level because he finished school or he’s close to finishing school. ... We had no plan to do that.”

Michigan line-backer Josh Uche, right, tackles Maryland quarterback Ryan Brand. Uche was selected by New England in the second round, one of three linebackers the Patriots selected.
UFC 249 to be held May 9

Organization plans three events in Florida next month without fans

**By Greg Beacham**
Associated Press

The UFC is returning to competition on May 9 for three shows without fans in eight days in Jacksonville, Florida. The mixed martial arts promotion announced its plans Friday to return to action after postponing and canceling several shows due to the coronavirus pandemic.

UFC 249 will be held May 9 at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville with no fans in attendance. The pay-per-view show was postponed on March 8 at the insistence of ESPN and Disney, the UFC’s broadcast partners. Prominent California state officials were opposed to the UFC’s plan to hold a show there. However, the promotion’s plans have satisfied Florida officials, including the Florida State Boxing Commission, which regulates MMA in the state.

“The UFC organization is a renowned entertainment brand that’s presented a safe and sensible plan to use this Jacksonville location, and we are thrilled to have our city highlighted nationally,” Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said.

ESPN also is on board with White’s current plan, according to a statement issued by the network: “Sports play an important role in people’s lives and can bring moments of escape in challenging times. We look forward to bringing UFC to fans again.” The UFC issued a brief statement about its health and safety precautions for the shows in Florida. The promotion says all athletes and staff will be held to “a number of precautionary measures, such as participating in advanced medical screenings and temperature checks and following social distancing guidelines.”

UFC 249 will include two title fights, with bantamweight champ Henry Cejudo defending his belt against former champion Dominick Cruz. The card also includes a lightweight bout between contenders Francis Ngannou and Jairzinho Rozenstruik, along with a matchup of veteran contenders Anthony Pettis and Donald “Cowboy” Cerrone.

Only a few UFC fighters have voiced concern about White’s determination to keep fighting amid the pandemic, and most have been publicly eager to return despite the worldwide health concerns. MMA fighters traditionally don’t get paid unless they compete, although Bellator and other promotions have given aid to their fighters in recent weeks after shutting down.

**Open: Move allows NBA players a chance to return to practice courts on limited basis**

**From Back Page**

began loosening restrictions on personal movement, the NBA decided it was time to let players return to their practice courts — if only on a limited basis. Georgia and Oklahoma are among the states that have allowed some businesses to reopen and some cities in Florida are expected to loosen their stay-at-home policies in the coming days, even though health officials are warning that such moves are being made too quickly for the current stage of the pandemic.

For those teams in cities where stay-at-home orders still make such a return impossible, the NBA said it would work to find “alternate arrangements,” the person with knowledge of the matter said.

This move does not mean that a resumption of games is imminent. Still, the decision to let teams back into facilities is a significant step.

ESPN first reported details of the NBA’s decision.

NHL, suspended at about the same point of the season as the NBA, Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said league officials “haven’t made any decisions yet.” Daly said only the NHL owes players and teams guidance before April 30 and will consider its next steps in that context.

Many NBA players have said they haven’t even had access to a basket since the league ordered teams to close their practice facilities on March 19. All-Star Jimmy Butler sent baskets to his Miami Heat teammates earlier this month, but some other players around the league said they haven’t even touched a basketball during the shutdown.

If they’re so inclined, that can now change. There remains no indicator about when a full-fledged return to organized team workouts will resume.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver has said on several occasions that the league does not anticipate being able to decide until sometime in May — at the earliest — if a resumption of the season is possible.

The NBA suspended the season March 11. It ordered teams to shutter their facilities eight days later, saying at the time it was doing so “in light of the rapidly-developing coronavirus situation, and consistent with evolving advice from health experts regarding how to promote individual and public health while minimizing the spread of the virus.”

Johns Hopkins University, which tracks the numbers of those affected or killed by the virus based on official government figures, said the COVID-19 worldwide death toll surpassed 200,000 on Saturday. And the World Health Organization said “there is currently no evidence” that people who have recovered from the virus cannot fall sick again.

**Briefly**

**Wake Forest fires Manning after 5 losing seasons in 6**

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Danny Manning never built a winner at Wake Forest. Now the school is looking for a new coach and direction.

Wake Forest fired Manning on Saturday after losing seasons in five of his six years with one NCAA Tournament appearance.

The move came more than six weeks after the Demon Deacons lost to Pittsburgh in the opening game of the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament, ending the season shortly before the coronavirus pandemic led to a shutdown of college and professional sports.

The decision came after what athletic director John Currie called an “overall evaluation” of a program with two winning seasons in the past decade going back to the days of Howard Oliver.

“Time goes by, we’re able to resume things,” Currie said Saturday in a video teleconference.

“Do we need to be better prepared? Of course we do. As time goes by, we’re able to resume things,” Currie said Saturday in a video teleconference.

“We never stopped working on this particular program because it is so important to all of us, just like we haven’t stopped with the day-to-day duties. … But certainly the onset of the pandemic played a role in the timing of today’s announcement.”

Manning, a former No. 1 overall NBA draft pick, went 78-111 at the school with a 30-80 mark in ACC regular-season games. Those league struggles included a 4-9 mark in league road games and 1-6 in the ACC Tournament.

Official: Manfred had hand in ump’s removal

NEW YORK — A major league official testified he suggested Angel Hernandez be removed from consideration for the 2015 World Series because he did not think Commissioner Rob Manfred would approve the umpire to work baseball’s premier event.

Hernandez sued Major League Baseball in 2017, alleging race discrimination and cited his failure to be assigned to the World Series since 2005 and MLB’s failure to promote him to crew chief.

The team quoted Scully on Twitter Saturday saying, “I’m home and resting comfortably with my wife and we are both eagerly awaiting the Time for Dodger Baseball!” That’s a phrase announced before the start of every Dodgers home game.

The 92-year-old fell Tuesday at his Los Angeles-area home.

**NCAA won’t waive Div. I sport requirement**

The NCAA Division I Council denied a request to temporarily waive the minimum number of sports required to be a Division I member and delayed a decision on allowing all college athletes to be immediately eligible one time after transferring.

The NCAA announced Friday night that a request made recently by five PBS conference commissioners to waive numerous Division I requirements for up to four years would be considered in the coming weeks. But a blanket waiver permitting schools to drop below the minimum 16 sports would only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Louisville football signee fatally shot**

ORLANDO, Fla. — A star high school football player from Florida who had signed to play for the University of Louisville was fatally shot late Saturday, Orlando police said. Dexter Rentz Jr. died a state record in 2017 when he intercepted five passes in a game.
TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

FIGHTING IN FLORIDA

UFC planning three events for May » MMA, Page 23

Open gym

NBA players will be allowed to use team facilities in some states

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

MIAMI

NBA players will be allowed to return to team training facilities starting Friday, provided that their local governments do not have a stay-at-home order prohibiting such movement still in place as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Any workouts that take place would be voluntary and be limited to individual sessions only, according to a person familiar with the league’s decision. The person spoke to The Associated Press on Saturday on the condition of anonymity because the directives from the league were not released publicly.

Group practices would not be allowed yet, and teams will not yet be permitted to organize in-person workouts.

But as certain states and municipalities