Death toll rises, dozens missing from floods in Japan

By Mari Yamaguchi  
Associated Press

TOKYO — Soldiers rescued residents on boats as floodwaters flowed down streets in southern Japanese towns hit by deadly rains that were expanding across the region Tuesday. At least 50 people have died and a dozen are missing.

Pounding rain since late Friday in Japan’s southern region of Kyushu has triggered widespread flooding. More rain was predicted in Kyushu and the western half of Japan’s main island as the rain front moved east.

In Fukuoka, on the northern part of the island, three soldiers waded through knee-high water pulling a boat carrying a mother, her 2-month-old baby and two other residents.

“Good job!” one of the soldiers said as he held up the baby to his chest while the mother got off the boat, Asahi video footage showed.

Several children wearing orange life vests over their wet T-shirts arrived on another boat.

SEE FLOODS ON PAGE 4

Protective gear for medical workers begins to run low again

By Geoff Mulvihill and Camille Fassett  
Associated Press

The personal protective gear that was in dangerously short supply during the early weeks of the coronavirus crisis in the U.S. is running low again as the virus resumes its rapid spread.

A national nursing union is concerned that gear has to be reused. A doctors association warns that physicians’ offices are closed because they cannot get masks and other supplies. And Democratic members of Congress are pushing the Trump administration to devise a national strategy to acquire and distribute gear in anticipation of the crisis worsening into the fall.

“We’re five months into this and there are still shortages of gowns, hair covers, shoe covers, masks, N95 masks,” said Deborah Burger, president of National Nurses United, who cited results from a survey of the union’s members. “They’re being doled out, and we’re still being told to reuse them.”

SEE SUPPLY ON PAGE 7
Uber buys Postmates in $2.65 billion deal

By Matt Ott and Cathy Bussewitz

Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. — Uber has widened its reach in the fiercely competitive delivery market by acquiring Postmates in a $2.65 billion all-stock deal, the company said Monday.

The acquisition enables the ride-hailing giant to increase its delivery offerings at a time when the global pandemic has suppressed customers’ desire for rides while boosting home delivery needs. While Uber’s meal delivery business, UberEats, has mostly focused on restaurants, Postmates delivers a wider array of goods including groceries, pharmacy items, alcoholic drinks and party supplies.

“The vision for us is to become an everyday service,” said Dara Khosrowshahi, CEO of Uber, in a conference call with investors Monday. “Postmates is a great step along that vision. Anyplace you want to go, anything you want delivered to your home, Uber is going to be there with you, and we think these everyday frequent interactions create a habit, create a connection with customers.

Uber will gain ground against DoorDash, which controls about 44% of the U.S. meal delivery market, according to May figures from Second Measure, a data analytics company. That’s compared with UberEats’ 23% share before the Postmates deal. Postmates had about 8% of the market.

BY Matt Ott and Cathy Bussewitz

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
MILITARY

Pentagon mulls ban on Confederate flags

By Missy Ryan and Alex Horton
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Pentagonal leaders are considering a ban on Confederate flags at all bases, an official said Monday, in another possible step in the military’s reckoning with its long acceptance of Civil War tributes.

The official said the draft policy, being considered at the Pentagon’s highest levels would build on recent moves by military services to bar Confederate symbols on facilities they control and, if approved, would represent the first Defense Department-wide prohibition of such iconography.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. A Pentagon spokesman declined to comment on the proposed change, which was first reported by CNN.

The Pentagon’s consideration of the new policy comes as some state and local leaders, along with colleges, universities and organizations, take steps to address the legacy of the Civil War, slavery and racism, removing statues of Confederate leaders from public spaces and renaming institutions honoring officials linked to racist policies.

Last month, Mississippi’s governor signed a bill changing the state flag. NASCAR has banned the flag.

The moves in some cases have taken on partisan tones, with President Donald Trump decrying NASCAR’s flag ban and voicing his vetoes an annual defense bill if it includes a Democratic proposal to change the names of military bases honoring Confederate leaders.

Those proposals come amid a nationwide reckoning that began with the death of George Floyd, a Black man, in Minneapolis police custody in May.

A Pentagon ban could also exacerbate strains between Pentagon leaders and Trump caused by the military’s involvement in responding to recent civil unrest. Since then, Defense Secretary Mark Esper and military leaders have scrambled to illustrate their responsiveness to a newly opened conversation about race.

Military bases generally are not decorated with Confederate flags. Many barracks and homes on post carry the U.S. flag, service-specific banners, the colors of service academies or sports teams and college teams. The Confederate flag can more often be found on T-shirts, service members’ tattoos, bumper stickers or banners hanging inside a barracks.

Last month, the Marine Corps ordered the identification and removal of Confederate flag symbols in public and work spaces; the Navy has signaled it is moving to do the same.

The Marine Corps ban applies to mugs, bumper stickers, banners, posters and more. But it stops short of prohibiting the symbol inside barracks rooms and homes and on personal bags and vehicles.

While the Army, the largest military branch, has previously resisted pressure to rename its 10 bases honoring Confederate commanders, saying in 2017 that such moves would be “controversial and divisive,” officials have said in recent weeks that Army leaders are now open to at least discussing the issue.

The installations, all in former Confederate states, were named with input from influential locals in the Jim Crow era.

The Army courted their approval because it needed large swaths of land to build sprawling bases during the buildups of World Wars I and II.

US planning to sell 6 Black Hawk helicopters to Lithuania

By John VanderHurst
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. plans to sell six UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to Lithuania to boost allied quick response capabilities in a region regarded by some security analysts as one of NATO’s most vulnerable.

The deal, which will also include a full stock of related Black Hawk gear and weaponry such as M240H machine guns and missile warning systems, is worth $380 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a statement Monday.

The Black Hawks will help Lithuania modernize its armed forces, and one year after the former Soviet republic entered into a new security agreement with the U.S. that calls for a rapid deployment of NATO divisions in several weeks.

“The proposed sale of these UH-60 helicopters to Lithuania will significantly increase its capability to provide troop lift, border security, anti-terrorist, medical evacuation, search and rescue, re-supply/external lift, combat support in all weather,” the agency said.

Lithuania, which shares borders with the militarized Russian exclave of Kaliningrad to the south and Russia’s strategic partner of Belarus to the east, is considered by many security analysts to be one of NATO’s most exposed members.

Of particular concern is a 40-mile stretch of land along Lithuania’s border with Poland, known as the Suwalki Gap, which, if seized by Russian forces in the event of a conflict, could result in the three Baltic states being cut off from the rest of the alliance.

NATO in recent years has added multinational battle groups in Lithuania and the other Baltic states, Latvia and Estonia, as well as in Poland, to act as deterrents against potential Russian aggression.

The battle group in northeastern Poland is led by the U.S., and is particularly focused on security along the Suwalki Gap.

By Katherine Hafner
The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

Kristianne Parren was tired and ready for bed early Sunday when an explosion-like sound erupted in her Virginia Beach home.

It was shortly before 1 a.m. in the Sandpiper Crescent Lincoln Military Housing complex off Shore Drive, and she and her husband had just finished moving a television into their master bedroom, she told The Virginian-Pilot on Monday. Her husband, Nicholas, was putting away his handgun as he does every night when the shooting started.

“I thought he had dropped his firearm and it exploded or something,” said Parren, 22. “As soon as he put it away gunshots started going off throughout the house.”

Bullets sprayed through the front of the home, reaching several rooms including the living room, master bedroom and the bedroom of their 8-month-old daughter, Mabel, as asleep in her crib.

Parren said she was caught in “absolute terror.” She ran and grabbed her daughter and her phone in another room to call 911. A Virginia Beach police spokeswoman said the next day shows at least 10 bullet holes, marked with evidence letters by police, in Mabel’s room. The closest was about a foot away from the crib.

Other holes mark walls in adjoining rooms.

“There’s bullet holes next to a baby’s crib. Our family is going through a traumatic experience,” she said. “This shouldn’t have happened in military housing.”

She added that the shooting is a final straw on top of multiple service requests over the past several years going unaddressed, regarding wasps and a creature living in the roof.

Brooke Scarbrough, a Lincoln Military Housing spokeswoman, said the residents notified the complex of the shooting Monday morning and while police are leading the investigation, “we are working diligently with them alongside our Navy Partner to ensure the impacted families are taken care of and supported.”

Drive-by shootings hit Virginia Beach military housing

 Corrections

■ A July 7 story about the USS McCampbell departing Japan for a refit in the United States incorrectly identified the ship’s unit. It belongs to Destroyer Squadron 15.

■ A July 3 Washington Post story about the Army soldiers under the command of then-1st Lt. Clint Lorance, who was convicted of second-degree murder for ordering his troops to fire on civilians in Afghanistan and pardoned by President Donald Trump, misstated the name of Lorance’s forthcoming book. It is “Stolen Honor,” not “Stolen Valor.”
**MILITARY**

**N. Korea says no to nuke talks as US envoy arrives**

**By Kim Gamel**

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea insisted Thursday that it has “no intention” of resuming dialogue with the United States as the Trump administration’s main point man on the issue traveled to the region to try to revive nuclear talks.

Stephen Biegun, deputy secretary of state and special representative for North Korea, planned to meet with senior South Korean and Japanese officials during a four-day trip that began with his arrival Tuesday on Osan Air Base.

He planned to discuss cooperation with both allies on a range of issues “and further strengthen coordination on the final, fully verified denuclearization” of North Korea, according to the State Department.

Biegun’s visit comes days after South Korean President Moon Jae-in suggested the U.S. and North Korean leaders meet again before U.S. presidential elections are held in November.

North Korea rejected the idea, calling Moon a “meddlesome man,” in its second such message in less than a week.

“Explicitly speaking once again, we have no intention to sit face to face with the U.S.,” Rwon Jong Gun, head of the North Korean Foreign Ministry’s department of U.S. affairs, said Tuesday in a statement posted on the state-run Korean Central News Agency announcing Melzer’s indictment last month.

Melzer is being held at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York, where he is also charged with providing support to terrorists.

Prosecutors accused Melzer, a private serving with the Vicenza-based 173rd Airborne Brigade, of using an encrypted app to send sensitive details about his unit’s locations, movements and security to members of the extremist groups the Order of the Nine Angles, or O9A, and the “RapeWaffen Division.”

He was motivated by hatred to orchestrate “this ultimate act of betrayal,” Audrey Strauss, acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said in a statement announcing Melzer’s indictment last month.

A native of Louisville, Ky., Melzer enlisted in the Army in 2018 and joined O9A in 2019, around the time he was stationed in Italy, the indictment said. He began plotting a “jihadi attack” in April, after he and others in his unit were told they would deploy to an unnamed base in Turkey, it said.

O9A, formed decades ago in the United Kingdom, has espoused violent, white supremacist, anti-Semitic and satanic beliefs.

The group has also expressed support for Osama bin Laden and other radical Islamic jihadis, and hopes to “usher in a new imperial age (ace) ruled by a race of Satanic supermen,” the London-based advocacy group Hope Not Hate has said.

In one message to unnamed group members, Melzer wrote that a lack of heavy weapons and machine guns at the base in Turkey meant “every fire-team is essentially crippled,” a federal complaint said. An attack from nearby mountains could “panic the s--- outta” the troops, another chat participant said, according to the filing.

An infantryman with 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, Melzer wanted the attack to cause a mass casualty incident, which he hoped would spur a war in Turkey, even if the ambush resulted in his own death, one message said. He also said he “wouldn’t mind” if the group found someone to “stir something up” in Italy and claimed to have had contacts with several Islamic State members in France — some he claimed had since been killed.

FBI agents also found ISIS propaganda on Melzer’s online cloud storage describing attacks and murder of U.S. personnel, the complaint said.

Federal officials foiled Melzer’s plot and arrested him on May 30 at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, home to U.S. Army Garrison Italy and U.S. Army Africa.

In a recorded interview with FBI and military officials at that time, Melzer confessed that he wanted to kill as many of his fellow soldiers as possible, the complaint stated. He considered himself a traitor and his actions treason, court filings said, citing the interview.

Melzer is being held at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan. Public defenders representing him did not respond to a request for comment about his plea.

**Floods: Mud, debris hamper rescue workers**

**FROM FRONT PAGE**

An older woman told NHK television she started walking down the road to evacuate, but floodwater rose quickly up to her neck. Another woman said, “I was almost washed away and had to grab an electrical pole.”

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said 49 victims were from riverside towns in the Kumamoto prefecture. Another of the dead confirmed as of Tuesday morning was a woman in her 80s found inside her flooded home in another prefecture.

About 3 million residents were advised to evacuate across Kyushu, Japan’s third-largest island.

Tens of thousands of army troops, police and other rescue workers mobilized from around the country worked their way through mud and debris in the hardest-hit riverside towns along the Kuma River. Rescue operations have been hampered by the floodwater and continuing harsh weather.

In Kumala village in the hardest-hit Kumamoto prefecture, dozens of residents took shelter at a park. The roofed structure had no walls or floor and they sat on blue tarps and blankets on mud.

A boy walks along debris piled up at the side of a road in Hitéyoshi city, Kumamoto prefecture.

PHOTOS BY KOTA ENDO, KYODO NEWS

**Paratrooper pleads not guilty to charges in neo-Nazi plot**

**By Chad Garland**

Stars and Stripes

An Italy-based paratrooper pleaded not guilty this week to charges he conspired with a satanic neo-Nazi group to help plot an ambush on his own unit during a planned deployment to Turkey.

Ethian Melzer, 22, entered the plea Monday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Sarah Netburn in Manhattan at a virtual hearing, court records show.

The six charges he faces include conspiracy to kill U.S. nationals and conspiring and attempting to murder U.S. service members, which each carry a maximum sentence of life in prison. He is also charged with providing support to terrorists.

Prosecutors accused Melzer, a private serving with the Vicenza-based 173rd Airborne Brigade, of using an encrypted app to send sensitive details about his unit’s location...
**MILITARY**

**Stars and Stripes**

**Body recovered of Marine missing at sea in Japan**

BY JAMES BOLINGER AND HANA KUSUMOTO

Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — An airman assigned to Kadena Air Base ended his Independence Day under arrest on accusations that he drove while drunk and left the scene of an accident, according to Okinawa police.

Staff Sgt. Tavorus M. Trotty, 24, was taken into custody after a taxi driver reported that he had struck another vehicle at 5:35 a.m. and then left the area, a spokesman for the Urasoe Police Station said Tuesday. The driver followed Trotty, whom police arrested an hour later when he stopped not far from the accident scene.

Trotty injured his forehead, which struck the windshield, and also suffered a minor cut when he hit the other car, according to the spokesman. His case, which remains under investigation, was referred to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office on Sunday, the spokesman said. The charges are driving under the influence and failing to report an accident.

Kadena's 18th Wing did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday. A breath test by police measured Trotty's blood alcohol content at twice Japan's legal limit of 0.03%, according to the spokesman. By comparison, all 50 U.S. states have set 0.08 as the legal limit for driving under the influence.

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**Soldier dies in noncombat incident in Kosovo**

An Oregon National Guard soldier has died while supporting the Operation Joint Guardian peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, the Pentagon announced Monday evening.

Pfc. Alexander Blake Klass, 20, of Willamina, Ore., died Saturday “as the result of a noncombat related incident,” a statement said. The death, which happened at Camp Novo Selo near Vuštrri in the northern part of the country, is under investigation.

Klass was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team out of Springfield, Ore., the statement said.

No other information was available.

news@stripes.com

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**Stars and Stripes**

**US airman accused of drunken driving, leaving accident scene**

BY JAMES BOLINGER

Stars and Stripes

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Army mounts first large-scale drill since pandemic hit

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Roughly 5,500 soldiers with the 25th Infantry Division will join the annual Lightning Forge exercise in Hawaii beginning Tuesday, the division’s first large-scale training since the coronavirus pandemic hit in the spring.

The exercise runs through July 21 and will be held in training areas across the island of Oahu, according to an Army statement on Friday.

The division began a gradual return to group training in early May as new cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, began tapering off.

“As we concluded the COVID-19 crisis, our approach to Exercise Lightning Forge will be transparent, thoughtful, and deliberate, with the health safety and well-being of our soldiers, families, and community our top priority,” he said.

As of Tuesday, Hawaii had 1,030 verified cases of the virus, with 19 deaths, according to the state Department of Health. Recent weeks have seen an increase in daily new cases, often in the double digits.

The state has gradually eased a stringent stay-at-home order issued in early April, but new cases in June were about six times higher than those in May.

In response, Kirk Caldwell, mayor of the city and county of Honolulu, on Thursday expanded a mandate requiring face masks be worn in all indoor public spaces — including workplaces that do not deal with the public — and in outdoors areas where physical distancing is not possible.

The Army has generally abided by county and state orders regarding the pandemic, but it remains undecided how, or if, the mask order will be implemented on Oahu’s two Army bases, Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter.

Lightning Forge training will focus on the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, with support personnel from across the division.

About 150 infantry soldiers from the Royal Thai Army’s 3rd Infantry Division will join the exercise.

Training sites include Schofield Barracks, the East Range, Dillingham Army Airfield, the Kahuku Training Area and Banzai Drop Zone.

Lightning Forge prepares a brigade combat team each year for a training rotation at the U.S. Army’s Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La.

Two large-scale helicopter operations will be conducted near Dillingham Army Airfield on Wednesday and Thursday.

The Army has advised Oahu residents slow-moving military convoys could affect traffic flow.

Okinawa base shelters in place after a few positive tests

BY DAVE ORNAUER AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The U.S. military ordered personnel at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on Okinawa to shelter in place Tuesday after “several” people tested positive for the coronavirus.

The order, issued via a mass email alert by Marine Corps Installations Pacific, took effect at 2:49 p.m. and was lifted about four hours later.

Those who tested positive have been moved into isolation, along with their close contacts, according to a Marine Corps statement issued Tuesday evening. It did not say how many are infected or whether they are on active duty.

“At this time, the source of exposure is unknown,” the statement said. “Military leadership and health professionals have employed a contact tracing team to determine any additional potential exposures.”

There has been no change in the health-protection level for installations on Okinawa, which remain at “moderate” risk, according to an email from Marine spokesman 1st Lt. Timothy Hayes.

“We are taking all prudent measures to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and will continue to communicate with our forces, our families and our local Okinawan communities openly,” the Marine statement said.

The infections were announced less than a week after the Marine Corps reported its first coronavirus case on Okinawa, a family member of a Marine who tested positive July 1 after returning from the United States.

That case was the first on the island precluding the city and county of Honolulu, which remain at “moderate” risk, according to an email from Marine spokesman 1st Lt. Timothy Hayes.

“We are taking all prudent measures to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and will continue to communicate with our forces, our families and our local Okinawan communities openly,” the Marine statement said.

State Department approves sale of Ospreys to Indonesia

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The State Department has approved the sale of eight MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft to Indonesia, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency announced Monday.

The announcement comes as Japan prepares to deploy its first of 17 Ospreys to Camp Kaisan, Japan, to assist in ground Self-Defense Force airfield in Chiba Prefecture.

The total cost to Indonesia for the helicopter/airplane hybrids along with related equipment is estimated at $2 billion, the agency said in a statement.

The sale includes 24 Rolls Royce engines, infrared radars, missile warning systems, multi-band radios, airborne GPS, machine guns and various other equipment along with software, training for personnel and U.S. government and contractor engineering, logistics and technical support, the statement said.

Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation with territory spread across more than 17,000 islands, employs a large fleet of conventional military aircraft for disaster relief and in a decades-long fight against Islamic extremists. Like several other Southeast Asia nations, Indonesia claims South China Sea territory that is also claimed by China.

“This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of an important regional partner that is a force for political stability, and economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region,” the agency’s statement said. “It is vital to U.S. national interest to assist Indonesia in developing and maintaining a strong and effective self-defense capability.”

The proposed sale will enhance Indonesia’s humanitarian and disaster relief capabilities and support amphibious operations, the statement added.

Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono said during a press conference Tuesday that his nation’s first Osprey was scheduled to arrive at the base Monday, but its delivery was delayed by bad weather. The aircraft would travel to Kusarazu “hereafter” weather permitting, he said.

U.S. forces in the Far East include Air Force CV-22 Ospreys stationed at Yokota Air Base, Tokyo, and Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. The Marine Corps has flown Ospreys out of Okinawa since 2012.
Supply: Association says its nursing homes received unusable items from FEMA

FROM FRONT PAGE

During the crisis first exploded in March and April in hot spots such as New York City, the situation was so desperate that nurses turned plastic garbage bags into protective gowns. The lack of equipment forced states and hospitals to compete against each other, the federal government and other countries in a desperate, expensive bidding wars.

In general, supplies of protective gear are more robust now, and many states and major hospital chains say they are in better shape. But medical professionals and some lawmakers have cast doubt on those improvements as shortages begin to reappear.

Dr. Aisha Terry, an associate professor of emergency medicine at George Washington University in Washington, said that she has good access to PPE, but some non-academic and rural health facilities have much less.

Think over production, distribution and access has improved," Terry said. “But the fear is that we will become complacent and allow supplies to dwindle in some places.

In a letter to Congress last week, the health department in DuPage County, Ill., near Chicago, said all hospitals in the county are reusing protective gear “in ways that were not originally intended and are probably less safe than the optimal use of PPE.

The DuPage County department is a supplier of last resort that steps in when facilities have less than two weeks worth of gear. As of Monday, it had only nine days of some supplies at the current request level. A rise in new infections could make the supply go much faster.

The American Medical Association wrote to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Vice President Mike Pence and members of Congress calling for a coordinated national strategy to buy and allocate gear.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, a New York Democrat, released a memo last week ahead of a congressional committee hearing that raised concerns about looming problems in the supply chain. Her report was based on interviews with unnamed employees at medical supply companies, one of whom warned that raw material for gowns is not available at any price in the amounts needed, leading to an “unsustainable” situation.

FEMA, which manages the nation’s stockpile, would not break down which states have enough gear to last beyond the days which do not. In June, the government started replenishing its once-depleted stockpile with the goal of building up a two-month supply.

As of June 10, FEMA had distributed or directed private companies to distribute more than 74 million N95 masks and 66 million pairs of gloves, along with other gear. The agency said it changed its distribution method to send more equipment to hot spots.

Although all U.S. states and territories have received some protective gear from FEMA, an Associated Press analysis of the agency’s own data found that the amounts varied widely when measured by population and the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The AP analysis found that low-population, mostly rural states received the largest FEMA allocations per confirmed case. As of mid-June, for example, Montana received the largest amount of protective gear per case, compared with 32 items per case in Massachusetts, an early hot spot. States including California, Iowa and Nebraska, all of which have seen a surge in confirmed infections, received among the lowest amounts of protective gear from FEMA per case, according to the AP analysis.

Many states say the federal nursing homes said most items sent by FEMA in early June were unusable, including child-size gloves, surgical masks with ear loops that broke when stretched and isolation gowns with no arm openings.

A nonprofit group called #GetUsPPE was established in March by physicians to help distribute donated protective gear.

The group had a 200% increase in requests during the last two weeks of June from medical providers in Texas, a state with a big surge in confirmed virus cases. State officials there have said their supplies are adequate.

“We anticipated that we would need to be around for a few weeks until someone else stepped in and solved this problem,” said Dr. Megan Ranney, an emergency physician at Rhode Island Hospital who was among the group’s founders. “Here we are, still getting hundreds of thousands of requests a week.”

Brazil’s President Bolsonaro tests positive for COVID-19

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro said Tuesday he has tested positive for COVID-19 after months of downplaying the virus’ severity.

Bolsonaro, 65, confirmed the test results while wearing a mask and speaking to reporters in the capital, Brasilia, and said he is already taking hydroxychloroquine — an anti-malarial unproven to effectively treat COVID-19.

“I’m well, normal. I even want to take a walk around here, but I can’t due to medical recommendations,” Bolsonaro said. “I thought I had it before, given my very dynamic activity. I’m president and on the combat lines. I’ll keep on being in the middle of the people.”

The Brazilian president’s test list has often appeared in public to shake hands with supporters and mingle with crowds, at times without a mask. He has said that his history as an athlete would protect him from the virus, and that it would be nothing more than a “little flu” were he to contract it. He also repeatedly said that there is no way to prevent 70% of the population from falling ill with COVID-19, and that local authorities’ measures to shut down economic activity would ultimately cause more hardship than allowing the virus to run its course.

Bolsonaro on Tuesday repeated those sentiments, comparing the virus to a rain that will fall on most people, and that some, like the elderly, must take greater care.

“You can’t just talk about the consequences of the virus that you have to worry about. Life goes on. Brazil needs to produce. You need to get the economy in gear,” he said.

Cities and states last month lifted meeting restrictions that had been imposed to control the spread of the virus, as their statistical curves of deaths began to decline along with the occupation rate of its intensive-care units. Brazil, the world’s sixth most populous nation, with more than 210 million people, is one of the global hot spots of the pandemic.

Bolsonaro said he has canceled a trip to the northeast region that was planned for this week. He will continue working via videoconference and receive rare visitors when he needs to sign a document, he said.

The president underwent an X-ray of his lungs Monday after experiencing fever, muscle aches and malaise, he told reporters. As of Tuesday, his fever had subsided, he said, and attributed the improvement to hydroxychloroquine, which he has promised despite growing medical consensus it does not combat COVID-19. He stepped back from the journalists and removed his mask at one point to show that he looks well.
WASHINGTON — The government on Monday identified roughly $650,000 in loans and grants to small businesses and nonprofits that received taxpayer money through a federal program that was designed to soften job losses from the coronavirus but also benefited wealthy, well-connected companies and celebrities owned firms.

The Treasury Department’s Payroll Protection Program approved more than 4 million applications for the dollars and saw a greater proportion of the funds than the hard-hit restaurant and hotel industries. Many law firms and private equity companies also obtained loans.

Businesses owned by politicians also borrowed from the program, including a minor league baseball team owned by the family of the former governor of Ohio. A cable franchisee of Wendy’s, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut restaurants, whose CEO is a former donor to President Donald Trump, received loans totaling $15 to $30 million.

Other recipients included Kanye West’s clothing and sneaker brand Yeezy, Ice Cube’s professional basketball league, Planned Parenthood clinics in more than two dozen states, the nonprofit arm of the anti-tax group headed by Grover Norquist, Americans for Tax Reform, as well as Rosenblatt Securities, one of the biggest names on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

As of June 30, the program had handed out $521 billion. The Treasury Department identified just a fraction of the borrowers Monday, naming companies that get more than $150,000. Those firms made up 15% of the nearly 5 million small entities that received loans.

Sen. Chuck Schumer described the program, saying the release of the data was intended “to the truly small and underbanked small businesses.” Economists generally credit the program with helping prevent the job market meltdown from being worse. Employers added 7.5 million jobs in May and June, a solid increase that was probably driven in part by the PPP. The economy still has nearly 15 million fewer jobs than before the pandemic.

Research by the Federal Reserve found businesses with fewer than 50 workers before the pandemic saw their hiring rise by 12% in June. Those with more than 500 grew just 5% in larger firms, suggesting PPP helped fuel rehiring.

Many small businesses have already run through their PPP money and face smaller demand, as consumers are wary of returning to habits of shopping, visiting gyms, or eating out. Texas, Florida, California, New York and other states have reversed their reopenings, closing bars and dining rooms, and that he can’t keep merchandise on the shelves as buyers are using their governmental stimulus money to buy firearms, jewelry, televisions and other electronics.

Pawnshop owner Lionel Hammond said sales of his West Quincy, Mo., store have been off the charts and that he can’t keep merchandise on the shelves as buyers are using their governmental stimulus money to buy firearms, jewelry, televisions and other electronics.

“This is the time of the year we were going to be able to pull inventory and that’s not happening,” Hammond said. “It is starting to slow, but as for how long it lasts who knows,” Hammond said. “It is bound to slow. We can’t keep electronics in, especially game systems. People have been home for so long it is that they are coming in and wanting to buy a new gaming system or something to simply give them something to do,” Pigg said.

And like any other essential business, pawnshop owners and managers have made some adjustments to their storefront since mid-March to prevent the spread of the virus, including altered hours, adding hand sanitizing stations at the front door, plexiglass at the counter, and signs encouraging store patrons to maintain social distancing.

Both Pigg and Hammond say they anticipate the buying frenzy will likely stretch into mid-July as the volume of sales continues to slow.

“When I talk to my friends who own pawnshops, they all tell me the same thing — it is a buying spree like no one has seen.”

Lionel Hammond
pawn shop owner in West Quincy, Mo.
### Schools debating over how and if to reopen

**By Patrick Whittle and Carolyn Thompson**

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — School districts across the country are in the midst of making wrenching decisions over how to return to the classroom in settings radically altered by the coronavirus pandemic, with some districts running at capacity, virtual learning, outdoor classrooms and quarantine protocols for infected children.

For parents planning for the upcoming school year, taking shape by day and vary district to district, state to state. The debates have been highly emotional, with tempers flaring among parents and administrators, and have been made all the more vexing by record numbers of COVID-19 cases being reported daily.

In Florida, some school districts want students back in the classroom in early August, even though the virus is surging through communities. On average, Florida has reported more than 7,000 new cases each day recently, more than any other state.

Meanwhile, medical experts say it “strongly advocated” that children return to school.

But the debates have been filled with tension. Near Rochester, N.Y., parents rallied in favor of fully opening schools, holding signs outside an administration building June 29 saying: “No normal school? No school tax.”

Christina Higley, a parent in the Rochester suburb of Webster, said she started a Facebook group initially to demand answers and have a say in what school would look like, but the discussions turned into a movement for re-opening schools.

“We have a lot of parents that are saying, ‘Open our schools, let us have the decision if we feel comfortable sending the children in to them,’” said Higley, whose children are in kindergarten, third and fifth grade.

The decisions are even more complicated in districts where the case count is rising. In Manatee County, Fla., the working plan is for all elementary students to return to school full time on Aug. 10. Older students would rely on virtual learning while they are phased back into brick-and-mortar schools.

But that proposal isn’t set in stone amid a surge in infections. The county recorded its highest number of cases since a single day in late June.

If a student tests positive for the virus in the new school year, classrooms or whole buildings would need to be disinfected, said Mike Barber, a district spokesman. Students and staff with confirmed infections wouldn’t be able to return until they had tested negative twice.

Meanwhile, medical experts have expressed concerns for children’s development and mental health. The American Academy of Pediatrics said it “strongly advocated” that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.

In Cape Elizabeth, Maine, Shael Norris said she’s particularly concerned about children who could face abuse at home and parents who risk losing their jobs to care for their kids. Norris has two children set to attend high school in the fall and runs a nonprofit that combats sexual assault.

“There are so many equally important risks, and we’re focused entirely on COVID,” she said. “But I get it. It’s scary.”

Maine never saw a major outbreak, and it is now reporting, on average, a few dozen cases each day. Still, the state’s largest school district of Portland has let all the options on the table: a full reopening, a partial reopening or fully remote learning.

The district sent a letter to parents that said it plans to use outdoor space when possible — a solution for only a few months a year, given Maine’s weather.

In order to keep kids safe a distance apart on school buses, districts will need more vehicles — an especially thorny issue for rural districts, where students travel vast distances. New Mexico has issued guidelines that buses should be run at 50% capacity, by Nancy Marston, director of the state Department of Education.

Many districts plan to lean heavily on federal bailout money to pay for their extra transportation needs.

It’s all adding up to an anxious start to the school year.

“Nobody has really laid out a clear plan for how you’re going to keep kids safe, especially smaller kids who are not going to be able to social distance all day, and they’re going to touch things and take their mask off,” said Duncan Kirkwood, whose 9- and 11-year-old daughters attend the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo, N.Y.

### New at Saudi hajj: Bottled holy water and sterilized pebbles

**By Aya Batrawy**

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi Arabia has issued guidelines for about 1.1 million pilgrims who will be allowed to perform the hajj pilgrimage in Mecca later this month, an experience that will look vastly different from any other because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The pilgrims will be only able to touch holy water under Zamzam well in Mecca that is packaged in plastic bottles, and pebbles for casting away evil that are usually picked up by pilgrims along hajj routes will be sterilized and baged ahead of time. Pilgrims will also have to bring their own prayer rugs.

The guidelines were announced Monday as Saudi authorities prepare for a very limited hajj, which for the first time will not include pilgrims from outside the country. Instead, the kingdom that 70% of pilgrims allowed to make the pilgrimage this year will be selected from among foreign residents of Saudi Arabia and 30% would be Saudi citizens.

Saudi pilgrims will be selected from among health care workers and security personnel who have recovered from COVID-19, the health ministry said. Saudi Arabia’s health government said their selection represents a “token of appreciation for their role in providing care” during the pandemic.

Saudi Arabia has one of the Middle East’s largest outbreaks of the virus, with infection rates rising by 3,000-4,000 cases daily. More than 213,000 people have contracted the virus in the kingdom so far, including 1,968 who have died.

The new guidelines mandate that the foreign residents making this year’s pilgrimage should be between the ages of 20 and 50, and that they have not performed the hajj before. The pilgrims will have to quarantine before and after the hajj, and they will be tested for the coronavirus.

Those eligible have until Friday to submit an application through the Hajj Ministry’s website.

Saudi Arabia has dramatically scaled back the hajj due to concerns about overcrowding at the annual pilgrimage, which usually draws about 2.5 million people, saying its decision was aimed at preserving global public health.

At the hajj, the crowds move, pray and stand in extremely close proximity, often squeezed shoulder-to-shoulder, as they carry out five days of rites around Mecca. As part of the new safety measures this year, authorities said anyone participating in the hajj will not be allowed to touch the cube-shaped Kaaba, which is Islam’s holiest site and the metaphorical house of God.

Pilgrims this year will also have to wear masks, maintain physical distance during prayers and sleep in tents that follow guidelines on social distancing.

In other developments in the Middle East, Iran’s health ministry on Tuesday announced the highest single-day spike in deaths from coronavirus, with 200 new fatalities. Spokeswoman Sma Sadat Lari said that was an increase of 40 from Monday, when 160 were reported to have died of COVID-19.

She blamed the spike on large gatherings for weddings and other ceremonies, where people do not observe distancing regulations. Iran on Sunday instituted mandatory mask-wearing even as its public increasingly shrugs off the danger of the virus. Iran has reported more than 245,000 cases of the virus so far and 11,931 deaths.
Associated Press

International students will be forced to leave the United States or face deportation if their schools offer classes entirely online this fall, under new guidelines issued Monday by federal immigration authorities.

The guidelines, issued by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, provide additional pressure for universities to reopen even amid growing concerns about the spread of COVID-19 among young adults. Colleges received the guidance the same day that four institutions, including Harvard University, announced that all instruction would be offered remotely.

President Donald Trump has insisted that schools and colleges return to in-person instruction as soon as possible. The updated guidance was released, Trump repeated on Twitter that schools must “open up,” adding that “ Dominick and hand sanitizer would remain the latest “closed for political reasons, not for health reasons.”

Under the updated rules, international students must take at least some of their classes in person. New visas will not be issued to students at schools or programs that are entirely online. And even at colleges offering a mix of in-person and online courses, this fall, international students will be barred from taking all their classes online.

The American Council on Education, which represents university presidents, said the guidelines are “disappointing” and will result in confusion as schools look for ways to reopen safely.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — The number of COVID-19 patients in Alabama has risen sharply since late May, with the state seeing its highest daily count to date on Sunday, as the state’s hospital system reaches capacity.

As of Monday, the state reported 10,395 cases, an increase of 551 from the previous day. Of those cases, 630 are in rural areas, and a majority of the state’s hospital beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients.

Governor Kay Ivey issued a statement calling on all Alabamians to wear masks when out in public and to practice social distancing.

Mississippi

JACKSON — Mississippi’s Republican governor said Monday he is isolating himself after coming into contact with a member of the state House of Representatives who tested positive for the coronavirus.

In a tweet Monday, Gov. Tate Reeves said he is self-quarantining after being informed by health officials that he had been in contact with a member of the House of Representatives who tested positive for the virus.

Reeves did not identify the lawmaker. The Republican’s executive order requires all state employees to wear masks in public buildings and to practice social distancing.

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — More than 100 inmates have been infected with COVID-19 in a South Carolina prison where one inmate has already died from the disease caused by the coronavirus.

According to numbers on the website of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, 124 inmates at the Tyger River Correctional Institution have been diagnosed with the disease. That represents the largest outbreak throughout South Carolina’s prison system and about one-third of the 322 total infections reported among state prisoners as of Monday afternoon.

Thus far, 146 staff members across the agency have tested positive for the virus.

West Virginia

West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice on Monday instituted a mandatory face mask order for indoor spaces after the state reported record numbers of coronavirus cases over the weekend.

The Republican’s executive order, which goes into effect at midnight, requires everyone over the age of 9 to wear the face coverings inside buildings when social distancing isn’t possible.

New confirmed virus cases in the state have risen sharply in the last two weeks, with state health officials having reported 118 infections Saturday and 76 on Sunday, both figures topping 630 — the highest daily count in the state since the outbreak began.

Justice and his health officials have been urging West Virginians to wear masks as cases ticked up, with outbreaks linked to out-of-state tourism travel and church services. Still, the governor has stopped short of issuing a mask order, saying it would be politically divisive and difficult to enforce. On Monday, he said he could wait no longer.
Trump’s June may be November issue for GOP

By ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s June may be November issue for the Republican Party, as some House members and senators, highlight GOP worries about Trump’s conduct over the course of last year.

Even measured against the warp-speed news cycle that’s become routine under Trump, June was remarkable. He repeatedly called on the Camp David respecto of a Confederate monument, the Supreme Court ruled last month that Trump could not control his speech, or take in and synthesize emotions, or evolving, unable to regulate his emotions, moderate his responses, or even to take in and synthesize emotions.

Yet their willingness to discuss the problem, plus carefully worded assessments by Republican senators, highlighted GOP worries about the impact of Trump using June to relentlessly cater to his deeply conservative base without broadening his appeal by taking a more moderate tone.

“All elections, the political environment shapes how things come out, and sometimes you can’t control that,” No. 2 Senate Republican leader John Thune, of South Dakota, said last week. He said GOP candidates “need to do what they need to do to win. And in some states, he will be a benefit in some parts of the country. In other parts of the country, less so.”

“It’s been a little bit of a rough patch, but there’s a lot of good stuff to be talking about,” said Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., citing strong June rehiring numbers amid a revived North American trade deal. Cramer said candidates should focus on their own “family interactions” and “family events.”

The book’s back cover opens with a biting critique of the president: “Today, Donald is much as he was at three years old: incapable of growing, learning, or evolving, unable to regulate his emotions, moderate his responses, or take in and synthesize information.”

President Donald Trump holds a Bible as he visits outside St. John’s Church near the White House on June 1. Some Republicans are expressing concern about Trump’s conduct over the course of last month and its impact on their party’s ability to hold the Senate.

President sideswipes NASCAR and Black driver over flag, noose

BY JILL COLVIN AND JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — NASCAR’s layered relationship with President Donald Trump took a sharp turn Monday when Trump took a sideswipe at the racing organization for banning the Confederate flag and wrongly accused the sport’s only full-time Black driver of perpetrating “a hoax” when a crew member found a noose in the team garage stall.

Trump suggested Bubba Wallace should apologize after the sport rallied around him after the noose was found in his assigned stall at Talladega Superspeedway last June. Staff members “are toxic to mainstream Americans” and their positions “are toxic to mainstream Americans” and their positions “are toxic to mainstream Americans.”

The tweet came after Trump used a pair of Independence Day speeches to dig deeper into America’s divisions by accusing protesters who have pushed for racial justice of engaging in a “merciless campaign to wipe out our history.” The remarks served as a direct appeal to the Republican president’s political base, including many disaffected white voters, with less than four months to the November election.

Wallace responded on Twitter with a note to “the next generation of NASCAR drivers & officials who came to his aid, stood by his side, & were willing to sacrifice everything for what our country stands for. We spoke of a NASCAR that & Flag decision has caused lowest ratings EVER!”

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NATION

VA nearing historically high budget

By Steve Beynon
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is one step closer to securing its largest budget in history at more than $250 billion, continuing a trend of the government’s second-largest agency expanding rapidly in size to support a growing and aging veterans population.

House Appropriations subcommittee members Monday forwarded a bill funding and aging veterans population. House Appropriations subcommittee members Monday forwarded a bill funding and aging veterans population. House Appropriations subcommittee members Monday forwarded a bill funding and aging veterans population.

The funding proposal boosts virtually all of the department’s many services and priorities of VA Secretary Robert Wilkie and Capitol Hill: suicide prevention, women’s health care and a $1.1 billion boost to implement the agency’s troubled health records system.

“The [military construction]/VA bill includes historic spending for women veterans, mental health, suicide prevention, medical research and homeless prevention, while closely monitoring VA claims processing and system modernization,” said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., chairwoman of the subcommittee on military construction, veterans affairs, and related agencies.

VA is one of the only federal agencies not getting a budget cut and it is the only Cabinet department eyeing a double-digit budget boost — 14%, according to Trump’s proposed budget.

The proposed budget is Trump’s fourth time requesting an increase for the VA, continuing a pattern set by previous administrations with little significant pushback from Congress. The agency’s budget has increased consistently since the beginning of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. In 2001, the budget was $48 billion.

“The over the last decade, the VA’s budget has more than doubled — far outpacing the growth in patients and beneficiaries,” said Darin Selnick, a senior adviser for Concerned Veterans of America, a conservative veterans advocacy group. “Additionally, the VA has added nearly 30,000 employees in the past five years — making it larger than the active-duty United States Navy in terms of personnel.”

Selnick said money is “merely a talking point” for lawmakers and the VA needs to become more efficient, suggesting an audit “would be a good place to start.”

The cash flow into VA’s mammoth electronic health record modernization continues to be a concern after a series of delays. The overhaul of the VA’s system is designed to permit the VA to share Defense Department medical records of transitioning service members and ease the burden on veterans to prove service-connected injuries and illnesses.

The new system was also created to allow the VA to share information easily with private-sector health care providers who treat veterans as more veterans are able to seek care outside the VA with federal funding.

The VA’s budget still has a long way to go before being finalized, including a compromise budget negotiated by House and Senate lawmakers and a full vote from each chamber.

Here are some of the highlights of what the House Appropriations subcommittee bill includes:

- $10.3 billion for mental health care, an increase of $865 million from the 2020 enacted level and $40 million more than Trump’s budget request.
- $661 million for gender-specific care for women, an increase of $76 million from the 2020 enacted level, and $35 million more than Trump’s budget proposal.
- $1.9 billion for homeless assistance programs, an increase of $81 million from the 2020 enacted level, and $40 million more than Trump’s budget request.
- $504 million for opioid abuse prevention, an increase of $102 million from the 2020 enacted level and $50 million more than Trump’s budget request.
- $840 million for medical and prosthetic research, an increase of $40 million from the 2020 enacted level, and $50 million more than Trump’s budget request.
- $2.6 billion to continue implementation of the VA Electronic Health Record System, an increase of $1.1 billion from the 2020 enacted level and equal to Trump’s budget request. The bill also continues Government Accountability Office oversight of the program to ensure the EHR system is implemented in a timely manner.
- $1.8 billion for VA construction, an increase of $1.39 billion from the 2020 enacted level and equal to Trump’s budget request.

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Nicknamed 75 memories with Stars and Stripes Pacific

Your photos/stories will appear on the Stars and Stripes Pacific 75th Anniversary Website, 75.stripes.com.
Russian space adviser charged with treason

Associated Press

MOSCOW — An adviser to the director of Russia's state space corporation has been detained on treason charges, the nation's top security agency said Tuesday.

Ivan Safronov, a former journalist who served as an adviser to Roscosmos head Dmitry Rogozin, was detained in Moscow by agents of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the main KGB successor agency.

The FSB said that Safronov is accused of relaying sensitive data to a spy agency of an unspecified NATO member. He could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Roscosmos claimed that the charges didn't relate to Safronov's work for the corporation, which he joined in May. Prior to that, Safronov worked as a correspondent for the top business daily Kommersant for nearly a decade until 2019, and after that worked for a year for another business daily, Vedomosti.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Safronov's detention isn't related to his activities as a journalist. Last year, the FSB reportedly opened an inquiry following Safronov's article that claimed that Russia had signed a contract with Egypt for the delivery of sophisticated Su-35 fighter jets. Kommersant later removed the report from its website, and no charges were filed.

“Six of the containers were intended as cells in which people could be tied up and one container was intended as a torture chamber,” Andy Kraag, head of the police's National Investigation Service, said in a video released by police, adding that the police operation “prevented a number of violent crimes.”

A search of the containers uncovered bags containing tools including hedge cutters, scalpels and pliers.

A court in Amsterdam ordered the six suspects held for 90 days as investigations continue.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Dutch police arrested six men after discovering sea containers that had been converted into a makeshift prison and soundproofed “torture chamber” complete with a dentist's chair, tools including pliers and scalpels and handcuffs, a high ranking officer announced Tuesday.

Authorities said police conducted the raid before the torture chamber could be used and alerted potential victims, who went into hiding.

The grisly discovery was made last month by officers investigating leads generated by data from encrypted phones used by criminals that were cracked recently by French police. Detectives in Britain and the Netherlands have already arrested hundreds of suspects based on the encrypted messages.

Tuesday's announcement gave a chilling insight into the increasingly violent Dutch criminal underworld, which is involved in the large-scale production and trafficking of drugs.

Dutch police said last week that their investigations, code-named 26Lemont, based on millions of messages from the EncroChat phones, had led to the arrest of more than 100 suspects and seizure of more than 17,600 pounds of cocaine and 2,600 pounds of crystal meth as well as the dismantling of 19 synthetic drugs labs and seizure of dozens of firearms.

On June 22, Dutch national police force officers arrested six men on suspicion of crimes including preparing kidnappings and serious assault. Detectives also discovered the seven converted sea containers in a warehouse in Wouwse Plantage, a village in the southwest, close to the border with Belgium, according to a statement released Tuesday.

They were tipped off by messages from an EncroChat phone including photos of the container and dentist's chair with belts attached to the arm and foot supports. The messages called the warehouse the “treatment room” and the “ebi,” a reference to a top security Dutch prison. The messages also revealed identities of potential victims, who were warned and went into hiding, police said.

Video released by the police showed a heavily armed arrest team blasting open a door at the warehouse and discovering the improvised prison. Another armed team detained a suspect in Rotterdam.

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**American Roundup**

**TN** FRANKLIN — A dog in Tennessee became a hero on the Fourth of July by alerting her owner to a house fire next door.

Roux, a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois, woke her owner Jeff LeCates with "frantic and unusual barks" Saturday night, a Franklin Fire Department press release said.

When LeCates opened his door to investigate, Roux burst out and LeCates saw his neighbor’s home on fire, officials said.

LeCates banged on their door, waking the family of three and their pets, and then used a garden hose on the fire until firefighters arrived. No one in the home was injured.

**SC** OKATIE — A South Carolina woman is being treated for injuries after being attacked by an alligator in her neighborhood.

The 75-year-old woman was trimming plants near the edge of a pond in her gated community in the Okatie area Friday night when a 10-foot alligator latched onto her leg and pulled her into the water, according to the Department of Natural Resources.

Spokesman David Lucas said that a man passing by on a golf cart jumped into the water to help the woman, and the alligator briefly pulled both of them underwater.

According to Lucas, the woman has already undergone one surgery after suffering several fractures to her leg as well as lacerations. Authorities said the alligator had been killed and would undergo a necropsy.

**OH** DAYTON — A man angry that a fireworks exploded near his apartment complex shot at the man who set it off, authorities said, sparking a standoff that lasted for several hours.

The shooting in Dayton occurred early Monday. The shots struck a car but did not hit any people, authorities said, and no injuries were reported.

After firing the shots, the shooter returned to his apartment. Police were called to the complex, and about six hours later, the man was taken into custody. Charges have not been announced and he has not been identified.

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas’ McCarran International Airport will receive federal funding to help with improvements.

The Las Vegas Review Journal reported Sunday that the nation’s eighth-busiest airport will get $17 million in grant money for upgrades. It’s part of $800 million in infrastructure spending being doled out to airports nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Airport spokesman Chris Jones said the funds will help with repairing the surface of an aircraft parking area as well as refurbishing a nearby gate for ground vehicles.

**MD** SALISBURY — A man is facing criminal charges for riding one of the wild horses at a national park where the Maryland herd of feral animals is protected.

National Park Service spokeswoman Kelly Taylor told news outlets that charges were filed against the man, but she didn’t release his name or specify the charges.

The Salisbury Daily Times reported Sunday that a video of the man riding a horse on Assateague Island circulated on social media.

Taylor said the man faces a possible fine of up to $5,000 and a maximum of six months in jail if he is convicted.

**FL** CLEARWATER — Lightning struck two people Sunday afternoon as a line of storms from the Gulf of Mexico moved onto Clearwater Beach, police said.

**SD** HARRISBURG — Firefighters in Harrisburg responded to a house fire started by fireworks, authorities reported Sunday.

No one was hurt in the fire that damaged one home, the Argus Leader reported.

Lincoln County Emergency Management coordinator Harold Timmerman said that the homeowners told fire investigators they had doused discharged fireworks near their home with water earlier that night.

But Timmerman said it appears one of the fireworks ignited and went off near the house.

Firefighters were called to the scene around 2 a.m. Sunday and fought the fire for several hours. County authorities also responded to a barn fire set off by a bottle rocket firework Saturday night.

No one was injured in that fire either.

**IL** JOLIET — More than 700 nurses at Amita Health St. Joseph Medical Center Joliet went on strike Saturday morning after negotiations between the hospital and the nurses union failed to result in a contract.

One of the main sticking points in the negotiations is the union’s contention that the nursing staffing levels are too low to keep the nurses safe.

The strike comes after Amita Health, which has 19 hospitals in Illinois, issued a statement that said it would bring in other licensed nurses during a strike to prepare to have ambulances bypass the hospital if necessary and cancel nonurgent surgeries.

In an email Saturday to the Chicago Tribune, a spokesman for Amita Health said a “minimum number” of patients had been transferred to Amita Health Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale prior to the strike.

The nurses union, the Illinois Nurses Association, has been in negotiations with Amita Health since February and the nurses have been working without a contract since May 9.

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**Space in the sand**

People are flocking back to the Jersey Shore, as coronavirus-related restrictions are being eased and temperatures are climbing. Visitors to Monmouth Beach, N.J., on Sunday had plenty of room to keep physical distance while lounging in the sand and playing in the surf.

**Eric Carvin/AP**

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**700 nurses at hospital strike over pay, safety**

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**The Census**

The number of people injured in a shooting in a Pennsylvania home. Authorities said Mark Ivie Jr., 20, and another man had fought after midnight Sunday near Ivie’s Ephrata home. Authorities said at their home, Mark Ivie Sr., 43, gave a rifle to Ivie Jr., who then shot at six people. The man Ivie fought with was among those he shot at, but it wasn’t clear if that man was among the wounded. Ivie Jr. is charged with six counts each of attempted homicide, aggravated assault and conspiracy. His bail was set at $1 million. The elder Ivie faces six counts each of aggravated assault and conspiracy. His bail was set at $750,000.

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**From wire reports**
Projects old and new

Shaggy rerelease, Charlene Theron, Dalai Lama featured this week

By The Associated Press

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

“The Old Guard”: The summer movie season may be nonexistent this year, but Netflix had a pinch-hitter ready to stream: “The Old Guard.”

Available Friday, this comic book adaptation stars Charlize Theron as the leader of a group of ancient immortals who have found another teammate in a soldier played by KiKi Layne (“If Beale Street Could Talk”). It’s directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, who also helmed “Love & Basketball” and “Beyond the Lights.”

“Palm Springs”: If a rom-com is more your speed, there’s also “Palm Springs,” on Hulu on Friday, starring Andy Samberg and Cristin Milioti as wedding guests who find themselves caught in a time loop. The sunny pic caused a stir a earlier this year when it broke the Sundance Film Festival acquisition record by 69 cents.

“Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets”: Blurring the line between documentary and fiction, filmmaker brothers Bill and Turner Ross (“Western”) turn their camera on a group of people in a Las Vegas dive bar the day after Donald Trump’s election. The filmmakers rented the space, recruited the patrons and told them all to pretend that the bar was closing at the end of the night. But the alcohol is real, the conversations unexpected and the result, available to rent Friday, is filmmaking magic.

Music

The Dalai Lama: To commemorate his 85th birthday on July 6, the Dalai Lama is releasing his first-ever album. The 11-track “Inner World” features teachings and mantras by the Tibetan spiritual leader set to music. Grammy-nominated sitar player Anoushka Shankar makes a guest appearance on the album, playing on “Ama La,” a track honoring mothers.

Television

Viewers seeking to stir their hearts and minds should consider Netflix’s “Stateless,” set in an immigration detention center in the Australian desert. Co-created and produced by Cate Blanchett, the six-part drama out Wednesday brings together an unlikely group of strangers, including an air-line steward running away from a cult, a family of Afghan refugees and a bureaucrat attempting to contain a national scandal. The story’s goal, as Blanchett described it, is to illustrate the global displacement crisis and “how we’re being separated from our humanity.”

Muscles and grit developed at work, not with a personal trainer, are put to the test in CBS’ “Tough as Nails,” a competition series debuting Wednesday. A farmer, roofer and iron worker are among those testing their mental and physical prowess in job-site challenges. The series is hosted and produced by Phil Keoghan (“The Amazing Race”).

Other news

Venice Film Festival organizers said Tuesday that they are pushing forward with September plans for its 77th installment, which will include a slightly reduced number of films in the main competition as well as some outdoor and virtual screenings. If the stay-at-homes' film festival extends, it will be the first major film festival since COVID-19 essentially shut down the industry in mid-March. There will still be 50 to 55 films in the official selection, which will be announced on July 28.

RosettaBooks announced Tuesday that it had acquired the memoir of the late Sargent Shriver, the Peace Corps’ founding director and an architect of President Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” Shriver worked on the memoir, “We Called It a War,” in the late 1960s and it was only recently rediscovered. The 348-page book is scheduled for January. Shriver was the husband of President John F. Kennedy’s sister, Eunice.

Former Kazahian frontman Tom Melghan was sentenced to 200 hours of unpaid work after pleading guilty Tuesday at Leicester Magistrates’ Court in England to assaulting his former fiancée.
OPINION

High court cupcake Voting Rights Act for 2020

By NOAH FELDMAN
Bloomberg Opinion

In a moment of deep uncertainty about making the 2020 presidential election work, the U.S. Supreme Court has struck a blow for stability and common sense. In a 9-0 decision, the court held that states cannot have the power for members of the Electoral College to vote for the candidate their state has pledged to support — and to punish them if they try to break the pledge.

The decision is important because it will help avoid an election disaster in which a few voters try to thwart the will of the people. More fundamentally, the decision shows that the Supreme Court is recognizing the importance of our electoral system, which are supposed to be about majoritarian democracy, notwithstanding the quirks and quirky features inherited from the men who wrote the Constitution over 230 years ago.

When an outcome greatly supports one of the parties, it can be easy to forget why the issue is important enough to make it to the court in the first place. In the faileless electron case that lies at the heart of the justices had to weigh in is an equilibrium in the Electoral College system.

With the coming a system for presidential elections, the framers could have told state legislatures to select the states’ preferences to Washington, D.C., to be counted. Instead, however, the framers devised the idea of an Electoral College made up of actual human beings, each with one vote, all of whom meet in their respective states and send their votes to Washington. (The name “Electoral College” makes it sound like all the people that sign on one place, but they don’t, and never have.)

Because the electors are selected indi-vidually, a few of them over the years have entertained the idea that they, not the voters who chose them, should be able to decide for whom the state will cast the ballots. After all, they say, they are “electors” — so they should be free to do the electing.

The return of “faithless electors” would make a mockery of the idea that presidential elections are democratic at all. It’s bad enough that the Electoral College system isn’t purely majoritarian as it currently functions. Allowing electors to ignore their promises and follow their own agendas would introduce a huge element of randomness into a presidential election system that already occasionally thwarts the will of the majority.

Justice Elena Kagan, joined by six of her colleagues, held that Article II of the Constitution resolves the issue by stating that the states choose the electors “in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct.” That language, she held, gives broad discretion to the state legislature to figure out how it will choose electors, and that authority logically allows states to direct the electors to vote according to the state's will, or to sanction them if they do not; and to replace them with different electors who will do the job right. There are 15 states that already have such laws in place. It would be good for the other 35 to follow suit.

Justice Clarence Thomas, joined by Jus-tice Neil Gorsuch, agreed with the result. He, however, held that states’ right to choose electors is an inherent sovereign right of the states to dissolve the bonds of the union.

For now, however, the good news is that Thomas and Kagan are not feeling so radical as to invite a disruption of the presidential election by random electors who might hope to hijack the process.

The Electoral College system is wildly outdated. It needs repairs. But when you have an old Constitution like ours, sometimes the best thing you can do is leave one to bring the old one into the shop and have expert mechanics do their best to help it run safely.

On Monday the justices acted like good, skilled mechanics. Here’s hoping the old jalopy can get us through the November 2020 election — and already have such laws in place. It might be good for the other 35 to follow suit. Noahn Feldman is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and former professor of law at Columbia Law School. His column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Which do you prefer: Trump’s agenda or Biden’s?

By HUGH HEWITT
Special to The Washington Post

The best commentators on the presidential candidates are other partisans — and that includes about 99% of all reporters, hosts, analysts, in my view — should nonetheless be aware of people on the other side. The goal of each coalition backing either President Donald Trump or former Vice President Joe Biden.

I will be voting for Trump. He believes in the Constitution, as proved most obvi-ously by his two Supreme Court justices and 53 federal circuit court judges.

Trump will continue his military build-up, especially his expansion of the Navy, where he aims to reach 355 ships. Trump has confronted the Chinese Communist Party on its numerous crimes in a way no president has since the bilateral thaw begun by Mao Zedong and President Rich-arld Nixon in 1972, and yet is willing to deal with its hard-line leadership short of war. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo almost daily articulates and advances Trump’s understanding of the new Cold War with China we find ourselves in. If there is any deep divide between Republican and Democrats, it has been revealed by Robert O’Brien, in which the president’s national security adviser declared, “The Chinese Communist Party is a criminal Leninist organization. The Party General Secretary Xi Jinping sees himself as Josef Stalin.”

Attorney General William Barr is a deeply intelligent, experienced and re-lentless force for the rule of law. Trump’s supporters hope he oversees the rapid con-cussion of U.S. Attorney John Durham’s investigation into the interference with the peaceful transition of power after Trump’s successful 2016 win and a clear challenge to a government of those who refuse to honor the people’s votes.

Trump has pushed through a massive de-regulatory agenda to create jobs, expand his supporters want more of this shrinking of federal control.

The rancor in the country rests on many pillars. He is genuinely personable and amiable, a calm and welcoming presence. Many of his supporters simply yawn for an era of “amicable good neighbor” relations.

Biden’s supporters want taxes raised, significantly, to build infrastructure and to raise up long undervalued Americans. Biden will defend and expand President Barack Obama’s signature legislative achievement in health care. Biden judges will almost cer-tainly see nothing wrong with the return of race-based rewards or in limiting the newly invigorated “Free Exercise” clause. Democrats will have an old Constitution like ours, some-thing that did not come into existence until the granddaddy of all states-rights arguments, Thomas’ could expect to hijack the process.

But this view is a little worrisome. The presidential election is a federal undertak-ing and must be separated from the State. Presiden-}
O nce the course of our careers in the intelligence community — years marked by dismantled Republican and Democratic administrations — we regularly briefed presidents on intelligence matters. Knowing how often we did so, walking into the Oval Office or the White House Situation Room was a serious and solemn experience. Our job was to explain the analysis and the situation in an objective way as possible so that the president could make the best decision possible to protect the United States, our allies and our interests.

We had the easy job. We had only to present intelligence, which meant to explain it by definition imperfect in countless ways, and advise. The harder job — making the ultimate decision — was one of our president’s. And the big decisions, the ones that could have lasting effects on people across the globe, were far from easy. In fact, most times we knew no one was ever going to ask us to judge the CIA’s work. “We never get asked questions that would provide the clarity or certainty of a 9 or 10.”

First, on critical issues is almost always unclear. In fact, if we had applied the administration’s apparent standard for certainty before we briefed a president, we could have remained the Daily Brief the Annual Brief, given how infrequently we would meet that lofty, unreasonable certainty. As an engaged executive branch, we would have never asked to judge the CIA’s work. “We never get asked questions that would provide the clarity or certainty of a 9 or 10.”

Second, it was often the very uncertainty of the intelligence — dissenting views from various agencies, difficult questions regarding reliability and the challenge of collecting additional intelligence — that demanded presidential attention. In our experience, the intelligence community had a sacred responsibility to alert policymakers to potentially significant intelligence and for them to make the ultimate responsibility to act and would need time to think through the options, and because decisions about how to gain a clearer intelligence picture often themselves posed difficult choices.

Consider, for example, the raid that brought justice to Osama bin Laden. Although many now speculate that this was an easy call by President Barack Obama, it was not. Obama was faced with uncertain and conflicting intelligence and was forced to decide based on imperfect — and sometimes competing — acts. Rather than eschewing a decision, the president embraced this uncertainty, stood up to his responsibility and decided, knowing the risks associated with doing so.

We saw President George W. Bush and other presidents before him tackle the same types of uncertainty because they knew — as Harry Truman so clearly expressed — where the buck stopped. Not to decide, was a decision, and a tough one. The president had to decide who was the right person to make the decision and then whether to sit back and wait or force the decision with imperfect — and sometimes conflicting — intelligence. We had the luxury of sitting back and waiting. Unfortunately, we often were not so lucky.

In our view, this makes no sense.

And so, we ask: If we could not make the decision, who could? Who among our president’s list of worries?

Uncertainty is part of the process of briefing a president.

BY MICHAEL LEITER, Michael Hayden and ROBERT CARDILLO
Special to The Washington Post

Michael Leiter was director of the National Counterterrorism Center from 2007 to 2011. Michael Hayden was CIA director from 2006 to 2009. Robert Cardillo was director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency from 2014 to 2019.
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 School support orgs.
5 String after E
8 Loyal
12 “Money —
everything!”
13 Kanga’s kid
14 Spanish greeting
15 Sweet snacks on sticks
17 Billions of years
18 Friend of Porthos
19 Like skim milk
21 Plopped down
22 “A likely story!”
23 Do sum work?
26 Shriner’s cap
28 Eagle’s descent
31 Profound
33 Quarterback
35 Pesky email
36 Clinic
38 Chest muscle
40 Fourth-yr. students
41 Historic Scott
43 Highland hat
45 Place of prayer
49 Swiss currency
51 Dove calls
52 Hotel personnel
54 Calendar entry (Abbr.)
55 Prefix with athlete

DOWN
1 Elite alternative
2 Despot
3 “Diana” singer
4 Rose parts
5 Iced, as a cupcake
6 Republicans
7 Egypt’s Mubarak
8 Huey Lewis and —
9 Runways for Santa
10 Radius neighbor
11 Sunrise direction
12 Chanteuse Edith
20 Drs. that deliver
23 Billboards
24 Actress Ruby
25 Morning moisture
27 Microwave
29 Crew tool
30 Downing St. VIPs
32 Stocklers
33 “The Crown” provider
37 Corral
38 Astronomer
39 Sagan
42 Unpaid bills
43 Taj —
44 Swindle
46 Great expectation
48 Alaskan city
49 Tax prep pros
50 Bygone fillers
51 Historic period

Across to Previous Puzzle

Answer to Previous Puzzle

7-8 CRYPTOQUIP

G X S K U - V G U K W B N B Q E B
P X R Q B M D S H R K B N K B S K U
W H N M P K U X F X D K
X D B K O F K D B X M D: E T T M V D B N
G O E H E W S K .

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: IF A VENDOR SAYS “HAVE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU!” I GUESS THAT’S A PROPOSITIONAL PHRASE.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: S equals L
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NEW YORK — WNBA players will wear uniforms for the opening weekend of the season featuring Breonna Taylor’s name when the league begins play later this month.

Players will also wear warmups that read “Black Lives Matter” on the front and “Say Her Name” on the back throughout the season, the league and players’ union announced Monday. Also, the phrase “Black Lives Matter” will be featured prominently on the courts where the teams practice and play.

Taylor, a 26-year-old Black emergency medical technician, was shot eight times by plainclothes officers after police entered her apartment with a no-knock warrant. Her family and protesters around the country are demanding the officers who killed Taylor face criminal charges.

“Breonna Taylor’s name should be a name that is very familiar to all of us,” WNBPA President Cathy Engelbert said. “It is a name that we see promoting on the courts where our teams practice and play. It is a name that is very familiar to our players. It is a name that is very familiar to our fans. We want to make sure that her name is prominently displayed on court and that her name is on our warmups.”

Taylor died in March, one of the 108 Black people who were killed by police officers in 2020 as rapidly changing dynamics of a form of limitations,” Brown said. “And if I’m not going to play, I’m not going to be able to shed light and speak on something bigger than myself. I’m going to be able to stand in front of a million people and be able to take social justice causes. Those initiatives will include paint “Black Lives Matter” on the walls of the Wide World of Sports. And while players who decided to opt out of playing in Orlando won’t be paid for the games they missed, they won’t face discipline from their teams.

“At the end of the day, Black Lives Matter and Black athletes lives matter as well,” Brown said. “I respect any guy’s decision. My decision was to play just because I felt like it’s bigger than me and it’s bigger than my family and it’s bigger than all of us. People have died for the opportunity to be able to shed light and speak on certain causes. The least I could do is play basketball.”

But Brown also is in agreement with Philadelphia 76ers forward Mike Scott that the NBA’s plan to only allow players to choose messages from a league-approved list is disappointing.

“Think that list is an example of a form of limitations,” Brown said. “I think we should be able to express our struggle just a little bit more.”

FC Dallas withdraws from MLS tournament

By Anne M. Peterson

FC Dallas has withdrawn from the MLS is Back tournament in Florida after 10 players tested positive for coronavirus.

The league said Monday that of the 537 players assed at a pair of Walt Disney World hotels, 13 have tested positive: 10 from Dallas, two from Nashville and one from Columbus. Additionally, a Dallas coach also tested positive.

“The decision to have them not participate in the tournament is in the best interests of everyone, of the Dallas players and the other 25 teams, and allows us to continue to manage the health and safety of our players while continuing to go forward with our plan,” MLS Commissioner Don Garber told The Associated Press in a telephone interview on Monday.

Apart from the health and safety aspect, the number of positive cases also meant that Dallas could not go forward with its plans to host matches in Florida.

With Dallas’ withdrawal, Major League Soccer was revising a new schedule for the monthlong tournament, to be played without fans at ESPN’s Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney World.

The tournament is still set to open Wednesday with a nationally televised match between Orlando City and Columbus Crew SC. FC Dallas announced last week that six players had tested positive upon arrival in Florida for the tournament, and the entire team was quarantined. Subsequent tests found four more players infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

The league said no other team was in contact with the FC Dallas delegation. Details on when FC Dallas will return to competitive play was also on Monday, LAFC forward Carlos Vela opted out of the tournament out of concerns for his wife, who is expecting their second child.

“I always want to give everything I have to my club, our fans and supporters and the city of L.A.,” Vela said in a statement. “However, it is in the best interest of the health of my family to stay home and be with my wife during what is a risky pregnancy.”

PGA, Memorial change course on spectators

The PGA Tour and the Memorial acrrored state-approved plans to have limited spectators next week because of what it described as rapidly changing dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PGA, hosted by Jack Nicklaus at his Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio, was in line to be the first tournament to open Wednesday with spectators since the NBA paused its season on March 11.

From encouraging young athletes to take COVID-19 seriously, to driving 15 hours from Boston in May to lead a protest march in the days after the release of the video of George Floyd’s death in Minneapolis, Brown has actively used social media to raise awareness on several fronts to his more than 1.6 million followers on Twitter and Instagram.

While he said Monday that he initially considered not playing in Orlando because of the pandemic and family concerns, he ultimately decided the opportunity to amplify his voice on the NBA’s worldwide stage won out.

“Once I thought about the opportunity that the organization and the NBA presented to play for something bigger than myself, I was signed up,” he said.

“I plan on using my voice while I’m down there. I plan on spreading light on things that are getting dimmed and hopefully the NBA and our organization can understand.”

Brown’s heavily involved with the players association as a member of the executive committee and said he’s encouraged by the open dialogue among players and the NBA leadership’s attentiveness to the union’s concerns. That has included allowing an option for players to opt out of playing in Orlando.

Lakers guard Avery Bradley and Brooklyn Nets’ Kyrie Irving, who have been vocal leaders of a players’ coalition that has sought to keep a focus on social justice and racial equality issues, are among a handful of players who are sitting out the Orlando restart. Bradley’s comments were because of concerns for his son with a history of respiratory illnesses and his personal belief in the NBA’s current plan.

Last month the league announced a pledge to devote resources to helping players promote social justice causes. Those initiatives will include paint “Black Lives Matter” on the walls of the Wide World of Sports. And while players who decided to opt out of playing in Orlando won’t be paid for the games they missed, they won’t face discipline from their teams.

“‘At the end of the day, Black Lives Matter and Black athletes lives matter as well,” Brown said. “I respect any guy’s decision. My decision was to play just because I felt like it’s bigger than me and it’s bigger than my family and it’s bigger than all of us. People have died for the opportunity to be able to shed light and speak on certain causes. The least I could do is play basketball.”

But Brown also is in agreement with Philadelphia 76ers forward Mike Scott that the NBA’s plan to only allow players to choose messages from a league-approved list is disappointing.

“Think that list is an example of a form of limitations,” Brown said. “I think we should be able to express our struggle just a little bit more.”
JR Smith, happy to be back in game, lands with Lakers

By Greg Beacham
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — JR Smith was not ready to wrap up his 15-year NBA career when he left the Cleveland Cavaliers in late 2018, and the ensuing 20 months were not much fun for the veteran shooter.

“I went through a very depressed state for a long time,” Smith said Monday. “I’m a big video gamer, (but) I didn’t even play (NBA) 2K anymore. I don’t want to hoop, I don’t want to work out, I don’t want to play 2K, I don’t want do anything with basketball.”

Thanks to a call from the Los Angeles Lakers, Smith is getting another shot on basketball’s biggest stage. He joined the Western Conference leaders for workouts last week before they headed to Florida for the conclusion of the NBA season.

The 34-year-old Smith was added to the roster because Lakers starter Avery Bradley declined to return for the rest of the NBA season.

For Los Angeles before the season started, a champion, for him to have his shot, a small forward, a defender, a shooter.

“I was gone for a while,” Smith said. “Being somebody who has been around the league predominately for most of their adult life, when that’s taken away from you, it kind of gives you that culture shock. You obviously don’t understand what you’ve lost until it’s gone. I just want to appreciate the moment for what it is, and whether it be next year or never again, I just want to enjoy every possible moment that I got.”

Smith tried out for the Lakers in February when they had another roster spot available, but the team chose veteran Dion Waiters for that slot. Waiters never got to play for Los Angeles before the season was suspended, and now both veterans are headed to Orlando with the Lakers.

Coach Frank Vogel was impressed by the way Smith kept himself in shape despite being without a team for an extended period.

“I think this is really a great story,” Vogel said. “When you look at a guy who could potentially be out of the league and was a starter on a Finals team a couple years back, a champion, for him to have the perseverance to stay ready and give himself this opportunity, I think is to be commended.”

“It’s too soon to tell whether Smith will get significant playing time behind Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Alex Caruso, who are likely to fill the majority of Bradley’s minutes.

But Smith’s particular set of skills is exactly what the Lakers sought — particularly his career 37.3% shooting on three-pointers.

With James setting up Anthony Davis as their primary scoring option, the Lakers have plenty of opportunities for well-spaced shooters to get open looks.

“Hey, his nickname is ‘Swish’ for a reason, right?” Vogel said of Smith. “He’s a shot-maker, a big-time shot-maker. I think he’s really going to help us.”

Smith is also uncommonly familiar with James, and he knows what to do when LeBron’s competitiveness ramps up in the post-season. Smith and James have played together for years in the NBA’s most difficult situations.

“There’s people that are not going to know how to deal with it,” Smith said of James’ competitiveness. “It comes off in the wrong way sometimes, and you need that bridge as a player to be able to go to the next player and be like, ‘Listen man, it’s nothing personal. (It’s not about) who was right, who was wrong.’ It’s just a good balance, I think, between myself and him, because he knows just as well he can challenge anybody else, I’ll challenge him, and vice versa.”

NBA’s faith in Orlando restart will be tested

By Dan Woike
Los Angeles Times

Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey is wearing some of the effects of the NBA’s shutdown all over his face. With the kind of beard you’d expect to see on someone cast away on a remote island and talking to a volleyball, Morey has his anxieties concerning what’s to come for the league.

Teams are making their way to Orlando, Fla., for the NBA restart over a three-day span beginning Tuesday when training camps can begin in preparation for re-opening day July 30.

Positive tests for COVID-19 continue to register. Some teams have closed their practice facilities. And for people such as Morey, who doesn’t know for sure whether his 6-foot-9 Rockets coach Mike D’Antoni will be cleared to participate, it’s a critical time.

Still, all things considered, the wild-bearded exec has faith. It’s why he’ll be on one of those planes.

“I think it would be pretty bad to ask the players to do something that I’m not doing,” he said during a Zoom call Monday. “I do feel comfortable that we have the best plan in a tough situation. Does that make the situation perfect? No. But I do think a lot of work has been put into this.

“I think it would be pretty bad to ask the players to do something that I’m not doing,” he said during a Zoom call Monday. “I do feel comfortable that we have the best plan in a tough situation. Does that make the situation perfect? No. But I do think a lot of work has been put into this.

“I think every day there’s new info and you have to make the best decision based on that info. As I talk to you right now, I think we’re on the right path, on the right plan,” Morey said. “But I think every day, there’s new in formation. We’ll see what comes in the future. If anyone is certain about anything right now, I think they’re making a mistake.”

Teams will travel either by chartered plane or bus. All passengers must have tested negative throughout the league’s testing. If they have returned a positive test, the passengers must have satisfied the league criteria to rejoin their teams. If a passenger is presenting any COVID-19 symptoms or lives with someone who has or recently had the virus or symptoms, they will not be allowed to travel with their teams.

Passengers will be directed to clean their hands before and after the security screening process and will undergo a temperature and symptoms check before boarding. They also will be asked to wear masks for the trip.

On the plane, passengers will be spread out with as many empty seats and rows between them as possible. Food and drinks will all be prepackaged, if there is service.

After landing, two buses and a luggage truck will await a team, with the drivers wearing masks. As the team arrives on campus, everyone must either wash or sanitize their hands.

After checking in, everyone must quarantine in their hotel rooms for up to 48 hours (or until each traveler passes two coronavirus tests more than 24 hours apart).

“Just stretch and watch Netflix,” New Orleans Pelicans guard Lonzo Ball said about the quarantine. “There’s really not much more you can do — try to get my series in.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Players who tested positive for the coronavirus between June 23 and June 29.

Teams of the 22 in the restart that have closed practice facilities after hearing of positive tests.

Hours teams must quarantine in their hotel rooms after arriving in Orlando, Fla.

Source: Los Angeles Times
The NHL is in position to resume playing in less than a month — with 24 teams in action, all in Canada — and could be on the verge of enjoying labor peace through 2026.

The National Hockey League and the NHL Players’ Association on Monday announced a tentative deal on a return-to-play plan, training camps would open immediately to its expanded 24-team playoff format, with play starting in Edmonton, Alberta, for the qualifications rounds once the NHL season resumes on Aug. 1.

The agreements need two-thirds approval by owners. If approved, the four-year extension of the collective bargaining agreement could pave the way for NHL players to return to the Olympics. The NHL participated in five consecutive Olympics from 1998-2014 before skipping the 2018 games in South Korea.

The AP. The salary cap will remain at $81.5 million for at least next season, the person said, also speaking only on the condition of anonymity because the details have not been released.

Escrow payments to owners to even out hockey-related revenue at $50/50 would be capped at 20% next season, with the cap decreasing throughout the deal, the second person said. If owners are still owed money from the players, the CBA would be extended for an additional season. Escrow has been one of the biggest complaints of players in the past several years.

The agreements need two-thirds approval by owners. On the union side, the agreement must first be approved by a majority of the NHLPA’s 31-member executive committee before going to a vote to the full membership.

Should the league push ahead, the matchups are already known: The top four teams in each conference (Boston, Tampa Bay, Washington and Philadelphia in the East and St. Louis, Colorado, Vegas and Dallas in the West) play a handful of round-robin games to determine seeding.

Those top seeds then face the winners of eight opening-round, best-of-five series: No. 5 Pittsburgh vs. No. 12 Montreal; No. 6 Carolina vs. No. 11 New York Rangers; No. 7 New York Islanders vs. No. 10 Florida; No. 8 Toronto vs. No. 9 Columbus; No. 5 Edmonton vs. No. 12 Chicago; No. 6 Nashville vs. No. 11 Arizona; No. 7 Vancouver vs. No. 10 Minnesota; and No. 8 Calgary vs. No. 9 Winnipeg.

Players would defer 10% of salaries next season which owners would pay back over three years plus interest, the person said.

Any pro football writer Teresa M. Walker contributed to this report.

**Payday: Mahomes will be big hit on salary cap**

**FROM BACK PAGE**

Still, Mahomes will take up a big chunk of Kansas City’s cap space, around 20 percent depending on the annual contract breakdown and final cap numbers. That could potentially make it difficult for the Chiefs to pay several star players big contracts.

The Chiefs already had picked up their fifth-year option in April on Mahomes, who had been due to make $825,000 on the final year of his rookie contract this season, to keep him around at least through 2021. General manager Brett Veach said this deal has been a priority for quite a while and thanked Mahomes’ agents, Chris Cabott and Leigh Steinberg.

“His abilities are so rare, and to couple that with an incredible personality is outstanding,” Veach said of Mahomes. “We’re going to continue to do everything we can to surround him with talent, and this deal provides us more flexibility to do that. This is the first step of an integral part to our success and we’re thrilled he’s going to be the quarterback of the Kansas City Chiefs for a long time.”

Mahomes threw touchdown passes on consecutive fourth-quarter drives in rallying the Chiefs to their first Super Bowl title in 50 years and the first for coach Andy Reid. That comeback performance earned Mahomes the Super Bowl MVP award and only cemented his status as the face of the Kansas City franchise.

Reid said the best part is that Mahomes is still early in his career. Mahomes won’t turn 25 until Sept. 17.

“He’s a natural leader and always grinding, whether that’s on the field, in the weight room or watching film, he wants to be the best,” Reid said. “He’s a competitor and his teammates feed off his energy. He makes us all better as an organization and we are blessed he’s going to be our quarterback for years to come.”

The Chiefs traded up to select Mahomes 10th overall in the 2017 draft, and he spent one season learning the ropes under Alex Smith before getting the starting job.

Mahomes proceeded to shatter just about every franchise passing record while winning the league MVP award, and he had the Chiefs within overtime of landing in the Super Bowl that season. He also was The Associated Press NFL Offensive Player of the Year.

He dealt with numerous injuries this past season, including a dislocated kneecap on a seemingly innocent quarterback sneak that left him sidelined for a couple of games. He came back to lead the Chiefs to a long winning streak that culminated with a series of come-from-behind wins in the playoffs, including their second-half rally in the Super Bowl.

He is 24-7 as a starter, completing 65.9% of his passes with 76 touchdowns and only 18 interceptions. Mahomes is 724-for-1,099 for 9,412 yards passing, averaging 303.6 yards per game with a 108.9 career quarterback rating.

He also has run 110 times for 500 yards with four TDs. He has led the Chiefs to back-to-back AFC championship games. In the postseason, Mahomes is 115-for-184 for 1,474 yards with 13 TDs and only two interceptions with a 106.6 rating.

Patrick Mahomes’ 10-year extension worth up to $503 million, surpasses Mike Trout’s $432.5 million deal with Major League Baseball’s Los Angeles Angels. It is expected to use up about 20 percent of Kansas City’s space under the NFL’s salary cap.
Testing concerns overshadow release of 60-game schedules

BY BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

Major League Baseball released its pandemic-shortened schedule Monday, featuring a tantalizing season opener between the New York Yankees and World Series champion Washington Nationals, even as some teams were still bogged down by coronavirus concerns.

By the time MLB revealed each team’s 60-game slate Monday evening, the Nationals and Houston Astros — last year’s pennant winners — had canceled workouts because of COVID-19 testing delays that one executive worried could endanger the season. The St. Louis Cardinals also scrubbed their practice for the same reason.

“We got camps being shut down and people going three and four days without tests. You just don’t know what’s going on,” Dodgers star Mookie Betts said. “We have to just figure out the right way to do it.”

Nick Markakis became the second Atlanta Braves veteran to opt out of the season, swayed by a phone call with teammate Freddie Freeman, who has been stricken with COVID-19.

The Texas Rangers said All-Star slugger Joey Gallo tested positive and is asymptomatic. Arizona Diamondbacks outfielder Kole Calhoun also tested positive but feels good, manager Torey Lovullo said.

Philadelphia Phillies ace Aaron Nola reported to camp after waiting a few extra days because he was in contact with someone who tested positive for the coronavirus.

“All my tests came back negative,” Nola said. “I don’t want to be the guy that screws up everything and gives everybody a reason to have COVID-19. I was hoping to come here and be a positive influence but obviously I didn’t do that. We have a lot of work to do.”

The schedule was a bright spot on an otherwise shaky day in baseball’s reboot following a shutdown of more than three months. The steady stream of players testing positive and opting out is leading to a growing unease that the full season might not be played.

“Sixty games looks pretty good on paper, but when you go through it day by day, it gets more difficult to kind of see that, the end of the finish line,” Minnesota Twins catcher Mitch Garver said.

“There’s a ton of players out there quoted saying this, but it almost seems like you’re waiting on bad news, right? You’re just waiting on somebody’s camp to break out. You’re waiting for travel restrictions to be shut down across the nation. You’re waiting for a second wave, where things become unplayable and sports take a backseat. We’re all just kind of going day-to-day right now, making sure that we’re ready for the given day and looking forward to that.”

The Nationals and Astros were idle after not receiving test results from Friday. That came a day after Washington reliever Sean Doolittle criticized slow test results and a lack of some personal protective equipment.

“Without accurate and timely testing, it is simply not safe for us to continue with summer camp,” Nationals general manager Mike Rizzo said. “Major League Baseball needs to work quickly to resolve issues with their process and their lab. Otherwise, summer camp and the 2020 season are at risk.”

MLB said in a statement that 95% of its intake testing had been completed and the Utah laboratory it’s using had reported 98% of results, a majority of those a day after samples were collected. MLB said it addressed delays caused by the holiday weekend, doesn’t expect them to continue and commended teams for canceling workouts.

“It will make it more realistic: Hey, this is about to happen in just over two weeks now.”

The season ends on Sept. 27, with all 30 teams starting their games at 3 p.m. EDT to possibly make for a final-day playoff scramble. Most games this season, however, are at night.

Teams will play 40 games against their division opponents. The other 20 will be interleague games, including six against a natural opponent, taking on clubs in their corresponding geographic region — East vs. East, for example.

Games planned for London, Mexico City and Puerto Rico already have been canceled. Among the schedule highlights:

• The St. Louis Cardinals take the Chicago White Sox next to the “Field of Dreams” cornfield outside Dyersville, Iowa, on Aug. 13.
• Jackie Robinson Day, usually celebrated on April 15, will be held Aug. 29 — that’s the date the Rev. Martin Luther King led the March on Washington in 1963, and also the date Brooklyn Dodgers owner Branch Rickey talked to Robinson in 1945 about a future in the majors.
• Roberto Clemente Day will be held Sept. 14.
• The 100th anniversary of the Negro Leagues will be celebrated on Aug. 16.
• Oakland pitcher Mike Fiers will get his first look at his former Houston teammates on Aug. 7 at the empty Coliseum. Fiers blew the whistle on the Astros’ sign-stealing scam, which dominated baseball talk throughout the winter before the virus shut down the sport.

Starting off with a bang: Yanks-Nats, Dodgers-Giants

Schedule has two high-profile games July 23

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mookie Betts, Gerrit Cole and a pair of high-profile matchups are set for opening day as Major League Baseball begins its shortened 60-game season on July 23 in ballparks without fans amid the coronavirus pandemic.

MLB released the schedule Monday, and it starts with two games. Cole and the New York Yankees visit the World Series champion Washington Nationals at 7:08 p.m. EDT, then Betts and his new Los Angeles Dodgers teammates host the San Francisco Giants at 10:08 p.m.

There are 14 games on July 24, including the first matchup at new Globe Life Field in Texas when the Rangers take on Colorado. The same day, Anthony Rendon and the Los Angeles Angels visit Oakland and the Cincinnati Reds host Detroit.

“Seeing the schedule makes it a little more real,” Reds manager David Bell said. “We can all start to plan a little better, have an idea what our life is going to be like and where we’re going to be the next several months.”

“It will make it more realistic: Hey, this is about to happen in just over two weeks now.”

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The Chiefs had the 2018 NFL MVP under contract for the next two seasons but that wasn’t nearly enough. "Here to stay," Mahomes wrote on Twitter.

The contract extension starts in 2022 when the NFL salary cap is projected to be $227.5 million. However, that number could be lower depending on revenue losses due to the coronavirus pandemic and the possibility any games played this season won’t have fans.

SEE PAYDAY ON PAGE 22

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

The Kansas City Chiefs made sure they’ll have Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes around as long as possible.

Mahomes agreed to a 10-year extension worth up to $503 million, according to his agency, Steinberg Sports. The deal is worth $477 million in guarantee mechanisms and includes a no-trade clause and opt-out clauses if guarantee mechanisms aren’t met.

It’s the richest contract in professional sports history, surpassing Mike Trout’s $426.5 million deal with the Los Angeles Angels.

"Since he joined the Chiefs just a few years ago, Patrick has developed into one of the most prolific athletes in all of sports,” Chiefs chairman Clark Hunt said in a statement about the quarterback who led them to their first championship in 50 years.

"With his dynamic play and infectious personality, he is one of the most recognized and beloved figures to put on the Chiefs uniform. He’s an extraordinary leader and a credit to the Kansas City community, and I’m delighted that he will be a member of the Chiefs for many years to come.”

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DID YOU KNOW?
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SOURCE: Associated Press

Payday

Mahomes gets richest deal in sports history

Above: Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes scrambles during Super Bowl LIV against the San Francisco 49ers on Feb. 2 in Miami Gardens, Fla. The Chiefs won the game 31-20.

Right: Chiefs coach Andy Reid, left, celebrates with Mahomes, who was named MVP of the game.