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StARS AND StrIPES
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VIRUS OUTBREAK
FIRM ACTION
Calif., NY residents told to stay home; other states to enact strict measures
Associated Press

California and New York ordered their residents to stay home. More than 30 states called National Guardsmen to active duty. And Miami closed its beaches as Americans grappled with the coronavirus pandemic.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday restricted nonessential movements.

“This is a moment we need to make tough decisions,” Newsom said. “We need to recognize reality.”

His move came after counties and communities covering about half the state’s population already had issued similar orders.

People may still leave their homes for walks and exercise and for essential needs such as food and medical care. Restaurant meals can still be delivered to homes.

In a letter to President Donald Trump dated Wednesday, Newsom requested that the Navy’s USNS Mercy, the world’s largest hospital ship, be deployed to the Port of Los Angeles for use through Sept. 1. California has disproportionately aided people returning to the U.S. from foreign countries and needs the ship to help “decompress” its health care delivery system as infection rates climb, Newsom wrote. The ship is based in San Diego.

SEE VIRUS ON PAGE 8

EUCOM chief preps for worst-case scenario as virus infects 35 troops

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The top military officer in Europe said his command is preparing for a “worst-case scenario” that would require troop reinforcement in connection with the fast-spreading coronavirus, which he said has infected 35 U.S. troops on the Continent.

About 2,600 U.S. personnel fall into the category of “concern,” meaning that they are self-isolating because of travel or illness. U.S. European Command’s Gen. Tod Wolters told reporters Friday in a news conference.

“We don’t know exactly what the future holds,” Wolters said. “Can we do this in perpetuity? We would be challenged. But we are preparing for worst-case scenarios with respect to the potential spread.”

SEE EUCOM ON PAGE 6

Negotiations begin on $1T economic rescue
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SEE EUCOM ON PAGE 6

Negotiations begin on $1T economic rescue
Page 8
Trump seeks to fill up oil reserves

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Thursday that it is seeking $3 billion from Congress to top up the country’s strategic petroleum reserves, potentially propping up U.S. oil producers after crude prices crashed globally.

President Donald Trump had directed the Energy Department last week to fill the United States’ emergency stash of crude oil to the top, over objections from congressional Democrats who said he was favoring climate-damaging fossil fuels and the profits of oil giants.

Plummeting crude prices benefited U.S. consumers filling up their cars, Trump said Thursday. “But on the other hand, it hurts a great industry, and a very powerful industry,” Trump told reporters.

West Texas crude prices fell below $21 a barrel Wednesday after oil producers Russia and Saudi Arabia stepped up pumping, threatening the market share of U.S. oil, and as the coronavirus moved the world toward recession and tapped-down consumer demand for energy.

Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette told reporters Thursday that the move was about filling up the country’s 713.5 million barrel Strategic Petroleum Reserve at a time of cheap oil, not about throwing U.S. oil producers a lifeline in rough markets.

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EXCHANGE RATES

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(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany, check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

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This is a useful resource for understanding current exchange rates and interest rates, which can be critical for managing financial resources, especially in the context of international oil markets and the strategic petroleum reserves.
Afghan base hit with apparent insider attack

By Tameem Akhtar
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — At least 17 police and army personnel were killed in an apparent insider attack at a joint military and police base early Friday, Afghanistan’s Ministry of Defense said. The attack took place in southern Zabul province, a Taliban stronghold.

The Defense Ministry statement said the Taliban carried out the attack, but with the assistance of Afghan police and army personnel inside the base. It said 11 soldiers and six police were killed.

No one immediately took responsibility, but Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed said he would look into the allegation.

Provincial council member Asaabullah Kakar had earlier given a higher toll of 25 killed and said it was a Taliban attack with help from inside. It was not immediately possible to resolve the conflicting accounts.

The attack comes as the U.S. and NATO started a staged withdrawal of their troops, in keeping with a peace deal signed last month between the United States and the Taliban.

The troop pullout is tied to promises by the Taliban to fight terrorism, including the Islamic State’s affiliate headquartered in eastern Afghanistan.

However, Washington has struggled to get Afghanistan’s squabbling politicians to unite behind a single leader to start intra-Afghan negotiations, a critical next step in the U.S.-Taliban deal.

Washington has also been critical of the violent attacks carried out by the Taliban targeting Afghan security forces, but not U.S. or NATO personnel.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s spokesman said Friday’s “heinous” attack called into question the Taliban’s commitment to the peace deal.

Ghani and his rival in last year’s presidential polls had both declared themselves president in rival ceremonies earlier this month. Since then, Washington’s peace envoy who brokered the U.S.-Taliban deal has been meeting the two leaders seeking a compromise.

Until now the squabbling has only intensified.

Russia builds radar to track missile launch

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

Russia plans to deploy a next-generation radar to its military exclave of Kaliningrad and use it to counter emerging U.S. hypersonic weapons systems, state media reported.

The Kontei ner radar can track launches of cruise and hypersonic missiles nearly 2,000 miles away. Russia’s Tass news agency reported Thursday. Deploying the radar in Kaliningrad, which is wedged between NATO members Poland and Lithuania, and the U.S. boost their investments in hypersonic technology.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has ramped up investments in hypersonic technology and has plans later this year to test a new “glide body” weapon system, which uses a booster rocket motor to accelerate to well-above hypersonic speeds and then jettisons the expended rocket booster.

The planned mobilization of the radar near NATO territory comes as Moscow and the U.S. boost their investments in hypersonic technology. Vice Adm. Alexander Moiseyev, who commands the Russian navy’s northern fleet, told Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda on Thursday that plans are underway to test-fire hypersonics with nuclear submarines.

“We have already received our orders,” he told the newspaper. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has ramped up investments in hypersonic technology and has plans later this year to test a new “glide body” weapon system, which uses a booster rocket motor to accelerate to well-above hypersonic speeds and then jettisons the expended rocket booster.

Body of Navy dive student found in Fla.

By Michael Bihraum
The Washington Post

BRUSSELS — Deep into the global coronavirus pandemic, NATO is taking an unconventional approach to its daily operations: packing senior leadership into conference rooms to push on with some of its business as usual.

The continued in-person meetings have unsettled some senior diplomats posted to the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels. They prefer that the alliance leaders sit behind a screen and bump elbows across much of the world: communicating by videoconference and further scale back bureaucratic committee meetings.

After a routine Wednesday meeting of NATO ambassadors and the alliance leadership packed 150 people into a room, at least one ambassador was seeking coronavirus testing to be made available to delegations, according to two senior NATO diplomats familiar with the worries. The diplomats spoke on the condition of anonymity to disclose health concerns within the alliance.

The stiff-upper-lip style has been pushed by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who on Thursday said that the alliance needed to continue to project strength throughout the pandemic.

He did, however, conduct the news conference via Skype, a first, to try to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

NATO has struggled with how to balance health precautions with its need to carry on with its daily business of protecting its 29 member nations. There are significant NATO military operations in Eastern Europe, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo, all of which require monitoring and maintenance.

NATO is also in the process of formulating a plan to take a greater role in broader Middle Eastern security, which President Donald Trump requested after a U.S. air strike in January killed a senior Iranian military commander and unsettled the region.

Other international blocs, such as the 27-member European Union, have largely switched over to videoconferencing to carry out meetings amid the crisis.

NATO officials say that the E.U. approach would not work well for their highly-classified meetings, in which sensitive military information is routinely shared among allies. Although military commanders in the field communicate with their headquarters and civilian leaders via secure video-conferencing, that approach is not practical for large-scale meetings of diplomats in the North Atlantic Council, the group of ambassadors that runs NATO, said spokesman Oana Lungescu.

So far, one NATO staff member working at the headquarters in Brussels has tested positive for coronavirus. The person had gone on vacation in northern Italy, felt unwell around the end of the week that began on March 2, and tested positive, the alliance said in a statement on March 9.

Wednesday’s meeting of senior leadership, in which the pandemic response was a major topic, seems to have been a particular flash point for frustrations from some NATO diplomats who felt as though Stoltenberg was not taking their health concerns seriously.

The feeling of vulnerability is not universally shared within the alliance: two other senior NATO diplomats said they felt the current precautions were appropriate. Both spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive assessments.

Elsewhere, senior national leaders, including Trump, continue to hold relative large meetings and in-person news conferences.

Official NATO photos from the meeting show senior NATO staff sitting in the room with one chair empty — about three feet — in between them. The pictures also showed Stoltenberg and the senior NATO military commander, U.S. Air Force Gen. Tod Wolters, having their temperatures checked with a forehead thermometer as they entered the headquarters, and Stoltenberg and Wolters grinning and bumping elbows.

Lungescu, the NATO spokes-woman, said that steps were being taken to ensure the health of personnel, including avoiding having Stoltenberg and NATO’s deputy secretary-general inside the headquarters at the same time. Such measures were “common sense,” she said. Many NATO staff have been sent to work from home, and are rotating through the headquarters to man skeletal teams, she said.

And “the number of staff in the few meetings that are now taking place has been reduced drastically,” she said.

Elsewhere in Europe, senior military leadership has already been badly affected by the virus. At least one person with coronavirus attended a March 6 military conference in Wiesbaden, Germany, and after the meeting, a top Polish military commander who was in attendance tested positive.

As the world retreats, NATO is still holding its meetings

The body of a Navy dive student who went missing Thursday while training off Panama City, Fla., has been recovered, according to local news reports.

The Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center student went missing around 11:30 a.m. during a training exercise at “Camp 4” in St. Andrew Bay, said NBC affiliate WJHG. The training area is marked by buoys and has a maximum depth of 20 feet.

The body was recovered around 4:30 p.m., according to ABC affiliate WMBB.

The identity of the diver will not be released until after his family is notified, Navy officials told WMBB.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the student’s family during this difficult time,” they added.
US, Colombian paratroopers train together

BY SARAH BLAKE MORGAN
Associated Press

TOLEMAIDA AIR BASE, Colombia — Under a covered pavilion near a steaming runway at Colombia’s Tolemaida Air Base, dozens of American paratroopers lie sweating on a green and brown camouflage face paint drips from their brows.

The soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division can’t move much—they’re loaded down with rifles and nearly 100 pounds of gear. In less than an hour, it will all drop out of a C-130 aircraft moving 150 mph.

The group’s banter quiets to make way for directions from jumpmasters moving off and on soldiers to the next, making sure buckles and straps are in place.

Spc. Parker Firth is quieter than usual. After 22 jumps, he admits he’s still scared.

“When the doors open, it’s not in your hands anymore,” the 22-year-old said. “You just got to believe in the parachute to open. Whatever happens, happens.”

For these 75 American paratroopers from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, this weeklong training exercise with the Colombian Army is not a deployment—a word reserved for occasions like the New Year’s Eve mobilization that sent members of the division’s Immediate Response Force to the Middle East, amid rising tensions with Iran. For now, 2,500 division paratroopers remain in the Middle East on standby.

It’s intense training like this exercise in Colombia that allows the soldiers to deploy with lightning speed. Their readiness in a time of crisis has sent members of the division into battle across the globe.

There have been no signs pointing to potential military intervention by the U.S. or Colombia. But as the United States has spent billions of dollars restoring peace and building a partnership in a region that’s heavily influenced by Russia and Iran, cementing relationships like the one with Colombia is key to U.S. strategy.

U.S. and Colombian forces spend several days mapping out the exercise, which simulates the securing of an air base. They spend hours jumping off elevated wooden platforms and practicing their landings in what resemble oversized sandboxes.

“It’s an honor to jump with the 82nd Airborne Division,” Colombian Maj. Gen. Pablo Alfonso Bonilla Vasquez tells the Americans, adding that their cooperation will send a message to the region.

The next day, the troops from Fort Bragg will arrive in Colombia. They are just soldiers, their gear soldiers jump with can weigh nearly 100 pounds.

A Colombian paratrooper works to secure his parachute pack before a training exercise at Tolemaida Air Base, in Colombia, Jan. 26. The gear soldiers jump with can weigh nearly 100 pounds.

An American jumpmaster leans out of a C-130 in flight over Melgar to “clear the rear,” referring to the process paratroopers use to make sure all jumpers have exited their parachutes.

MILITARY
WASHINGTON — The Navy has canceled all part-time child care programs and services for children up to age 12. This includes hourly child care unless it is deemed “emergency/mission essential,” according to a Navy statement.

The Navy has 4,500 day care slots across the service, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly said earlier this month. Visitors to facilities will be limited to special circumstances, such as workers addressing non-critical maintenance. Sanitation practices — which include cleaning doors and hard surfaces, as well as increasing handwashing — are also being implemented, the statement said.

Navy-operated child care programs will also not allow new enrollees unless deemed emergency or mission essential.

Parents who are told to telework full-time must care for their children at home, according to the statement. Their child care fees will be waived and their child’s space in child care programs saved during the closures.

“Teleworking includes parents or guardians who work from home, regardless of the employer or who participate in a virtual learning environment. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis,” Coleen San Nicolas-Perez, spokeswoman for Navy Installations Command, said in an email Thursday.

Fees will also be waived and spaces in programs saved for parents who voluntarily remove their child from care for at least two weeks, or until May 1, according to the Navy statement. Navy installations may also receive waivers to reduce their child care operating hours.

The Marine Corps is limiting child care to essential personnel only, said Marine Corps spokeswoman Desirée Chavis in an email. Currently, the Marine Corps has 4,749 children enrolled in its Child Development Center programs.

The Marine Corps guidance includes conducting health screenings for children, staff and other visitors in facility lobbies before entering classrooms, limiting classrooms to no more than 10 individuals including staff and suspending new child care enrollees.

For the Air Force, decisions on child care programs are being left to local installation commanders, who are calling for operational security we are not providing the rating of the second class petty officer, and will only confirm that it is a second class petty officer assigned to Naval Special Warfare,” said LT LT Matthew Stroup, a command speakman.

The Naval Special Warfare Command includes SEALs, special warfare combatant-craft crewmen and other support ratings. Stroup said in a statement.

“The individual is currently isolated on base and restricted in movement in accordance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines,” Naval Special Warfare Command said in a statement. “The other members of the group who were in close contact with the Sailor are also quarantined on base out of an abundance of caution. They remain in close contact with medical professionals.”

The Coronado, Calif.-based Navy command is part of U.S. Special Operations Command. Both the Navy and SOCOM “are committed to taking every measure possible to protect the health of our force” and officials are coordinating closely with local, state and public health authorities, the statement said.

About 1,400 people in Washington have tested positive for the coronavirus and more than 70 have died.
**VIRUS OUTBREAK**

**Navy suspends promotion boards to limit exposure**

*By Caitlin M. Kenney*  
**Stars and Stripes**

WASHINGTON — The Navy is suspending its selection and promotion boards at U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, and at U.S. Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain due to the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. Central Command said Friday.

“This will reduce the need for large gatherings and travel to limit exposure to the virus,” said Rear Adm. John Nowell, chief of naval personnel.

Other panels impacted include advancement for enlisted sailors and milestone boards, according to a Navy announcement by Vice Adm. John Nowell, chief of naval personnel.

No additional officer or enlisted candidates will be added to the original eligibility list for these boards.

The Navy is working to ensure sailors who are eventually approved by a board or the Senate will have their rank and pay backdated.

“I want to reassure every affected sailor that we are committed to maintaining the sanctity of the selection board process and every precaution is being taken to ensure fairness and minimize impact to you and your family,” Nowell said.

Kenney,caitlin@stripes.com  
@caitlinmkenney

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**US troops deploying to CENTCOM will be put under quarantine first**

*By Chad Garland*  
**Stars and Stripes**

U.S. and coalition troops deploying to the Middle East will be put under a 14-day predeployment quarantine at their home stations to prevent potential strain on medical facilities amid the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. Central Command said Friday.

“This will reduce the need for quarantine in a combat environment and potentially reduce stress on limited medical facilities and resources at their respective bases in the region,” the Tampa, Fla.-based command said in a statement.

CENTCOM will also work with U.S. Transportation Command to make sure that the troops are quarantined while headed to the region, the statement said.

The new restrictions will be required for all U.S. and coalition service members.

It will mean that some units and troops will be delayed in rotating home while their replacements are in quarantine, the command said.

“This policy is not intended to otherwise delay or prevent the flow of service members or units out of the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility,” CENTCOM said. “This policy is also not expected to delay the drawdown in forces from Afghanistan as part of the U.S. agreement with the Taliban.”

The NATO Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan began withdrawing from some bases earlier this month as it works to drawdown from about 13,000 troops to 8,600 by mid-July, as part of the deal reached with the Taliban last month, aimed at ending more than 18 years of war.

The CENTCOM announcement comes a day after the Afghan government announced measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including holding newly arrived personnel in screening facilities and temporarily blocking the entry of other inbound personnel.

The British military also planned to bring home some of its troops from Iraq, the U.K. Defense Ministry announced Thursday. Troops from other countries participating in the anti-Islamic State coalition in Iraq would also be sent home after the Iraqi security forces put a halt on training due to the virus outbreak, the U.S.-led coalition in Baghdad said in a statement Friday.

“With the need for quarantining, it makes sense just to bring them home,” said Capt. Jeff Heflin, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command.

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**American sergeant is 1st soldier in Vicenza to be sent to hospital**

*By Nancy Montgomery*  
**Stars and Stripes**

VICENZA, Italy — A U.S. soldier in Vicenza was hospitalized Wednesday after being taken by ambulance from his barracks on Caserma Ederle, U.S. Army Garrison Italy officials said Friday.

He is the first U.S. soldier to test positive for the coronavirus in a garrison of some 7,000 soldiers, as Italy’s climbing death rate for the first time surpassed that of China, where the virus first began circulating widely in December.

The soldier, a sergeant with the 207th Military Intelligence Brigade, was expected to be released from Italy’s San Bortolo Hospital and recuperate at an isolation barracks on Caserma Ederle, base officials said Friday.

He had been in quarantine in his barracks with “flu-like symptoms,” the garrison said, prior to his hospital admission Wednesday.

“In the barracks, control measures were immediately activated to trace potential infections and quarantined all the people with whom the (soldier) has been in contact,” the garrison’s Facebook page said.

About seven people have been initially identified as close contacts, the garrison said.

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**EUCOM: Wolters says combat readiness might be affected if infection rate keeps increasing**

*FROM FRONT PAGE*

Such a scenario would mean that EUCOM could no longer maintain its current level of combat readiness, the number of infections and would need U.S. military reinforcements from elsewhere, Wolters said.

“At this point, we don’t forecast that to occur. But conditions in the environment will dictate that in the future,” Wolters said.

In all, about 60 personnel, including service members, military civilians and family members have tested positive for the coronavirus, EUCOM said.

Europe is emerging as the epicenter of the coronavirus as cases surged in Italy, Germany and beyond. The increases also are felt inside the military communities in these countries.

It wasn’t immediately clear if the 35 cases in Europe that Wolters cited included civilian personnel.

The Army Garrison in Stuttgart, which also hosts Wolters’ EUCOM headquarters, had 21 confirmed infections as of Friday, which is more than other overseas military installations. Among the infected are troops, civilians, contractors and military family members, including at least one child.

As of Friday, the Defense Department reported 67 troops with infections, one of whom is hospitalized. In addition, there are 14 civilians, 26 dependents and 16 contractors infected.

Wolters said he has spoken by phone with some of his personnel who have contracted the virus, which has forced the military to scale back numerous exercises, including its large Defender Europe-20 drill.

Wolters is the first soldier in Vicenza to be sent to hospital.
Europe struggles under stress of response

Associated Press

PARIS — Southern Europe buckled under the strain of the coronavirus pandemic on Friday, with gasping patients filling the wards of hospitals in Spain and Italy as the global death toll surpassed 10,000 for the first time.

The World Health Organization noted the dramatic speed of the virus' spread. “It took over three months to reach the first 10,000 confirmed cases, and only 12 days to reach the next 10,000,” the U.N. health agency said Friday.

WHO released new protocols to help countries identify the extent of COVID-19 infection among their populations, which age groups are most affected and the percentage of patients who are infected without any symptoms.

In Bergamo, the epicenter of the virus in Italy, cemeteries were overwhelmed. Sky News video from inside the city's main hospital showed patients lined up in a narrow walkway, struggling for breath as doctors and nurses moved swiftly from one beeping machine to the next.

“When the virus arrived here, there was no containment and it spread through the valleys very quickly,” one nurse said. “I think it was normal flu. We doctors knew it was COVID-19 but there was no containment and it spread through the valleys very quickly. The U.N. chief warned of a "phase of the world's history."" It was a day that the virus spread through the valleys very quickly. The U.N. chief warned of a "phase of the world's history.""

In neighboring Iraq, authorities were able to keep working in supermarkets, production sites and other necessary businesses amidst stringent movement restrictions. "We need to keep the country running," Macron said.

Worldwide, the death toll from COVID-19 passed 10,000 and infections exceeded 244,000, according to Johns Hopkins University tally. Italy, with 60 million citizens, has recorded 3,405 deaths, exceeding the 3,248 in China, a country with a population more than 20 times larger. Spain, second behind Italy in Europe, reported 1,002 deaths and 19,980 infections.

French President Emmanuel Macron urged employees to keep working in supermarkets, production sites and other necessary businesses amidst stringent movement restrictions. "We need to keep the country running," Macron said.

Satellite images marking the Persian Gulf waters and paratroopers captured from Iran's economy, which was under heavy U.S. sanctions, were overflying the country into a major crisis. "We must not ease off. We must continue the measures we have taken," Macron urged employees to keep working in supermarkets, production sites and other necessary businesses amidst stringent movement restrictions.

"Certain medical centers are suffering stress that is reaching the limit," said Fernando Simon, director of Spain's center for health alerts and emergencies. "The difficult days in which we must bear down are coming now. We can't keep our focus. A convention center and hotels in Madrid were being prepared as field hospitals.

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leaders in Middle East optimistic about future

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's leader

vowed to overcome the new coronavirus outbreak in upbeats messages marking the Persian New Year on Friday, even as the Health Ministry announced 149 more fatalities, bringing the country's death toll to 1,919. But the virus is hitting the world's worst-affected nation and has been widely criticized for its slow response.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has finally seen all state matters, called the new year "the year of leaps in production" in Iran's economy, which has been under heavy U.S. sanctions since President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear accord.

President Hassan Rouhani also marked the new year, known as Nowruz, by promising a bet

ter economy. "We will put the coronavirus behind us soon with unity, with hard work and with cooperation," he said.

Rouhani has defended his government's response to the coronavirus outbreak in the face of widespread criticism that of

ficials acted too slowly and may have even covered up initial cases before infections rapidly spread across the country.

He also sought to highlight what he viewed as the achieve-

ments of the past year, including the downsizing of a sophisticated U.S. drone and missile strikes on U.S. bases in Iraq in retaliation for the killing of Iran's top general in Baghdad.

Security forces have been stop-

ping pilgrims in recent days, but more keep arriving. Late on Thursday, the doors of the shrine were closed and the electricity was switched off. Officials called on the faithful to perform the pilgrimage "remotely" to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

Iraq has been grappling with anti-government protests for months. The coronavirus outbreak, which has infected around 200 people and killed more than a dozen, and the fallout from cru-

tered oil prices, threaten to plunge the country into a major crisis.

Saudia Arabia announced early Friday it would shut down domestic air travel, buses, taxis and trains for the next two weeks, beginning on Saturday morning. The monarchy has reported 274 confirmed cases, eight of whom recovered.

In a televised address late Thursday, King Salman said Saudi Arabia was "living through a difficult phase of the world's history."" "However, we are completely certain that this phase will end and we will recover. Despite the challenges and bitterness and its difficul-

"He also sought to highlight what he viewed as the achieve-

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Saudia Arabia announced early Friday it would shut down domestic air travel, buses, taxis and trains for the next two weeks, beginning on Saturday morning. The monarchy has reported 274 confirmed cases, eight of whom recovered.

In a televised address late Thursday, King Salman said Saudi Arabia was "living through a difficult phase of the world's history."" "However, we are completely certain that this phase will end and we will recover. Despite the challenges and bitterness and its difficul-

"He also sought to highlight what he viewed as the achieve-

ments of the past year, including the downsizing of a sophisticated U.S. drone and missile strikes on U.S. bases in Iraq in retaliation for the killing of Iran's top general in Baghdad.

Security forces have been stop-

ping pilgrims in recent days, but more keep arriving. Late on Thursday, the doors of the shrine were closed and the electricity was switched off. Officials called on the faithful to perform the pilgrimage "remotely" to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

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Virus: More than 4,000 National Guard troops deployed

FROM FRONT PAGE

He said infection rates are doubling every four days in some parts of the state and issued the dire prediction that 56% of California’s population could contract the virus over the next eight weeks.

On Friday, New York state moved to join California...

“We’re going to close the valve, because the rate of increase in the number of cases portends a total overwhelming of our hospital system,” New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said as cases in the state climbed to more than 7,000 and the death toll reached at least 38.

Cuomo said that starting Sunday, all workers in nonessential businesses must stay home and all gatherings of any size will be banned in the state of more than 19 million people. The move came after California all but closed its 40 million residents in the biggest lockdown in the nation.

On Friday morning, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that more than 4,000 National Guard reservists have been deployed in 31 states to help battle the coronavirus.

Esper told Fox News that the Army Corps of Engineers in New York three days ago working to help identify sites, such as college dorms or hotels, that it could renovate for hospital beds.

Esper said the military also is preparing Army units to assemble field hospitals.

Esper, who has spoken with Cuomo, said the USNS Comfort hospital ship will be in New York. He says the Mercy will be deployed early next week on the West Coast.

He added that 67 U.S. service members are infected with coronavirus and that 1,500 Americans are quarantined on four U.S. bases in an effort to lighten the burden on the nation’s civilian medical facilities.

On Thursday, Florida’s largest county ordered all beaches, parks and “non-essential” commercial and retail businesses closed because of the new coronavirus pandemic.

“We must all act as if we are infected and take every precautionary step to prevent transmitting this virus,” Gimenez said in his announcement of the closures, which appear to go beyond other state and local orders.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis already had ordered bars closed and restaurants to limit seating, while some municipal governments have limited eateries to takeout and delivery.

Gimenez’s order allows small businesses to keep idled workers on payroll and $208 billion in loans to airlines and other industries.

McConnell’s plan proposes $1,200 direct checks to taxpayers, $300 billion for small businesses to keep idled workers on payroll and $208 billion in loans to airlines and other industries.

The negotiations are certain to encounter roadblocks and opposition. The Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., are protected from the loss of a paycheck or that no family falls into financial ruin because of this pandemic.

At the consumer level, McConnell’s plan would provide $208 billion in loans and loan guarantees to distressed sectors, including $50 billion for commercial airlines, $8 billion for air cargo carriers and $150 billion for other eligible businesses, but those loans would have to be paid back.

Businesses would also be allowed to defer payment of the 6.2% employer payroll tax.

The proposal also includes a specific provision to allow the Treasury secretary “to participate in the gains,” through stock options or other financial instruments, of companies that receive federal aid.

At the same time, caring for the expected surge of sick Americans is a priority for Congress.

The McConnell proposal contains a raft of health-care provisions — including permanent liability protection for the manufacturers of respirators and other desperately needed medical gear to handle the pandemic.

At the consumer level, McConnell’s bill would put into federal law the commitment from insurers that coronavirus tests will be cost-free to policy holders. Additionally, the bill requires coverage of coronavirus vaccines, at no cost to patients.

For the health care industry, the bill would establish a new Medicare payment for treating COVID-19 patients. It would suspend the end of the year’s 2% Medicare payment cut to providers under previously set budget restraints.

Pelosi and Schumer said in statement they looked forward to working with Republicans “in a bipartisan way to deliver for the American people as soon as humanly possible.”

The Democratic leaders said, however, their priority is to “make sure all workers are protected from the loss of a paycheck or that no family falls into financial ruin because of this pandemic.”

The two parties have perversely, in recent days, turned this into a political battle between themselves.

Keeping paychecks flowing for idled workers as jobless claims skyrocket is a top priority for both Republican and Democratic plans emerging from Congress.

But how best to send direct payments to Americans — as one-time stipends, ongoing payroll support or unemployment checks — is a crucial debate.

Democrats have other ideas for shoring up jobless aid to Americans by pushing more money into the existing unemployment insurance system. Schumer called it “employment insurance” — which he characterized as “unemployment insurance on steroids.”

FROM PAGE 8

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trump administration officials descended Friday on Capitol Hill to launch high-stakes negotiations with Senate Republicans and Democrats racing to draft a $1 trillion-plus economic rescue package amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The closed-door convening is the biggest effort yet from Washington to shore up households and the U.S. economy as the pandemic and its nationwide shutdown hurls the country toward a likely recession.

Mnuchin wants Congress to vote by Monday.

“We want to lay out the need for urgency and quick action,” said Eric Ueland, the White House director of legislative affairs, entering the morning session. “The American people expect action.”

With Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on one side and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer on the other, Mnuchin took the center seat for the rare high-level talks.

Despite the urgency to act, talks are likely to hit challenges over different opinions on how best to swiftly push out aid.

McConnell laid out the Republican offer Thursday of direct payments to Americans, businesses and industry loans but Democrats said it does not go far enough to help ordinary workers and shore up the healthcare system.

Schumer vowed Friday as he entered the negotiations that Democrats will “fight hard” for those priorities. Democrats insist on putting together talks quickly and do something big and bold to help the American people,” Schumer said.

The 247-page McConnell CARES Act puts the leader’s imprint on opening talks with Democrats in Congress as lawmakers prepare to work through the weekend to fast-track perhaps the most urgent legislative undertaking since the 2008 financial crisis.

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FROM PAGE 8

Wendy Tennis pins two pieces of a mask together on an assembly line Wednesday at Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs, Colo.

resources on responding to the anticipated surge of COVID-19 cases. Gov. Tim Walz ordered Thursday.
includes cases in which someone went online or called stores and big-box retailers alike.

formally filed complaints against mom-and-pop

look so far at the emerging problem. In all, 41 states

buck.”

are receiving a surge of reports about merchants

who go outside is new normal

BY Gillian Flaccus

Associated Press

The chairman of Arizona’s Asian Chamber of Commerce didn’t see much downside to attending a small dinner at a local restaurant to bolster the business

and bring together other leaders to discuss how to help Asian-American eateries devastated by the coronavirus.

That was, at least, until he posted about it on Instagram. The feedback was swift from people who were appalled that Ryan Winkle would promote a gathering — even a small one — as COVID-19 raged and entire cities were urged to self-isolate.

“I started getting some messages saying, ‘Hey, why are you trying to spread the virus?’ I was like, ‘It’s a small event, and everyone had washed their hands and they had sanitizer on the tables,’” Winkle said of the dinner held Saturday in Mesa, Ariz. “My thinking is always about the economics. Imagine when all these businesses shut down. That’s a whole different problem.”

“Quarantine shaming” — calling out those not abiding by social distancing rules — is part of a new and startling reality for Americans who must navigate a world of rapidly evolving social norms in the age of COVID-19. As schools close and shelter-in-place orders sweep across the U.S., the divide between those who are stringently practicing self-isolation and those who are still trying to go about some semblance of a normal life has never been more clear. Complicating matters: What was socially acceptable even 48 hours ago may now be taboo, as government officials race to contain the virus with ever-expanding circles of social isolation.

“The time matrix seems to be shifting. I’ve never known several days to go by so slowly and watch-

ing the collective conscience move more and more in one di-

rection day by day,” said Paula Flackson, who lost her bartending job when California’s Mammoth Mountain ski resort closed this week.

For those who must go to work, the divide is widening even further.

Steve Diehl, who is considered an essential employee at his job at a warehouse near Chicago, wears a mask to work because a family member has a compromised immune system. He’s terrified of catching the new coronavirus or transmitting it to his loved one at home.

Diehl posted a sign at the warehouse entrance asking people to put on masks that were provided “topglove-immuno-compromised family,” but several co-workers didn’t wear them, he said. One of them coughed into his hand while standing by Diehl’s desk — and then began to touch things on his desk with the same hand.

“That and I’m terrified,” said Diehl, who posted a photo of himself in a mask on Twitter. “And when I made a comment about it, they shrugged it off.”

Others who are trying to juggle working from home while caring for kids who are also home are making smaller and more mundane choices that nevertheless bring shocked responses — or outright rebukes — including one case in which a mom was told by a friend and even family. Is it OK to run out for a coffee? Can you allow your children to go to the playground? What about sending kids to day care centers, which remain the only lifeline in many states that have closed, too?

Those appalled by the behavior of some of their fellow Americans have welcomed a crackdown this week from many state and local governments that are adding daily to lists of closures and bans.

Price gouging complaints on rise across US

BY Reese Dunklin

and Justin Pritchard

Associated Press

One store advertised hand sanitizer at $60 a bot-

tle. Another was accused of hawking it at $1 a squirt.

Chain stores offered $26 thermometers and face

masks at the “everyday low price” of $39.95 a pair,

as police and health authorities acted to contain the virus with ever-expanding circles of social isolation.

on Facebook next to cellphone photos of a Southern California grocery charging $6.98 for a gallon of milk and $14.99 for cheddar cheese. “There are families out there who really need groceries and they’re overcharging.”

Beyond AP’s state count, individual cities are car-

rying out efforts to prevent exploitation. New York City alone has received more than 1,000 complaints, issued 550 violations and imposed $275,000 in fines for price gouging — including one case in which a store was accused of selling bottles of Purell at $79 each. Among the items the city is preventing stores from jacking up the prices on: aisle vera and rub-

bing alcohol, the ingredients that can be combined to make hand sanitizer.

Three states, including California, refused to share how many reports they’ve received, and sev-
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A marquee outside the Lake Theater & Cafe in downtown Lake Oswego, Ore., on Tuesday. “Quarantine shaming” has become part of reality as social norms change in the U.S.

“STOP SHOPPING HERE!!” one woman blared on Facebook next to cellphone photos of a Southern California grocery charging $6.98 for a gallon of milk and $14.99 for cheddar cheese. “There are families out there who really need groceries and they’re overcharging.”

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A marquee outside the Lake Theater & Cafe in downtown Lake Oswego, Ore., on Tuesday. “Quarantine shaming” has become part of reality as social norms change in the U.S.

Businesses ask customers to avoid using paper money

BY Ken Sweet

Associated Press

NEW YORK — In a world suf-

fering a pandemic, cash is no lon-

ger king.

A growing number of busi-

nesses and individuals worldwide have stopped using banknotes in fear that physical currency, handled by tens of thousands of people over their useful life, could be a vector for the spread-

ing coronavirus.

Public officials and health experts have said that the risk of transmitting the virus per-

son-to-person through the use of banknotes is small. But that has not stopped businesses from refusing to accept currency and some countries from urging their citizens to stop using banknotes altogether.

Open Books, a nonprofit book-

store in Chicago, sent an email to customers last week asking indi-

viduals not to use cash. A chain of diners in Washington State has also stopped accepting cash. And convenience stores like Grubhub, Door Dash, and others have in-

stituted “no contact” deliveries, and have other stopped offering cash as a payment option or are actively discouraging it.

Experts say cash does carry a risk of transmitting the virus, but the risk from cash so far is small compared with other transmis-

sion routes. A scientific paper published early in the outbreak found the virus can live on cardboard for up to 24 hours and up to three days on plastic and stain-

less steel. The researchers, how-

ever, did not test whether it can live on banknote paper.

The presence of live virus particles on banknotes does not mean they are a health hazard, public health experts said. Virus particles are unlikely to return to the air, or aerosolize, once on a surface.

“It’s not impossible that there might be traces of virus on dol-

lar bills but if you wash your hands it should provide adequate protections, you shouldn’t need anything else,” said Julie Fischer, a professor at the Center for Global Health Science and Soci-

ety at Georgetown University, on C-SPAN.

Other devices used to pay for items are just as likely to be vec-

tors for disease transfer. Credit and debit cards are made of pla-

tic and metal. ATMs are touched by hundreds of human hands a day.

Even the Federal Reserve has taken efforts to make sure money is not contaminated. Banknotes that circulated in Europe and Asia are being quarantined for seven to 10 days as a “precau-

tionary measure,” according to a Federal Reserve spokesperson.

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tionary measure,” according to a Federal Reserve spokesperson.
White House replaces counterterrorism chief

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Thursday that it was replacing the acting chief of the National Counterterrorism Center, part of an ongoing leadership shakeup in the intelligence community.

Russell Travers took over as acting director of the NCTC last August and has spent decades in counterterrorism and national security.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence said in a statement Thursday evening that Travers had been offered a different position by Acting DNI Richard Grenell but had decided to retire instead.

“Over the next few weeks, we expect Russ to step out of his current position to prepare for retirement. Russ’ willingness to step up and serve as the acting director of NCTC minded time is an example of his commitment to serve this vital mission,” the statement read.

The White House on Wednesday announced plans to nominate Chris Millburg, a former Army Special Forces officer and counterterrorism adviser to President Donald Trump, to the role of NCTC chief.

“Acting DNI Grenell and the ODNI leadership have been discussing the many reform recommendations previously made by other Directors,” the statement said. “Our hope is that these reforms will posture NCTC to lead the counterterrorism mission into the future.”

The Washington Post was first to report that Travers had been replaced. The newspaper said that Travers told colleagues that he had wanted to retire.

The NCTC analyzes emerging terror threats to the United States, maintains a database of known and suspected terrorists and produces warnings and alerts on developing issues.

The intelligence community has endured significant upheaval in the leadership ranks over the last year. The former director of national intelligence, Dan Coats, who had bumped elbows with Trump, resigned last year, and his deputy, Sue Gordon, left as well. Travers’ predecessor as NCTC chief, Joseph Maguire, also served briefly as intelligence director but left the post last month.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An American jailed for months in Lebanon was released from custody Thursday, while a Navy veteran was granted medical furlough from an Iran prison as the country struggles to curb the spread of coronavirus, U.S. officials said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that Michael White, imprisoned more than a year ago after entering Iran’s supreme leader, was released to the Swiss Embassy as part of a furlough that will require him to remain in Iran. The U.S. will work for his full release, Pompeo said.

The other American was Amer Fakhoury, a New Hampshire restaurant owner who had faced decades-old murder and torture charges in Lebanon that he denies. He was ordered released by a judge because more than 10 years had passed since the crimes he was accused of committing.

The Trump administration trumpeted the twin releases, though done in different countries for different reasons, as part of its efforts to secure the release of Americans held hostage or imprisoned abroad. Officials including President Donald Trump used the occasion to nudge additional Americans they want released, including journalist Austin Tice, who went missing last year in Syria.

“I want to let everyone know that recovering Americans held captive and imprisoned abroad continues to be a top priority for my administration,” Trump said at a news conference.

White’s release, though temporary for the moment, came as Iran has furloughed tens of thousands of prisoners while struggling with a coronavirus that Iranian officials fear could kill millions.

What of Imperial Beach, Calif., was detained in Iran while visiting a girlfriend there in July. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison for insulting Iran’s supreme leader and posting private information; the State Department said he was serving a 13-year sentence.

His mother had called for White’s immediate release in an interview with The Associated Press this month, saying she was concerned about the well-being of her son and that he had been battling cancer.

“He is in very good spirits, but has some pretty sustained health conditions that are going to require some attention,” Brian Hook, the U.S. special envoy for Iran, said on a conference call.

Hook said White would be evaluated by doctors.

Fakhoury was on his way back to the U.S. after a judge in Lebanon ordered him released. Fakhoury had been accused of torturing prisoners at a jail run by an Israeli-backed militia two-decades ago.

He had been imprisoned since September after returning to Lebanon to visit family.

His case had put a significant strain on already troubled ties between the U.S. and Lebanon. Lawmakers in Washington had threatened to withhold critical aid to the country and impose sanctions on the Lebanese military, which is seen by the Trump administration as a bulwark against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement.

“Anytime a U.S. citizen is wrongfully detained by a foreign government, we use every tool at our disposal to free them,” said Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H, who had worked for his release. “I’m very glad Amer is finally coming home and will be reunited with his family. No family should have to go through what the Fakhoury family has gone through.”

Fakhoury was diagnosed with Stage 4 lymphoma and had been hospitalized in Lebanon. Trump said Fakhoury “will now be able to receive much needed care and treatment in the United States.”

“We’ve been working very hard to get him home, and so happy for Amer and his entire family at his side,” Trump said.

Hours before Shaheen announced Fakhoury’s release, a U.S. Marine Osprey was seen taking off from the U.S. Embassy compound northeast of Beirut.

Separately, hours after the release, the U.S. embassy announced that all of its non-essential personnel had been ordered to leave Lebanon. An official in Washington said the decision to move to ordered departure was not connected to the release and was instead made due to the spread of the coronavirus and the uncertainty of transportation.

2 Americans released from Iran, Lebanon

2 Americans released from Iran, Lebanon

By Marcia Dunn

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A NASA astronaut who’s about to leave the planet for six months will blast off without any family or fanfare because of the coronavirus.

Chris Cassidy said Thursday that he won’t have any guests at his April 9 launch from Kazakhstan. He expects to say goodbye in Russia to his wife and three children three weeks earlier than planned.

Because of the coronavirus outbreak, she’s going to fly home to Houston. One of his three children, meanwhile, is trying to fly back to the U.S. from New Zealand.

There will be a smaller team than usual at the launch pad, too.

“It really is going to be strange,” Cassidy told The Associated Press from cosmonaut headquarters in Star City, Russia.

He said he’s already in quarantine ahead of his launch to the International Space Station.

“The things that are stressing the rest of the world and the rest of America, are the same things that are stressing me right now,” said Cassidy.

“It’s not like any other time in the past.”

He said he’s been “crushed” by the news.

Cassidy is also dealing with a rare late-in-the-game crew switch. He’ll spend 6-1/2 months on the space station with two Russians assigned to the flight just a month ago after one of the original cosmonauts suffered an eye injury.

While training together to catch up, Cassidy, Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner have been taking precautions to stay germ-free, frequently washing their hands and keeping a safe distance from others.

The space station crew will drop from six to three a week after his arrival.

It will remain at three people until SpaceX launches two NASA astronauts as early as May, or another crew arrives in a Russian Soyuz capsule in the fall.

With only three people on board, it promises to be extraordinarily busy.

“That doesn’t bother me at all,” Cassidy told the AP. “In fact, I’m excited. Bring it on.”

Cassidy, Ivanishin and Vagner leave Tuesday for the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. They will be isolated there in a special hotel for astronauts, as is customary. But on launch day, there won’t be the usual cheering, back-slapping throngs of well-wishers or journalists either.

Their families, bosses and dozens of others normally jam a special room behind a glass wall while the astronauts mount on their spacecrafts before liftoff.

Not this time.

“A lot of eligibility going through the glass at maybe one video camera or something like this and then we’ll get on the bus” to go to a launch pad with a minimal team there, Cassidy said.

As for the Feb. 19 crew switch, Cassidy, from York, Maine, initially was “crushed” by the news.

The former chief of NASA’s astronaut corps and two-time space flyer, Cassidy already knew the backup cosmonauts.

“So no issues there,” he said. However, “my heart hurt for my two friends who thought they were so close to a rocket launch and were not going to get one,” he told the AP.

Ivanishin, like Cassidy an experienced spaceman, said earlier this week that he’s surprised to be suddenly rocketing away, “but life happens.” He said the crew learned they would have occurred even closer to launch and so the three have had “some time for the news to settle in.”

Cassidy acknowledges his stress level is higher than usual right now from worrying about his loved ones.

“We’re only human,” he said, “and we’ll work through it and be fine.”

No family, fanfare for NASA astronaut launching next month

No family, fanfare for NASA astronaut launching next month

Saturday, March 21, 2020

PAGE 10

• STARS AND STRIPES •
For Biden, a waiting game as presumptive Dem nominee

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the three weeks since his blowout win in the South Carolina primary, Joe Biden has emerged as the Democratic presidential nominee-in-waiting. But, amid the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic, put the emphasis on waiting.

Biden holds an essentially insurmountable delegate lead over his last remaining rival, Bernie Sanders, yet the Vermont senator remains in the race. And with several states delaying their primaries to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Biden can’t reach the required majority of pledged convention delegates until May or June.

The former vice president, who proudly calls himself a “tactile politician,” can’t chase those votes in public because he’s essentially confined to his Delaware home like any other American in essentially confined to his Delaware home.

The campaign has promised the expected build-out from a relative shoestring staff — growth having been hampered by Biden’s inconsistent fundraising until his recent primary victories — into a national footprint befitting a national footprint.

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Biden and his aides must also react to President Donald Trump and developments in the coronavirus outbreak and response. While challengers to incumbent presidents always play a reactionary role, that’s especially true for Biden, who has built his entire campaign as a juxtaposition with Trump.

But now Trump and his team have an even more dominant media megaphone with an endless loop of White House briefings and congressional machinations in response to the crisis. As an example, Biden has used two formal addresses to denounce Trump’s response as slow and inadequate. Yet since then, the president has signed an initial aid package and endorsed a massive program for direct aid to every adult American — a turn that underscores the difficulty Biden may face countering Trump with a “front-porch campaign” from Delaware.

“I think you’ve seen in the last week, certainly, that the vice president is going to put policy considerations ahead of political considerations,” Dunn said.

Senators sold stocks ahead of market drop

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., sold as much as $1.7 million in stocks just before the market dropped in February amid fears about the coronavirus epidemic.

Senate records show that Burr and his wife sold between roughly $600,000 and $1.7 million in more than 30 separate transactions in late January and mid-February just before the market began to fall and as government health officials began to issue stark warnings about the effects of the virus.

Several of the stocks were in companies that own hotels.

The stock sales were first reported by ProPublica and The Center for Responsive Politics. Most of them came on Feb. 13, just before the Federal Reserve Board of Governors met in Washington, D.C., and released the bank’s statement that it would keep interest rates at record lows.

Burr told the small North Carolina audience that the virus was “much more aggressive in its transmission than anything that we have seen in recent history” and “probably more akin to the 1918 pandemic.”

Burr’s remarks were much more dire than remarks he had made publicly, and came as President Donald Trump was still downplaying the severity of the virus.

Senators are required to wait 60 days after receiving insider information before they can sell stocks, but Burr had already sold his holdings in late January, at the beginning of the global pandemic.

The North Carolina senator is not the only lawmaker to sell stocks just before the steep downturn due to the global pandemic. Georgia Sen. Kelly Loeffler, a new senator who is up for re-election this year, sold off hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of stock in late January, as senators began to brief donors on the new coronavirus pandemic.

In the weeks that followed, Loeffler urged donors to have faith in the Trump administration’s efforts to prepare the nation.

“['realDonald Trump & Trump administration are doing a great job working to keep Americans healthy & safe,' Loeffler tweeted Feb. 27.

The Daily Beast first reported the sale of tens of millions of dollars of stock in late January. The senator is married to Jeffrey Sprecher, the chairman and CEO of Intercontinental Exchange, which owns the New York Stock Exchange.

Gabbard ends her 2020 bid

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard suspended her presidential campaign on Thursday, ending a long-shot effort that saw her feeding with Hillary Clinton and raising fears among Democrats that she would mount a third-party 2020 bid.

In an email and a video posted to Twitter, Gabbard offered her full support to former Vice President Joe Biden, saying “it’s clear that Democratic primary voters have chosen him to take on President Donald Trump in November.

As the coronavirus outbreak continues, Gabbard, a military veteran and a major in the Army National Guard, said she would focus on her continued service, including military experience, should she be needed.

“I feel that the best way I can be of service at this time is to continue to work for the health and wellbeing of the people of Hawaii and our country in Congress, and to stand ready to serve in uniform should the Hawaii National Guard be activated,” said Gabbard, who served two tours of duty in the Middle East.
Oil price drop leaves Iraq closer to crisis

By Qassim Abdul-Zahra AND Samya Kullab 
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The economic fallout from the coronavirus coupled with a sudden drop in oil prices is threatening to cata
crypt Iraq into an unprecedented crisis.

The crude-exporting country is struggling to finance measures to contain the pandemic amid a leadership void in the federal government, and the unexpected oil price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia is further exacerbating budget shortfalls as losses mount daily in trade, commerce, tourism and transportation.

“This epidemic is striking our economy more than it is striking our health,” said Thamir Gharib, a hotel owner in Karbala. The Shi'ite holy city in southern Iraq that hummed with religious pilgrims all year long is now ghostly quiet.

Gone are the dozens of buses primarily from neighboring Iran, the Gulf and Europe carrying visitors to the Imam Hussein shrine and filling up Karbala’s hotels and restaurants.

Revenues from tourists who traveled to holy sites in Iraq accounted for nearly 8% of the country’s GDP, according to figures from the World Travel and Tourism Council. But as the global pandemic takes hold of the country, religious tourism has ground to a halt and Gharib’s hotel doors like others in Karbala and the nearby city of Najaf — are shuttered.

A potentially weeks-long curfew went into effect in the capital Baghdad on Tuesday night, further compounding economic losses.

“If we calculate the damages with the fall of oil prices, it’s no less than $120-130 million per day,” said Mudarr Saleh, financial adviser to the prime minister.

“It is necessary to legislate an emergency budget in the short term that provides financial sus-
tainability at this stage to meet the necessary needs,” he added.

But Iraqi officials appear to be slow to heed these calls amid a deepening political crisis as rival blocs sparred for weeks over the naming of the next prime min-
ister, precipitating a void in the country’s top leadership. On Tues-
day, former governor of Najaf, Adnan al-Zurfi, was named pre-
mier-designate but it remained to be seen whether political blocs will approve his Cabinet line-up.

Other officials expressed optimis-

Oil prices were already suffer-
ing shock from the virus outbreak and plunged further when Saudi Arabia began heavily discounting

India hangs 4 men convicted for fatal New Delhi gang rape

By Sheikh Salih and Rishabh Jain

NEW DELHI — Four men sentenced to death for the gruesome gang rape and murder of a woman on a New Delhi bus in 2012 were hanged Friday, concluding a case that exposed the scope of sexual violence in India and prompted horrified Indians to demand swift justice.

The four stood trial relatively quickly in India’s slow-moving justice system, their convictions and sentences handed down less than a year after the crime. In-
dia’s top court upheld the verdicts in 2017, finding the men’s crimes

People shop in the main Shurja market, Monday.

People shop in the main Shurja market, March 10, in central Baghdad, Iraq. With oil prices dropping and economic fallout from the coronavirus, Iraq struggles to maintain life.

India hangs 4 men convicted for fatal New Delhi gang rape

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People shop in the main Shurja market, March 10, in central Baghdad, Iraq. With oil prices dropping and economic fallout from the coronavirus, Iraq struggles to maintain life.
Unleash your inner napper

Follow these tips to fall asleep faster, awake more refreshed

BY ERICA PEARSON
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

EnergyPod activated. Enjoy your Metro-Nap,” said a soft voice from the speaker. As the chair’s leg rest rose, I settled back to the relaxing sounds of waves and synthesizer melodies and closed my eyes beneath the dome-like shield.

I almost forgot that I was in downtown Minneapolis — and in the middle of a workday. A place to power nap is becoming an office wellness amenity, as employers begin to see sleeping on the job as a way to boost productivity, not a sign of laziness.

As part of a recent renovation, Fifth Street Towers added two MetroNaps EnergyPods (chairs designed for workplace napping) to their tenant amenity center. The pods gently wake you with soft light and vibrations after 20 minutes.

“They’re rarely empty,” said Reed Christianson, a principal with Transwestern, the building’s leasing team.

Power naps — whether at your desk or in a fancy pod — are just one of the most popular sleep hacks that local experts suggest. This week, our Snooze Goal is to try at least one of these suggestions, and hack our way to better sleep. Your sleep diary will give you clues about which hacks might be best suited to your natural sleep schedule and lifestyle.

Here are four ways to boost sleep and be better rested:

Power nap

This works best for folks who want to stay up a little later and get an energy boost without relying on caffeinfe.

Humans are “natural nappers,” who typically feel a lull in the afternoon, said Dr. Michael Howell, a sleep medicine doctor and associate neurology professor at the University of Minnesota. Taking a 10- to 20-minute nap or a longer 90-minute snooze can make for a more productive afternoon and evening, he said.

A nap isn’t necessarily a good idea for someone who struggles to fall asleep at bedtime, he said. But for the rest of us, even those who think they are incapable of napping, it’s worth a try.

“Napping takes practice,” said Howell. “Recognize that most people, when they start napping, aren’t any good at it.”

First, identify when your natural napping time is.

“If you go to bed at 10 p.m. and wake up at 6 a.m., what’s the midpoint of that? It’s about 2 a.m. That means that your natural naptime is 2 o’clock in the afternoon. Exactly 12 hours apart,” Howell said.

Another way to find your ideal naptime, he suggested, is to minimize stimulants like coffee and energy drinks, and “listen to what your brain is telling you in the afternoon.”

Once you have the timing down, seek out a place that’s comfortable, cool and quiet. We sleep in 90-minute cycles, passing through different stages — drifting off, light sleep, deep sleep and REM sleep. If you don’t have time to nap for a full 90 minutes, it’s better to try a shorter 10- to 20-minute power nap, Howell said. That’s because trying to wake from a deep sleep can leave you groggier than when you began.

To nap, he suggests you sit down, close your eyes and drop your head. Don’t use a blanket for a short nap, because your body’s drop in temperature during sleep will help you wake up naturally.

“If you can fall asleep, great, but if not, don’t worry about it. Just keep plugging away at it like you’re practicing the piano or trying to hit a golf ball,” Howell said.

Therapy light

This hack is for those who struggle through groggy mornings, especially natural night owls who have to wake up early, said Howell.

“Focus on doing the right thing in the morning to pay it forward to yourself, so it’s easier to fall asleep tomorrow night,” Howell said.

He suggests spending about a half-hour in front of a 10,000-lux lamp soon after rising. It provides your body with artificial sunlight, which helps you wake up and shifts your circadian rhythm earlier. (Real sunlight works, too, of course, but it tends to be in short supply at this time of year.)

For more extreme night owls (those who have trouble getting to sleep at night and would sleep in by four to six hours on the weekend), he recommends combining the morning light with a very small dose (one milligram) of melatonin in the evening.

“You can take melatonin not just to help fall asleep but actually to help wake up in the morning. You’re pulling your circadian rhythm earlier,” he said. “That’s what you’re doing. Don’t think of it as a sleeping pill. Let’s say you are a person who would like to sleep in until noon, but have to wake up at 7. So you’re using the lightbox at 7. The other thing you can do is take melatonin at 7 at night. That’s 12 hours apart. The lightbox is giving you your sunrise, and the melatonin is giving you your sunset.”

Meditation

This can make it easier to wind down and quiet your brain at bedtime. But it also can help boost sleep quality, which is why both Twin Cities wellness coach Amy Mattila and M Health Fairview pulmonologist and sleep expert Dr. Conrad Iber recommend it.

“Meditation can help you to start to tell the nervous system it’s time to relax and to unwind,” said Mattila.

You can practice on your own, or using a meditation app like Calm or Headspace. Iber also suggested searching for sleep meditations on YouTube and listening to the audio only.

Meditation during the day can also help with sleep. A recent Dutch study found that two weeks of listening to short audio meditations (spending 10 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes after work) improved both the quality and quantity of sleep.

The researchers focused on four specific mindfulness exercises that aid in sleep:

Focus on doing the right thing in the morning to pay it forward to yourself, so it’s easier to fall asleep tomorrow night.

Mindfully focusing on an everyday task such as brushing your teeth or drinking tea.

A loving kindness practice, in which you send feelings of compassion to yourself and others.

Gratitude affirmations

This hack is for sleepers who have trouble calming their mind, either when trying to fall asleep at bedtime or when they awake in the middle of the night, said Sleep Health Specialists’ Sarah Moe.

“Right before bed, say out loud, audibly, three things that you hope to accomplish the next day, and three things that you are grateful for,” said Moe. “When you hear those things, it not only releases some worry for the next day, but also the gratitude portion releases a relaxing and calming hormone that helps initiate sleep.”

‘Napping takes practice. Recognize that most people, when they start napping, aren’t any good at it.’

Dr. Michael Howell
physician, neurology professor at the University of Minnesota
Isolation BINGE
22 TV shows to watch as you wait out coronavirus indoors

The Seattle Times

Due to unprecedented events taking place around the world, a lot of us may be finding ourselves staying inside more than usual these days. And we’ll be needing things to watch — not just movies, which kill maybe two hours or so, but multiseason TV shows in which we can get happily lost. In between washing our hands and monitoring the latest public health news, here’s 22 binge-worthy TV shows available for streaming.

‘Tuca & Bertie’ (Netflix)
This unjustly canceled Netflix series about a friendship between anxious perfectionist song thrush Bertie (voiced by Ali Wong) and Tuca, a big-hearted, extroverted toucan in recovery for substance-use issues (Tiffany Haddish), is the only show I’ve watched and immediately wondered, “Does this take place inside my brain?” The premise — from Lisa Hanawalt, who created the wildly gorgeous anthropomorphized creatures of “BoJack Horseman” — is preposterous: It’s an animated show about 30-something bird-women that somehow manages to take on serious content — trauma, mental health, sobriety, workplace sexism — in a cartoon atmosphere that’s insistently funny and bubbly. And while the dichotomy between introverted Bertie and brazen Tuca could fall flat if it were just that, I’ve always seen them as two sides of the same (delightful, complex, vulnerable) personality, and their story as a surreal, comedic metaphor for the way our friends can expand our understanding of our own inner reserves. We all have a little Tuca and Bertie in us.

‘Love Is Blind’ (Netflix)
“Love Is Blind” is not a good TV show. The concept is like “The Bachelor,” with a distinct arranged-marriage vibe, wherein a bunch of conventionally attractive people talk to each other through a wall and then get engaged without knowing what their conventionally attractive partners look like. Surprised! They (mostly) try to give their hot mystery dates a shot, cohabitating and planning weddings at a time when most of us are still only committed to the texting-funny-gifs stage of a relationship. Don’t worry, it gets weirder! The “Love Is Blind” contestants are inexplicably shepherded through their stress-inducing journey by the one-time boy-band star and ex-husband of Jessica Simpson, Nick Lachey, and his wife, Vanessa Lachey (previously Minnillo), best known as host of MTV’s “Total Request Live.” I’ve always found “The Bachelor” unwatchable, but there is so much going on in “Love Is Blind” — outdated gender norms, the horrors of cohabitation writ large, the collision between romance and the allure of one’s phone, insecure and avoidant attachment styles and HEAVY emotions expressed in ways both functional and disastrous. It’s a bad show and you’ll feel bad that you watched it. You also won’t be able to stop yourself.

‘American Vandal’ (Netflix)
Since the day I first watched the pilot, I have wanted to scream “VANDAL!!” It is a searing, hilarious parody of the true-crime genre (think “Serial” or “Making a Murderer”) with an incredibly well-written mystery arc, and a terrifyingly accurate depiction of high school antics in the 2010s.

‘The Life of Birds’
(POD, available on Amazon Prime)
At its root, the anxiety we’re all feeling about coronavirus is about fear of death: the horror of the end of our own lives on this planet, sudden and stark and unknowable, as well as terror of the lives of our loved ones taken from us with a cruel finality. We know that statistically, we are almost certainly safe — knock frantically on wood — and yet we dread. It’s time to be with the birds, light-boned and feathery and endlessly fascinating in their endless ways, absurd-looking or elegant, they of industrious nests and miraculous eggs and fuzzy baby chicks. This PBS documentary series is so vividly shot, it’s incredible in the literal sense of not to be believed (how do they get the cameras so close to the birds?), and the narration by the indomitable David Attenborough will soothe even the most existential anxiety (that accent!).

‘Curb Your Enthusiasm’
(HBO Now)
I want to hear Larry David’s take on coronavirus because a quarantine sounds like his dream come true. The fictionalized take on the “Seinfeld” creator’s life is wrapping up its 10th season now on HBO, so it’s the perfect time to wind back across the bridges David has burned in his tiresome quest to be right, no matter the argument (usually one he started). I won’t defend L.D.’s petty squabbles with friends, family, Mocha Joe, his dry cleaner, an aggressive swan, Joseph from the National Park(s) and a slew of Hollywood folks, BUT David did once refuse to shake Ben Stiller’s recently sneezed-in-hand, ruining their relationship while displaying proper outbreak preparedness.

‘The Circle’ (Netflix)
If you like reality television, or even if you don’t, you should check this show out. A group of strangers all vie to be the most influential, but they can only interact with each other through an online system called “The Circle.” With catfishing, romance, drama and a cast of unique characters, this show is the perfect recipe for a silly, but irresistible, watch.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15
**TELEVISION**

**FROM PAGE 14**

*Monk* (USA Network; available on Amazon Prime Video)

Tony Shalhoub won three Emmys for his role as Adrian Monk, the titular sleuth bent by the unsolved murder of his wife and the obsessive-compulsive disorder and phobias that intensified after her death. Plotlines dulled as the show trudged on, but there’s enough heart in the script — and intrigue about Trudy’s murder — to make eight seasons worth watching. “Monk” is easy to start and easy to love, and the protagonist’s paranoia over germs has never been more relatable.

*One Day at a Time* (Netflix)

I idly checked out the first episode of Gloria Calderon Kellett’s reboot of the 1970s sitcom, featuring three generations of a Cuban American family living together in more-or-less harmony, a white back, thinking it would be something pleasantly sitcomty to pass a half-hour. And, just like that, three seasons went by — and all I wanted was more. This show, led by the powerhouse duo of Justina Machado (“Six Feet Under”) and living legend Rita Moreno, is quite possibly the sweetest, funniest streaming experience I’ve had in years; sitcomty, sure, but utterly charming in its depiction of family love.

*Sex Education* (Netflix)

Viewer discretion is advised with this one, but it’s worth a watch. Being a teenager is awkward enough, but for the show’s main character, Otis, it doesn’t help that his mom, played by Gillian Anderson, is a sex therapist. He eventually teams up with his classmate Maeve to start an underground sex therapy clinic using the knowledge he’s picked up from his mom. What could go wrong? Unsurprisingly, a lot, but it makes for an entertaining watch. The show is an honest, funny and open look at sexuality and growing up.

*Nathan for You* (Comedy Central; available on Hulu)

Nathan Fielder graduated from one of the greatest shows about sex, relationships and happiness. He says so at the time.

*For All Mankind* (Apple TV)

I’m a sucker for space-related TV shows and alternate history, so this new Apple TV series hooked me from the get-go. The premise: What if the global space race had never ended? What if the Russians had beaten the U.S. to the moon? How would that have affected NASA’s space program? One hint: In this alternate universe, we would have celebrated some badass female astronauts a lot sooner than we did. Set in the ’80s, the show doesn’t shy away from the societal issues of its time and deftly incorporates elements of history into a fast-moving narrative. You’ll meet John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, and one of the female astronauts (Molly Cobb, played by Sonya Walger) is based loosely on real-life pioneer Jerrie Cobb, a trailblazing pilot who was the first woman to pass all the flight tests that NASA’s original Mercury 7 astronauts took.

*Six Feet Under* (HBO; available on Amazon Prime, Hulu, HBO Now)

This HBO drama centered on the Fishers, a Los Angeles family who owned a funeral home, and every episode began with someone’s life ending. Sounds dark, and it was, but this Alan Ball creation was so perfectly cast and elegantly written that I returned for more every Sunday back in the aughts — and have been looking ever since for an excuse to watch the whole thing beginning to end. The characters, not always lovable but having the messy imperfections and annoyances of real life, were always surprising; the message of how those we have lost linger among us was unexpectedly lyrical.

*You’re the Worst* (FX, available on Hulu)

Frequently referred to as an “anti-romantic romantic comedy,” “You’re the Worst” contains one of the greatest love stories in modern television. The show follows two love-cynics, Gretchen and Jimmy, and their journey through love, relationships, happiness and other wacky antics over the course of several years. I think the true genius of the show is how it’s able to effectively tackle tough subjects, like depression, alcoholism and PTSD, with beautiful nuance, yet feature the trashiest band of characters imaginable.

*Westworld* (HBO; available on Amazon Prime Video, HBO NOW, Hulu)

This series — in which rich people live out their fantasies in a Wild West-set amusement park hosted by humanoid robots — becomes more twisted and multilayered as it goes along. Add to that the stellar cast (Evan Rachel Wood, Thandie Newton, Anthony Hopkins, Ed Harris, Jeffrey Wright, etc.), and this unsettling, violent, visually stunning sci-fi drama might have you, like me, hooked by the end of first episode.

*’Stars and Stripes’*

**Brooklyn Nine-Nine** (NBC, available on Hulu)

You’ve probably already binged it twice by now, but it’s smart, it’s funny and, unlike many sitcoms that we’re finding haven’t aged well these days (since when is New York that white, “Friends”?), “Brooklyn Nine-Nine” has a wonderfully diverse cast and is standing proof that you can be funny without being offensive. You may think you caught all the brilliant jokes the first two times you binged it, but like with a good book, you’re guaranteed to find something new to laugh at with every rewatch.

*Call the Midwife* (PBS; available on Netflix)

A friend recommended this British period drama, set in midcentury and centering on a group of midwife/nurses living in a convent in the slums of London and at work in a local hospital and I quickly got hooked. This show is based on the real-life memoirs of nurse Jennifer Worth, and it’s sort of the spiritual opposite of “Six Feet Under.” In every episode, a baby is born. In its many seasons (its ninth recently aired in Britain, and at least two more are planned), “Call the Midwife” has explored some unexpectedly gritty territory; this show is far more modern than it appears at first glance, and it has a female energy that’s both empowering and irresistible.

*Grey’s Anatomy* (ABC; available on ABC, Netflix, Hulu)

I’m not even ashamed to admit it. I have seen Every. Single. Episode. Of. This. Show. Sure, we’ve lost many characters (Alex! Derek! * sob ArIZoNA! CaLLie! Yang! Lexie! Mark!) to death, destruction and whatnot. And yes, if this hospital were real and I actually worked there, I would run screaming out the nearest exit because it is cursed with the worst luck of any building in America. However, I love this show because there has been a new cast member after 16 seasons, these characters have become as familiar as friends. “Grey’s” has always been about relationships — the medicine is just a vehicle to advance the drama! — and how the people around us get us through life’s challenges. Also, it’s set in a hospital full of fictional world-class doctors who somehow always pull out miraculous answers for the most confounding viruses, tumors and medical mysteries. If so, if you need to time in a pandemic, well pull up “Grey’s” and get acquainted with the doctors of Grey-Sloan Memorial Hospital.
A dutiful samurai adventure

Fans of action titles, Japanese mythology will find something to love in Nioh 2.

BY NIC REUBEN
Special to The Washington Post

Don’t imitate me
it’s as boring
as the two halves of a melon.

To the Haiku poet Matsuo Basho, symmetry was deeply uninspiring. Why limit yourself to forms of expression already dreamed up by another? When Nioh — which draws from the same well of Zen imagery as many of Basho’s poems — released in 2017, it featured an undeniable symmetry with the design trends popularized by the first two Dark Souls games. Stamina-based combat. Relentless, deadly foes. Unforgiving environments.

But to call it a reflection of Dark Souls wouldn’t be entirely accurate. Inspired by Ninja Gaiden and Onimusha, Nioh’s combat was far more expansive, with a higher skill ceiling but much more flexibility. This depth is even more pronounced in the sequel, and as a result, Nioh 2 is a hard sell to anyone who doesn’t have the time to dedicate themselves. Its unforgiving combat, byzantine equipment system and systems-heavy character customization are both its greatest assets and the biggest barriers to entry for anyone who just wants to hit a monkey demon with a sword for an hour or so. Which is, I think, most of us. There’s plenty on the other side of that barrier for which it’s worth crossing. In many cases, Nioh 2’s foes need to be as smart and relentless as they are simply to give the player a reason to utilize all their options. Each of Nioh 2’s nine weapons has three stances — fighting styles you can switch between — each with their own pace, strengths, weaknesses and combos. Each of these three stances has options to flow into the other, offering yet more approaches. The thrill of outsmarting, outmaneuvering and ultimately eviscerating worthy and dangerous foes is one of the game’s big triumphs.

The sequel’s newest addition to the tense, parry-and-counter, stamina-based combat is the option to collect the souls of slain Yokai, supernatural folkloric beings, and use their abilities to turn the tide of battle. You can briefly transform into a giant gorilla, somersault into the air to avoid an incoming attack, and follow up with a throwing spear. Or, close the distance by metamorphosing into a spectral ogre and pummeling your opponent with your gigantic fists. These abilities add variety and visual flair to fights.

Nioh 2 cleverly fictionalizes historical events as though recorded history was filled with mistranslation, amalgamating myth and legend. Your customized demon hunter takes part in key historical events, slaying swaths of demons with famous warlord Oda Nobunaga across an epic campaign. It’s dramatic, silly and excellent fun.

Between the ghostly voices whispering of war crimes passed, the bloodied and tortured bodies slumped against smoldering dwellings, and the mythological body horror designs of your Yokai foes, environments can feel oppressively bleak sometimes. To balance this, Nioh 2 introduces a touch of Ghibli-esque whimsy. Adorable Kodama spirits are hidden across every level as collectibles, inviting you to seek them out for helpful bonuses. Follow the sound of meowing, and you might find a saucer-eyed, chubby cat called a Scampuss, who’ll follow you around and help in combat.

These touches, along with a more hopeful tone in many of the story cutscenes, are a welcome reprieve from the darkness while you steel yourself to plunge back in, katana-first.

A perhaps less-welcome reprieve is the amount of time you’ll spend going through menus. Over the course of a level, you Hoover up tiered equipment like in an MMORPG — a lot of it identical to weaponry and armor you already own. Most of this will end up being donated at shrines for a resource you can spend on healing items and ammunition, or used at a blacksmith you can access between missions. Along with experience points, and separate skill trees for Ninjutsu abilities like throwing stars and elemental weapon buffs, the options for optimization can become overwhelming.

Fighting is still what you’ll spend most of your time doing, though. When things go well, combat feels incredibly weighty, responsive and fluid, discouraging button-mashing in favor of a measured approach that still manages to evoke a martial arts movie power fantasy. And an intuitive three-player co-op option transforms Nioh 2 from a cautious, deliberate gantlet into a riotous hack and slash. As a devotee of Dark Souls, Bloodborne and Sekiro, though, I wonder if Nioh 2 has learned some of the wrong lessons from FromSoft’s oeuvre. Souls director Hidetaka Miyazaki is always eager to move away from discussions of his work’s infamous difficulty in interviews. Nioh 2’s producer, Fumihiko Yasuda, has unabashedly referred to Nioh 2 as a “Masocore” game, and the game’s often gleefully punishing design supports this. Enemies that appear from nowhere, attacking immediately, can often feel sadistic for sadism’s sake — something the Souls games rarely lean into. It’s never enough to completely sour how enjoyable combat is, but it doesn’t often feel like an overzealous, rather than thoughtful, application of difficulty.

Despite this, Nioh 2 is still one of the most accomplished and polished games to be a bit like Dark Souls since everything became a bit like Dark Souls. Platforms: PlayStation 4
Online: teamninjastudio.com/nioh
## Eugene Sheffer Crossword

**ACROSS**
1. Shiny lip  
2. Vanished  
3. Mine find  
4. Costa  
5. Start of summer
6. Women's clothing size  
7. Yogi's little pal  
8. Left  
9. Ultimate goal  
10. Mexican entreé  
11. Abound  
12. Swindle  
13. Author Deighton  
14. Hammert pook  
15. Biol. or chem.  
16. Bottom line  
17. Sweet"  
18. One of the Fab Four  
19. Woody's son  
20. Comic shreiks  
21. Sun. talk  
22. Sheep's cry  
23. Reply to "Shall we?"  
24. Mimic  
25. Sail support  
26. Leer at  
27. Actress  
28. New stafers  
29. Cooks' garments  
30. Handsome guy  
31. City in Ohio  
32. Medical screenings  
33. Former Mideast org.  
34. Purplish black  
35. "So there!"  
36. Service charge  
37. Damascus  
38. Is its cap.  
39. Mauna —  
40. Letters after Q  
41. Acid type  
42. Hungarian-born financier  
43. Military sch.  
44. Former larva  
45. Org.  
46. Bloke  
47. Maui garlands  
48. Charge  
49. Curvy letter  
50. Nanny's suffix  
51. Chemical  
52. Prefix  
53. “Better”  
54. Existence is what it is, and it is not what it is not.  
55. Who is to say that having freedom is better than having freedom?  
56. Who is to say that every man with health adds to his health?  
57. Whatever, I still demand that you return my follow.

**DOWN**
1. Vanished  
2. Mine find  
3. 44th president  
4. Costa  
5. Service charge  
6. Purple-turquoise  
7. 9th Scholarly hurdle  
8. Director Burton  
9. Natives of Naples  
10. Far (Pref.)  
11. Idyllic place  
12. Wager  
13. Annuls  
14. Actor Waterston  
15. Guest's bed  
16. Hot tub  
17. Former Mideast org.  
18. Purplish black  
19. "So there!"  
20. Service charge  
21. Damascus  
22. Is its cap.  
23. Mauna —  
24. Letters after Q  
25. Acid type  
26. Hungarian-born financier  
27. Military sch.  
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**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

- OAT  
- ALPO  
- VIP  
- AWE  
- TEAK  
- LACES  
- FOR  
- SHAME  
- LUGS  
- SLICER  
- Fou  
- ANY  
- FOR  
- YOU  
- COSTA  
- FRAP  
- USES  
- FOR  
- ALIE  
- FLAT  
- FAD  
- SNEER  
- FOR  
- ALL  
- LTD  
- BOA  
- AORTAL  
- SARI  
- FOR  
- KEEPS  
- GLADE  
- EDGE  
- TEA  
- TIME  
- LEOS  
- EXT

---

**CRYPTOQUIP**

- PWFMDCMW  
- GPDEZGDPEWP  
- N.M.FPWMHVVCKZBBNMWV  
- DGEZRHCPWZIIUBDMKIU  

**EWZIM: “H’E CDK Z BDDR.”**

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: WEEK-LONG ANNUAL EVENT THAT COMMEMORATES THE PLERUES OF KISSING: A TWO-LIP FESTIVAL.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: B equals C
Blaming 'China' for virus isn't specific enough

By JOSH ROGIN
The Washington Post

It's crucial for our health and safety that the United States push back against the Chinese government's efforts to rewrite the history of the coronavirus pandemic. It's also crucial we don't fuel racism or stigmatize Chinese citizens or Chinese Americans who are doing so. The key to accomplishing both goals is to separate the way we talk about the Chinese people from the way we talk about their rulers in Beijing.

President Donald Trump insists on calling the virus the “Chinese virus,” and his administration's rationale for doing so is simplistic but technically accurate: Chinese officials are intentionally spreading the lie the virus may have originated in the United States to deflect blame from their own early failings. “It's not racist at all, not at all. It comes from China, that's why I want to be accurate,” Trump said Wednesday.

As many have noted, accuracy is not the only consideration—China president should take into account. Trump is ignoring the history of racism against Asians and Asian Americans in this country and neglecting vital discussion that refers to the geographical origin against ethnically Asian people in this country since the crisis began.

As a former USG reporter said a White House official used the term “Kung-Fu” in her presence. That's unacceptable. The Asian American Journalists Association asked news organizations not to use the term “Wuhan virus,” in accordance with World Health Organization guidelines warning that referring to the geographical origin of an illness in the name stigmatizes the people there.

Several people who are using “Chinese virus” or “Wuhan virus” are not racist. And surely, some are. For the person on the other end, that's not the point. But there's a well-founded way to honor the truth about the virus and hold those responsible to account without causing undeserved anguish.

We must all be specific in blaming the Chinese Communist Party for its actions. It would be more accurate to say China’s leaders, not the entire Chinese people, are responsible. Even that is to separate the way we talk about the Chinese government and the Chinese people, and take care not to alienate ethnically Chinese citizens at home. In turn, we must also be careful not to attribute racist motives (unless justified) to those who criticize the Chinese authorities.

“At all, the CCP has engaged in widespread political manipulation for years. It is not only racism and gross disinformation that have given the Chinese government the opportunity to deflect attention from their own bad governance. It is also racism against the Chinese government. It is also the CCP's response. We must not aid the CCP's efforts to stoke internal divisions and spread disinformation. Have we learned nothing from the post-9/11 demonization of Muslims? Chinese and Vietnamese Americans need our support during this crisis and bring great strength to our response.

Let's stop saying “Chinese virus” — not because everyone who uses it is racist, but because it provides an easy cudgel for the Chinese Communist Party's attempts to divide and deflect our attention from their bad actions. We should stop using the phrase “Kung-Fu,” too. That's more accurate and_offends only those who deserve it.

By William H. McRaven
Special to The Washington Post

F or a would-be NAVY SEAL, Hell Week was the most intense part of the toughest military training in the world. It is six days of sleepless, constant physical and mental harassment, and one “special day” at the Mud Flats. The Mud Flats are an area between San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, where the waves come together and creates a swampy patch of terrain, a muddy bog that tests your determination to be a SEAL.

My training class had been out of the water for weeks, sitting doctors, jailjournalists and thwarting science — most notably the stagnating chain of thought that publicly released the first coronavirus genome sequence.

Virus has thrown us into mud, but end is in sight

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Stars and Stripes 2020
stripes.com
‘Sea calf’ born to cow that swam to shore

NC — A pregnant cow who swam 4 miles to shore after being swept away by Hurricane Dorian in September has given birth to a “miracle” calf.

A photo of the “sea calf” was posted Monday on Facebook by Ranch Solutions, a group hired to return the pregnant cow back home to North Carolina’s Cedar Island, 350 miles east of Charlotte. The cow, Dori, was one of three swept away by Dorian that were found in the state’s Outer Banks, The Charlotte Observer reported.

The calf has one brown and one blue eye, Ranch Solutions said. Having differently colored eyes is a rare condition shared by various animals, including some wild horses.

When Hurricane Dorian generated an 8-foot “mini tsunami,” it washed the calf’s mother and dozens of other animals away, including 28 wild horses that died.

Man threatens people, flees in stolen vehicle

ND — A 30-year-old man is facing numerous felony charges after police say he threatened multiple people with a knife, stole a vehicle and crashed in Fargo.

An officer tried to pull the man over but he fled a Clay County sheriff’s deputy used a tactical maneuver to stop the suspect on Interstate 94 where he subsequently crashed and was arrested.

Aquarium releases seal back into habitat

MD — The National Aquarium has released a harp seal rescued from Ocean City after severe dehydration.

The seal, Amelia Bedelia, has been part of a cast of storybook characters undergoing rehabilitation at the aquarium in Baltimore. She was one of three seals to be rescued by the Aquarium’s Animal Rescue team this season and the first seal to be released, the aquarium wrote in a Facebook post.

During her nearly three weeks of rehabilitation at the aquarium, Amelia was regularly interacting with enrichment items and puzzle feeders helping to sharpen up foraging skills before her release to a natural habitat, the aquarium said.

Two other seals — Huckleberry Finn, a gray seal rescued from Assateague State Park, and Pippi Longstocking, a gray seal pup rescued from Dewey Beach, Del., — will remain with the aquarium until they are healthy enough to return to the ocean.

Police: Intoxicated man threatens bar shooting

SD — A Sioux Falls man is facing numerous felony charges after police say he threatened to shoot people in a bar and revealed he was armed.

Police are recommending charges of making terrorist threats, possessing a gun in a bar, possessing a gun while intoxicated and disorderly conduct.

The 38-year-old man had a blood alcohol level of 0.30 when he was arrested Tuesday night, the Argus Leader reported. That’s more than three times the legal limit to drive.

Former aide charged in scheme to use drones to smuggle drugs by drone

Hawaii — Two Hawaii men were arrested for illegally harvesting hundreds of opium, a pricey local delicacy.

The two men from Oahu’s famed North Shore were allegedly caught picking the limpets in the Pupukea Marine Life Conservation District, state officials said Wednesday.

It is illegal to remove any marine life from a marine life conservation district.

Two men arrested for illegal harvest of opihis

MD — Two men were arrested for using drones to help them harvest hundreds of opihis, a type of opium.

The dollar amount levied against a cooper-producing company failing to comply with a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency settlement over dust pollution at an Arizona smelter. EPA officials announced that ASARCO was penalized for noncompliance with a 2015 settlement for violations of the federal Clean Air Act. The dust plan is designed to address the release of lead, coarse dust and other hazardous air pollutants at ASARCO’s copper smelter in Hayden.

Just beyond reach

Just beyond reach

Micha Robbins, 4, tries to touch the nose cone of a F/A-18 Hornet Blue Angel as the Navy’s Demonstration team landed Wednesday in Waco, Texas, to refuel.
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Flame arrives in Tokyo amid doubts

Games still scheduled to take place as planned

By Haruka Nuga and Koji Ueda
Associated Press

MATSUMIASHA AIR BASE, Japan — The Olympic flame on Friday completed its difficult journey from Greece to Japan.

That signified a small, symbolic victory for the IOC and local organizers, who maintain the Tokyo Olympics will open on July 24 amid a chaotic and canceled world as they believe they should be postponed or canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

“For the first time in 56 years, the Olympic torch is heading to Tokyo and I hope that the Olympic torch will illuminate the path of hope for many people,” organizing committee President Yoshiro Mori said at a scaled-down arrival ceremony at an air base in northern Japan.

Mori of course was referring to Tokyo’s famous 1964 Olympics. Tokyo was also to have been the venue for the 1940 Olympics, which were cancelled by World War II.

“We will work closely with the International Olympic Committee, the Japanese government, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government,” he said, and based on the World Health Organization’s advice, “we will ensure a safe and secure games.”

The flame, carried in a tiny canister from Greece, reached Japan aboard a white airplane painted with the inscription “Tokyo 2020 — Olympic Torch Relay” along its side. The tail section was adorned with the refrain “Hope Lights Our Way.”

The aircraft was welcomed on the tarmac by a small contingent of organizing committee officials. Two of Japan’s most famous Olympians — three-time wrestling medalist Saori Yoshida and three-time judo medalist Tadahiro Nomura — received the flame for the lighting ceremony.

Three-time Olympic gold medalists Tadahiro Nomura, right, and Saori Yoshida light the torch Friday during the Olympic Flame Arrival Ceremony at Japan Air Self-Defense Force Matsushima Base in Higashimatsushima in Miyagi Prefecture, north of Tokyo.

MLB may use twinnings to make up games

By Pat Graham
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Philadelphia Phillies minor league Logan O’Hoppe got the news from his agent and relayed it immediately to teammate Vito Friscia.

“Fra-cis-ia,” 40th-round draft pick, would be getting his spring training pay, after all.

“I thought I was kidding,” O’Hoppe said. “It’s awesome. I’m happy for him.”

Major League Baseball announced Thursday that minor league players shut out of spring training camps amid the novel coronavirus outbreak will receive allowances from teams through April 8, and a plan is underway to compensate those players during the postponed portion of the regular season.

Minor leaguers will receive allowances of $400 per week in teams in a lump sum for the next three weeks — a significant bump from their usual spring per diems of $100-200 per week. Teams hope that will allow players to cover housing, food and other expenses while they’re not able to work their way into form.

“Let’s play two! Colorado Rockies manager Bud Black would be down for doubleheaders.

Maybe even a couple a week.

That might be a necessity to make up games once the baseball season delayed by the new coronavirus gets underway.

“In theory, yeah, I think all of us would be up for some sort of doubleheader situation,” Black said during a conference call Thursday. “But there’s an understanding that we’re going to be in front of all of us is that it’s going to be the same for everybody. It’s got to make sense for the clubs and the players.”

Opening day has been pushed back from March 26 to mid-May at the earliest, and both sides are committed to playing as many games as possible.

Translation: Doubleheaders could be on the docket.

“I know that when we’re able to safely play, we’re going to have to think of creative ways to get in as many games as possible given all the time that’s going to be lost,” said Farhan Zaidi, the president of baseball operations for the San Francisco Giants. “I don’t really have any specific thoughts on that. I know everybody is going to be thinking through ways to do that.”

Two pitchers announced they are having Tommy John surgery and will miss the season whenever it starts: Boston ace left-hander Chris Sale and San Francisco righty Tyler Beede.

More than anything, Black wants his players to treat this time away like it’s December and the season is still in the distance.

Don’t ramp up.

Black said that when a time-table is known, the teams will be given approximately three weeks to get back in shape as part of a second spring training. That’s plenty of time for a starting pitcher to work his way into form.

Seattle shuttered its facility in Peoria, Ariz. The Mariners had initially planned to keep the facility open and work with players in small, staggered groups of 10, but general manager Jerry Dipoto said most of the 40-man roster had gone home.

“As we got to the point yesterday where we pulled the plug there were about 10 or 12 guys that were actually coming down and taking advantage of the workout time,” Dipoto said. “And frankly, we were concerned with the idea of group gatherings of any sort, particularly after we got the news yesterday there was a positive test of a baseball staff member down here in Arizona with another club.”

On Wednesday, the Cincinnati Reds, whose training facility is in Goodyear, Ariz., said an employee who works year-round at the complex tested positive for COVID-19. All Reds employees who were in contact with the employee during spring training were being tested and have self-quarantined. Dipoto said no Mariners players or staff have reported showing any symptoms of coronavirus.

AP baseball writer Jon Krawczel and AP Sports Writers Tim Booth, Will Graves, Stephen Hawkins and Jake Seiler contributed to this report.
Any other testing that has been done so far was in lieu of the virus. She's been running a fever and coughing since last week. Her doctor recommended she get tested at the emergency room, but there was told there weren't enough tests, so she can't get one. I've noticed where some people have been tested fairly quickly."

President Donald Trump on Wednesday, the Brooklyn Nets professional basketball team announced that the team was tested last week upon returning from San Francisco after a game against the Golden State Warriors. The team found a private lab to perform the tests, and several players were positive for the virus, including January All-Star Kevin Durant.

Even though public health resources were not used, it raised the ire of many, including New York Mayor Bill de Blasio.

"We wish them a speedy recovery," the mayor wrote on Twitter. "But, with all due respect, an entire NBA team should not be at risk for COVID-19 while there are critically ill patients waiting to be tested. Tests should not be for the wealthy, but for the sick."

Like Robin Fraser.

The 30-year-old has an autoimmune disorder that means he can't travel without a mask. He was supposed to start a film, and got tested after a person he was close contact with someone confirmed to have had the virus.

"That's just not fair," said Fraser, who lives in Victoria, N.Y., near Rochester. "Why are they getting in first? Why are they getting in first?" he asked. "We can't get tested. It's just not fair."

The situation, when it comes to testing, is a matter of growing frustration over the difficulties getting tested for the new virus have been building since the first U.S. case was confirmed Jan. 20. Early

Professional athletes, politicians, and celebrities receive tests as ordinary citizens wait — ‘That’s been the story of life,’ Trump says

<NAME> BURSCHER, MICHÈLLE R. SMITH AND TIM REYNOLDS

WASHINGTON — Celebrities, politicians and professional athletes faced a backlash this week as many revealed that they had been tested for coronavirus, even when they didn’t have a fever or other tell-tale symptoms.

That’s fueling a perception that the wealthy and famous have been able to jump to the head of the line to get tested while others have been turned away or met with long delays.

The concerns over preferential treatment underscore a fundamental truth about inequalities baked into the American health care system — those with the financial means can often receive a different level of service.

Asked about the issue Wednesday, President Donald Trump said the well-to-do and well-connected should be given priority for coronavirus tests. But the wealthy former reality TV star and reality TV star said during a briefing at the White House. "That doesn’t happen on occasion. And I’ve noticed where some people have been tested fairly quickly."

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RB Gurley switches to Atlanta

 Associated Press

ATLANTA — A person familiar with the deal said Friday the Atlanta Falcons have agreed to a one-year deal with three-time Pro Bowl running back Todd Gurley.

The person told The Associated Press about the agreement on condition of anonymity because the deal will not be official until Gurley passes a physical. The league isn’t allowing players to report to new teams immediately for those physically during the coronavirus pandemic.

Gurley will be making a return to the state of Georgia. He was a standout at the University of Georgia, rushing for more than 3,000 yards in three seasons.

The agreement with the 25-year-old Gurley comes less than a week after the Falcons released running back Devonta Freeman. Atlanta ranked only 30th in the NFL in rushing in 2019 and are hoping for a significant boost from Gurley.

Gurley was released by the Los Angeles Rams on Thursday, making the other two-time Pro Bowl running back in three of his five seasons with the Rams. His average of 1,218 yards in three seasons is the second-best in the league’s highest-paid running back at the time.

In other news:

- The Buffalo Bills officially announced acquiring receiver Stefon Diggs in a multi-draft-pick trade with the Minnesota Vikings.

- The Vikings acquired four draft picks, including Buffalo’s first-round choice (22nd overall), giving them five of the top 105 picks in this year’s draft. Minnesota also acquired Buffalo’s fourth- and fifth-round picks this year, and a fourth-round selection in 2021.

- Buffalo also acquired the Vikings’ seventh-round pick as part of the deal to provide the Josh Allen-led offense a primary deep threat it has been previously missing.

- The Dallas Cowboys agreed to deal with safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, adding a familiar name for new coach Mike McCarthy.

- The 27-year-old’s addition comes at a position the Cowboys have largely ignored in free agency and the draft in recent years.

-Mark J. Terrill/AP

New Orleans coach Payton tests positive for coronavirus

 By Brett Martel

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton says he has tested positive for the coronavirus, is resting comfortably at home and is making his test result public in hopes he can motivate people to do more to fight the pandemic.

Payton learned Thursday that he has tested positive for the coronavirus, he told ESPN before posting a photo of himself smiling as he sat on a couch next to his dog.

“Appreciate the well wishes,” Payton wrote on his Twitter page. “I’m feeling better and fortunate to not have any of the respiratory symptoms. 4 more days at home.”

Payton, 56, is the first employee of either an NFL team or the league to make such a diagnosis public.

Payton told ESPN that he was tested Monday for coronavirus after he began to feel ill a day earlier. He added that he has not been admitted to a hospital and does not have a fever or cough.

“I was fortunate to be in the minority, without the serious side effects that some have. I’m lucky,” Payton told ESPN. “Younger people feel like they can handle this, but they can be a carrier to someone who can’t handle it. So we all need to do our part. It’s important for every one of us to do our part.”

Payton said it was important to be particularly vigilant in Louisiana and the New Orleans area because of international tourist traffic, especially around recently concluded Mardi Gras festivities.

“So our parents, and those that are more susceptible to this virus, deserve everyone doing their best to combat it,” Payton said. “There are hundreds of people right now in tough predicaments, fighting for their lives. Let’s be part of the solution, not the problem. We can easily help reduce the numbers of those impacted. We have to do our part to beat this.”

“Take a minute to understand what the experts are saying. It’s not complicated to do what they’re asking of us. Just that type of small investment by every one of us will have a dramatic impact.”

TAMPA, Fla. — A new look for the NFL: Tom Brady in Tampa Bay pewter and red rather than Patriots red, white and blue.

The six-time Super Bowl champion quarterback signed a two-year, $50 million contract in free agency Friday, embarking on a “new football journey” with the Buccaneers.

The 42-year-old quarterback who spent the first 20 years of his career with the Patriots announced his decision in an Instagram post, adding he’s thankful for the opportunity.

“Excited, humble and hungry ... If there is one thing I have learned about football, it’s that nobody care what you did yesterday or the year before that,” Brady wrote.

“I look forward to meeting all my new teammates and coaches and proving to them I can believe and trust in me,” the four-time Super Bowl MVP added. “I have always believed that well done is better than well said, so I’m not gonna say much more. I’m just gonna get to work!”

The signing comes three days after Brady announced on social media that he would not return to New England, ending his historic run with the Patriots.

He joins an offense that led the NFL in passing yards last season, featuring a pair of 1,000-yard receivers in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin, tight end O.J. Howard and Cameron Brate, and a young, developing running game behind Ronald Jones.

Here is the current look at the Bucs defense and offense:
It has been just one week.
That’s all. Just one full week since Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for COVID-19, just one full week since the NBA became the first of the North American pro sports leagues to suspend operations, one week since sports essentially stopped.
The NHL quickly followed the NBA’s lead and suspended play. Major League Soccer and Major League Baseball shuttered as well. Golf lasted a day before deciding it couldn’t still play, and auto racing screeched to a halt before the weekend. The NCAA basketball tournaments were called off and college sports for the entirety of the academic year soon followed.

SEE WEEK ON PAGE 22

“We’re flying by the seat of our pants here. And I feel like everyone is.”
Frank Kaminsky
Phoenix Suns center

Top right: Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert (27), the first NBA player to test positive for COVID-19, talks with teammate Donovan Mitchell. Mitchell tested positive shortly after Gobert. Above right: A notice is affixed to a door of Scotiabank Saddledome, the home of the Calgary Flames, on March 12, announcing the NHL’s suspension of the season due to the coronavirus. Above left: The Nets’ Kevin Durant, one of four Brooklyn players to test positive.

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