

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Shortages in protective gear seen again

Associated Press

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

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

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

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

In general, supplies of protective gear

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

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

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

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

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

The American Medical Association wrote to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Vice President Mike Pence and members of Congress calling for a co-

ordinated national strategy to buy and allocate gear.

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

Rear Adm. John Polowczyk, who is in charge of coronavirus-related supplies for the White House, told Congress last week that more than one-fourth of the states have less than a 30-day supply.

"It would seem like in less than 30 days, we're going to have a real crisis," said Rep. Bill Foster, an Illinois Democrat.

FEMA, which manages the nation's stockpile, would not break down which states have enough gear to last beyond 30 days and which do not. In June, the government started replenishing its once-depleted stockpile with the goal of building up a two-month supply.

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

Death toll rises, dozens missing from floods in Japan

Associated Press

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

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

In Fukuoka, on the northern part of the island, three soldiers waded through knee-

high water pulling a boat carrying a mother, her 2-month-old baby and two other residents.

"Good job!" one of the soldiers said as he held up the baby to his chest while the mother got off the boat, Asahi video footage showed. Several children wearing orange life vests over their wet T-shirts arrived on another boat.

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

The Fire and Disaster Management

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

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

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

Okinawa base shelters in place after some positive virus tests

BY DAVE ORNAUER
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

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

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

Those who tested positive have been moved into isolation, along with their close contacts,

according to a Marine Corps statement issued Tuesday evening. It did not say how many are infected or whether they are on active duty.

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

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

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

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

That case was the first on the island prefecture since April 30.

Drive-by shooting hits military housing

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

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

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

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

A cellphone video Parren took the next day shows at least 10 bullet holes, marked with evidence letters by police, in Mabel’s room.

Parren said Virginia Beach police told her that the intended target was a neighbor’s car.

Parren said she and her husband, who’s a sailor based at Naval Station Norfolk, have until September on their lease with Lincoln, but that they cannot live at the complex anymore.

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

Paratrooper pleads not guilty to charges in neo-Nazi plot

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

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

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

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

Prosecutors accused Melzer, a private serving with the Vicenza-based 173rd Airborne Brigade, of using an encrypted app to send sensitive details about his unit’s locations, movements and security to members of the

extremist groups the Order of the NineAngles, or O9A, and the “RapeWaffen Division.”

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

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

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

according to the filing.

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

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

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

Corrections

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

Body of Marine missing at sea recovered in Japan

BY JAMES BOLINGER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — Searchers on Sunday recovered the body of a Marine who likely drowned days earlier while going to the aid of two other swimmers.

Sgt. Tyler M. Rankin, 24, of Kansas City, Mo., disappeared Thursday off the coast of Hamada Beach in Shimane prefecture, according to a statement Tuesday from Marine Aircraft Group 12. He was a KC-130 Hercules mechanic assigned to Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 at MCAS Iwakuni.

The Japan Coast Guard and local authorities responded immediately Thursday to a call of someone drowning about 11 a.m. near the Iwami Kahin

campground, according to the coast guard and the Marine statement.

About 20 people affiliated with the base were visiting the beach that morning, a coast guard spokesman said. Rankin went missing after he swam out to rescue two men from the group, who were swept offshore.

The sea had swells of up to nearly 10 feet at the time of the incident, along with strong winds, the spokesman said. It's customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

Marines of Rankin's squadron — nicknamed the Sumos — “mourn the loss of their brother at arms,” Lt. Col. Christopher Kocab, the squadron's commander, said in Tuesday's statement.

USFK expresses regret for troops' beach party conduct

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. military expressed regret for “disruptive behavior” Tuesday after American troops allegedly caused a ruckus during a Fourth of July party that included fireworks on a popular beach in the southern city of Busan.

About 200 police were dispatched to break up the festivities Saturday on Haeundae Beach in Busan after receiving more than 70 complaints from residents.

One soldier was briefly detained and fined for a misdemeanor after throwing a firework in the direction of police, then trying to flee the scene, the public affairs office at the Busan Metropolitan Police Agency said.

Two traffic accidents and a drunken driving case involving soldiers also were reported in the area Saturday.

“The foreigners were setting off fireworks, sparklers and so on along the path leading to the beach, even throwing some toward people,” a police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with department policy.

“They also installed speakers and played loud music. They clogged up the road, did not make way for cars and flipped folks off.”

U.S. Forces Korea said it was aware of disruptive behavior and poor-conduct reports in Busan and promised to cooperate with South Korean law enforcement authorities to identify those responsible.

“We regret the inconvenience and disruption this behavior caused the people of Busan,” the command said in a statement.

It called the behavior “deeply troubling” and not representative of “the strong respect we hold for the Korean people, their culture, laws and regulations.”

DOD mulls ban on Confederate flags

The Washington Post

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Pentagon ban could also exacerbate strains between Pentagon leaders and Trump caused by the military's in-

volvement in responding to recent civil unrest. Since then, Defense Secretary Mark Esper and military leaders have scrambled to illustrate their responsiveness to a newly open conversation about race.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Also likely to be the subject of conversations about Civil War tributes and the military are ships and buildings on military facilities named for Confederate leaders.

Trump niece's book to come out next week

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A tell-all book by President Donald Trump's niece that has been the subject of a legal battle will be released next week.

Publisher Simon & Schuster cited "high interest and extraordinary interest" in the book by Mary Trump titled "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man." The book was originally set for release on July 28, but will now arrive on July 14.

The revised date, announced Monday, came after a New York appellate court cleared the way for the book's publication following a legal challenge by Trump's brother.

The White House did not respond immediately to a request for comment on the release date change.

Robert Trump had sued Mary Trump to block publication of a book promoted to contain an "insider's perspective" of "countless holiday meals," "family interactions" and "family events." A judge last week left in place a restraint that blocked Mary Trump and any agent of hers from distributing the book, but the court made clear it was not considering Simon & Schuster to be covered by the ruling. The publisher has said that 75,000 first-run editions had already been sent to bookstores.

Mary Trump is the daughter of Fred Trump Jr., the president's elder brother, who died in 1981. She holds a doctorate in psychology. The book is expected to include a number of allegations about President Trump, including how his upbringing led to his worldview and the derision he showed his father after he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

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

President sideswipes NASCAR, Black driver over flag, noose

Associated Press

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

Trump suggested Bubba Wallace should apologize after the sport rallied around him after the noose was found in his assigned stall at Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama. Federal authorities ruled last month the noose had been hanging since October and was not a hate crime. NASCAR and the FBI have exclusively referred to the rope — which was used to pull the garage door closed — as a noose.

It was the only garage pull out of 1,684 stalls at 29 inspected NASCAR tracks to be fashioned as a noose.

NASCAR President Steve Phelps has bristled at suggestions the noose was a hoax. Wallace was shown a photograph of the noose, never personally saw it, and was told by NASCAR officials he was the victim of a hate crime.

"Has @BubbaWallace apologized to all of those great NAS-

CAR drivers & officials who came to his aid, stood by his side, & were willing to sacrifice everything for him, only to find out that the whole thing was just another HOAX?" Trump tweeted. "That & Flag decision has caused lowest ratings EVER!"

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

Wallace responded on Twitter with a note to "the next generation and little ones following my foot steps" in which he urged people to use their platform and not be detracted by "hate being thrown at you."

"Love should come naturally as people are TAUGHT to hate," Wallace tweeted. "Even when it's HATE from the POTUS .. Love wins."

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany defended the president's decision to wade into the Wallace case, likening it to actor Jussie Smollett's claims he was a victim of a hate

crime. McEnany criticized the press in a White House briefing, calling Trump's tweet a "complete indictment of the media's rush to judgment."

McEnany declined to explain why the president thought Wallace should have to apologize given he didn't report the noose. McEnany refused to say whether or not the president supports NASCAR's ban on the Confederate flag.

NASCAR did not directly address the Trump tweet in a Monday statement.

"We are proud to have Bubba Wallace in the NASCAR family and we commend his courage and leadership," NASCAR said. "NASCAR continues to stand tall with Bubba, our competitors and everyone who makes our sport welcoming and inclusive for all racing fans."

Andrew Murstein, co-owner of the Richard Petty Motorsports team that fields Wallace's car, called Trump's tweet "a late, misinformed, and factually incorrect statement." He also said it was unwarranted and cited the photo NASCAR released of the noose.

"A picture is worth a thousand words," Murstein said in a statement. "Bubba has reacted in a truthful, professional, level headed manner. The NASCAR community and those in the know all stand by him."

Woman charged after NYC racial dispute

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A white woman walking her dog who called the police during a videotaped dispute with a Black man in Central Park was charged Monday with filing a false report.

In May, Amy Cooper drew widespread condemnation for calling 911 to report she was being threatened by "an African-American man" when bird watcher Christian Cooper

appeared to keep his distance as he recorded her rant on his phone.

District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. said in a statement Monday that his office had charged Amy Cooper with falsely reporting the confrontation, a misdemeanor. She was ordered to appear in court Oct. 14.

After the backlash, Amy Cooper released an apology through a public relations service, say-

ing she "reacted emotionally and made false assumptions about his intentions."

"He had every right to request that I leash my dog in an area where it was required," she said in the written statement. "I am well aware of the pain that misassumptions and insensitive statements about race cause and would never have imagined that I would be involved in the type of incident that occurred with Chris."

Foreign students may be forced to leave US

Associated Press

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

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

President Donald Trump has insisted that schools and colleges return to in-person instruction as soon as possible. Soon after the guidance was released, Trump repeated on Twitter that schools must reopen this fall, adding that Democrats want to keep schools closed “for political reasons, not for health reasons.”

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

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

California

SACRAMENTO — A coronavirus outbreak is closing California’s Capitol and forcing the Assembly to put off its return to work as infection and hospitalization rates soar across the state.

Assemblywoman Autumn Burke, a Democrat from Inglewood, tweeted Monday that she

was exposed to COVID-19 by someone when the Assembly met on June 26 to pass a \$202.1 billion budget, even though she and others were wearing masks and observing physical distancing requirements.

Four other people who work in the Assembly have also tested positive for the virus, Speaker Anthony Rendon’s office confirmed without indicating whether they were lawmakers or staff.

The Speaker’s office said the Capitol building would be closed until further notice for “cleaning and sanitizing.”

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE — The federal government is setting up five new drive-thru coronavirus testing sites in Louisiana’s capital city region, which has been seeing spikes in confirmed cases of the COVID-19 disease.

Baton Rouge’s mayor, Sharon Weston Broome, said most of the sites will open Tuesday and operate seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a goal of testing as many as 5,000 people a day. The federally supported test locations, which will use a self-administered nasal swab, will remain up and running through July 18.

Broome enacted a mask requirement last week for anyone entering a business around the city, as the region sees sizable increases in virus cases and hospitalizations, including an outbreak traced to a cluster of bars near the Louisiana State University campus.

The new testing sites — located at LSU, Southern University, Cortana Mall, a megachurch location and a multipurpose event center in neighboring Ascension Parish — will be supported by the Louisiana National Guard and other state agencies. Results are expected to take three to five days, according to the mayor’s office.

Mississippi

JACKSON — Mississippi’s Republican governor said Monday he is isolating himself

after coming into contact with a member of the state House of Representatives who tested positive for the coronavirus.

In a tweet Monday, Gov. Tate Reeves said he received a virus test and is awaiting results.

Reeves did not identify the lawmaker, only that he came into contact with the individual “briefly” last week. Reeves was visibly in close contact last week with House Speaker Philip Gunn during the signing of a bill that removed the Confederate emblem from Mississippi’s state flag.

Gunn announced Sunday that he had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Oregon

PENDLETON — A spike in COVID-19 cases in Umatilla County has been fueled in part by sick employees returning to work, as the economy there reopens, without realizing they have the virus because their symptoms are mild, a local public health official told a newspaper.

The county’s largest workplace outbreak is at the Lamb Weston potato factory in Hermiston, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 168 new confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 statewide on Monday, bringing the total to 10,395. There were no new deaths reported; 215 people have died statewide since the beginning of the pandemic.

A surge of cases — more than 630 — has hit rural Umatilla County hard. The county 210 miles east of Portland has 2% of the state’s population but has accounted for nearly one-fifth of Oregon’s case count over the past week.

South Carolina

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

According to numbers on the

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

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

Tyger River is a medium-security men’s prison in Enoree, about 75 miles northwest of Columbia. Last week, prison officials confirmed that a 58-year-old inmate there had died of complications from COVID-19, a week after being hospitalized for his symptoms. Stanley Smith was the third South Carolina state prison inmate to die in the outbreak.

West Virginia

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

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

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

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

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dog alerts owner to house fire next door

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

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

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

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

Woman recovering after attack by alligator

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

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

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

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

Man firing gun prompts long SWAT standoff

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

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

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

Man facing charges for riding a wild horse

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

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

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

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

Lightning strikes and injures 2 men on beach

FL CLEARWATER — Lightning struck two people Sunday afternoon as a line of storms from the Gulf of Mexico moved onto Clearwater

Beach, police said.

Gacek Arkadiusz, 37, of Des Plaines, Ill., was unconscious and not breathing when police arrived at 2:15 p.m., media outlets reported.

An officer began CPR until lifeguards arrived and took over medical treatment.

He was taken to the hospital in critical condition, Clearwater police said.

Sav Keomany, 43, of Pickerington, Ohio, who was a few feet away, was taken to the hospital in stable condition, media outlets reported.

House fire was likely set off by fireworks

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

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

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

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

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

No one was injured in that fire either.

State: Boat at bottom of bay must be removed

MI TRAVERSE CITY — A sunken boat must be removed from the bottom of Grand Traverse Bay in north-

ern Michigan, according to state officials.

Federal and state authorities said Thursday they are working to arrange the salvage operation for the 33-foot-long vessel that sank last month, the Traverse City Record-Eagle reported.

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy spokesman Nick Asendelft said officials “don’t want that left in the water.”

The boat took on water June 19 and sank. The 10 people on board were rescued by the Coast Guard.

700 nurses at hospital strike over pay, safety

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

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

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

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

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

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Mahomes lands biggest salary in sports

Associated Press

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

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

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

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

"With his dynamic play and infectious personality, he is

one of the most recognized and beloved figures to put on the Chiefs uniform. He's an extraordinary leader and a credit to the Kansas City community, and I'm delighted that he will be a member of the Chiefs for many years to come."

The Chiefs had the 2018 NFL MVP under contract for the next two seasons but that wasn't nearly enough.

"Here to stay," Mahomes wrote on Twitter.

The contract extension starts in 2022 when the NFL salary cap is projected to be \$227.5 million. However, that number could be lower depending on revenue losses due to the coronavirus pandemic and the possibility any games played this season won't have fans. Still, Mahomes will take up a big chunk of Kansas City's cap space, around 20% depending on the annual contract breakdown and final cap numbers. That could potentially make it difficult for the Chiefs to

pay several star players big contracts.

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

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

Mahomes threw touchdown passes on consecutive fourth-quarter drives in rallying the Chiefs to their first Super Bowl

title in 50 years and the first for coach Andy Reid. That comeback performance earned Mahomes the Super Bowl MVP award and only cemented his status as the face of the Kansas City franchise.

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

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

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

Labor deal: NHL, players agree on date to resume

Associated Press

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

The National Hockey League and the NHL Players' Association on Monday announced a tentative deal on a return-to-play format and a memorandum of understanding on a four-year extension of the collective bargaining agreement.

Should both agreements be ratified, the NHL would proceed immediately to its expanded 24-team playoff format, with play beginning on Aug. 1. Under the plan, training camps would open July 13, with teams traveling to their respective hub cities for exhibition games on July 26.

The hub cities are Toronto and Edmonton, Alberta, for the qualifying round and at least first two playoff rounds, according to a person with direct knowledge of the agreements who spoke with The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the league and NHLPA have not released this information.

For the conference finals and the Stanley Cup Final, the person said, the league is being cautious and allowing itself site flexibility in the event of potential spikes in COVID-19 infections.

Extending the CBA, which was set to expire in September 2022, was considered a necessary step in restarting the season, which was placed on pause in March as a result of the pandemic. The extension covers numerous on- and off-ice issues, including the NHL's potential return to the Olympics, the person said.

If approved, players would be in a position to compete at the Beijing Olympics in 2022 and in Italy four years later. In order for that to happen, the NHL would first have to resolve marketing rights and health insurance, among other issues, with the International Olympic Committee and International Ice Hockey Federation.

The NHL, NHLPA and IIHF had what were called productive talks earlier this year. The NHL participated in five consecutive Olympics from 1998-2014 before skipping 2018 in South Korea.

Financially, the CBA extension would attempt to address the lost revenue stem-

ming from the remainder of the regular season being wiped out and with empty arenas looming for the playoffs.

Players would defer 10% of salaries next season which owners would pay back over three consecutive seasons starting in 2022-23, a second person familiar with the proposed agreement told The AP. The salary cap will remain at \$81.5 million for at least next season, the person said, also speaking only on the condition of anonymity because the details have not been released.

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

The agreements need two-thirds approval by owners.

On the union side, the agreements must first be approved by a majority of the NHLPA's 31-member executive committee before going to a vote to the full membership.

Smith, glad to be back, lands with Lakers

Associated Press

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

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

Thanks to a call from the Los Angeles Lakers, Smith is getting another shot on basket-

ball’s biggest stage. He joined the Western Conference leaders for workouts last week before they headed to Florida for the conclusion of the NBA season.

The 34-year-old Smith was added to the roster because Lakers starter Avery Bradley declined to return for the rest of the season, citing family concerns. The Lakers needed a depth replacement who could immediately fit in alongside LeBron James while playing solid wing defense, providing a three-point threat and meshing quickly as a teammate.

Nobody in recent NBA history fits that job description more perfectly than Smith, who

reached four NBA Finals and won the 2016 title while playing alongside James in Cleveland. Known for his ebullient behavior on and off the court, Smith was overjoyed to get back in the show.

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

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

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

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

Testing concerns overshadow release of MLB schedule

Associated Press

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

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

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

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

The Texas Rangers said All-Star slugger Joey Gallo tested

positive and is asymptomatic. Arizona Diamondbacks outfielder Kole Calhoun also tested positive but feels good, manager Torey Lovullo said.

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

“All my tests came back negative,” Nola said.

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

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

“There’s a ton of players out there quoted saying this, but it almost feels like you’re waiting on bad news, right? You’re just waiting on somebody’s camp to break out. You’re waiting for travel restrictions to be shut down across the nation. You’re waiting for a second wave,

where things become unplayable and sports take a backseat. We’re all just kind of going day-to-day right now, making sure that we’re ready for the given day and looking forward to that.”

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

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

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

But it’s clear that players,

managers and coaches have a lot more to worry about than just getting in shape and rounding out rosters.

“You get around the cage and you know you’re not supposed to be touching the cage,” Marlins manager Don Mattingly said. “You have this mask on all day, which is quite honestly cumbersome when it’s hot and you’re working. But it’s something you get used to. When you’re out there and guys are working, it looks exactly the same. You totally forget about it. You can get past it, for sure.”

Mattingly said he tries to be as careful as possible before and after workouts: “You go to touch a door and you’re like, ‘If I can open that without actually having to grab it,’ you’re trying to do that. That’s everywhere now. All the stuff we’re having to do everywhere in the world, especially in the South Florida area where it has been rough lately, that’s what we’re trying to do here.”

Testing hasn’t been an issue everywhere.

“We have not had any, I wouldn’t even say hiccups,” Cleveland Indians manager Terry Francona said.