

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Friday, March 27, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## House passes \$2.2T rescue package

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Acting with exceptional resolve in an extraordinary time, the House rushed President Donald Trump a \$2.2 trillion rescue package Friday, tossing a life preserver to a U.S. economy and health care system left flailing by the coronavirus pandemic.

The House approved the sweeping measure by a voice vote, as strong majorities of both parties lined up behind the most colossal economic relief bill in the nation's history. It will ship payments of up to \$1,200 to millions of Americans, bolster unemployment benefits, offer loans, grants and tax breaks to businesses large and small and flush billions more to states, local governments and the nation's all but overwhelmed health care system.

"Today we've all acknowledged our nation faces an economic and health emergency of historic proportions," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Democratic and Republican leaders worked in tandem to quickly pass the measure by voice vote to accommodate members scattered around the country and reluctant to risk flying back to the Capitol. There were hand sanitizers at the end of each aisle in the chamber, where most lawmakers sat scattered apart from one another.

There was no doubt the House would give overwhelming final congressional approval to the largest economic bailout legislation in U.S. history. For the most part, Democrats who saw a taxpayer giveaway to big business and Republicans who considered it laden with waste were set to back the measure for the greater good of keeping the economy alive.

But libertarian Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., threatened to slow action by demanding a roll call vote. The debate was mostly conciliatory, with members of both parties praising the measure as a rescue for a ravaged nation. The lecturns in the chamber's well were wiped down between many of the speeches.

"While no one will agree with every part of this rescue bill, we face a challenge rarely seen in America's history. We must act now, or the toll on lives and livelihoods will be far greater," said Rep. Kevin Brady, R-Texas.

"We have no time to dither," said Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-Va. "We have no time to engage in ideological or petty partisan fights. Our country needs us as one."

Friday's House session followed an extraordinary 96-0 Senate vote late Wednesday. The bill's relief can hardly come soon enough.

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said Thursday the economy "may well

be in recession" already, and the government reported a shocking 3.3 million burst of weekly jobless claims, more than four times the previous record. The U.S. death toll from the virus rose to 1,300.

It is unlikely to be the end of the federal response. Pelosi said issues like more generous food stamp payments, aid to state and local governments and family leave may be revisited in subsequent legislation.

The legislation will give \$1,200 in direct payments to individuals and make way for a flood of subsidized loans, grants and tax breaks to businesses facing extinction in an economic shutdown caused as Americans self-isolate by the tens of millions. It dwarfs prior Washington efforts to take on economic crises and natural disasters, such as the 2008 Wall Street bailout and President Barack Obama's first-year economic recovery act.

But key elements are untested, such as grants to small businesses to keep workers on payroll and complex lending programs to larger businesses.

Policymakers worry that bureaucracies like the Small Business Administration may become overwhelmed, and conservatives fear that a new, generous unemployment benefit will dissuade jobless people from returning to the workforce.

## Separating, special duty Marines get order exemption

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON

*Stars and Stripes*

Marines who are leaving the service or on special duty assignments have been exempted from a far-reaching stop movement order issued by the Pentagon to help halt the spread of the coronavirus.

The stop movement order bars international travel, including permanent changes of station, temporary duty assignments and leave. It runs through May 24.

The exemption was issued in a Marine administrative memo Thursday. It includes recruiters, drill instructors, combat instructors, security forces and others in commands that "fill a vital need," a Marine spokesman said in a statement Friday.

Meanwhile, Marines who are due to leave the Corps this fiscal year — which ends in September — but haven't met all the transition requirements, which include obtaining their medical and dental records and conducting a final interview with their career planner and commander, may request an extension from their local career planner, a separate administrative message issued March 17 said.

"The extension is to help Marines complete the transition readiness seminar and all other requirements," said Sgt. Jorge Ribera Pedraza, a career planner for Marine Aircraft Group 49.

The Marine Corps is also considering making changes that would affect selection

boards in light of the coronavirus.

The format could be modified to allow for social distancing, an essential tool against coronavirus, which in some cases causes severe lung illness and death.

"Instead of ... everybody being in one room staring at a computer screen, discussing one Marine at a time, we're now looking at ... is it possible to spread (the board) across two or three rooms electronically with video teleconference capability?" Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger said at a news conference Thursday at the Pentagon.

As of Thursday, 44 Marines had tested positive for the virus, said acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly.

# Hospital ship to ease burden in Calif.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A military hospital ship that arrived in Los Angeles on Friday will provide 1,000 beds for non-coronavirus patients to relieve over-burdened medical centers expected to be hit with a surge of COVID-19 cases in the coming days.

The US Naval Ship Mercy pulled into port a day after Los Angeles saw a 50% jump in coronavirus cases. California has a total of 4,040 cases and deaths increased to 82, according to numbers kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and California Gov. Gavin Newsom are expected

## DID YOU KNOW?

About a third of the nation's record 3.3 million unemployment claims are in California, where thousands of businesses have been forced to close following the governor's order for people to stay at home.

SOURCE: Associated Press

to visit the Mercy, which could begin receiving patients over the weekend.

"The proposal we're recommending is that we do a slow ramp up" with patients, ship Capt. John Rotruck said. "We would start slowly with a num-

ber like five for the first day, then doubling that and doubling again. A number like that would be a reasonable start."

Meanwhile, California has hired retired state workers and transferred other employees to help process an avalanche of over 1 million unemployment claims amid a surge of job losses.

About a third of the nation's record 3.3 million unemployment claims are in California, where thousands of businesses have been forced to close following Newsom's order for people to stay at home unless their jobs are deemed essential or they are buying food, medicine, visiting a doctor or exercising.

In Los Angeles, the number

of virus cases jumped Thursday from about 800 to over 1,200 in 24 hours, which was directly correlated to an increase in the availability of test kits, public health Director Barbara Ferrer said. Deaths in the nation's most populous county jumped from 12 to 21.

Based on a projection that each infected person spreads the virus to two others, the number of patients could quickly overwhelm hospitals, Ferrer said as she urged people to avoid exposure.

"We have to assume that the spread of COVID-19 is happening all across the county," Ferrer said.

# Army set to operate field hospitals

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—More than 600 medical soldiers from Fort Campbell, Ky., and Fort Hood, Texas, are expected to begin caring for patients on Monday in New York City, where hospitals have become overwhelmed by the coronavirus crisis, Army officials said.

The soldiers will operate a field hospital alongside Federal Emergency Management Agency personnel out of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan, treating non-coronavirus patients to lighten the burden on local hospitals that must free up bed space for people suffering from the new virus, said Gen. James McConville, the Army chief of staff. The soldiers from Fort Campbell's 531st Hospital Center and Fort Hood's 9th Hospital Center will bring with them 284 hospital beds, but will likely be responsible for even more beds provided by other government agencies, he said.

Lt. Gen. Charlie Flynn, the

Army's chief for operations, plans and training, said the short-notice deployments of medical personnel showed the military commitment to helping the U.S. civilian community in desperate times.

"They are taking pressure off the local and state health care systems — moving patients into that facility so we can help those patients — people with broken legs, car accidents, everything else that needs care," Flynn said during a Pentagon news briefing.

New York has been the hardest hit of any U.S. state, with the nation's outbreak epicenter now in New York City, according to federal health officials.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Thursday that the crisis was deepening. The number of New Yorkers hospitalized by the coronavirus shot up 40% since Wednesday, Cuomo said during a news conference. The state reported 37,258 confirmed cases of the virus in the state as of Thursday morning, and 5,327 of those people were hospitalized. Cuomo said 385

people had died in New York of the virus, including 100 between Wednesday and Thursday morning.

Soldiers with the hospital units deploying to New York began arriving Wednesday at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in central New Jersey, and they will begin moving into New York City throughout the weekend.

Meanwhile, soldiers with a third hospital unit, the 627th Hospital Center from Fort Carson, Colo., began deploying this week to Seattle, and were in the process Thursday of finding a location to place a field hospital, McConville said. Unlike the units heading to New York, the more than 300 soldiers from the 627th will likely build a hospital out of tents.

Washington state, especially the Seattle area, is another area of the United States hit hard by the fast-spreading disease, which has caused crises across much of the globe. Health officials in Washington reported 2,580 coronavirus cases as of Wednesday evening, including

132 deaths.

Top Pentagon leaders have said they were poised to send more medical help to communities in need, if they were deemed necessary. The Navy's two hospital ships are set to perform missions similar to the deploying Army field hospitals.

But the Army leaders on Thursday said none of its three remaining active-duty hospital center units had been ordered to prepare to deploy. The Army has 15 more field hospital units in its reserves, which could potentially be activated, Flynn said. Defense Secretary Mark Esper is weary of deploying those reserve units, which could potentially pull medical professionals from local communities where they are likely already battling the disease.

The Army additionally has to ensure it can treat its own people. McConville said, as of Thursday, 100 soldiers had tested positive for the coronavirus worldwide.

# Gold Star families hopeful for Afghan peace

BY PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Former Marine Javier Gutierrez says he often prays that his son's death on the battlefield in Afghanistan will be the last an American family must bear.

Sgt. 1st Class Javier J. Gutierrez, 28, of San Antonio, who shared his father's name but went by Jaguar — his middle name — was one of two American soldiers killed in early February. His death came weeks before the U.S. and the Taliban signed a deal Feb. 29 that could lead to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan by next spring. Hundreds have already returned home.

Some critics have warned that the Taliban would rise to power after foreign forces leave, threatening U.S. national security and undermining what U.S. troops sacrificed. Domestic politics, Taliban attacks on Afghan forces and potential delays caused by the

coronavirus have all emerged as challenges to moving ahead with the accord, though the opposing Afghan sides, in a sign of progress, agreed to prisoner exchanges Thursday.

Gutierrez, like other Gold Star families, has begun to hope that an end to the conflict is in sight.

"It's influenced my perspective, my son's death," Gutierrez said during a phone call. "I want them to come home. I don't want anyone else to have to go through this.

"I wish for victory there, but whatever happens, their deaths have not gone in vain, none of them," he said, referring to the roughly 2,400 American servicemembers killed throughout the war, who he said helped preserve stability and freedom in America.

Those sentiments — a desire to bring the troops home and a belief that their loved ones' deaths made positive contributions — were shared by three Gold Star families who talked about the prospect of the U.S.'s

longest war coming to an end.

Under the U.S.-Taliban deal, all international forces will withdraw from Afghanistan within 14 months if the Taliban meets promises such as breaking ties with terrorist groups like al-Qaida and preventing them from using the country to attack the U.S. and its allies.

A drawdown expected to bring the number of U.S. forces from about 13,000 to 8,600 by mid-July was a result of more than a year of direct negotiations. The talks stalled briefly in September after a bomb attack in Kabul killed Sgt. 1st Class Elis A. Barreto Ortiz, 34.

Ortiz, of Morovis, Puerto Rico, was a wheeled vehicle mechanic and described as a "mainstay" in the 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division by the unit's leadership.

He joined the Army in 2010, following in the footsteps of his father, who also served.

Ortiz is survived by two sons and a daughter, in addition to

his widow, Legna Aponte, who said she welcomed the peace deal.

"I am not into politics, but everything that guarantees the safe return of our troops feels right," Aponte said during a March 9 online chat. "In my opinion, each fallen soldier contributed big to make this peace deal a reality."

Since ousting the Taliban in 2001, the U.S. has struggled to find an exit from the conflict, and despite billions in aid Afghanistan's government hasn't been able to secure the country itself. The Taliban has been resurgent following the last major coalition withdrawal in late 2014.

Gutierrez said he's often thought about whether they'll be the last combat fatalities of the war.

"While it hurts, it would be an honor if my son and that other brave soldier would be the last ones to die in that country," Gutierrez said.

*Stars and Stripes* reporter J.P. Lawrence contributed to this report.

## Political turmoil in Kabul dogs negotiations with Taliban

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — After months of deliberation, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Friday announced his 21-member team to negotiate peace with the Taliban, only to have his political opponent reject it as not inclusive enough.

Afghanistan's political turmoil has impeded each tentative step toward negotiations with the Taliban — negotiations that are supposed to come next under a peace deal that Washington signed with the insurgents last month.

The deal calls for the eventual withdrawal of all 13,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan in exchange for guarantees from the Taliban to fight other militant groups, including Islamic State. The deal has been touted as Afghanistan's best chance yet of ending its relentless wars.

Ghani and his opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, have been locked in a power struggle that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo could not resolve during his emergency visit to Kabul this week.

Pompeo held talks with Ghani and

Abdullah, who has also declared himself president in a parallel inauguration ceremony this month, but made no headway in reconciling the two. Washington subsequently said it would cut \$1 billion in assistance to Afghanistan if the two leaders couldn't "get their act together."

Ghani's 21-member team is led by the Masoom Stanikzai, former head of Afghanistan's intelligence agency, who was forced to resign last year.

He quit after a CIA-trained team under his command was found to have killed four brothers they falsely accused of being ISIS operatives.

The special forces unit known as Unit 02 still operates despite reports of abuses, including one last year by the Human Rights Watch, which documented what it says are mounting atrocities by U.S.-backed Afghan special forces.

Abdullah seeks a power-sharing deal with Ghani, something the Afghan president has so far rejected. Abdullah accuses Ghani of being unwilling to compromise while Ghani says his rival's power-sharing demands will require a constitutional

change and that can come only by holding a *loya jirga*, or grand council, of all Afghans.

In a televised speech a day after Pompeo's visit, Ghani dismissed the threat of funding cuts and claimed that Afghanistan can manage without the \$1 billion in U.S. aid.

Despite 18 years and billions of dollars in international aid, Afghanistan remains desperately poor. The poverty level soared from 35% of the population in 2012 to more than 55% last year. Poverty level counts those who survive on \$1 or less a day. Successive Afghan governments, including Ghani's, have been accused by international watchdogs of widespread corruption.

Meanwhile, Taliban political spokesman Sohail Shaheen said the group would send four members to the U.S.-led coalition base in Bagram, north of Kabul, to oversee the release of their prisoners, also part of the deal signed with the U.S.

That deal calls for the release of 5,000 Taliban and 1,000 government personnel and Afghan troops held captive by the Taliban.

# Fla. treats 2 cruises as virus cases spike

Associated Press

**FORT LAUDERDALE** — Miami-area hospitals were treating about a dozen crew members from two cruise ships and Florida's second-largest county ordered residents to stay home as the state's number of coronavirus cases jumped sharply on Thursday.

The state health department said more than 2,350 people had tested positive for the new coronavirus, a 35% increase from Wednesday's total. The number of deaths jumped from 21 to 27.

Miami-area hospitals received crew members Thursday from two Costa Cruise ships, the *Magica* and *Favolosa*. Carnival Corp., which owns the cruise line, said in a statement that the ships were empty except for crew members. They remained offshore.

Both vessels were both last in port at the Caribbean island of St. Maarten. About 30 crew members had shown flu-like symptoms, but only about a dozen required hospitalization, Carnival said.

Meanwhile, the second-largest county in the state, Broward, issued an order requiring residents to stay home starting Friday unless they were getting food or other essentials, headed to work or had an emergency.

Counties in the Tampa Bay area and central Florida had already imposed orders to stay home.

Cities in the county had been pushing for such a measure, and some had already issued their own orders.

## Alabama

**MONTGOMERY** — Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey on Thursday directed public schools to finish the academic year with students taking lessons at home through distance learning as the state tries to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Ivey, who had closed schools through April 5, said it became clear that schools cannot reopen yet. She signed an order saying school systems should

implement plans beginning April 6 to finish the school year through alternate means of instruction.

Alabama Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey said the state is developing plans for how the distance learning would work. Mackey said lessons may be conducted online, and students who do not have internet access may get take-home materials.

## Arizona

**MESA** — The Arizona National Guard stepped up its efforts to bolster the supply of food Thursday as a few dozen soldiers packed boxes at food banks seeing a surge in demand and others prepared to move goods between warehouses and grocery stores.

Thursday's food bank missions in Mesa and Tucson were among the first since Gov. Doug Ducey activated the Guard last week in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

For now, the Guard has about 750 members activated and its mission is limited to assisting grocery stores and food banks. But Ducey last week said he may need to activate as many as 5,500 guardsmen for missions such as building hospitals, organizing a medical corps or assisting law enforcement.

## Oklahoma

**OKLAHOMA CITY** — A member of Gov. Kevin Stitt's Cabinet is among the 84 new coronavirus cases reported Thursday in Oklahoma, bringing the state's tally of infections to at least 248.

Oklahoma's death toll rose to seven. The virus has now been detected in 33 of the state's 77 counties, and health officials have consistently said that, because of a lack of testing supplies, the actual number of infected persons is likely significantly higher.

A spokeswoman for the governor said State Secretary of Digital Transformation and Administration David Ostrowe has the virus and is quarantined at home. Ostrowe has not

had contact with Stitt in more than two weeks, Baylee Lakey said, adding that Stitt hasn't been tested for the virus and has no plans to do so at this time.

## Delaware

**DOVER** — Officials on Thursday announced Delaware's first two coronavirus deaths, including one that occurred after the first known outbreak at a long-term care facility in the state.

The death of an 86-year-old man who had lived at Little Sisters of the Poor Jeanne Jugan Residence in Newark was announced Thursday night in a news release from state health officials. The man had underlying medical conditions, officials said. Six residents of the nursing home have tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

Earlier in the day, a 66-year-old man from southern Delaware had been announced as the state's first coronavirus death. The Sussex County man with underlying health conditions died while hospitalized out of state.

## Georgia

**ATLANTA** — Georgia's governor Thursday extended an order to keep the state's public schools closed because of the new coronavirus, as the death toll in the state rose to at least 56.

Gov. Brian Kemp's latest order keeps K-12 public schools across the state closed through April 24 and closes public colleges and universities for the rest of the semester. Many school districts had already decided to extend closures on their own, after an earlier order signed by Kemp that banned gatherings of 10 or more people.

With schools closed, the Georgia state Board of Education on Thursday waived a series of state rules and laws in moves that will let school districts graduate seniors and promote other students even if

coursework is incomplete.

Many of Georgia's 180 local school systems were already exempt from most of the rules under earlier flexibility agreements, but the move extends the flexibility to all.

The state also changed the fee structure for enrolling students in online classes offered by the Georgia Virtual School.

## Montana

**HELENA** — A Montana resident who had COVID-19 has died, marking the state's first death related to the disease caused by the coronavirus, Gov. Steve Bullock said.

Bullock announced the death Thursday night, but did not release the person's identity or where the person lived. Health officials were contacting relatives, he said.

"Especially during these times, Montana truly is one big small town — this news hits us hard, but we're in this together," Bullock said in a statement. "My family and I send our love and support to the family, friends, and community of our fellow Montanan."

On Saturday, a two-week stay-at-home order goes into effect for the state's 1 million residents in the latest attempt to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

The state had 90 cases as of Thursday night.

## Nevada

**RENO** — The coronavirus has claimed 10 lives in Nevada, including the first person younger than 50, state health officials said Thursday.

The four new deaths confirmed Thursday were the most in a single day.

All 10 deaths have occurred in the Las Vegas area, with the first confirmed on March 16.

The disclosures came as a report was released ranking Nevada among the three worst states nationally in hospital preparedness for the outbreak based on the number of hospital beds and physicians per 1,000 people. The other two are Utah and Idaho.

# Military medical school to allow early graduations

BY ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

More than 200 military doctors and nurses will be allowed to graduate early in an effort to get more medical staff to the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences announced Thursday.

Following the federal emergency declaration to combat the fast-spreading virus, the decision was made to move up the graduation date for most students by six weeks to April 1.

“Our curriculum has a specific focus on threats like emerging infectious diseases and disasters that our military and Public Health Service forces are likely to encounter in the course of their careers,” said Dr. Richard Thomas, president of the university, which is based in Bethesda, Md. “This instruction is based on real-life lessons learned, is woven throughout the curriculum and incorporated into our medical field exercises. Our students are uniquely prepared to meet and address the readiness needs of the Department of Defense and our nation the moment they step out of our doors.”

The students, who are all active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Public Health Service, will have completed all of their requirements to be awarded a degree and will be available for reassignment by their respective services, according to an university news release. They include physicians, family, mental health and women’s health nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and certified registered nurse anesthetists.

“This is exactly what they were educated and trained to do. The surgeon generals of the

Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service will receive a competent cadre of health care professionals who can augment current resources available to them,” Thomas said.

Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine at the university, said the future medical doctors of the program are now taking final electives that aren’t essential to degree requirements.

Dr. Carol Romano, dean of the Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing at the university, said nursing students are working in close collaboration with program directors and faculty mentors to complete all their academic requirements and meet the accelerated graduation date. Students studying for a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree must complete and disseminate a project, she said.

“All the projects had been completed and students were in the process of polishing their final project summary document and preparing posters and podium presentations,” Romano said. “The faculty elected to waive our internal requirement for poster and presentations and accept the final document as the only dissemination deliverable.”

Students studying to become a registered nurse with a focus on anesthesia were restricted by their professional accrediting body from graduating in April, but they will still graduate nearly three weeks early on May 1, Romano said.

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences is the nation’s only federal health sciences university. It educates, trains and prepares uniformed services health professionals, officers and leaders to directly support the Military Health System.

# British PM Johnson tests positive for virus

*Associated Press*

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has tested positive for the new coronavirus, the first leader of a major nation to contract COVID-19, but he insisted Friday that he remains in charge of the U.K.’s response to the outbreak.

Johnson, 55, said he was tested Thursday on the advice of the country’s chief medical officer after showing “mild symptoms” of a temperature and a persistent cough.

“I’ve taken a test, that’s come out positive so I am working from home, I am self-isolating, and that’s entirely the right thing to do,” Johnson said in a video message posted on his

Twitter account.

“But be in no doubt that I can continue, thanks to the wizardry of modern technology, to communicate with all my top team to lead the national fight-back against coronavirus.”

Health Secretary Matt Hancock was also confirmed to have the virus. Hancock, 41, tweeted: “Thankfully my symptoms are mild.”

Johnson is the highest-profile political leader to have contracted the virus, which has infected more than 500,000 people around the world.

The diagnoses of Johnson and Hancock are the latest evidence that no one — no matter how high-profile — is untouched by the global pandemic.

# Maduro threatens Trump after facing drug charge

*Associated Press*

MIAMI — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro stood defiant in the face of a \$15 million bounty by the U.S. to face drug trafficking charges, calling Donald Trump a “racist cowboy” and warning that he is ready to fight by whatever means necessary should the U.S. and neighboring Colombia dare to invade.

Maduro’s bellicose remarks Thursday night came hours after the U.S. announced sweeping indictments against the socialist leader and several members of his inner circle for allegedly converting Venezuela into a criminal enterprise at the service of drug traffickers and terrorist groups.

One indictment by prosecutors in New York accused Maduro and socialist party boss Diosdado Cabello, head of the rubber-stamp constitutional assembly, of conspiring with Colombian rebels and members of the Venezuelan military “to flood the United States

with cocaine” and use the drug trade as a “weapon against America.”

Maduro, a former bus driver who fashions himself an everyman icon of the Latin American left, said the charges were politically motivated. He said they ignore U.S. ally Colombia’s role as the main source of the world’s cocaine and his own role in facilitating peace talks between Colombia’s government and that country’s rebels over the past decade.

“Donald Trump, you are a miserable human being,” Maduro railed during his televised address. “You manage international relations like a New York mafia extortion artist you once were as a real estate boss.”

What was some of Maduro’s most venomous rhetoric ever against Trump also came with a threat of military force: “If one day the imperialists and Colombian oligarchy dare to touch even a single hair, they will face the Bolivarian fury of an entire nation that will wipe them all out.”

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## 3 hikers' call for rescue ends in arrest for 2

**OR** PORTLAND—Three hikers were stranded in the Coast Range, and their call for help saved them — but also ended in arrests for two of them.

The Tillamook County Sheriff's Office said Steven Harrigan, Natalie Ladu and Alex Meyers planned to hike in the Tillamook Burn area. The group parked at a locked access gate Tuesday, entered the forest and eventually called authorities, saying they were "frozen and unable to move." The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Their call for help came Tuesday evening, and searchers found their cars and spotted the group's footprints shortly before midnight.

They found the group about 3:30 a.m. Wednesday. No one needed medical attention.

Harrigan, 45, was arrested for felon in possession of a firearm, the sheriff's office said. Ladu, 37, was arrested on a Washington County warrant for a parole violation and possession of methamphetamine, according to the agency. Meyers, 31, was not arrested.

## Thief enjoys some comforts after break-in

**NE** LINCOLN — A thief made himself or herself at home after breaking into a house in central Lincoln, authorities said.

The resident called police Monday evening and said that when she got home from work, she found her back door broken and several items missing, the Lincoln Journal Star reported.

"It appears the (thief) spent a lot of time in the house. There were cigarettes found all over the house, items moved from upstairs to downstairs," Officer

Erin Spilker said.

The thief even prepared food in the kitchen before leaving with the woman's wedding rings and a ruby ring, plus groceries, a coffee pot and two garbage cans. The total loss was estimated at \$9,000.

## Man trying to save dog breaks through ice, dies

**WI** TOWN OF WEYAUWEGA — Sheriff's officials say a man has died after he broke through the ice on a pond in Waupaca County while trying to rescue a dog.

Dispatchers received a 911 call about a man in distress on a pond on private property in the Town of Weyauwega on Wednesday afternoon. Sheriff's deputies and Weyauwega police and fire responded. Firefighters were able to locate the man, get him to shore and he was rushed to Theda Care Medical Center in Waupaca where he was pronounced dead.

The dog made it out of the pond before first responders arrived on scene, officials said.

## Protective zone for right whales extended

**MA** BOSTON — The federal government plans to use a protective zone east of Boston until early April to try to keep endangered whales safe.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said the area will be in use through April 7. It's designed to protect North Atlantic right whales, which number only about 400 and are vulnerable to collisions with ships.

NOAA said private citizens saw an aggregation of the whales from a Boston-area beach on March 23. The agency is asking mariners to route around the area or proceed at 10 knots or less.

## Landmark hotel set for redevelopment

**VA** ARLINGTON — A landmark hotel just outside the nation's capital has received the go-ahead for a partial demolition and major redevelopment.

The Key Bridge Marriott in Rosslyn has sat just across the Potomac River from D.C.'s Georgetown neighborhood since 1959.

It is the oldest Marriott still in service, built just two years after the company — which began in the 1920s as a curbside stand serving root beer and tamales — shifted emphasis from restaurants to hotels.

On Tuesday the Arlington County Board announced it approved a redevelopment plan that calls for partially demolishing the hotel and renovating its 445 rooms.

More than 450 residential units will also be built, and the plan calls for constructing an esplanade with views of the river that will be open to the public.

## Officers rescue man from burning garage

**ND** WEST FARGO — Police in West Fargo say officers rescued a man suspected of starting a fire in a garage who was threatening to shoot them if they entered the burning structure.

When police responded to the property Wednesday afternoon they could hear the man in the burning, unattached garage.

Assistant Police Chief Jerry Boyer told KFGO that officers were able to get inside and pull the man out. One officer was treated at a hospital for smoke inhalation. Two other officers were treated at the scene.

The man in the garage is hospitalized and could face charges. Investigators say the

fire was deliberately set.

## Driver injured when locomotive strikes car

**NE** FAIRBURY — A driver was injured when her car was struck by a locomotive at a crossing in the southeast Nebraska city of Fairbury, authorities said.

The car had gotten high-centered on tracks on the city's southwest side, authorities said. A passenger got out upon seeing the train coming, but the driver stayed in an effort to get the car off the tracks.

She failed and was injured when the train struck the car, authorities said. The car came to rest about 100 feet from the intersection.

The driver was taken to a hospital. She's been identified as Isabella Kenley, 22, of Fairbury. Her passenger was identified as Dana Culp, 23.

## Police: Man arrested after many shots fired

**AZ** CHANDLER — A man was arrested after more than 100 shots were fired at police and in the air in a Chandler neighborhood early Tuesday morning and it's a miracle that nobody was hurt, Chandler police said.

The patrol car of an officer who responded to 911 calls about shots fired was riddled with bullets and multiple shots also were fired in the air before the man surrendered to police, police said in a statement. "Miraculously, no injuries were reported."

Police identified the man arrested as Zachary Rhodes, 26, and said he was jailed on suspicion of multiple counts of attempted first-degree murder and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

From wire reports

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# MLB uniform maker joins virus fight

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Bryce Harper jersey that could have been worn this baseball season by the biggest Philadelphia Phillies fan is now a protective mask in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Fanatics, the company that manufactures uniforms for Major League Baseball, has suspended production on jerseys and is instead using the polyester mesh fabric to make masks and gowns for hospitals in Pennsylvania and nearby states.

New York Yankees and Phillies pinstripes were still in vogue on baseball's scheduled opening day — only stitched on the protective wear made by the apparel company.

Michael Rubin, the founder and executive chairman of Fanatics, was watching TV last week when he was struck by the idea to turn the 360,000-square foot facility in Easton, Pa., into a factory for the COVID-19 virus fight.

While Rubin considered how he could make it happen, St.

Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem reached out to Fanatics late last week about the possibility of the company manufacturing masks. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf and Attorney General Josh Shapiro each contacted Rubin over the weekend and told Rubin the state was in "dire need" of more masks and gowns.

Fanatics developed a prototype that was approved by the state's emergency agency and by Tuesday the company halted production of all baseball jerseys.

Rubin, a limited ownership partner of the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers and the NHL's New Jersey Devils, said he had the blessing of MLB commissioner Rob Manfred to stop producing jerseys.

"We've got a million yards of fabric that we make these baseball uniforms from. What would you think if we take that fabric and make masks and gowns?" Rubin told The Associated Press he said to Manfred. "He immediately said, 'Great. I want to do it immediately. The

most important thing is we've got to help the heroes on the front line and baseball can help play a role in it.'"

So with Manfred's support, production on the \$300 jerseys for Harper, Aaron Judge, Mookie Betts and the rest of baseball's brightest stars was stopped. The company makes the uniforms for MLB and Nike.

Fanatics started fashioning masks and gowns on Tuesday and Rubin hoped to produce nearly 15,000 masks and gowns a day. Rubin, whose Reform Alliance lobbies for changes to state probation and parole laws, said the demand was for 95% masks. The production plant had been shut down as a nonessential business but about 100 workers have returned to work for Fanatics.

The company is making Level 1 masks, used for low-risk, nonsurgical procedures that are for single-use only.

Rubin said Wolf told Fanatics they would pay for the masks and gowns. Rubin, though, said he spoke to Manfred and

Fanatics teamed with MLB to provide hospital uniforms at no cost to those in need in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

Rubin, who has a net worth of \$2.3 billion according for Forbes, said it would cost Fanatics about \$3 million to make the masks and gowns and the company would produce at least 1 million over the course of several months.

There was a bit of a dust-up this week when the Devils and 76ers did an about-face on cutting salaries for employees making more than \$100,000. A day after announcing the temporary 20% pay cuts because of the economics effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the teams' co-owners rescinded them.

"As an organization, I don't believe we got right up front," Rubin said. "But I believe we got it right. I think people who know me know I'm a transparent person. I believe when you get something wrong, you just kind of fix it. Ultimately, as an organization, we fixed it."

## Hockey manufacturer switches to protective masks

Associated Press

Hockey equipment manufacturer Bauer has shifted from making visors for helmets to medical visors for those fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

When hockey came to a halt amid the global pandemic, Bauer faced the possibility of closing its manufacturing plant in Blainville, Quebec, but engineers there instead brainstormed the idea of producing medical shields to help protect people on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19.

They came up with a prototype, and Bauer vice president of global marketing Mary-Kay Messier said there were already 100,000 devices ready for distribution. They're expected to first go to doctors and nurses in Canada, then the U.S.

The medical shields are

being produced in Quebec and a facility in Liverpool, N.Y., that primarily makes Bauer's lacrosse equipment. The company, which is headquartered in Exeter, N.H., said its Liverpool facility made 1,300 face shields Thursday with a goal of producing 2,000 more Friday and 4,000 daily next week.

"There's a real shortage, a dire shortage of medical devices and gear that's needed to keep people on the front lines safe," Messier said. "We all want to figure out how we can make a difference."

U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire said on Twitter she's "proud to see this NH business adapt to help health care workers' needs during this time." Columbus Blue Jackets captain Nick Foligno tweeted his support: "Awesome work @ BauerHockey. Like many, I'm

proud to wear your equipment! Thanks for making a difference where it matters!"

Spokeswoman Vanessa McMains of Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore said volunteers are assembling face shields and 35,000 fanny packs with gloves, masks and hand sanitizer to be distributed to those in close contact with COVID-19 patients. She said Johns Hopkins was preparing for a shortage in the U.S. similar to what has happened to other countries around the world.

Congress' \$2.2 trillion virus relief package earmarked \$1 billion under the Defense Production Act to help private industry boost the production of medical gear.

"Every company has something that they can contribute," Messier said. "It's just a matter

of a little bit of creativity to try and think about what it could be."

Bauer is still ramping up production of the medical shields, and Messier said she hopes other companies follow suit. She said in times of tragedy, rival manufacturers should not be competitors.

"You're really just all in on it together in how you can help the team," she said. "I think about hockey. It's really a team sport, right? And we're fortunate to work in that kind of environment, and in this time it's about how can we support the greater community."

Fellow manufacturer Warrior Hockey tweeted: "In times of need, we're all on the same team. We commend @ BauerHockey's efforts to help keep our medical professionals safe."

# Indianapolis 500 postponed until August

Associated Press

It was bump day for the Indy 500.

The Indianapolis 500 is now a summer event. The Monster Mile could be set for a monster-sized NASCAR weekend spectacle of racing. And a supersized shakeup of the schedule looms whenever NASCAR and IndyCar resume in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Indianapolis 500 was postponed Thursday until Aug. 23 and won't run on Memorial Day weekend for the first time since 1945. The Indy 500 was positioned as the middle race of a Triple Crown of racing on Memorial Day that kicked off the biggest day of motorsports with Formula One's Grand Prix of Monaco and ended with NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600. The race now falls outside of May for the first time in its 104-year history.

"With a number of postponed sporting events being rescheduled in the summer and early fall, it's frankly very difficult to find three consecutive weekends as we traditionally have in May," Penske Entertainment

Corp. President and CEO Mark Miles said.

The Indy 500 now shares the race weekend calendar with ... the Drydene 400. Yes, the crown jewel of IndyCar will serve as the opening act for the NASCAR Cup race at Dover International Speedway, that track better known as the Monster Mile that has suffered with dwindling attendance and had its dates shuffled around the schedule.

"The good news is they can sit in the grandstand and watch the Indy 500 and stay and watch our race live," Dover President Mike Tatom said. "What a perfect day that would be for a motorsports fan. Watch it live on your phone, sit in the grandstand and enjoy a hot dog."

Chew on this: Dover still doesn't have a new date for its May race, one of seven NASCAR weekends already postponed before the series is scheduled to resume May 9 at Martinsville Speedway.

As each confined weekend ticks off, and the death count from coronavirus up to about 1,200, that target seems more

and more unlikely.

"We intend to race all our 36 points races as well as the All-Star event," NASCAR President Steve Phelps said. "What those look like at this particular point we're looking broadly about what our options are. At this particular point, we would like to finish the season at Phoenix and keep the playoff portion intact. With that said, it will require a lot of different opportunities for us to look at."

So what will happen?

NASCAR had promised a shakeup of its staid schedule in 2021, but the crisis may force the stock car series to offer a sneak peak the rest of the summer. Mid-week races, night races, doubleheaders, nothing is off the starting grid when it comes to potential scenarios to squeeze in the remaining 32 Cup races. NASCAR offered a break with tradition in June with Pocono Raceway set to hold a NASCAR Cup Series twin bill, with one race on Saturday, one on Sunday. The test run for '21 could now be forced on at least another track — with Dover the top target — before

this season is over.

"The perfect scenario would be to have enough time to prepare properly for two separate race weekends," Tatom said. "If that's not possible, it would have to be in the form of a doubleheader."

Let's race two!

There is a doubleheader scheduled because of coronavirus with a twist, an IndyCar/NASCAR twin bill at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The IndyCar road course race will now be run on July 4, a day before NASCAR races at The Brickyard in an unprecedented doubleheader between the series.

NASCAR set a self-imposed April 1 deadline to release the 2021 schedule, and that won't happen, not with 2020 races in so much flux.

The series would like to send a proposed schedule to teams within the next week or two that would shed light on what's ahead. One obvious solution is moving the June 7 race at Michigan International Speedway to an Aug. 9 doubleheader at the track to free up another weekend.

## Source: NBA executives taking 20% pay reduction

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Top NBA executives are having their base salaries reduced by 20% for the foreseeable future, a person with knowledge of the details said Thursday.

The reductions affect the roughly 100 highest-earning executives, as the NBA joins the NHL and NASCAR in cutting salaries while competitions are on hold because of the coronavirus.

The cuts are effective immediately and affect NBA employees both inside the league headquarters in New York, and in global offices, the person told The Associated Press. The person was granted anonymity because the reductions were not announced publicly.

The reductions were first re-

ported by ESPN.

Health benefits remain unaffected and there are no changes for the rest of the organization, including support and administrative staff.

The NBA suspended its season on March 11 when Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz became the first player to test positive. The league is still discussing scenarios for resuming play once allowed.

It had already been a challenging season for the NBA financially, with a loss of revenue from China following Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey's tweet in support of Hong Kong anti-government protesters. Games were taken off the air and relationships with business partners were damaged, with Commissioner Adam Silver saying during last

month's All-Star Game that the league could lose hundreds of millions of dollars.

Then came the coronavirus, which for most people causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. The vast majority of people recover.

The pandemic has caused a huge impact on sports leagues. The NHL is cutting salaries for league employees 25% starting next month. NASCAR officers will have a 25% reduction in salary, while all other employees will have their salary reduced by 20%.

NBA executives have given up salary before, with former

Commissioner David Stern taking no pay during work stoppages in 1998 and 2011.

NBA teams will make their next scheduled salary payments to players April 1, but it remains unclear if they will get what would be their next check April 15. The league could say the pandemic falls under what is legally known as a "Force Majeure Event" — the term for unforeseeable circumstances, such as war or an epidemic. Per the Collective Bargaining Agreement, when that clause is invoked, players could lose 1.08% of their annual salary for each game missed.

That means Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors, the league's highest-paid player this season, could lose about \$435,000 for each game that ultimately is not played.