

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

New outbreaks show risk of easing up

Associated Press

ROME — Fresh coronavirus outbreaks at slaughterhouses in Germany and new cases reported Saturday in South Korea linked to a man who had visited multiple nightclubs highlighted the challenges authorities face as they seek to open up their economies.

Meanwhile in Belarus, which has imposed no lockdown despite increasing case numbers, tens of thousands of people turned out to mark Victory Day. That was in contrast to Russia where a muted event took place over an empty Red Square.

Germany and South Korea have both carried out extensive testing and contact tracing, and have been hailed for avoiding the mass deaths that have overwhelmed other countries in their regions. But even there, authorities have struggled with finding the balance between saving lives and saving jobs.

The United States, Brazil and Italy also were wrestling with how to ease curbs on business and public activity.

Meanwhile, governments were coming under fresh scrutiny for their handling of the pandemic. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that Europe must acknowledge that it “wasn’t well-prepared” for the coronavirus pandemic, though he also said that solidarity is increasing and that the 27-member European Union has “grown in the crisis.”

Health officials in Germany were scrambling to contain fresh outbreaks of the new coronavirus that have emerged at three slaughterhouses — two in the west of the country and one in the north.

The response is seen as a test for the government’s new strategy of getting local authorities to tackle any surge in new cases, which was agreed Wednesday as part of a plan for

gradually easing restrictions and returning to normality.

In South Korea, a decline in new infections had prompted the government to ease social distancing guidelines and announce plans to reopen schools Wednesday.

But on Saturday, the capital city shut down more than 2,100 nightclubs, hostess bars and discos after dozens of coronavirus infections were linked to club goers who went out last weekend as the country relaxed social distancing guidelines.

Hard-hit Italy saw people return to the streets for their traditional aperitivos and revel in fine weather as restrictions there have eased — going too far for some authorities.

Milan mayor Giuseppe Sala warned that “a handful of crazy people” were putting the city’s economic recovery at risk, and threatened to shut down the city’s trendy Navigli district after crowds of young Mila-

nese were seen out at aperitivo hour ignoring social-distancing norms.

In Rome, the Campo dei Fiori flower and vegetable market was bustling Saturday morning, the first weekend Italians were allowed outside for more than just work and basic necessities. But confusion about what is now allowed and what is not created frustration for business owners.

Pakistan on Saturday allowed shops, factories, construction sites and some other businesses to reopen, while 1,637 new cases and 24 deaths were reported.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said his government is rolling back curbs because it can’t support millions of families that depend on daily wages. The government warned controls will be reimposed if the public fails to follow social distancing guidelines.

US lawmakers condemn Taliban for violating deal

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

Increased Taliban attacks in Afghanistan call into question whether the militant group can be trusted to adhere to a peace plan, two high-ranking members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said Friday.

“The dramatic increase in violence in Afghanistan is an unacceptable violation of the Trump Administration’s February agreement with the Taliban,” Democratic Rep. Eliot Engel of New York and Republican Rep. Michael T. McCaul of Texas said in a joint statement.

Engel, chairman of the foreign affairs committee, and

McCaul, the group’s ranking Republican, join a chorus of U.S. officials condemning the Taliban for violating the deal meant to end the war.

The deal says that if the Taliban keep terrorists from operating in Afghanistan, stop attacking the U.S. and its allies, and hold intra-Afghan peace talks with the Kabul government, foreign forces would begin a phased withdrawal to leave the country in 14 months.

A wave of offensives against Afghan troops followed the signing of the deal, with attacks surging above “seasonal norms,” according to a report by the Special Inspector Gen-

eral for Afghanistan Reconstruction released last week.

“The Taliban’s continued attacks on Afghan forces make us question whether the Taliban will uphold its commitments, jeopardize progress towards peace, and prevent negotiations from moving forward,” the congressmen said in the statement.

Other U.S. officials in recent days have also said Taliban attacks on Afghan troops violate the deal, despite such attacks not being expressly prohibited in the released text of the deal.

On Thursday, the U.S. peace envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, tweeted that

he pressed Taliban leaders in Qatar on reducing violence in the country and on enacting a cease-fire.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Tuesday said both the Taliban and the Afghan government were not holding up their ends of the deal. The Afghan government, however, was not a signatory to the deal, and the Taliban refused to allow Kabul’s direct participation in the negotiations. The Taliban and the Afghan government were supposed to start peace talks two months ago, but that hasn’t happened due to a dispute over a prisoner exchange the U.S. promised as part of the deal.

DOD axes order to boost fighter readiness

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Pentagon officials have dismissed a 2018 directive from former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis ordering the military to ensure nearly 80% of its fighter jets were combat-capable, according to the nominee to be the next Air Force chief.

Air Force Gen. Charles “CQ” Brown wrote in testimony to senators ahead of his confirmation hearing Thursday that the Air Force was no longer holding itself to Mattis’ stringent policy meant to drastically improve unusually low mission capable rates within the military at the time. The Air Force never achieved Mattis’ benchmark combat readiness rate across its fighter jet force, but it did report improvements.

“The Air Force returned to allowing lead commands to determine the required [mission capable] rates to meet readiness

objectives,” Brown wrote in his testimony. “We continue to balance near-term readiness recovery with investment long-term combat capability.”

Brown, who is in charge of Pacific Air Forces, was nominated by the White House in March to succeed retiring Gen. David Goldfein, the service’s chief since July 2016. If confirmed, Brown would be the first African American military service chief.

The decision to scrap Mattis’ goal of 80% flight capability within the Pentagon’s F-35, F-22, F-16 and F/A-18 jets came from his successor Defense Secretary Mark Esper’s office, Brown wrote. The Mattis policy, issued in September 2018, gave the services one year to reach 80% mission-capable rate. The policy did not include some fighter jets, including F-15 models and the A-10.

Under the Mattis policy, Brown said F-16 flyability rates jumped to a high of 75% in June 2019, up from about 70% in late 2018.

The F-35 rate climbed to a high of about 74% in September, up from about 55%. The F-22 rate increased from 49% mission capable in September 2018 to a high of 68% in April 2019. The Air Force does not fly the F/A-18s, which belong to the Navy and Marine Corps.

Brown, a longtime F-16 pilot, wrote that reaching the 80% thresholds proved challenging with aging Air Force jets and various problems faced in the newer F-35 program that have at times grounded some of those advanced stealth aircraft.

“Maintaining aging aircraft is an extremely difficult and expensive task, while new, technologically advanced weapons systems present their own challenges,” he wrote.

The service is in the process of implementing a new plan aimed at increasing aircraft combat readiness and also reducing the cost to fix those airframes, he also wrote.

Dramatic steps taken to secure ‘no-fail’ missions

The Washington Post

In late February, Brig. Gen. Pete Fesler prepared about 130 troops under his command to mobilize for a new mission, one that would take them away from their families and involve extensive precautions to keep service members safe.

Tapping his experience from deployments in Asia and the Middle East, the former fighter pilot made plans for adapting the unit’s sensitive mission to new hazards over an unknown period of time, as authorities scrambled to anticipate the moves of an unpredictable adversary.

The difference from his previous assignments: At the end of the day, instead of being halfway around the world, Fesler can look out from the base where he’s lodging and see the neighborhood where his wife and kids are hunkered down during the coronavirus pandemic.

The general is a senior commander at the North American Aerospace Defense Command

(NORAD) in Colorado Springs, Colo., where he heads a team that is attempting to sequester itself to ensure that COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, can’t cripple NORAD’s command center, responsible for preventing the United States from coming under attack from foreign missiles or other aerial threats.

His is one of a number of U.S.-based units taking dramatic steps that officials hope will prevent the highly contagious disease from ravaging teams of specially trained personnel.

Even as the Pentagon dispatches tens of thousands of troops to assist with the domestic response, the coronavirus poses a major challenge to the military’s ability to continue its core missions. It has sidelined a deployed aircraft carrier, reduced the number of basic recruits entering the military and resulted in the postponement or scaling back of big international exercises. Almost 5,000 service members have tested

positive for the virus; two have died.

To blunt the impact on the force, the Pentagon has imposed a global “stop movement” order that freezes most troops in place and introduced other measures designed to reduce risk, including physical distancing and the use of masks.

The response has been different for what the military considers “no-fail” missions, such as manning the NORAD command center, a 24/7 operation typically run out of Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs. Now part of that watch mission — the one that Fesler’s team is responsible for — has moved into Cheyenne Mountain, a Cold War-era bunker complex bored into the granite core of a nearby peak.

NORAD officials decided to cloister command center personnel under Fesler’s command two months ago to create a backup capability that could take over if the disease crippled personnel at Peterson.

“Once we started recognizing the trajectory change and the spread of COVID-19, that’s when we recognized the need to take measures to prepare our military capability and protect it in the event that we had a worst-case scenario,” Fesler said in a phone interview from Cheyenne Mountain.

They wear masks in their housing buildings, even though cleaning crews and other support staff are not permitted to enter those areas or work spaces. Supplies are dropped off once a week.

If they need to bring someone into their Cheyenne Mountain workspace, to repair a computer for example, “we treat the facility like an airlock,” Fesler said, sealing off the area until that person leaves, after which time they enter wearing protective equipment and clean.

While the troops are not permitted to interact with others, their families sometimes “dead drop” items for them in the trunk of their parked cars.

Trump says 'no rush' on more aid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says he's in "no rush" to negotiate another financial rescue bill, even as the government reported that more than 20 million Americans lost their jobs last month due to economic upheaval caused by the coronavirus.

The president's low-key approach came Friday as the Labor Department reported the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression and as Democrats prepared to unveil what Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer calls a "Rooseveltian-style" aid package to shore up the economy and address the health crisis.

Some congressional conservatives, meanwhile, who set aside long-held opposition to deficits to pass more than \$2 trillion in relief so far, have expressed reservations about another massive spending package.

"We've kind of paused as far as formal negotiations go," Larry Kudlow, the director of the National Economic Council, told reporters Friday. He said the administra-

tion wanted to let the last round of recovery funding kick in before committing to hundreds of billions or more in additional spending. "Let's have a look at what the latest round produces, give it a month or so to evaluate that."

Kudlow added that talks were in a "lull" and that administration officials and legislators would "regroup" in the next several weeks.

Still, White House aides are drawing up a wish list for a future spending bill, including a payroll tax cut, liability protection for businesses that reopen and potentially billions in infrastructure spending.

Kudlow added that the White House was also considering allowing businesses to immediately expense the costs of modifying their facilities to accommodate the public safety measures necessary to reopen. The notion was brought up on a call with House members advising the White House on re-opening plans Thursday evening and drew bipartisan support.

"We're in no rush; we're in no rush," Trump told reporters Friday during an

event with House Republicans. He called on the Democratic-controlled House to return to Washington, adding, "We want to see what they have."

The emerging Democratic bill is expected to include eye-popping sums, centered on nearly \$1 trillion that states and cities are seeking to prevent mass layoffs as governments reel from the one-two punch of skyrocketing costs from the pandemic and dismal tax receipts in the shuttered economy.

The package being compiled by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi — the fifth from Congress in a matter of weeks — draws on requests from governors for \$500 billion, and from cities and counties for up to \$300 billion to prevent widespread layoffs of police, fire and other front-line workers during the pandemic.

"No one could look at today's jobs report, the highest unemployment since the Great Depression, and say we should hit the pause button on further government action," Schumer said in a statement.

Pence's press secretary tests positive for virus

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary has the coronavirus, the White House said, making her the second person who works at the White House complex known to test positive for the virus this week.

President Donald Trump, who publicly identified the affected Pence aide, said he was "not worried" about the virus spreading in the White House. Nonetheless, officials said they were stepping up safety protocols for the complex.

Pence spokeswoman Katie Miller, who tested positive Friday, had been in recent contact with Pence but not with the president. She is married to Stephen Miller, a top Trump adviser. The White House had no immediate comment on whether Stephen Miller had been tested or if he was still working in the White House.

The positive test for the se-

nior Pence aide came one day after White House officials confirmed that a member of the military serving as one of Trump's valets had tested positive for COVID-19.

Six people who had been in contact with Miller were scheduled to fly with Pence on Friday to Des Moines, Iowa, on Air Force Two. They were removed from the flight just before it took off, according to a senior administration official.

None of those people were exhibiting symptoms but were asked to deplane so they could be tested "out of an abundance of caution," a senior administration official told reporters traveling with Pence. All six later tested negative, the White House said.

The official said staff in the West Wing are tested regularly but much of Pence's staff — which works next door in the Executive Office Building — are tested less frequently.

Dems urge 5 companies to return coronavirus aid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Democratic-led subcommittee overseeing federal coronavirus aid is demanding that five companies return loans the panel says should have gone to smaller businesses.

The subcommittee led by Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C., sent letters Friday to the companies as its first official action. The House voted last month to create the panel over the objections of Republicans who say it is partisan and duplicative of other oversight efforts around the federal government.

The panel said the companies they contacted received loans of \$10 million or more, are all public, have more than 600 employees and have a stock market value of more than \$25 million.

The letters were sent to EVO Transportation & Energy Services Inc., a transportation operator in Arizona; Gulf Island

Fabrication Inc., a manufacturer of marine vessels used in the energy sector based in Texas; MiMedx Group Inc., a biopharmaceutical company based in Georgia; Quantum Corporation, a video streaming and storage company based in Silicon Valley, Calif.; and Universal Stainless & Alloy Products Inc., a steel manufacturer based in Pennsylvania.

The letters ask the companies to respond by Monday to inform the committee whether they are returning the money and by what date.

"We did not intend for these funds to be used by large corporations that have a substantial investor base and access to capital markets," the Democrats wrote.

Almost 50 public companies have already pledged to return money to the government's emergency lending program as the treasury secretary has threatened criminal prosecutions for violating the rules.

Calif. warns 3 counties as state reopens

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The most significant reopening of the California economy during the coronavirus pandemic started Friday with tens of thousands of businesses cleared to open with limitations and the governor expressing optimism residents may soon be able to eat in restaurants and shop in stores.

Nearly two dozen counties want to move further, which the state will allow under strict criteria on the number of cases, deaths and tests, Gov. Gavin Newsom said. Still, his administration sent a stern warning later Friday to three Northern California counties that have moved faster than the state allows, threatening them with losing federal disaster money. Yuba, Sutter and Modoc counties have opened businesses such as hair and nail salons, shopping malls and dine-in restaurants.

A spokesman for Yuba and Sutter counties said officials are “working to do what is best for the overall health of our communities and coordinating with Governor’s representatives on achieving balance with his order.”

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas officials released 300 inmates early from the state’s overcrowded prisons as a precaution during the coronavirus crisis.

Dexter Payne, head of Arkansas’ correction division, said Thursday during court testimony that there will be additional releases once inmates are screened and cleared by the Parole Board.

Payne testified in the ongoing federal lawsuit that 11 inmates brought against the Arkansas Department of Corrections. They allege that state prison officials have mishandled the coronavirus pandemic and put inmates at a higher risk of infection, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported Friday.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — A federal court halted the Kentucky governor’s temporary ban on mass gatherings from applying to in-person religious services, clearing the way for Sunday church services.

U.S. District Judge Gregory F. Van Tatenhove on Friday issued a temporary restraining order enjoining Gov. Andy Beshear’s administration from enforcing the ban on mass gatherings at “any in-person religious service which adheres to applicable social distancing and hygiene guidelines.”

The ruling from the Eastern District of Kentucky sided with the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Nicholasville but applies to all places of worship around the commonwealth.

Michigan

LANSING — Michigan restaurants and bars on Friday pushed Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to let them reopen in three weeks, saying they need a lifeline to survive financially and a chance to show the public it is safe to return.

The venues have been closed to dine-in customers since March 16. They hope to resume service on May 29, when restrictions are set to end without an extension.

Guidance released Friday by the Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association to help restaurants prepare to reopen their dining rooms includes procedures for cleaning, screening workers, providing them masks and gloves, and keeping customers, tables and bar stools 6 feet apart.

North Carolina

RALEIGH — COVID-19 remains a “lethal threat” to North Carolina residents who don’t take it seriously, Gov. Roy Cooper said on Friday as rules he issued so more businesses can open and the public enjoy more of the outdoors take effect.

Cooper offered sobering comments to citizens even

while defending his decision this week to initiate Friday afternoon the first part of his three-phase plan to ease restrictions that began in March. He said it’s still preferable to stay at home, but urged social distancing and wearing of face masks in public.

New Mexico

WINDOW ROCK — The Navajo Nation’s health department is reporting 119 new cases of COVID-19 and a total of 96 deaths as of Friday.

The tribe says there have been 2,876 confirmed cases so far. Most of them are in McKinley County in New Mexico and Apache County in Arizona.

Residents on the reservation are under a weekend lockdown that begins Friday night and ends Monday morning around dawn.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and others on Friday distributed food, water and other supplies to families in remote communities.

The Navajo Nation has been hit hard by the outbreak, with the tribe implementing curfews to try to stop the spread.

New York

NEW YORK — An appeals court should let a June 23 primary election in New York state proceed without voters and poll workers being forced to risk exposure to the coronavirus to vote for a Democratic candidate for president when the race is essentially over, lawyers for the state said Friday.

The written arguments were filed by Attorney General Letitia James and Senior Assistant Solicitor Judith N. Vale after a judge ordered the state to include the presidential race on the ballot even though former Vice President Joe Biden is essentially running unopposed.

On Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Analisa Torres said it was unconstitutional to eliminate the Democratic presidential primary after delegates for withdrawn candidates Bernie Sanders and Andrew Yang

complained that doing so weakens their standing at the Democratic Convention.

Pennsylvania

LEWISBURG — Thirteen western Pennsylvania counties, including the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, will see relief from Gov. Tom Wolf’s most restrictive pandemic orders on movement and businesses next week, joining much of northern Pennsylvania that began emerging Friday.

But frustration among counties that remain locked down grew into something of a rebellion, with some Republican officials saying Friday that they would take it upon themselves to reopen in defiance of the Democratic governor. And some district attorneys declared their refusal to prosecute businesses that opened their doors in violation of Wolf’s shutdown.

Texas

DALLAS — Republican Sen. Ted Cruz on Friday got his hair cut at a Dallas salon that became a rallying cry for conservative protests against coronavirus lockdown orders in Texas after the owner refused to shut down and ultimately went to jail.

Cruz, who spent two weeks in self-isolation in March after saying he came into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, said he flew up from Houston to get his first haircut in three months at Salon a la Mode. He did so one day after its owner, Shelley Luther, walked out of jail after a court ordered her released.

Luther spent less than 48 hours behind bars after a Dallas judge sentenced her to a week in jail for defying Republican Gov. Greg Abbott’s emergency orders that did not allow hair salons to reopen yet.

Cruz called Luther’s punishment “ridiculous” but sidestepped questions about what might have been an appropriate penalty for her for violating an order, The Dallas Morning News reported.

WWII veterans mark V-E Day with Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They stormed French beaches on D-Day, helped liberate a concentration camp and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. And seven elderly World War II veterans weren't about to let the coronavirus pandemic keep them from marking the 75th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe.

Ranging in age from 96 to 100, the veterans held their salute as President Donald Trump joined them in a commemoration at the World War II Memorial on a blustery Friday morning.

Steven Melnikoff, now 100, was an infantryman whose Army unit was responsible for capturing more than 10,000 German soldiers.

"It was a tough battle," Melnikoff, who lives near Baltimore, said by telephone after Friday's ceremony. Speaking of his unit, he said: "I was with them constantly for 11 months, except the weeks and months that I spent in the hospital." He had been shot in the neck.

Trump kept his distance as he walked by the veterans, including one in a wheelchair, who had lined up to greet him.

The president and first lady Melania Trump participated in a wreath-laying ceremony and toured the memorial. They paused in front of a wall of stars with the phrase "Here we mark the price of freedom," before they returned to the White House.

White House officials had described the veterans as "choosing nation over self" by

deciding to join Trump at the ceremony.

"These heroes are living testaments to the American spirit of perseverance and victory, especially in the midst of dark days," said White House spokesman Judd Deere.

Timothy Davis, director of the Greatest Generations Foundation, which helps veterans return to the countries where they fought, said the U.S. soldiers were originally scheduled to travel to Moscow for a commemoration event. But with international travel out of the question during the pandemic, Davis said they talked to him about trying to commemorate the day in Washington.

"Of course, we presented to them the risk we are facing," Davis said. "They said, 'It doesn't matter, Tim,'" and

asked him to press ahead, saying they viewed the commemoration as "a blessing to all who fought, died and served in World War II."

Other veterans joining Trump included Gregory Melikian, 97, of Phoenix, who sent the coded message to the world that the Germans had unconditionally surrendered; Donald Halverson, 97, of Minnesota, saw some of the war's fiercest fighting in Italy. John Coates, 96, of Maryland, fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Jack Myers, 97, of Hagerstown, Md., was part of a unit that liberated the Dachau concentration camp.

Melnikoff; Guy Whidden, 97, of Braddock Heights, Md.; and Harold Angle, 97, of Chambersburg, Penn., participated in the D-Day invasion

Alaska court rules governor recall can proceed

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — The Alaska Supreme Court ruled Friday that an effort aimed at recalling Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy from office can proceed, a movement initially fueled by public outrage over spending cuts he'd proposed.

The court had previously allowed the Recall Dunleavy campaign to proceed with a second signature-gathering phase while it heard the case. The campaign must gather 71,252 signatures in a bid to force a recall election. It has reported gathering more than 34,000 signatures so far.

Dunleavy, who took office in December 2018, has argued the recall effort is political. He agreed to reverse or moderate some of the vetoes that spurred outrage. His administration this year requested additional funds for Medicaid after the level of cuts sought last year didn't pan out.

Claire Pywell, the campaign's manager, called Friday's decision huge.

"We know that we still deserve a governor that follows the law and that shares our values and acts in our best interests," she said. "And it's go time."

Attorney General Kevin Clarkson, in a statement, said the court "ignored Alaska's

constitutional history and has effectively rewritten our Constitution and statutes to adopt no-cause political recall. By the Court's decision, from this point forward any elected official will be subject to recall for virtually any reason."

Grounds for recall in Alaska are lack of fitness, incompetence, neglect of duties or corruption. The recall campaign said the governor violated the law by not appointing a judge within a required time frame, misused state funds for partisan online ads and mailers and improperly used his veto authority to "attack the judiciary."

2 arrested in death of security guard over face mask

Associated Press

FLINT, Mich. — Two men were arrested Friday in the fatal shooting of a security guard who demanded a woman wear a mask while shopping at a store.

Genesee County authorities said Ramonyea Bishop, 23, was taken into custody at an apartment in Bay City. His alleged

accomplice, Larry Teague, 44, was arrested Thursday near a motel in Houston.

The men and Sharmel Teague, the wife of Larry Teague, are charged with first-degree murder in the May 1 shooting of Calvin "Duper" Munerlyn at a Family Dollar store in Flint.

Munerlyn was shot at the store just north of downtown

Flint a short time after telling Sharmel Teague's daughter she had to leave because she lacked a mask, according to Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton.

Teague argued with Munerlyn, 43, before leaving. Two men later came to the store and allegedly shot the security guard to death.

Bishop's sister, Brya Bishop,

was previously charged with tampering with evidence, lying to police and being an accessory to a felony. Leyton has said she "attempted to shield" family members.

During a news conference, Leyton said two other people, were arrested in Houston and charged with helping Teague flee to Texas and elude police.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Boy, 3, helps police find trapped elderly neighbor

NH HAMPTON — Police in New Hampshire are thanking a 3-year-old boy for noticing that the newspapers had piled up on his neighbor's porch.

Eyas Tran and his mother went for a walk in Hampton, and he wanted to put the newspaper on his neighbor's porch.

But when he got to the porch, he noticed "there was one, two, three newspapers," Eyas said in an interview with WBZ-TV.

The woman wasn't answering her phone or the door. Police found the woman in the basement, trapped in a small corridor. She was taken to the hospital with minor injuries.

Jetliner hits and kills man on airport runway

TX AUSTIN — A man was struck and killed by a commercial jet landing on a runaway at an Austin airport, authorities said.

The pilot of Southwest Airlines Flight 1392, a Boeing 737 arriving from Dallas, reported seeing a person on Runway 17R at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, shortly after the jet touched down. The FAA said the driver of an airport operations vehicle later found the body on the runway.

Airport spokesman Bryce Dubee said officials do not believe the man was supposed to be on the runway at the time.

2 drivers arrested in fatal race on interstate

AL FAIRFIELD — Two drivers were arrested on a manslaughter charge stemming from a race on an Alabama interstate that ended in a fatal crash.

Kevin Lamar King, 27, was booked into jail, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency said in a news release. The driver in the other vehicle, Keanjra Lashai Maddox, 22, was arrested by Birmingham police, AL.com reported.

Octavia Nicole Johnson, 20, a passenger in Maddox's vehicle, wasn't wearing a seat belt and was ejected from the vehicle, state troopers said. King crashed into the back of Maddox's vehicle during the race, sending both cars down a ravine.

Civil War remains found in collapsed cemetery

MS VICKSBURG — National Park Service archaeologists are recovering the remains of unidentified Civil War soldiers from a collapsed section of Vicksburg National Cemetery in Mississippi.

The collapse happened in February. The remains of about 15 Union soldiers are being unearthed from graves that were part of the collapse or that are in an unstable area, according to a National Park Service news release.

The material will be stored so each soldier's remains are kept together, and DNA testing may be needed.

Man wielding sword is fatally shot by police

NV LAS VEGAS — A sword-wielding man was fatally shot after allegedly advancing toward Las Vegas police officers, authorities said.

The name and age of the man wasn't immediately released.

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police said the man lunged at officers while police were trying to de-escalate a disturbance call at an apartment, according to police.

Arriving officers said there

was a man on the second floor of the building waving a sword. The man began to approach the officers when he was shot and killed.

Truck hits building after driver fell out open door

FL OCALA — A pickup truck crashed into a Florida building after the driver fell out of the moving vehicle, authorities said.

The crash occurred at an Ocala heating and air conditioning business, the Ocala Star-Banner reported.

The driver, who wasn't wearing a seat belt, was approaching a curve when he fell out of the vehicle because the door didn't shut properly, Florida Highway Patrol said. The truck then veered to the right, struck a sign, rolled through a parking lot and slammed into the business.

Doctor delivers baby in lot outside hospital

UT LOGAN — A doctor arriving for work at Logan Regional Hospital delivered a baby in the parking lot of a Utah hospital before performing emergency breaths to assist the infant, who was not breathing properly after the birth.

Dr. Barrett Labrum, a doctor of osteopathic medicine, saw a couple struggling at the van. The woman was already close to delivering her sixth child and could not get out of the vehicle.

"I heard something by the entrance to the hospital and walked over there," Labrum said. "The dad said the baby was coming. The baby was delivering, so I helped mom grab the baby and started doing the regular resuscitation."

Police: Woman licked hands, touched items

SC SUMTER — A woman who allegedly licked her hands and touched food items and several surfaces at a South Carolina grocery store and sandwich shop was arrested.

Shenir Gibson Holliday was taken into custody after Sumter police responded to reports of a suspicious person at a grocery store, news outlets reported. Police said surveillance footage showed Holliday, 38, licking her hands and coughing before touching food items and freezer doors.

The incident came after the manager of a sandwich shop said a woman was seen licking coins and putting them back in the shop's tip jar, the State reported, citing a sheriff's office report.

Woman stabbed when opening front door

NJ SICKLERVILLE — A homeowner opening her front door was stabbed and injured by a woman who had pulled a knife on police two days earlier when they responded to another call at the residence, authorities said.

Judith Asber, 52, went to the Sicklerville home and rang the doorbell, authorities said. When the homeowner answered it, Asber stabbed her in the abdomen and then chased her inside the home, authorities said.

The victim's name and details on her injuries were not disclosed. Asber was charged with attempted murder, aggravated assault, burglary, stalking and two weapons counts, according to the Camden County Prosecutor's Office.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Commentary

Glimmer of hope as sports begin to return

Associated Press

Finally, some signs of hope.

It's only a glimmer. Let's not pop the champagne just yet.

But there's baseball in South Korea and Taiwan. NASCAR is getting ready to crank up its engines, and German soccer is revving to go, too. The PGA Tour and IndyCar racing are planning to resume next month, and even the tiniest of steps — Major League Soccer clubs beginning individual workouts, a handful of NBA teams reopening their training facilities Friday — are an indication that some form of normality is returning.

"People are calling it the new normal," said Darren Eales, president of the Atlanta United MLS club. "We're calling the now normal. It's hard to predict what's going to happen, but we have to deal with it."

Certainly, anyone with the least bit of fandom running through their bones is eager to see live sports again — even if they can't see it in person.

That was apparent from the record ratings for the NFL Draft, not to mention the huge audiences tuning in for the Michael Jordan documentary "The Last Dance."

"Good God, do I want to watch a baseball game," exclaimed Amy Bass, a professor of sports studies at Manhattanville College just north of New York City. "We're constantly saying that sports is not just an escape, that we can learn a lot from sports. But you know what? They are an escape."

That's something we could all use right now, with the death toll climbing past a quarter-million worldwide and approaching 80,000 in the United States, not to mention the paralyzing economic slump that has crippled many businesses and left tens of millions to deal with the despair of unemployment.

Yep, we need sports more than ever, but we also need to understand that things aren't going to be the way they were before.

Not in the short term, for sure.

Maybe never again.

"I think we're going to be looking at a cultural shift in sports," Bass said, comparing it to the security-minded changes that affected all walks of life after the 2001 terrorist attacks. "There are kids today who don't know we didn't used to get frisked going into a ballpark. So many things changed in the culture of sports after 9-11."

The most visible change that everyone can expect as sports returns is the lack of people in the seats. About the closest thing we're going to get is those cardboard cutouts of fans that were placed in the stands by the Korean Baseball Organization.

The UFC is planning three mixed-martial-arts cards this month at an empty arena in Jacksonville, Fla., the first of which was Saturday night in what essentially served as the reopening day of human-centric U.S. sports (sorry, horse racing and bull riding).

While NASCAR plans to resume its Cup season with four races this month, other U.S. sports are taking a more cautious approach.

There's still no indication when Major League Baseball will begin its season, or what form that might take. Ditto for the NBA and NHL, which still hope to finish their seasons or at least find a way to crown their respective champions.

MLS has a bit more flexibility, since it can take its barely started season right up until the end of the calendar year, but the individual workouts that a few teams began Wednesday were merely a tantalizing snippet.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step," Eales said. "But we want to be cautious. The most important thing is to come back in a safe manner."

That's a lesson the NFL will soon have to consider. The pandemic struck in the U.S. after the Super Bowl, so the league has been able to carry on largely with business as usual. Free agency. A remote draft that was a big hit. And Thursday night's ridiculously over-hyped release of the 2020 schedule, which has a full slate of games that are supposed to begin in early September.

It seems quite likely the NFL (and college football, too) will have to play at least some of its games in empty stadiums, unless a vaccine or an effective treatment comes along far sooner than anyone is projecting. But that shouldn't be a huge drawback for the NFL, which relies on lucrative television deals for the bulk of its revenue.

The outlook isn't nearly as hopeful for other leagues, in this country and around the world.

The Canadian Football League will likely have to cancel its season, according to Commissioner Randy Ambrosie, who told lawmakers this week that the CFL's future is "very much in jeopardy" without a hefty government bailout.

Bass said a more extensive weeding-out of less-prominent leagues and sports might be one of the biggest legacies of the pandemic.

"I suspect we're going to see a squashing of some sports by the others," she said. "While the ratings for the NFL Draft were off the board, look at what kind of coverage the WNBA Draft got. I think women's sports are going to suffer."

But those are issues for another day.

Let's try to keep this positive vibe going.

Bucks, relatives claim Antetokounmpo was hacked

Wire reports

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo's social media accounts were hacked on Thursday afternoon and several bizarre and offensive tweets were posted, according to the Milwaukee Bucks, Antetokounmpo's brother and the player's representatives.

More than a dozen tweets popped up in Antetokounmpo's feed in the span of about five

minutes, and they appeared to clearly be the work of someone other than the reigning MVP. The tweets included racial slurs, profane attacks on other players and a claim that Antetokounmpo had the coronavirus.

"Giannis' twitter, phone, email and bank accounts were hacked!" Los Angeles Lakers forward Kostas Antetokounmpo tweeted. "He genuinely apologizes for everything

that was tweeted and he will be back as soon as possible! The things that were said by this hacker were extremely inappropriate and disgusting!"

The tweets weren't up for long before disappearing from Giannis Antetokounmpo's account.

Giannis Antetokounmpo sent out a tweet Thursday night confirming that his account was hacked. Antetokounmpo said he felt "terrible" for the play-

ers who "were included in the malicious and untrue tweets."

"The tweets and posts were extremely inappropriate and I am so disappointed and disgusted that somebody would say the terrible things that were said!" Antetokounmpo tweeted. The

Bucks said in a statement that an investigation is underway. Octagon, Antetokounmpo's agency, also confirmed the hacking.

Source: MLB to reduce amateur draft

Associated Press

NEW YORK—Major League Baseball will cut its amateur draft from 40 rounds to five this year, a move that figures to save teams about \$30 million.

Clubs gained the ability to reduce the draft as part of their March 26 agreement with the players' association and MLB plans to finalize a decision next week to go with the minimum, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press. The person spoke Friday on condition of anonymity because no decision was announced.

There will be just 160 players drafted, by far the fewest since the annual selection started in 1965, and the combined value of their signing bonus pools is \$235,906,800. The amount of signing bonus pool money eliminated is \$29,578,100.

Teams made the move with the season delayed by the coro-

navirus pandemic and the sport trying to cut expenses to cope with revenue loss.

"Particularly given the negligible economic impact to what's already a cheap acquisition cost, this approach is grossly shortsighted," said agent Jeff Berry, co-head of CAA Baseball. "To drastically reduce opportunity and talent and talent pools, it stunts growth and diversity at all levels and is really a self-inflicted sabotage of the long-term health and popularity of the game."

The start date of the draft will remain June 10 and the deadline to sign likely will be pushed back from July 10 to Aug. 1, the person said. The draft will be cut from three days to two.

As part of the agreement with the union, slot values to determine signing bonus pools will remain at 2019 levels and players passed over in the draft

are limited to signing bonuses of \$20,000 or less. That might cause more high school players to elect to go to college. And because of the NCAA's limit of 11.7 baseball scholarships, the change may lead to more prospects attending junior college.

"You can't afford to live when you sign for \$20,000 in the minor leagues," agent Scott Boras said. "They also may develop in college to be first rounders, which is the category we're looking for. So it gives you more opportunity to have more first rounders."

Berry said the decision was part of "furtherance down that slippery slope of diminishing the value and the importance of players" and linked it to other moves players decry and to the Houston Astros' cheating scandal.

"For any ownership group that supports this course of action as advisable or, frankly, is

so cash-strapped that this mid-six-figure savings is a financial necessity, they should do everyone a favor, including their fellow owners, and sell their franchises," he said. "Does anyone think it's that big of an ethical jump from hijacking the draft, tanking and service manipulation to hidden cameras and banging on trash cans? All those behaviors and attitudes, they're not analytic or intelligent or efficient, they're just unethical, and they reveal a lack of respect for players and fans."

Players turned down a proposal last week that would have kept rounds 6-10 in exchange for cutting their slot values in half.

Teams drafted 1,217 players over 40 rounds last June and have signed 960 at a total bonus cost of \$316,560,984.

Taiwan baseball fans return, sitting spaced apart

Associated Press

NEW TAIPEI CITY, Taiwan—There were fans in the stands for baseball in Taiwan on Friday, albeit spaced far apart as a safeguard against the spread of the coronavirus.

Up to 1,000 spectators are now allowed at ballparks in Taiwan, but they are still barred from bringing in food and concession stands are still closed.

"This means our government's disease control measures are quite rigorous," said 34-year-old fan Frank Cheng, an electronics industry worker from New Taipei City.

Cheng went to see his hometown Fubon Guardians play the UniLions with four of his friends. They all sat at least three seats apart.

Before the game started, Taiwan health and welfare minister Chen Shih-chung appeared at home plate wearing jersey No. 0, an emblem of the government's hope for zero coronavirus cases.

When the season opened on

April 11 after a three-week delay, only players, team personnel and cheerleaders were allowed in the stadium. The league later proposed allowing 200 fans per game and the Centers for Disease Control gave clearance for 1,000, league spokesman Tai Si-song said.

But instead of dancing together in support of their teams, Guardians fans stood on their own, moving to the cues of cheerleaders and mascots. Friends leaned across seats to talk to one another.

"There's plenty of social distance here," said Guardians fan Sun Ming, a 29-year-old finance sector worker from New Taipei City. "I think the disease prevention is quite effective and therefore we can have this chance to attend the game."

The Taiwan league has five teams and started its season ahead of professional baseball in Japan, South Korea and the United States.

As of Friday, stadiums will leave three seats between spec-

tators, even if they come in groups. Every second row will be left empty, ensuring no one coughs on someone else from behind. The league's smallest stadium at 11,000 seats can accommodate 1,000 people with that spacing plan and without opening the bleachers, Tai said.

"If we were to add people, that would impinge on the safe space," Tai said.

In New Taipei City, about 900 people bought tickets to watch the Fubon Guardians at the 12,500-seat venue, the club said. Tickets were still selling into the second inning.

A second league game was taking place at the same time in Taiwan's largest stadium, which has 19,000 seats.

Games in previous years averaged 6,000 fans each.

The government in Taiwan reported 440 coronavirus cases on Friday among a population of 23 million. Many Taiwanese still stay indoors after work in case the coronavirus outbreak suddenly worsens.

NBA takes tiny steps toward reopening

MIAMI—The NBA took tiny steps toward a return to normalcy Friday, as a small number of practice facilities reopened for workouts and at least one team received permission from the league to test players and staff for the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver took part in a teleconference with members of the National Basketball Players Association on Friday night. Silver, according to a person familiar with the call's details, told players that the league is still aiming to hold full best-of-seven playoff series should the season resume and that playing without fans is an obvious possibility.

Silver also spoke about the well-known notion of having the season resume in a centralized location, though cautioned that no decisions may be made for another several weeks, according to the person.