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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy offers new virus rules for ships at sea

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Ships at sea will now operate as clean “bubbles,” allowing only people aboard who have been medically screened and who adhere to health mitigation measures, according to new standards released Wednesday by the Navy.

After serious outbreaks of the coronavirus on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and the destroyer USS Kidd while the ships were at sea, the Navy has developed a new standardized operational guidance for the fleet during the pandemic based on lessons learned from combating the disease.

The outbreaks also prompted the Defense Department’s inspector general to initiate an evaluation of the Navy’s approach to preventing the spread of infectious diseases aboard its ships and submarines. The evaluation will de-

termine whether the Navy has put in place policies and procedures to prevent and stop the spread of diseases, and if mitigation measures that are effective at preventing the spread of the coronavirus had been implemented across the fleet, according to an announcement May 11.

The new guidance also comes the same day that the Navy’s own investigation into its response to the outbreak on the Roosevelt was delivered to Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations. The initial investigation was expanded April 29 after acting Navy Secretary James McPherson said that the first inquiry left him with “unanswered questions.”

His decision followed Defense Secretary Mark Esper’s own request days before for more time to review the Navy’s first investigation after he was briefed by McPherson and Gilday on the report’s recommendations.

Much of the mitigation measures in the new guidance have already been implemented by recently deployed ships such as the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, which had medical screenings and a restriction of movement for all sailors before they were allowed aboard. The Navy’s message Wednesday to the fleet makes these measures the standard across the force for operating during the coronavirus pandemic.

After the two-week restriction and the crew is at sea with no cases for more than 14 days, the ship is now considered an established “bubble” that only personnel and contractors who have also been screened and gone through self-isolation will be allowed to board.

One of the theories with the outbreak aboard the USS Kidd is that the crew might have come into contact with an infected person during their counter-drug mission, Esper said during a news conference

May 5 at the Pentagon.

The guidance does allow for a waiver in “extraordinary circumstances” for someone such as a contractor or inspection team to skip a restriction of movement period prior to boarding a ship. Approval from the naval component commander — such as the admiral of a regional command like Pacific Fleet — is required before they are allowed into the “established bubble,” according to the guidance.

Sailors will still need to practice personal mitigation measures such as wearing face coverings, self-monitoring and washing their hands, according to the guidance. Areas on the ship will also be required to be cleaned daily. The guidance also goes over requirements if a sailor becomes sick with the coronavirus and procedures for the ship once it returns from a deployment, including more health screenings.

Unemployment claims keep rising amid reopenings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roughly 2.1 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, a sign that companies are still slashing jobs in the face of a deep recession even as more businesses reopen and rehire some laid-off employees.

About 41 million people have applied for aid since the virus outbreak intensified in March, although not all of them are still unemployed. The Labor Department’s report Thursday includes a count of all the people now receiving unemployment aid: 21 million. That is a rough measure of the number

of unemployed Americans.

The national jobless rate was 14.7% in April, the highest since the Great Depression, and many economists expect that it will near 20% in May.

States are gradually restarting their economies by letting some businesses — from gyms, retail shops and restaurants to hair and nail salons — reopen with restrictions. As some of these employers, including automakers, have recalled a portion of their laid-off employees, the number of people receiving unemployment benefits has fallen.

First-time applications for unemployment aid, though still high by historical stan-

dards, have now fallen for eight straight weeks. In addition to those who applied last week, an additional 1.2 million applied under a new program for self-employed and gig workers, who are eligible for jobless aid for the first time. These figures aren’t adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn’t include them in the overall data.

Analysts are monitoring incoming economic data to gauge how consumers are responding as many retail establishments gradually reopen. Jobs won’t return in any significant way as long as Americans remain slow to resume spending at their previous levels.

Data from Chase Bank credit and debit cards shows that consumers have slowly increased their spending since the government distributed stimulus checks in mid-April. Consumer spending had plunged 40% in March compared with a year earlier, but has since rebounded to 20% below year-ago levels.

Most of that increase has occurred in online shopping, which has recovered to pre-virus levels after having tumbled about 20%. But offline spending, which makes up the vast majority of consumer spending, is still down 35% from a year ago, according to Chase, after having plummeted 50% at its lowest point.

Navy completes Roosevelt outbreak probe

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's top officer is reviewing recommendations from an investigation into the handling of the coronavirus outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, the spokesman for Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday said Wednesday.

More than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors — one of whom died — tested positive for the ill-

ness after the outbreak began aboard the aircraft carrier in March. It immediately diverted to Guam to seek treatment for some sailors, quarantine others and sanitize the vessel.

"The Chief of Naval Operations has received and is reviewing the command investigation into the events surrounding the [coronavirus] outbreak aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt," Gilday spokesman Cmdr. Nate Christensen said in

a statement. "It will take time for the investigation's recommendations to be reviewed and endorsed by [Gilday]."

The investigation was launched at Gilday's request after he reviewed the results of a preliminary inquiry into the outbreak prompted by then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly's removal of the ship's commander in April.

Details on the investigation's findings were not immediately

available. In a statement last month, Christensen said the report would "provide a more robust documentation of events and give a fuller consideration of the circumstances surrounding the matter."

The Roosevelt returned to sea for carrier qualification flights for its aircrew last week. After qualifications are completed, the remainder of the crew will re-embark, according to a statement May 18.

Marine recruit drops 186 pounds; is off to boot camp

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

Gabriel Ramirez spent his childhood dreaming of being a Marine, but that dream seemed unattainable as a 365-pound teen nicknamed "Meatball."

This week, Ramirez, 18, was on his way to boot camp, 186 pounds lighter.

At the end of Ramirez's sophomore year at Rancho Buena Vista High School in California, Marine recruiter Staff Sgt. Anna Rodrigues spoke to his class and later asked him about his interests.

"The kids I talk to, one thing I look for is heart," Rodrigues said in a phone interview Wednesday. "I am looking for someone that won't quit and will accept the challenge."

The talk made a big impression, Ramirez, of Oceanside, Calif., said in a service statement prior to leaving for Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

"She looked at me, not at my weight," Ramirez said in the statement. "She told me, 'It's all up to you if you want it,' and from there I got her card."

In his junior year, Ramirez

sometimes doubted he could both get in shape and improve his test scores enough to get into the service. But after he saw Rodrigues again, he visited Recruiting Substation Oceanside and worked out with the Marines there.

"I did my first workout with them and it killed me," Ramirez said in the statement. "I ran a 26-minute mile and a half, I couldn't do any pullups and I couldn't even do 20 crunches. But they always encouraged me, motivated me and pushed me."

Ramirez continued for a

while, but at one point the obstacles in his life got to be too much, he said in the statement.

He put all the weight he lost back on and stopped coming to work out.

Rodrigues called and asked what had happened, at which point Ramirez said he asked her why she was wasting her time with him.

Rodrigues kept motivating him, at times texting or calling daily. Ramirez lost the weight, graduated from high school last year when he was 17 and has enlisted for an infantry job, Rodrigues said.

Kansas soldier prevents a shooting spree on bridge

From wire reports

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Fort Leavenworth, Kan., soldier stopped a shooting spree when he rammed his vehicle into a gunman who had just wounded another soldier Wednesday, police said.

One soldier was seriously injured in the shooting on Centennial Bridge in Leavenworth, Kan., and the suspect was taken into custody after another soldier intervened, Leavenworth Police Chief Pat Kitchens said.

Leavenworth police had been called to investigate a report

of a person firing shots on the bridge. It's unclear what led to the suspect seemingly firing shots at random on the bridge, Kitchens told reporters, but one person was struck — an active-duty soldier who appeared to be an unintended target.

Kitchens said another soldier from Fort Leavenworth was waiting in traffic when he witnessed the shooting. The soldier intervened, he said, "by striking the shooter with his vehicle."

Kitchens said the soldier's actions brought an end to the shooting, "likely saving count-

less lives."

Officers initially believed they were responding to a road rage incident on the bridge that connects Kansas and Missouri not far from Fort Leavenworth, Kitchens said. Instead, they discovered that a man had been using multiple weapons to fire randomly at vehicles.

The suspect was trapped under a car, Kitchens said.

The soldier who was shot was taken to a hospital, and was in serious but stable condition Wednesday afternoon.

The suspect was also taken to a hospital with serious injuries

from the crash.

Two additional vehicles were struck by gunfire, Kitchens said, but no other injuries were reported.

Kitchens said police have not yet determined why the suspect, said to be a Platte County, Mo., resident, began firing shots on the bridge, but police were looking into the person's history within the community.

The Leavenworth County Sheriff's Office, the Platte County Sheriff's Office, the Kansas Highway Patrol and other agencies assisted at the scene.

Troops could receive hazard pay, awards for virus fight

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Thousands of troops who have deployed to help battle the coronavirus pandemic could soon receive hazard pay and awards to recognize their service, the military's top general said Thursday.

A group of Pentagon officials composed of the senior enlisted leadership from each service is now determining what the rules will be for hazard pay and awards for personnel, Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a virtual town hall event at the Pentagon.

More than 55,600 Defense Department personnel have deployed throughout the United States for coronavirus relief efforts, including about 46,000 National Guard members, according to the Pentagon. Some of these service members have conducted testing or treated coronavirus patients, increasing their risk of becoming infected by the virus.

"I expect that we'll put out some guidance that will be definitive under [Defense Secretary Mark Esper's] signature about hazardous duty pay, about awards, about unit awards, individual awards, etc. All of that kind of stuff is absolutely under consideration," he said.

Milley said the policy could be determined within the next 30 days.

During the town hall, Esper also reiterated his support for extending federal orders for Guard members who are on coronavirus missions approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Some National Guard members who were called up in late March to support relief efforts were set to have their orders end June 24, just short of the 90 days required to receive some GI Bill benefits.

"If it's a valid mission assignment, we should certainly extend it. And we should extend that mission assignment until the mission is accomplished," Esper said.

The Pentagon is also working to make certain Guard members receive time to quarantine once their mission is complete so they do not infect their families or community when they return home, the defense secretary said.

US deaths hit 100K; cases on the rise in India, Russia

Associated Press

MOSCOW — As the United States crossed a somber landmark of 100,000 coronavirus deaths, India registered record numbers Thursday while Russia continued to swiftly ease restrictions in sync with the Kremlin's political plans despite a continuing high pace of infection.

The once-unthinkable death toll in the U.S. means that more Americans have died from the virus than were killed in the Vietnam and Korean wars combined.

Elsewhere around the world, India saw another record daily jump in coronavirus cases, while Russia reported a steady increase in its caseload, even as the city of Moscow and provinces across the vast country moved to ease restrictions in sync with the Kremlin's political agenda.

India, home to more than 1.3 billion people, reported more than 6,500 new infections, bringing the nation's total to over 158,000. The spike comes as the nation's 2-month-old lockdown is set to end Sunday. The country has recorded over 4,500 deaths.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's gov-

ernment is preparing guidelines to be issued this weekend, possibly extending the lockdown in hard-hit areas. Earlier this month, the country allowed the reopening of shops and factories and the resumption of some train service and domestic flights.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin announced earlier this week that the country's postponed Victory Day military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the Nazi defeat in World War II will be held June 24, declaring the nation has passed the peak of the outbreak.

Russian media reported that the Kremlin now also plans to go ahead with another high-priority item on Putin's political agenda — a referendum on constitutional amendments that could allow him to remain in power through 2036. He postponed the vote in April because of the outbreak.

The government reported more than 8,300 new infections Thursday, down from more than 11,000 earlier this month. The total number of infections topped 379,000, the world's third-largest caseload behind that of the United States and Brazil.

Russian officials reported 174 new deaths, for a total of almost 4,150.

New battle plan? Military virus aid could look different if 2nd wave hits

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that as the U.S. military prepares for another potential wave of the coronavirus, it could do things a bit differently, providing more targeted aid for cities and states and possibly shorter quarantine times for troops.

Speaking as he flew back from a trip to the Marine Corps recruit base at Parris Island, S.C., Esper said the Pentagon is looking at a variety of plans. But he said U.S. forces might not be deployed the same way if or when the virus surges in a second large wave or even, more likely, a series of smaller bursts.

He also said that the military has started doing antibody tests on service members who had COVID-19 and recovered, in order to determine if their plasma can be used in others to prevent or treat the virus.

Esper said he spoke with military service leaders the other day and asked if they would be interested in getting units of blood or plasma to send aboard ships or with deployed forces to use as needed. He said

they all responded that it would be helpful. Esper said he has taken the test to see if he has the virus antibodies but doesn't yet have the results.

Unlike the nasal swab tests being used to diagnose active infections, antibody tests look for blood proteins called antibodies, which the body produces days or weeks after fighting an infection. The blood test could show if someone had the coronavirus in the recent past, which most experts think gives people some protection.

It's not yet known what antibody level would be needed for immunity or how long any immunity might last and whether people with antibodies can still spread the virus.

The Pentagon, Esper said, is also taking a broad look at how best to respond to any future outbreaks.

Noting that a lot of the military aid rushed to communities as the pandemic struck ended up going unused or was used much less than anticipated, he said the military may send medical staff rather than entire hospital ships and Army field hospitals.

Nation's capital to begin reopening Friday

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's capital will begin a gradual reopening Friday, even as Mayor Muriel Bowser warns that it probably will result in more coronavirus infections.

Restaurants will be permitted to seat guests outdoors, barbers and hair salons will open with limited capacity and nonessential businesses will be allowed to offer curbside or front-door pickup services. But nail parlors, gyms and public playgrounds will remain closed and gatherings of more than 10 people will be prohibited.

Dog parks, tennis courts and golf courses will reopen, but playground equipment and public pools will remain closed. Sports that involve close contact, including football, soccer and basketball, are still banned. For now, all area businesses are encouraged to work remotely as much as possible.

Bowser said Wednesday that the public health emergency she declared in March will remain in place.

"The virus is still in our city, in our region and in our country," Bowser said. "We know, without a vaccine or a cure, there will be new infections."

Arizona

PHOENIX — A judge presiding over a lawsuit seeking the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths among residents at Arizona's nursing homes says he understands the public's need for disclosing such information but he also sees the state's concerns in withholding the data.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Christopher Coury, who heard arguments Wednesday afternoon, said he was struggling with the notion that the public shouldn't be informed about providers that don't meet the standard of care. But he also expressed skepticism at the argument by news organizations that filed the lawsuit that releasing such information wouldn't harm the competitive positions of nursing homes.

"There are meritorious positions on both sides," said Coury, who plans to issue a ruling by the end of the week.

California

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom has crafted himself as a data-driven governor, letting the facts dictate what has been a largely cautious approach to public safety amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Now some California health officials are wondering if that's still the case as he moves rapidly through his four phases for reopening. Among the critics is Sara Cody, the Santa Clara County health officer at the forefront of shutting down the San Francisco Bay Area in mid-March, which served as a model for California and other parts of the country.

"The state modifications are being made without a real understanding of the consequences of what the last move has been," she told the county Board of Supervisors Tuesday. "Making changes too frequently leaves us blind."

Georgia

ATLANTA — Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said Wednesday that he wants to lift more restrictions on businesses as long as people continue to heed coronavirus guidance from officials and public health experts.

The Republican governor's comments came as state data shows the number of new daily infections trending upward after weeks of decline.

"We can't keep fighting the virus from our living room," Kemp said, according to video of his remarks posted online by WMAZ-TV.

Kemp said that using common sense and following health advice, including social distancing and wearing masks, will allow Georgians to get out of their homes safely and help spur the economy.

Michigan

LANSING — A Republican legislative leader said

Wednesday that Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer "lied" and engaged in a "cover-up" by requesting the removal of a social media post about her husband's attempt to get his boat in the water during the coronavirus pandemic, only to later acknowledge he did drop her name as a joke.

The governor confirmed Tuesday that her husband, Marc Mallory, called a dock company last week before he traveled to their home in the Elk Rapids area, after she had urged people to "think long and hard" about visiting the region.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey questioned why her staff contacted his office Friday to successfully push Republican Sen. Tom Barrett to delete his Facebook post about Mallory. The post was based on a post by the owner of North-Shore Dock, who said his staff took a call from Mallory asking if his boat could be put in the water before the Memorial Day weekend.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Professional sports can resume in Pennsylvania where the governor's stay-at-home order to stem the spread of the coronavirus is no longer in force, but without spectators, Gov. Tom Wolf's administration said Wednesday.

Those teams and competitors will be allowed to practice or play in counties where Wolf's "yellow" or "green" designation applies in his stoplight-colored three-phase reopening plan.

To resume, a team or a league must develop a coronavirus safety plan that has been approved by Wolf's state Department of Health and it must include testing or screening and monitoring of all "on-venue" players and personnel, the administration said.

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — The leader of South Carolina's health agency announced Wednesday that he is stepping down after a health

scare to spend more time with his family as the state continues to fight the coronavirus.

Rick Toomey's decision to leave the Department of Health and Environmental Control came less than 15 months after he took over the agency. DHEC's board had spent 17 months looking for its new director before choosing Toomey, who was a board member.

Toomey spent two weeks on leave starting in late March because of high blood pressure. Toomey said that health scare played a part in his decision to leave, along with wanting to spend more time in his Beaufort home, where his new grandson also lives.

"It is a difficult decision," Toomey said at an emergency board meeting Wednesday. "I have grown to love, to admire the effort of the individuals who make up DHEC."

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas officials fighting to block widespread mail-in voting during the pandemic claimed victory after the state's highest court ruled Wednesday that a lack of immunity to the coronavirus doesn't qualify someone to cast a ballot by mail.

The decision was unanimous by the Texas Supreme Court, which is stocked with nine Republican justices, including one who revealed last week that she had tested positive for COVID-19. Texas generally limits mail balloting only to voters who are over 65 years old or have a disability.

Justice Eva Guzman wrote the court was unified in the conclusion that "fear of contracting a disease is not a physical condition."

The top elections lawyer in Houston, Harris County attorney Douglas Ray, said he believed the ruling leaves room for each voter to decide themselves whether they qualify, and gives clerks basically no ability to second-guess the reasoning. In Texas, voters do not have to describe their disability when requesting a mail-in ballot.

Vast, violent protests rock Minneapolis

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Fires burned and looters struck Thursday after violent protests over the death of a black man in police custody rocked a Minneapolis neighborhood for a second straight night, with damage stretching for miles across the city and Mayor Jacob Frey appealing to the governor to activate the National Guard.

Amid the violence, a man was found fatally shot Wednesday night near a pawn shop. Asked to confirm reports that he had been shot by a store owner, police spokesman John Elder said that was “one of the theories.”

Pockets of looting continued Thursday at stores where windows and doors were smashed.

KSTP-TV reported some fires at businesses continued to burn with no firefighters on scene. A liquor store employee displayed a gun as he stood among the debris of broken bottles and beer cans inside the business.

Protesters began gathering in the early afternoon Wednesday near the city’s 3rd Precinct station, in the southern part of the city where George Floyd, 46, died on Memorial Day after an officer knelt on his neck until he became unresponsive. Protesters also skirmished with officers, who fired rubber bullets and tear gas in a repeat of Tuesday night’s confrontation.

On Thursday morning, smoke hung over Minneapolis and looters carried merchandise from a damaged Target

store with no interference by police.

Protests spread to other U.S. cities. In California, hundreds of people protesting Floyd’s death blocked a Los Angeles freeway and shattered windows of California Highway Patrol cruisers on Wednesday.

It was a second and much more violent night in Minneapolis since the death of Floyd, whom police were seeking to arrest outside a Minneapolis grocery store on a report of a counterfeit bill being passed. A bystander’s cellphone video showed an officer kneeling on Floyd’s neck for almost eight minutes as he eventually became unresponsive.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office and the FBI in Minneapolis said

Thursday they were conducting “a robust criminal investigation” into Floyd’s death and was making the case a priority. The FBI had already announced it was investigating whether Floyd’s civil rights were violated. The new announcement came a day after President Donald Trump tweeted that he had asked an investigation to be expedited.

Frey tweeted for calm early Thursday. “Please, Minneapolis, we cannot let tragedy beget more tragedy,” he said on Twitter. He also asked for the public’s help in keeping the peace.

The officer and three others were fired Tuesday, and on Wednesday, Frey called for him to be criminally charged.

Bad weather delays SpaceX rocket launch

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The launch of a SpaceX rocket ship with two NASA astronauts on a history-making flight into orbit was called off with less than 17 minutes to go in the countdown Wednesday because of thunderclouds and the risk of lightning.

Liftoff was rescheduled for Saturday afternoon.

The spacecraft — designed, built and owned by SpaceX — was set to blast off in the afternoon for the International Space Station, opening a new era in commercial spaceflight. It would have also marked the first time in nearly a decade that the U.S. launched astronauts into orbit from American soil.

Veteran space shuttle astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken were supposed to ride into orbit aboard SpaceX’s sleek, white-and-black, bullet-shaped Dragon capsule on top of a Falcon 9 rocket, taking off from the same launch pad used during the Apollo moon missions a half-century ago.

Chinese lawmakers endorse security law that limits Hong Kong’s autonomy

Associated Press

BEIJING — China’s legislature endorsed a national security law for Hong Kong on Thursday that has strained relations with the United States and Britain and prompted new protests in the territory.

The National People’s Congress approved the bill as it wrapped up an annual session that was held under intensive anti-coronavirus controls. The vote was 2,878 to 1 with six abstentions, in line with the high-profile but largely ceremonial body’s custom of near-unanimous support for all legal changes decided by the ruling Communist Party.

The law will alter Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, or Basic Law, to require the territory to enforce measures to be decided by the NPC’s standing committee, a small body controlled by the ruling party that handles most lawmaking work.

The law reflects the determination of President Xi Jinping’s government to tighten control over Hong Kong following 11 months of anti-government protests. Activists in Hong Kong

say the law will undermine the “high degree of autonomy” promised to the former British colony when it was handed back to China in 1997 under a “one country, two systems” framework and might be used to suppress political activity.

Premier Li Keqiang, the country’s No. 2 leader, defended the law as consistent with Beijing’s promises.

“The decision adopted by the NPC session is designed for steady implementation of ‘one country, two systems’ and Hong Kong’s long-term prosperity and stability,” Li said at a news conference.

The law and the way it is being enacted prompted U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday to announce Washington will no longer treat Hong Kong as autonomous from Beijing. That could hurt the territory’s attractiveness as a business center.

Pompeo’s notice adds Hong Kong to the Trump administration’s conflicts with China over trade, technology, religious freedom, Chinese handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the status of Taiwan, the self-

ruled island Beijing claims as its own territory.

Li called for mutual respect and Sino-U.S. cooperation to promote “extensive common interests” in resolving global problems and promoting trade, science and other fields.

“Both countries stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation,” Li said.

On Thursday, three pro-democracy lawmakers were ejected from Hong Kong’s legislative chamber during a debate over a bill that would criminalize insulting or abusing the Chinese national anthem.

Also Thursday, the NPC approved a government budget that will increase spending to generate jobs in an effort to reverse an economic slump after Chinese industries were shut down to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Private sector analysts say as much as 30% of the urban workforce, or as many as 130 million people, lost their jobs at least temporarily during the shutdown. They say as many as 25 million jobs might be lost for good this year.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Deputies: Man posed as officer, pointed gun

SC SPARTANBURG — Deputies arrested a man who allegedly flashed a badge, pointed a gun and pulled the trigger on a group of people during a fight at a South Carolina apartment complex, according to a sheriff's office report.

David Wayne Coburn, 57, is accused of first pulling out a badge and telling the group to disperse Monday evening, according to the Spartanburg County report.

Witnesses said they told Coburn to leave because the fight didn't involve him and they knew he wasn't an officer. Coburn left but later returned with a gun, the report stated. A witness said Coburn pulled the trigger but nothing came out because there wasn't a magazine in the gun.

Nurse reunited with her savior firefighter

NY NEW YORK — A Virginia nurse has been reunited with the New York firefighter who saved her from a burning building nearly 40 years ago.

Deirdre Taylor, who is working in New York to fight the coronavirus pandemic, was reunited Monday with retired FDNY firefighter Eugene Pugliese, 75, the New York Daily News reported.

Pugliese, a Vietnam Marine Corps veteran, said he remembers saving Taylor and her mother from a burning building in SoHo like it was yesterday.

"I didn't even have gear on," Pugliese said. "I had a helmet and an ax. We took the elevator up and we went to the floor below. We went upstairs. The hallway was pretty well charged. There was a lot of smoke."

Taylor said she thought she

would never have the opportunity to thank Pugliese for his bravery.

"The fire obviously shaped the rest of my life," she said. "I always knew I was given a second chance at life."

100-year-old shipwreck exposed by storm

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A shipwreck can be seen protruding from the Great Salt Lake and it could be more than 100 years old.

Utah State Parks posted a photo of a tangle of brown beams Monday on Facebook after a recent storm eroded part of the beach and exposed the shipwreck, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

The wreck is of a steel hold boat with wooden planking that dates back to the start of the 20th century, park manager Dave Shearer said.

Shearer believes the boat could have been used by the Southern Pacific Railroad to build the causeway across the lake in 1902 or to maintain the causeway in the years after.

Classic car in diocese fundraiser stolen

NM GALLUP — A Roman Catholic diocese in New Mexico says thieves stole a classic car officials were using to raise money for a vocations program.

The Gallup Independent reported security cameras from the Diocese of Gallup captured two men in a dark Chevy Silverado stealing the 1966 Plymouth Sport Fury last week. No arrests have been made.

The Rev. Matthew Keller started the V8s for Vocations program to raise funds to educate seminary students studying for the priesthood in the Diocese of Gallup.

Man accused of trying to kidnap nurse

NJ HOWELL — A New Jersey man who was arrested and sent for a psych evaluation last week tracked down a nurse from the medical center he was at and assaulted her before she was able to fight him off, police said.

An officer and his police dog found Leonardo Larrarte, 37, after the alleged attack Friday and arrested him. He is charged with attempted kidnapping and burglary, NJ.com reported Monday.

His arrest came less than a day after Larrarte was arrested by Lakewood police for an altercation he had with his roommate, Howell Police Chief Andrew Kudrick said.

The Lakewood resident was then sent to Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus for a psych evaluation where he had a brief interaction with the nurse he would later go on to track down, Kudrick said.

Upon his release, Kudrick said, Larrarte walked 6 miles to the nurse's home in Howell where he proceeded to attack the caregiver's 64-year-old mother before punching and choking the nurse. Larrarte ran away after the victim fought him off, Kudrick said.

Teen swims to shore to save dad and sister

ME WATERVILLE — A 16-year-old Maine girl swam great lengths to save her dad and sister when their boat took on water and capsized.

Kiana French swam to shore to find help after the 12-foot aluminum boat capsized on Parlin Pond on Sunday afternoon, the Morning Sentinel reported.

She said her father, Gary French, and sister, Cierrah French, were in a state of shock

and could not swim to shore.

Cierrah French, a cancer survivor, still feels pain in her knee from choriocarcinoma, a rare form of cancer. She said the water was cold and that her fingers and toes went numb.

Kiana French said she strapped on her life jacket in the water, and then recovered the other two jackets floating near the boat and helped her sister put one on as her dad clung tightly to the boat. She knew if she waited with them the currents would get worse, so she headed to shore.

Kiana French walked along the shoreline and called out for help until she saw a boat and was taken in by Maine Game Warden Kris MacCabe and his wife. Her father and sister were rescued by another boat.

Troopers arrest 4 after chase that hit 174 mph

NE GIBBON — Four people from Illinois have been arrested in Nebraska — including a driver accused of leading troopers on a chase exceeding 170 mph in southeastern Nebraska, officials said.

The Nebraska State Patrol said the arrests came Monday night, about 24 hours after a trooper had tried to pull over a Chevrolet Camaro for speeding on Interstate 80 near York. The car fled, reaching a speed of 174 mph before troopers disabled it with spike strips, the patrol said. It exited the interstate at Gibbon, and troopers later found the car abandoned.

On Monday night after receiving a tip, troopers pulled over a Jeep in Gibbon and found the suspected driver of the Camaro, Tyler Liles, 22, of Creve Couer, Ill., inside. The driver of the Jeep, who is suspected of having traveled from Illinois to pick up Liles, and two others also were arrested on suspicion of a range of charges.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES

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Boxing, UFC set for Las Vegas return

Associated Press

Mixed martial arts and boxing are back in business in Nevada.

The Nevada Athletic Commission unanimously agreed Wednesday to allow two UFC events and two Top Rank boxing shows in Las Vegas over the next two weeks.

The decision ends the moratorium on combat sports that has been in place in Nevada since March 14, when the commission stopped competition amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The UFC immediately confirmed its plans to stage a show without fans in attendance Saturday night at the UFC Apex arena on its expansive corporate complex in Las Vegas, followed by the UFC 250 pay-

per-view show at the same place June 6.

Top Rank is expected to hold fan-free boxing shows at the MGM Grand on June 9 and June 11.

Citing the importance of sports to the state's economy and morale, Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak announced Tuesday night that sporting events could return if promoters followed health rules approved by the appropriate authorities.

The commission approved stringent coronavirus safety protocols on Wednesday to accompany the return of combat sports to their hometown. The UFC and Top Rank have worked closely with the commission in recent weeks to create the protocols, according to Bob Bennett, the commission's

executive director.

"Throughout this process, we've been working hand in glove with the UFC," Bennett said. "I'm aware of their operations plan, and everything is moving forward based on their operations plan and our protocols."

The UFC established a partial blueprint for the safety rules when it staged three shows in Jacksonville, Fla., earlier this month.

The Nevada commission's safety protocols include testing and mandated quarantine at a hotel upon all participants' arrival in Las Vegas, followed by another test and isolation period before the events.

The UFC is expected to stage several domestic cards in Las Vegas over the upcom-

ing weeks, and President Dana White still intends to hold other shows on a private island for fighters not based in the U.S.

White said the events in Jacksonville included more than 1,110 processed tests for COVID-19. Veteran fighter Jacare Souza and two of his cornermen tested positive before the first event in Florida, but no other positive tests were reported.

The UFC show Saturday will be headlined by former welterweight champion Tyron Woodley facing Gilbert Burns.

The main event of UFC 250 on June 6 features dominant two-division champion Amanda Nunes defending her featherweight belt against Canadian challenger Felicia Spencer.

European Tour to restart with British Masters

Associated Press

The European Tour plans to resume its season the last full weekend in July with six tournaments in England and Wales that will include COVID-19 testing and depend on the U.K. lifting its quarantine restrictions.

It would start July 22 with the British Masters, hosted by Lee Westwood. The next five in the "U.K. Swing" are new tournaments the European Tour will pay for out of its tournament development fund. Three will be at former Ryder Cup venues — two at Celtic Manor in Wales, one at The Belfry in England.

The purse at each new event is 1 million euros. The tour said it will add 500,000 euros for the U.K. Swing for charities — half for the markets they play, half for the top 10 players from a "mini money list" to decide.

No spectators will be allowed at least for the UK swing.

"There is no question that we're back," Keith Pelley, the tour's chief executive, said in a conference call Thursday.

The European Tour also set dates for four Rolex Series events — the Scottish Open and BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth in October, the Nedbank Challenge

in South Africa and the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai in December.

Pelley said he expects the rest of the schedule — with hopes for 24 events — to be announced later.

He said the U.K. Swing depends largely on lifting the 14-day quarantine for players arriving from other countries. The PGA Championship in San Francisco is scheduled for Aug. 6-9.

If the quarantine is not lifted, top European Tour players would have to choose between a major and four European Tour events with minimal prize money.

Report: Hurley says Arizona State AD minimized scandal

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Arizona State men's basketball coach Bobby Hurley sent an email to Ray Anderson last season alleging the Arizona State athletic director minimized sexual harassment allegations by the wives of three athletic staff members against a school booster.

In the email obtained by

Yahoo Sports, Hurley accused Anderson on Dec. 8 of disregarding the safety of and showing no sensitivity toward the women.

"I feel like I've been lied to," Hurley wrote.

Hurley also accused Anderson of coming up with a numeric scale to judge the harassment claims by the women, including Hurley's wife, Leslie.

"You have chosen to create

your own numeric scale on what sexual assault mean(s) which is disturbing," Hurley wrote.

Anderson responded by telling Hurley his email includes false and baseless allegations.

"Your approach here is puzzling," Anderson wrote.

Arizona State previously had an outside investigation conducted that determined booster Bart Wear subjected the three

women to unwelcome comments and physical contact. In February, the school acknowledged to Yahoo that the situation could have been handled more quickly after waiting months to investigate.

The school canceled Wear's season tickets and warned him security may remove him from the premises if he attends any future Arizona State events.

NHL considering situation with sites

Associated Press

Concerns about Canadian coronavirus restrictions could push hockey south of the 49th parallel into the U.S. this summer.

Seven of the 10 locations the NHL has zeroed in on to hold playoff games if it resumes are American cities not restricted by Canada's 14-day mandatory quarantine upon arrival. As 24 teams figure out how to squeeze an expanded roster and limited personnel into one of two "hub" cities, the Vancouver Canucks are even considering relocating training camp to the U.S. if the situation doesn't change in the coming weeks.

"It's something that we're thinking about, but also, too, we just want to give it a few more days just to see if something is going to change," Vancouver general manager Jim Benning said Wednesday. "The perfect scenario we'd like to use our facilities. We're probably going to have 30, 32 guys here and we have great facilities for our players, so we would like to

do that first and foremost. But we've talked about moving it off site."

The Canucks are in the same boat as the NHL, which is in no rush to choose among the 10 finalists: Las Vegas, Columbus, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton. It will in the next few weeks select two or three to host Eastern and Western Conference brackets and then the Stanley Cup Final by factoring in government regulations, the frequency of COVID-19 in the community and availability of testing.

"We want to just be in a position to, in real time, have lots of options once we understand what the state of play is at the time we need to make the decision," Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "We could pick one or two locations, but that might, if we made the decision today, not turn out to be as good a decision as one that we make three, four weeks from now because things are continuing to evolve in all of the places that

we play."

The league told GMs on Tuesday to plan for a roster of 28 skaters and unlimited goaltenders for training camps that won't begin before early July and games without fans several weeks later. Each team will have a personnel cap of 50 in the city where games are played, though the Montreal Canadiens could be without one of their top players.

Montreal GM Marc Bergevin said forward Max Domi, who is high risk because he has Type 1 diabetes, will not play if doctors deem it to be unsafe.

Before the NHL commits to where games could be held, officials are planning for multiple scenarios. Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly is engaged in regular dialogue with the U.S. and Canadian governments and medical experts to determine what the health and safety landscape might look like this summer.

"That doesn't mean we get to look for any type of exception or any type of favoritism,"

said Toronto Maple Leafs captain John Tavares, who's on the Return to Play committee. "I think we just want to continue to follow the guidelines that are set out for us and do the best that we can. Hopefully things improve to a point where those things could be possibly loosened up, not just for us but for all of society."

Because testing is lagging in Ontario and British Columbia's government isn't expected to make exceptions for the NHL, Edmonton could be Canada's best hope. Oilers GM Ken Holland said with an attached practice rink and hotel and nearby restaurants, "Edmonton checks off in my opinion all the boxes."

Except that Daly said Canada's 14-day quarantine would be a nonstarter. The NHL is already facing what Winnipeg forward Andrew Copp called a "time crunch" to fit in effectively five rounds of playoffs, and if the focus shifts solely on U.S. locations, Las Vegas and Columbus appear to be the front-runners.

Sources: MLB players want more games, not pay cuts

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball players appeared likely to propose more regular-season games this year while holding to their demand for full prorated salaries, people familiar with their deliberations told The Associated Press.

Washington pitcher Max Scherzer, among eight players on the union's executive subcommittee, issued a statement late Wednesday night calling management's proposal for more salary cuts a non-starter.

A day after Major League Baseball proposed a sliding scale of salary slashing for a pandemic-delayed season with an 82-game schedule in ballparks without fans, the union held a conference call Wednesday that included its executive board, player representatives

and alternate player representatives, the people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because no details were announced.

Scherzer, among the sport's highest-paid players, confirmed the call without divulging who was on it.

"After discussing the latest developments with the rest of the players there's no need to engage with MLB in any further compensation reductions," he said in a statement posted to Twitter. "We have previously negotiated a pay cut in the version of prorated salaries, and there's no justification to accept a 2nd pay cut based upon the current information the union has received."

"I'm glad to hear other players voicing the same viewpoint," he added, "and believe

MLB's economic strategy would completely change if all documentation were to become public information."

It was unclear when the union will respond to MLB's plan, the people said.

Stars Mike Trout and Gerrit Cole would lose the most under MLB's plan, about 77% of the \$36 million each they were set to be paid this season. In all, there are 133 players whose contracts call for salaries of \$10 million or more, not including shares of signing bonuses.

A big leaguer earning \$1 million or less would keep at least 43% of his salary under the six-tier scale. That includes a share of \$200 million earmarked for players that is contingent on the postseason being completed. About 460 of approximately 900 players on rosters and injured lists when spring training

was stopped in mid-March due to the new coronavirus make \$1 million or less.

Trout and Cole would be cut to about \$8 million each. Colorado's Nolan Arenado would drop from \$35 million to \$7.84 million.

"Interesting strategy of making the best most marketable players potentially look like the bad guys," Milwaukee pitcher Brett Anderson tweeted.

The players' association called the proposal "extremely disappointing." The union has argued players already accepted a cut to prorated shares of their salaries in a March 26 agreement and should not have to bargain again.

MLB would like to start the season around the Fourth of July in empty ballparks and proposed an 82-game regular season.