

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Southern states dig out from Zeta's wrath

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Trees on top of buses and cars. Roofs ripped off homes. Boats pushed onto the highway by surging seawater. Hundreds of thousands of people left in the dark.

The remnants of Hurricane Zeta were far from land over the Atlantic on Friday, but people across the South were still digging out from the powerful storm that killed six people.

The wind effects of Zeta, which came ashore in Cocodrie, La., and barreled northeast, were felt all the way from the Gulf Coast to southern New Jersey. At the height of the outages, as many as 2.6 million people were without power across seven states from Louisiana to Virginia. Utility crews were out assessing the damage and fixing it.

In Louisiana, one of the hardest hit areas was Grand Isle, a barrier island community south of New Orleans. Gov. John Bel Edwards called the damage there “catastrophic”

and ordered the Louisiana National Guard to fly in soldiers to assist with search and rescue efforts.

Dodie Vegas, who with her husband owns Bridge Side Marina on Grand Isle, said damage was minimal at their water-side complex of cabins, campgrounds and docking facilities, but the rest of the island wasn't so lucky.

“As far as you can see, going down the island, the power lines are cracked in half,” she said by phone Thursday after riding out the storm with family. She described torn-off roofs and scattered debris: “The middle of the island looks like a bomb was dropped.”

A man was electrocuted in New Orleans, and four people died in Alabama and Georgia when trees fell on homes, authorities said, including two people who were pinned to their bed. In Biloxi, Miss., a man drowned when he was trapped in rising seawater.

Officials repeatedly stressed that the risks were not over —

pointing out that fatalities often come after a storm has passed, from things like breathing toxic generator fumes or being electrocuted by downed power lines.

Zeta was the 27th named storm of a historically busy year, with more than a month left in the Atlantic hurricane season. It set a new record as the 11th named storm to make landfall in the continental U.S. in a single season, well beyond the nine that hit in 1916. And the coronavirus pandemic has only made things more difficult for evacuees.

“Our heart breaks because this has been a tough, tough year,” said Edwards, whose state has taken the brunt of the hurricanes.

Every storm is different, and with Zeta the biggest threat was its winds. The hurricane intensified quickly and was just shy of a major Category 3 storm when it hit the Louisiana coast.

The howling gale toppled trees and knocked limbs off stately oaks in New Orleans,

and in Mississippi the storm surge whipped up by the winds tossed a shrimping boat into a front yard.

Mayor Sheldon Day of Thomasville, Ala., said hundreds of trees fell in roads and on homes, while some gas station canopies blew over.

“At one point, every major thoroughfare was blocked by trees,” Day said.

With just a few days until the Nov. 3 election, there were concerns about whether the storm would impact voters' ability to get to the polls.

Far fewer early voters showed up after the storm in Pascagoula, Miss., a court clerk said, and power failures in two Georgia counties disrupted voting. In Louisiana, getting power back to polling centers was a priority as was letting voters know quickly if there were any changes to locations come Tuesday. In Georgia, a group of civil rights organizations asked the governor to extend early voting hours Friday.

‘Small number’ test positive for virus aboard USS Ford

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

A “small number” of sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford were recently removed and placed in isolation at their residences after testing positive for the coronavirus, the Navy said.

Naval Air Force Atlantic spokeswoman Cmdr. Jennifer Cragg declined to provide the exact number of sailors who contracted the virus, citing Pentagon policy.

“The Department of Defense (DOD) does not release the number of infected individuals at the unit, facility, or

geographic area level due to operational security,” Cragg said in a statement emailed Thursday to Stars and Stripes.

Navy Times first reported the infections Thursday. Cragg told the news outlet that the infections were discovered “over a week ago.”

Cragg said that thorough contact tracing had been conducted, “and impacted Sailors were placed in a mandatory restriction of movement for continuous evaluation.”

“USS Gerald R. Ford continues to follow all [Defense Department] and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] mitigation guidance,”

Cragg said. “The ship takes the crew's safety very seriously and are taking every precaution and following all established protocols to safeguard all crewmembers.”

Among the precautions being taken for the roughly 2,700 crew members now aboard the carrier are physical distancing, limited group gatherings, personal protective equipment and intensive cleaning, she said.

The carrier is homeported in Norfolk, Va. During the past week, the crews of the Ford and the carrier John C. Stennis conducted two in-port damage control training events, according to a Navy news release.

The Navy experienced a severe outbreak of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, among the crew of the carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt this spring. More than 1,200 crew members were infected, with one death, and the ship was sidelined for weeks at port in Guam.

In a message to the fleet in September, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday said that more than 190 ships in the fleet had suffered some level of coronavirus infection this year.

As of Wednesday, 12,074 sailors have tested positive for the virus, according to the Navy's tally.

Quake hits Turkish city hosting US base

From staff and wire reports

An earthquake in the Aegean Sea killed at least four people and sent buildings crumbling to the ground in the Turkish city of Izmir, which hosts a U.S. military base and a NATO command.

“Four of our citizens lost their lives in the earthquake in Izmir,” Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said on Twitter. “A total of 120 citizens were affected by the earthquake.”

Three people were pulled from the rubble of a building in the city, Turkey’s official Anadolu news agency reported. Damage was also reported to buildings and the road network on the Greek island of Samos, where the director of the hospital said four people were treated for light injuries, The Associated Press reported.

There were no reports of injuries to U.S. personnel based at Izmir Air Station, U.S. Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa said.

The Air Force’s 425th Air Base Squadron, which is part of the 39th Air Base

Wing, headquartered about 500 miles to the east at Incirlik Air Base near Adana, is based at the air station. It is also home to NATO’s Allied Land Command and the alliance’s communications and information agency.

The 39th Air Base Wing said all of its personnel had been accounted for and there were no known injuries or deaths.

“Our number one priority is to ensure members of the 425th Air Base Squadron remain safe and cared for through the aftermath of these events,” Col. John Creel, 39th Air Base Wing commander, said in a statement Friday. “We know their families are worried, and that a number of our Turkish hosts have also been severely impacted.

“As the situation unfolds, we will support and equip our unit with the tools they need to pull through this together.”

The earthquake was centered in the Aegean Sea at a depth of 10.3 miles and registered at 6.6 magnitude on the Richter scale, Turkey’s Disaster and Emergency

Management Presidency said. Search and rescue teams have been sent to Izmir, the emergency authority said.

The European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre estimated the quake’s magnitude at 6.9 and put the epicenter eight miles north of Samos, while the U.S. Geological Survey said the temblor had a magnitude of 7.0. It is common for preliminary magnitudes to differ.

Multiple aftershocks struck the region in the hours after the quake.

About 20 buildings collapsed in Izmir, the third largest city in Turkey with a population of about 4.5 million residents, Mayor Tunc Soyer told CNN.

Six buildings were destroyed in the city, Turkey’s interior minister tweeted. There were small cracks in some buildings in six other provinces, he said.

Rescue efforts were underway to recover people trapped under the wreckage, said environment and urban planning minister Murat Kurum.

New suspect in custody after stabbings in France

Associated Press

NICE, France — A new suspect is in custody Friday in the investigation into a gruesome attack by a Tunisian man who killed three people in a French church, as France heightened its security alert amid religious and geopolitical tensions around cartoons mocking the Muslim Prophet Muhammad.

The suspect is a 47-year-old man believed to have been in contact with the attacker the night before the attack on the Notre Dame Basilica in the Riviera city of Nice, according to a judicial official. The official was not authorized to be publicly named.

The attacker, Ibrahim Issaoui, was seriously wounded by police and hospitalized in life-threatening condition, authorities said. Anti-terrorism prosecutors in France and Tunisia are investigating.

In an interview broadcast Friday with Saudi-owned Al-Arabi-

ya TV, Issaoui’s mother said she was shocked by the events.

From the Tunisian province of Sfax, the mother, her eyes wet with tears, said she was surprised to hear her son was in France when he called upon his arrival and had no idea what he was planning: “You don’t know the French language; you don’t know anyone there; you’re going to live alone there; why, why did you go there?” she said she told him over the phone at the time.

His brother told Al-Arabiya that Issaoui had informed the family he would sleep in front of the church, and sent them a photograph showing him at the cathedral where the attack took place.

“He didn’t tell me anything,” he said.

A neighbor said he knew the assailant when he was a mechanic and held various other odd jobs, and had shown no signs of radicalization.

Ex-soldier admits keeping teenage girl in barracks

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A former Army specialist faces at least 10 years’ imprisonment after pleading guilty Tuesday to federal child exploitation charges, admitting he snuck a 13-year-old runaway into his barracks at Fort Benning, Ga., for six days of sex, U.S. attorneys announced Wednesday.

Former Spc. Samuel Ray Robinson, 23, pleaded guilty in a Columbus, Ga., courtroom to one count of transportation of a minor with intent to engage in sexual criminal activity, the Department of Justice said in a statement. The charge carries a minimum 10-year federal prison sentence and up to life imprisonment as well as a fine up to \$250,000.

“Robinson targeted a vulnerable minor online, took her hours away from home, and kept her hidden, abusing

her repeatedly,” said Charlie Peeler, the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia. “He will pay a steep penalty for his egregious crime — federal prison without parole.”

Robinson is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Clay D. Land on Dec. 17.

Robinson, who has since been discharged from the Army, met his victim online, admitting to federal investigators that he knew she was underage, though he told them he believed she was 15.

The victim left her home in Santa Rose Beach, Fla., on or before May 27, when Robinson drove to nearby Destin, Fla., picked her up at a gas station and drove her some 200 miles to Fort Benning and snuck her into the barracks, according to DOJ. Forensic evidence gathered from the victim’s phone showed it remained on the post until June 2.

Trump fights headwinds amid Fla. battle

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Pressing against stiff headwinds from the pandemic, President Donald Trump steered toward what he hoped was safer political ground with the U.S. economy Thursday, as Democratic rival Joe Biden kept up his assault on Trump's handling of the coronavirus.

Campaigning hours apart in Florida, a state all but essential to the Republican's pathway to another term, both candidates urged supporters to get to polling places in person, even as a tropical storm interrupted early voting in the Southeast.

The shift to focusing on in-person voting next Tuesday — or sooner, where possible — comes as more than 80 million Americans have already cast their ballots, absentee or by mail. While the Election Day vote traditionally favors Republicans and early votes tend toward Democrats, the pandemic, which has killed more than 227,000 people in

the United States, has injected new uncertainty.

"You hold the power. If Florida goes blue, it's over," Biden told supporters Thursday.

Trump on Thursday was celebrating a new federal estimate that the economy grew at a stunning 33.1% annual rate in the July-September quarter — by far the largest quarterly gain on record — making up ground from its epic plunge in the spring, when the eruption of the coronavirus closed businesses and threw tens of millions out of work.

"So glad this great GDP number came out before November 3rd," Trump tweeted, predicting a dire reversal if Biden is elected.

But economists warned that the economy is already weakening again and facing renewed threats as confirmed viral cases surge, hiring has slowed and federal stimulus help has mostly run out.

Biden said, "The recovery is slowing if not stalling, and the recovery that is happen-

ing is helping those at the top but leaving tens of millions of working families and small businesses behind."

The Democrat is framing his closing arguments to voters on what he describes as responsible management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Trump, instead, is arguing that Biden would undo the economic gains of his administration with stricter, virus-targeting public health controls — though those are largely what scientists are calling for.

"The people are tired. They can't do it anymore," Trump said of lockdowns.

Trump and Biden both visited the western end of the Florida's Interstate 4 corridor, an area known for rapid residential growth, sprawling suburbs and its status as an ever-changing, hard-fought battleground during presidential elections. The president had been scheduled to hit another sunbelt battleground state, North Carolina, on Thursday evening but canceled his event in Fayetteville

as Tropical Storm Zeta brought wind gusts reaching 50 mph to the area.

Biden was forced to wrap his speech up early at a drive-in rally at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa after a brief shower turned into a torrential downpour.

On Friday, Trump is to visit three upper Midwest states, and he will hold a trio of rallies Saturday in Pennsylvania before launching on a whirlwind tour of battlegrounds including Florida, Michigan, Georgia and Pennsylvania in the closing 48 hours of the race.

Biden, meanwhile, heads later in the week to three more states Trump won in 2016: Iowa, Wisconsin and then Michigan, where he'll hold a joint Saturday rally with former President Barack Obama. Biden's campaign also announced he will visit Minnesota on Friday, hours before Trump holds a rally in one of the few Clinton-voting states Trump is hoping to pick up this year.

Veterans at center of key Senate election races

BY STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — There are 182 veterans running for Congress this year, some at the center of the most competitive contests that will decide which party controls the Senate. Yet the number of veterans in Congress and running is far lower than in previous generations.

Overall, 53 Democratic and 110 Republican veterans won their party nominations for House races, according to Veterans Campaign, a nonpartisan group that assists veterans running for office, and Military Times. In the Senate, 19 veterans are running as challengers or incumbents.

The numbers of those who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam were much larger than the in post-9/11 wars, but as veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan grow older, more are seeking political office.

"It's been in decline for the last 40 to 50 years. This year we saw a slight uptick, but overall, it has been going down," Seth Lynn, executive director of Veterans Campaign, said in a press conference Thursday.

"What's striking is right now if you look at the different generations ... the older generation had the greater number of veterans proportionately. But now for the first time, we have the highest portion of veterans [in Congress] among millennials. ... That's a good indication of a turnaround in the near future."

That trend, however, might not be reflected in the next Congress. There could be a slight decline after the election because 20% of veterans in Congress are not running for re-election, and several veterans running are underdogs, according to Veterans Campaign findings.

There are a handful of races in the Senate this year that will decide which party controls the chamber, and veterans are at the center of most of those races.

Arizona might be Democrats' best chance to pick up a seat in the Senate. Republican Sen. Martha McSally is lagging in the polls; on Thursday, Reuters/Ipsos reported her behind 5 points. The poll this week follows a monthslong trend of poor numbers for McSally. She has not won

a Senate race, losing the contest in 2018 against Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema. McSally was later appointed by the governor to fill the late John McCain's seat.

McSally was an A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot in the Air Force. She flew combat patrols over Iraq enforcing the no-fly zone in 1995. She became the first woman to fly combat missions and the first woman to command a fighter squadron. She later deployed to Afghanistan. In at least one mission, she had to provide close air support to friendly forces on the ground without a working targeting system. According to the Air Force, McSally's squadron flew more than 7,000 hours on their deployment and expended more than 23,000 rounds of 30 mm ammunition. She served from 1988-2010 and achieved the rank of colonel.

She faces former astronaut Mark Kelly, a veteran and pilot. If he wins, Kelly would be the second Democratic senator in Arizona in 25 years, after Sinema. Kelly was a Naval pilot and flew the A-6E Intruder aircraft, and he flew combat missions in the Gulf War.

Texas county halts non-essential service

Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — El Paso County officials ordered a two-week shutdown of non-essential activities Thursday after the area's medical resources were overwhelmed by COVID-19.

County Judge Ricardo Samaniego announced the measure during a virtual news conference Thursday. Among the non-essential services ordered to be closed, effective at midnight Thursday, are tattoo, hair and nail salons, as well as gyms and in-person dining. He also appealed to residents to avoid all non-essential activities. Grocery and drug stores, funeral homes, health care services and government activities were among the activities deemed essential.

Samaniego said all election-related activities, including campaigns and voting, also were deemed essential activities.

"Our hospitals are at capacity, our medical professionals are overwhelmed, and if we don't respond we will see unprecedented levels of death," said Samaniego, the county's top elected official.

Samaniego assured that county officials "have done everything possible" to avoid shutting down the county's economy.

"We need to build capacity for hospitals, build capacity, to shore up contact tracing and identify hot spots," he said.

Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation health officials on Thursday reported 130 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 but no deaths for the ninth time in the last 10 days.

The latest figures bring the total number of cases to 11,602 including 10 delayed reported cases.

The known death toll remains at 575.

Tribal health officials said 124,109 people on the vast reservation that covers parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah have been tested for COVID-19

since the pandemic started and 7,528 have recovered.

A shelter-in-place order, mask mandate, daily curfews and weekend lockdowns remain in effect on the Navajo Nation.

Connecticut

New data showing that about 70% of Connecticut residents now live in communities experiencing spikes in coronavirus infections led Gov. Ned Lamont on Thursday to give more municipal leaders the option of reverting back to the state's second phase of reopening, under which there are more restrictions.

The Democrat acknowledged being dismayed to see the state's positivity rate climb since Wednesday, calling it a "gut punch" for a state that has worked hard to do "the right thing for a long time" to control spread of the virus.

"I think we know what we've got to do to get through this. We're going to see some progress on a local basis, and I hope we can take that statewide," Lamont said, referring to the local rollbacks, as well as weekly testing of nursing home staffers and other measures.

Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — A region that encompasses central and west-central Illinois, including the capital of Springfield, became the latest Thursday to face restrictions on social interaction because of an elevated rate of positive tests for COVID-19.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker's declaration for Region 3, which includes Lincoln on the east edge, Springfield, Jacksonville and west to Quincy, was the ninth of 11 COVID-19 monitoring regions to be placed under "resurgence mitigations" to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The restrictions, which take effect Sunday, halt indoor bar and restaurant service, closes those establishments at 11 p.m. and limits the size of gatherings to 25 people or 25% of a room's

capacity.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — More than half of Kentucky's counties are listed in the most serious category for COVID-19 incidence rates as the state remains on a near-record pace of daily coronavirus cases, Gov. Andy Beshear said Thursday.

The governor reported 19 more virus-related deaths and 1,821 more virus cases, the state's third-highest daily number of cases since the pandemic began. It followed the second-highest daily case count on Wednesday and fourth-highest total Tuesday, he said at a news conference.

Meanwhile, 68 of Kentucky's 120 counties are listed in the red-zone category for having the highest COVID-19 incidence rates.

Beshear has recommended those counties take stricter steps to contain the virus's spread.

Michigan

LANSING — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration on Thursday tightened restrictions on indoor social gatherings and shifted the Traverse City region backward in Michigan's reopening plan, saying coronavirus hospitalizations have doubled in three weeks and the statewide death rate has risen for five straight weeks.

The state Department of Health and Human Services revised and extended mask and other emergency rules it issued weeks ago in the wake of a state Supreme Court ruling that declared unconstitutional a law used by the Democratic governor to control the pandemic with various orders.

Effective immediately, indoor venues without fixed seating must limit gatherings such as weddings and parties to no more than 50 people — down from a maximum of 500. Restaurants, bars and other venues must seat no more than six people at a table. All dine-in establishments must keep

customers' names and phone numbers for contact-tracing purposes, starting Monday.

Nevada

RENO — Beginning next week, public gatherings in Washoe County will be subject to the same 50-person limitation that was in effect before Gov. Steve Sisolak raised the statewide cap to 250 on Oct. 1 as part of a relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions.

A state task force approved the change Thursday at the request of Washoe County and the cities of Reno and Sparks in response to a dramatic spike in the spread of the coronavirus there over the last two weeks.

The return to the previous cap is part of a broader action plan the county submitted to the Nevada COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force. It applies only to Washoe County, although all counties remain free to implement limits more stringent than the governor's statewide directive.

Utah

SALT LAKE CITY — Anti-mask protesters stood in front of the home of Utah Epidemiologist Dr. Angela Dunn on Thursday evening after her personal information was leaked online.

Dunn said it was "scary and wrong" that anyone would feel comfortable sharing her personal information and protesting outside her home.

"It's taken a really big toll on my family and myself," Dunn said when asked about the protest during the governor's weekly COVID-19 briefing. "I think it's really unfortunate we live in a state where people feel that it is OK to harass civil servants."

About a dozen protesters stood across from Dunn's home Thursday morning and evening. Two of Dunn's neighbors, Laura and Tripp Hopkins, said the neighborhood had rallied around her by turning on their sprinklers and parking their cars on the street to deter protesters.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man pays to spend time with leopard, is mauled

FL DAVIE — A man was mauled by a captive black leopard in a backyard zoo in South Florida, wildlife officials said.

The man paid \$150 for a “full contact experience” with the black leopard, which allowed him to play with it and take pictures, WPLG reported.

A report by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission says the incident happened Aug. 31 in Davie, which is near Fort Lauderdale.

The agency charged the owner with allowing full contact with an extremely dangerous animal and was cited for maintaining captive wildlife in an unsafe condition.

The man was attacked as soon as he entered the leopard’s enclosure. The injuries were so severe that his scalp was “hanging from his head and his right ear was torn in half,” the report said.

Safe haven law used for 2nd time in 2 months

IA DES MOINES — A baby has been surrendered under Iowa’s safe haven law for the second time in as many months, officials said Thursday.

The Iowa Department of Human Services said in a news release that a baby girl, born Oct. 12, was recently released to the custody of the agency, marking the 47th time the state’s safe haven law has been used. The department declined to give details on where the baby was surrendered, citing privacy policies.

Earlier this month, Iowa officials reported that another baby girl born on Sept. 27 was surrendered to state custody under the safe haven law.

Iowa lawmakers changed

state law following a 2001 case in which a mother killed her home-delivered newborn in eastern Iowa. Under the law, parents can give the state custody of babies who are 30 days or younger without concern of being prosecuted. Parents or an authorized representative can leave infants at a hospital or other health care facility.

Surrendered babies are placed with foster or adoptive families.

High school evacuated after receiving threats

CT WATERFORD — A Connecticut high school was evacuated Thursday morning after someone made threats in a phone call to the school, police said.

Waterford High School received the call at about 7:30 a.m., after students had arrived for the day, said police Lt. Tim Silva. The nature of the threats was not disclosed, but Silva said they were not believed to be credible. Police, however, continued to investigate just to be sure, he said.

School officials decided later in the morning to send students home for the day.

Water taxi canceled over safety concerns

WA SEATTLE — The West Seattle Water Taxi was canceled for Thursday morning after an inspection at the Seacrest dock raised concerns that one of the pins connecting the gangway to the shore is damaged, according to King County.

KING-TV reported that, out of an abundance of caution, until a repair can be completed, service on the West Seattle route has been canceled until an assessment of the damage can be completed.

The water taxi is an impor-

tant link to downtown Seattle as the major bridge to West Seattle remains closed due to damage discovered in spring.

States reach offshore wind agreement

MD ANNAPOLIS — Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina announced an agreement Thursday to advance offshore wind development.

The states have agreed to form a team with representatives from each jurisdiction that will work to streamline the development of regional offshore wind resources.

The three states have committed to work together to increase regulatory certainty and encourage manufacturing of component parts. The partnership also will aim to reduce project costs through supply chain development and share information and best practices.

Children’s museum gets help for new building

ME WATERVILLE — The federal government is going to help a children’s museum in central Maine make improvements that will allow for better exhibits.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Community Facilities Program is giving the Children’s Discovery Museum in Waterville a \$67,500 grant and \$692,500 loan. The money is intended to help the museum buy and renovate a building in Waterville.

The building will serve as the museum’s new location, Democratic Rep. Chellie Pingree said.

“As the most rural state in the nation, Mainers know how important it is to make our community institutions modern and accessible,” Pingree said.

Man arrested on 12th drunken driving charge

WI BARABOO — A Wisconsin Dells man arrested on suspicion of drunken driving is facing his 12th charge for drunken driving.

Walter Decorah, 51, made his initial appearance Tuesday in Sauk County Circuit Court. Judge Patricia Barrett set bail at \$15,000 cash, the Baraboo News Republic reported.

Authorities say Decorah was arrested for falling asleep behind the steering wheel at a stop sign. He was charged with driving while intoxicated, operating with a prohibited alcohol content and driving with a revoked license.

Egrets skipping sex after eating bad fish

FL MIAMI — Florida’s great egrets just aren’t in the mood. Blame it on a headache or stomachache caused by eating some bad fish. A University of Florida study found increased mercury exposure is turning egrets off from sex.

Mercury contamination led to a 50% reduction in the birds’ attempts to breed, meaning the heavy metal is affecting their reproduction process much earlier than previously thought. The study also noted the full effects of mercury exposure among wading birds may be “systematically underestimated.”

The Miami Herald reported that heavy metals and other contaminants can disrupt hormones, which can then impact a desire to breed. Certain microorganisms can change mercury into methylmercury, a highly toxic form that builds up in fish, shellfish and animals that eat fish, in a process known as bioaccumulation.

From wire reports

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Clemson QB tests positive for COVID-19

Associated Press

Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence has tested positive for COVID-19, putting into doubt whether the face of college football will be available to play the top-ranked Tigers' biggest game of the season.

Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said in a statement released by the school Thursday night that Lawrence is in isolation with mild symptoms.

Swinney said Lawrence would miss Clemson's game Saturday against Boston College. The Tigers are scheduled to play No. 4 Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., on Nov. 7.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of 10 days.

Lawrence said in a statement on Twitter that his symptoms have been "relatively mild" and he was following protocol from Clemson and the ACC about the virus.

"The only thing that hurts is missing an opportunity to be

with my teammates this weekend and play the game I love," he said.

Lawrence said he'd be watching and cheering for the Tigers from isolation.

The junior from Georgia is a leading contender for the Heisman Trophy and potentially the top overall pick in next year's NFL Draft. He led the Tigers (6-0, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) to a national championship as a freshman and back to the College Football playoff championship game last season. Clemson's loss to LSU in the title game was the first — and still only — game the Tigers have lost in Lawrence's 32 career starts.

Clemson is tested three times a week per Atlantic Coast Conference protocol.

Lawrence created a stir earlier this week when asked about his NFL future, saying he still has the option to stay or leave.

"My mindset has been that I'm going to move on," Law-

rence said Tuesday. "But who knows? There's a lot of things that could happen."

Swinney said that while Lawrence will be missed against the Eagles (4-2, 3-2), it was an "opportunity for other guys to step up."

Freshman passer D.J. Uiagalelei has been the first in after Lawrence this season when games get out of hand. Uiagalelei, at 6-4 and 250 pounds, was rated the country's second-best college prospect by Rivals.com last season. He enrolled in January and went through spring drills until the coronavirus pandemic shut down college sports last March.

Two weeks ago against Georgia Tech, Uiagalelei missed the game with soreness, while Taisun Phommachanh broke a bone in his left hand during the game. That left freshman walk-on Hunter Helms as the Tigers' No. 2 man under center.

Uiagalelei missed the Georgia Tech game, but he returned the next week against Syracuse

and has played in every game except that GT contest.

A five-star recruit ranked 10th overall in his class by the 247Sports Composite ratings, Uiagalelei has completed 12 of 19 attempts for 102 yards, while also rushing eight times for 32 yards and two touchdowns.

Uiagalelei's last name is pronounced "oo-ee-AHN-gah-leh-lay."

Phommachanh was a four-star recruit in the class of 2019, ranked as the fourth-best dual threat quarterback in the nation. As a true freshman, he appeared in three games and preserved his redshirt. This season, he's played in four games and completed five passes on 17 attempts for 17 yards while also rushing seven times for 25 yards.

Phommachanh's name is pronounced "Tyson poo-mah-chun."

Clemson has won its past 27 games against ACC competition and the past nine against Boston College.

Pandemic affects SMU's prep for Navy's triple option

Associated Press

DALLAS — No. 22 SMU's preparation for Navy's triple-option running game is a little different in this pandemic-altered season.

The Mustangs (5-1, 2-1 American Athletic) are missing a few dozen of the scout-teamers they can normally roll through the repetitions in practice.

"When you play Navy, normally you have a lot of scout team guys, 130 players in your program and you have a scout team ready to go," coach Sonny Dykes said. "We have 80 guys in practice right now. It's going to be different."

Both teams go into Saturday night's game coming off losses. For SMU it was the first of the season, 42-13 at home to No. 7 Cincinnati.

The Midshipmen (3-3, 3-1) thought they finally had some momentum with two straight

victories before losing at home to Houston 37-21.

Navy had coach Ken Niumatalolo's second 11-win season last year, including a victory over the ranked Mustangs. Because of the three losses and a season shortened by the coronavirus, the Midshipmen can't get to double digits in wins this year.

"I was encouraged by their spirits Monday, the leadership," Niumatalolo said. "We're still in the mix in our conference. Long term, our guys recognize that there's still a lot to play for."

Run vs. pass

SMU quarterback Shane Buechele is averaging almost as many passes per game (37) as Navy's Dalen Morris has thrown all season (39). The Mustangs have the No. 13 passing offense in the country, while

Navy is 31st in rushing offense at 186 yards per game.

The overall offensive output is a bit of a mismatch, with SMU ranked 11th at 581 yards per game and the Midshipmen 88th at 288.

Keep the ball moving

Because Navy usually wins with ball control, Dykes says it's important for the SMU offense to counter that by staying on the field.

"They put pressure on you defensively, but they put just as much on you offensively because you're going to get fewer possessions," Dykes said. "As a result, you have to execute at a higher level. To me, they've really improved their program the last couple of years defensively. They run a lot of different coverages, a lot of different blitzes."

Return to the scene

Navy returns to SMU two years after the Mustangs won when they went for the two-point conversion in the first overtime for a 31-30 victory. It was Dykes' first win since taking over, and the first for SMU against Navy in 20 years.

Dykes and his players had to wait several minutes to celebrate because of a discussion and review over a play where the Mustangs sent an eligible offensive lineman in motion from the tight end spot and threw the two-point pass to an actual tight end, Hunter Thedford.

Naval carousel

Navy has had 23 players make their first career starts this season, the most nationally. Senior defensive end Jackson Perkins is the only Navy player to start all six games.

Falcons avenge earlier loss to Panthers

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — This time, the Atlanta Falcons finished.

Matt Ryan threw for 281 yards and ran for a touchdown, Younghoe Koo made four field goals and the Atlanta Falcons held on to beat the Carolina Panthers 25-17 on Thursday night behind a strong defensive performance to avoid a series season sweep.

The Falcons (2-6) have had a penchant for squandering leads, coming into the game 1-3 when leading entering the fourth quarter. Carolina was driving late, but Atlanta stopped the rally when Blidi Wreh-Wilson intercepted Teddy Bridgewater near the Falcons' 10-yard line with 1:04 remaining.

"That's what we've been talking about, ending games with either sacks or interceptions and the guys went out today and did exactly that," said Falcons coach Raheem Morris. "The ball went up in the air and Blidi came down with it and it was awesome."

Todd Gurley grinded out 46

yards rushing and a touchdown, Julio Jones added 137 yards receiving against a banged-up Panthers secondary and the Falcons defense limited the Panthers to 2-for-10 on third-down conversions to improve to 2-1 since Morris replaced Dan Quinn as head coach.

Panthers coach Matt Rhule said it felt like Bridgewater was constantly under duress.

"We had a hard time blocking their front," Rhule said. "We weren't able to get our receivers involved. We were 2 of 10 on third downs and we can't live like that."

Bridgewater tried to spur Carolina to a comeback in front of a sparse crowd of 5,240 due to COVID-19 after Koo missed an extra point that would have made it a two-possession game.

Bridgewater, who was knocked out of the game for two possessions with a neck injury following a late hit by Charles Harris — one that resulted in him being ejected — took over with the Panthers down by eight points with less than 3 minutes to play. He completed

a 35-yard strike to D.J. Moore on third-and-18 to move the Panthers into Falcons territory. But his final pass was easily picked.

Bridgewater was limited to 176 yards passing as the Panthers (3-5) lost their third straight game without injured Christian McCaffrey.

"I don't think any of us played real well tonight," Rhule said of Bridgewater's performance.

Said Bridgewater: "Tough loss and we have to find ways to finish the game. That can't be the common thing around here — coming up short."

The Falcons avenged a 23-16 loss to Carolina 18 days ago in which Bridgewater threw for 313 yards and two scores and Mike Davis piled up 149 yards rushing. Davis was held to 77 yards this time on a wet field where players routinely swapped cleats to adapt to the changing conditions.

But Jones didn't play in the first meeting.

He was a huge difference in this one, setting the tone by hauling in two catches for 52

yards on the game's first two plays. Playing against a Panthers secondary that was already without two starters and lost another when Donte Jackson reinjured his toe in the first half proved to be easy pickings for Jones.

"It's fun, no question about it," Ryan said of having Jones in the lineup. "The way we started the game is when we're at our best, play-action pass. I hope it's the start of something. I really feel like, although we're 2-6, we've been in some tight ones."

Samuel's big day: The Panthers had opened a 14-6 lead in the second quarter when Bridgewater found Curtis Samuel for a 29-yard touchdown pass on a well set up flea flicker. It was Samuel's second TD of the half, scoring earlier on a 12-yard run up the middle to give Carolina its first lead.

The 24-year-old Samuel has three career games with a TD rushing and receiving, which trails only Jerry Rice (5) among wide receivers in the Super Bowl era.

Giants' Jones regrets taking off mask in NYC bar

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — After a little prodding, New York Giants quarterback Daniel Jones expressed regret for taking off his mask in a closed New York City bar last weekend.

Speaking for the first time since a video at the bar was released, Jones did his best to avoid discussing the incident that left some wondering if he had violated NFL protocols for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jones, injured running back Saquon Barkley and receiver Sterling Shepard and others had dinner in the private room of a city restaurant. The Giants had played on Thursday and had the weekend off.

After the dinner was over, they were invited to the bar by

the owner.

Jones took off his mask inside and talked with people who were inside.

"Yeah, I had PPE and certainly need to make sure I'm wearing it," Jones said when asked about regretting the incident. "But like I said, we're not going to comment any more on it. Coach has certainly addressed it."

Coach Joe Judge had discussed the video earlier in the week and said the team would handle the matter internally.

Jones repeated that answer several times when asked about it. He said his focus was on playing the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (5-2) on Monday night.

Jones also refused to say whether he was facing disciplinary action.

A bigger problem for Jones

and the Giants (1-6) might be the status of their offensive line.

Left guard Will Hernandez, who has started every game since being drafted in 2018, was placed on the reserve COVID-19 list on Thursday after testing positive for the virus.

Hernandez is in isolation and it is unlikely he will play Monday. The Giants also told eight players and two coaches who were in close contact to the player to remain home and participate in meetings remotely.

The group included three other starting offensive linemen: tackles Andrew Thomas and Cam Fleming and center Nick Gates. Center Spencer Pulley and rookie guard Shane Lemieux, both backups, also missed practice.

Right guard Kevin Zeitler

was the only lineman to practice. He was joined at practice by tackles Matt Peart and Jackson Barton and practice squad tackle Kyle Murphy.

Judge was hopeful the players who were in close contact with Hernandez will be able to play Monday against one of the NFL's top defenses.

Jones said the offense has to adjust anytime someone misses a game, but he expects someone to step up if called upon.

"We have to be prepared regardless of the circumstance," Jones said. "It's tough to predict what's going to happen. But as players and certainly in my position, all you can do is take advantage of the time you have and attack the opportunity or the challenge and get the most out of it."

Banished Larson gets new NASCAR ride

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Kyle Larson will be back in NASCAR next season driving the flagship No. 5 Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports.

Larson signed a multi-year contract Wednesday with Hendrick that ended his seven-month banishment from NASCAR for using a racial slur while playing an online racing game last spring. He'd been considered the top pending free agent in the sport but was promptly fired by Chip Ganassi Racing and lost all his sponsors.

Since using the n-word on April 12, Larson has completed NASCAR's sensitivity training, hired an inclusion training coach, volunteered with the Tony Sanneh Foundation, visited Jackie Joyner-Kersey

and her St. Louis community center, and the site of the 2014 protests in Ferguson, Mo., that followed a fatal police shooting of a Black man.

Larson has volunteered at food banks, went with Sanneh to the George Floyd Memorial site in Minneapolis, spent extensive time at the Urban Youth Racing School in Philadelphia and made numerous other visits to both educate himself on racial justice issues and speak of his own experiences.

Larson, who is half-Japanese, also kept racing under the radar: He has won 42 sprint car races in 2020 while suspended from NASCAR.

"Kyle is unquestionably one of the most talented race car drivers in the world," team owner Rick Hendrick said in a statement. "He has champion-

ship-level ability and will be a significant addition to our on-track program. More importantly, I have full confidence that he understands our expectations and will be a tremendous ambassador for our team, our partners and NASCAR."

Hendrick said he's had "many, many conversations" with Larson and is "confident about what's in his heart and his desire to be a champion in all aspects of his life and career. Kyle has done important work over the past six months, and Hendrick Motorsports is going to support those continued efforts."

Hendrick was expected to bid for Larson when his contract expired with Ganassi, who also wanted to keep the driver he'd groomed from sprint cars to NASCAR's top Cup level.

Instead, the 28-year-old's future in NASCAR was jeopardized by his use of the slur during an iRacing event late Easter Sunday. He was finally reinstated by NASCAR last week.

"Mr. Hendrick is one of the people who extended a hand to me over the past six months," Larson said in a statement. "Our initial conversations were not about racing. He cares about me as a person and wants to see me succeed beyond driving. I can't put into words how grateful I am for the commitment, the faith and the confidence from him and everyone at Hendrick Motorsports."

Larson will be teamed with crew chief Cliff Daniels, who spent the last two years working with seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson.

Sports briefs

Hall of Fame manager La Russa returns to White Sox

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Tony La Russa, the Hall of Famer who won a World Series with the Oakland Athletics and two more with the St. Louis Cardinals, is returning to manage the Chicago White Sox 34 years after they fired him.

The 76-year-old La Russa rejoins the franchise where his managing career began more than four decades ago. He takes over for Rick Renteria after what the White Sox insisted was a mutual agreement to split.

"We are extremely excited about the future of this team," general manager Rick Hahn said Thursday. "As we showed in 2020, this is a young, talented club that we expect to only grow better and better in the coming years. Adding in a Hall of Fame manager who is recognized as being one of the best in the history of the game, we are a step closer to our goal of bringing White Sox fans an-

other championship."

La Russa inherits a team loaded with young stars and productive veterans that made the playoffs for the first time since 2008, only to sputter down the stretch and get knocked out in the wild-card round.

Wisconsin has three more test positive

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin says the number of active COVID-19 cases within the football program increased to 16 as of Thursday morning.

School officials said they learned of one more positive polymerase chain reaction test result late Wednesday, and that two more were confirmed Thursday. The three additional people to test positive included two staff members and one player.

This news comes one day after Wisconsin announced it was canceling its scheduled Saturday game at Nebraska

due to the number of players and staffers who had tested positive.

Stars remove interim tag from Bowness

FRISCO, Texas — The Dallas Stars have officially removed the interim tag from Rick Bowness, the coach who led them to the Stanley Cup Final.

General manager Jim Nill made the long-anticipated announcement Thursday, a month after the extended and most unusual season came to a close. The 65-year-old Bowness is the Stars' 24th head coach, their ninth since moving to Dallas in 1993.

Bowness was 20-13-5 after becoming their interim head coach in December. He was in his second season as a Stars assistant for Jim Montgomery, who was fired and later went to alcohol rehabilitation.

There were no immediate details about Bowness' contract.

Tyson, Jones promise fight at 'exhibition'

LOS ANGELES — Mike Tyson and Roy Jones Jr. got permission from California's athletic commission to return to the boxing ring next month because their fight would be strictly an exhibition of their once-unparalleled skills.

These fifty-something former champions still say they're taking this showdown far more seriously than any exhibition.

"Not a real fight? We got Mike Tyson versus Roy Jones," Tyson said Thursday in an online press conference. "I'm coming to fight, and I hope he's coming to fight, and that's all you need to know."

Promoters of the pay-per-view spectacle announced that Los Angeles' Staples Center will be the site of the 54-year-old Tyson's return to boxing on Nov. 28 for an eight-round main event against the 51-year-old Jones.