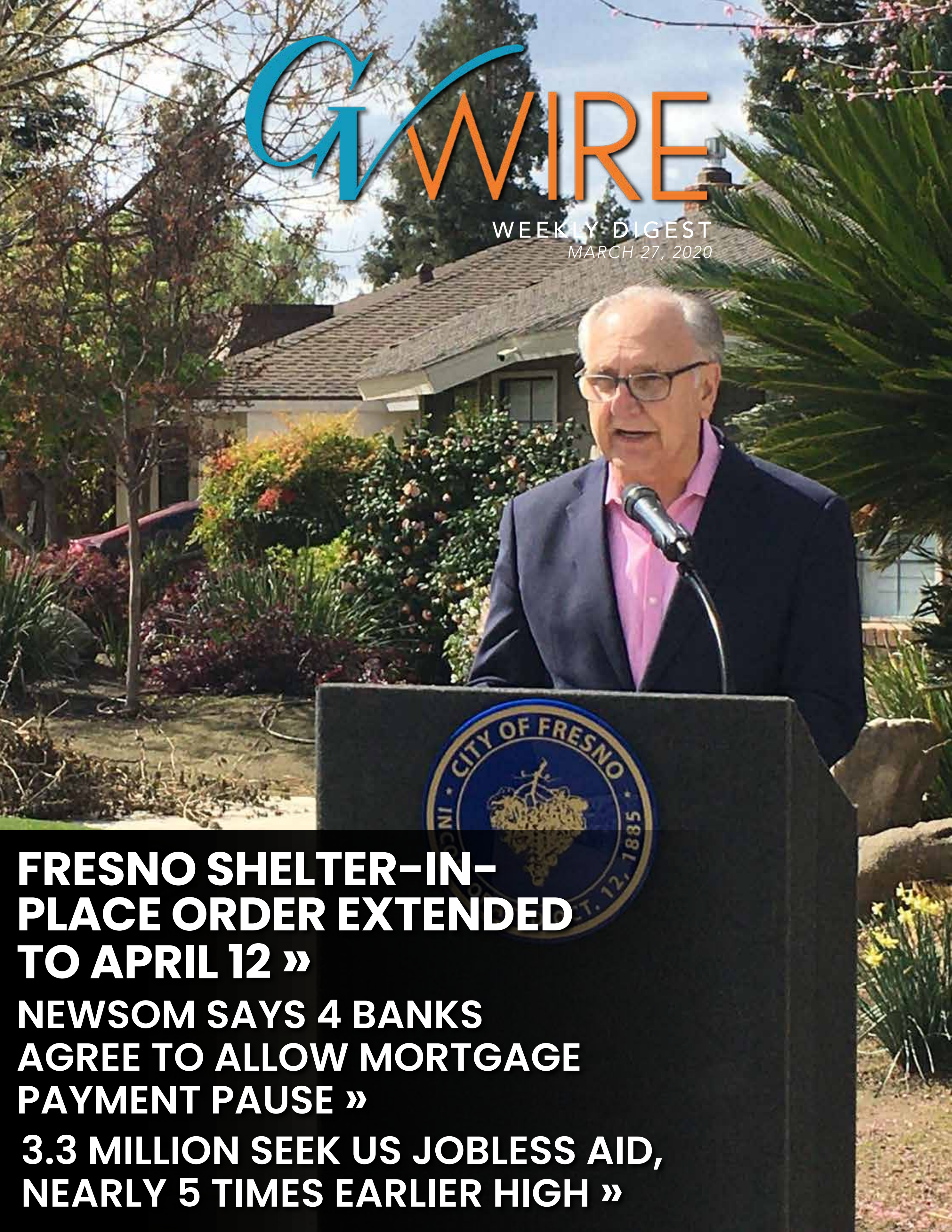


GWIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST
MARCH 27, 2020



**FRESNO SHELTER-IN-
PLACE ORDER EXTENDED
TO APRIL 12 »**

**NEWSOM SAYS 4 BANKS
AGREE TO ALLOW MORTGAGE
PAYMENT PAUSE »**

**3.3 MILLION SEEK US JOBLESS AID,
NEARLY 5 TIMES EARLIER HIGH »**



GV Wire/David Taub

FRESNO SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDER EXTENDED TO APRIL 12

March 26, 2020 | David Taub

GV Wire invited two Fresno-area doctors with expertise in the control of infectious disease to Fresno Mayor Lee Brand announced the extension of the city's shelter-in-place order through April 12

"If something changes nationally or locally, we can change too." — Fresno Mayor Lee Brand

during a news conference Thursday morning at his northeast Fresno home. "All indications are we have yet to see the worst of this pandemic. I know how difficult this is for everyone," Brand said. "My wife, Tricia, and I have changed our lifestyle because it's the right thing to do. The better job that we do now and contain the spread of the coronavirus, the faster we can recover and the faster we can return to our normal lives." Brand said he held the news conference at home because he wanted to lead by example for other seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brand is 70 years old. The mayor did leave open the possibility that the order could be shortened. "If something changes nationally or locally, we can change too," Brand said.

Shelter Order Working, Doesn't Foresee Police Enforcement

The order was set to expire on March 31. Brand said extending the order was to "protect the lives of as many people as possible." He said the order has worked thus far in "flattening the curve." "I'm proud to say that everything I've seen and heard tells me that almost everyone in Fresno is taking this seriously and taking the necessary precautions to protect their own health, helped their family and friends and the health of our entire community," Brand said. Brand doubted he would need law enforcement to implement shelter-in-place. "We don't have the resources to enforce it at this point in time. But you can see by getting people

to voluntarily do the stay at home, it won't have to reach such drastic measures as some ... in Europe right now, where they really have been locking people down. We don't want to have that," Brand said. "We want to have people comply. We want to have people live normal lives as soon as possible, have the least disruption as we can."

Order Through Easter

The extended order ends at 11:59 p.m. on April 12, which is Easter Sunday. Brand talked about the potential impact on churchgoers. "(Church) communication is up, not sideways. They've taken technology to preach to their members and keep in touch. Most churches are doing voluntary community work and this is based on the best available knowledge we have now," Brand said.

Federal Aid Coming

As Congress is voting on its \$2.2 trillion aid package responding to the crisis, Brand expects some of the money to come to Fresno. While there is nothing specific, Brand said the money will go to cities with a population of 500,000, qualifying Fresno. "We're not certain exactly how it's going to come down.

At least three or four times a week, we have evening phone conferences with the big city mayors in California. So I get to learn what best practices are in other cities and other cities are having basically the same experience we're having," Brand said. Brand is expecting a surge of...

"We're not certain exactly how it's going to come down. At least three or four times a week, we have evening phone conferences with the big city mayors in California. So I get to learn what best practices are in other cities and other cities are having basically the same experience we're having."
— Fresno Mayor Lee Brand

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FRESNO AREA OFFICIALS SET TO ACQUIRE HOTEL ROOMS FOR HOMELESS COVID-19 CASES

GV Wire/Janz Tello

March 26, 2020 | David Taub and Jim Jakobs

In a late afternoon [news conference](#) Wednesday, Fresno city and county officials stood shoulder to shoulder to announce a combined effort to provide service to homeless populations vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We recognize the fact that our homeless are the most vulnerable population that we have here in Fresno County,” said Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig. Despite the homeless still having to volunteer for testing, the city and county want to provide resources to those that agree to be tested and show symptoms of COVID-19.

Room Vouchers and Hand Washing Stations

The city and county are working together with newly acquired vouchers for hotel and motel rooms that can be used to house homeless that are identified as needing quarantine.

Sonia de la Rosa, principal administrative analyst for Fresno County said, “The reason we’re using hotel rooms is because that will give us an opportunity to isolate those folks that are pending test results or have been identified as COVID positive but do not require hospitalization.” As far as protection for the hotel workers and staff, the county says there will be protections in place for them as well as janitorial services to ensure the facility stays clean.

“We’ve seen an enormous amount of hotel and motel owners across the city volunteer their facilities,” said Fresno City Councilman Miguel Arias. It has not yet been determined which facilities will be used. The city and county say the locations will be determined by proximity to services that may be needed to address the medical needs they encounter...

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FRESNO OFFERS 0% LOANS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

March 25, 2020 | David Taub

The Fresno City Council voted to provide COVID-19 financial relief for small businesses at an emergency meeting Wednesday. Businesses with 25 or fewer employees will be eligible for 0% loans. If the business remains open for one year, the loan will be forgiven. In a separate vote, the council allocated \$750,000 for the “Save Our Small Businesses Act.” Of that, \$500,000 is funding previously allocated for a senior center; \$250,000 is from the city attorney’s budget.

The council also made changes to an emergency amendment covering a variety of issues approved last week. The most significant change allows bars to reopen and provide curbside or delivery service of alcohol, provided their permit allows for such action. Councilman Mike Karbassi created the act along with councilmembers Esmeralda Soria and Luis Chavez Karbassi is concerned about the fallout of city tax revenue in relation to businesses closing because of COVID-19. “We can help (small businesses) stay in operations and protect those jobs and...

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SMALL BUSINESS LOAN

Date: _____ No: _____

Applying For A: ☐ Driver License ☐ Learner Permit ☐ ID Card ☐ Renewal ☐ Replacement

Personal Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Birth Date: / / Gender:

Identification Information

Driver license? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Learner permit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Non-driver ID Card? ☐ Yes ☐ No

There are lots of places to explore. Places could be urban or suburban. Some people loves to be with nature to free their minds and refresh their souls, but some like to be in the city. You will get lots of benefits such as exploring new culture, meet new people while learning to be adaptive, gain new experiences through things, improve...

PHOTO HERE

enter the identification number it appears on the license, learner permit, or non-driver ID card.

Expiration: Type of License: Out-of-State License ID No:

Shutterstock



ARAMBULA DONATES \$50K TO NONPROFITS FOR COVID-19 RELIEF

March 26, 2020 | Bill McEwen

Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula donated \$50,000 from his campaign account Thursday to help families during the COVID-19 crisis. The Fresno Democrat challenged others — including elected officials — to follow his example by giving to groups that provide food, shelter, and other essential services. Arambula additionally suggested that people volunteer to help the elderly and disabled.

“I believe in times like these, we have a moral responsibility to help people and families who are struggling to feed their loved ones or provide basic needs because this pandemic has drastically altered their lives,” said Arambula, who represents the 31st District. “The organizations I’m supporting have stepped up their efforts to make sure no one is left behind.” Arambula reminded residents to stay at home and practice good hygiene and social distancing to contain the coronavirus. “We must be vigilant and considerate of one another,” Arambula said. “We are in this together and must depend on each other. We...

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AP File

STATE

NEWSOM SAYS 4 BANKS AGREE TO ALLOW MORTGAGE PAYMENT PAUSE

March 25, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Four of the nation’s largest banks agreed to temporarily suspend residential mortgage payments for Californians affected by the coronavirus, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday.

The announcement comes as more than 1 million Californians have filed for unemployment benefits since March 13 because many businesses have had to shut down because of a statewide “stay at home” order to prevent the spread of the virus.

Most Banks Offer 90-Day Deferral

Wells Fargo, US Bank, Citi and JP Morgan Chase have all agreed to suspend mortgage payments by 90 days for people affected by the coronavirus. An additional

Wells Fargo, US Bank, Citi and JP Morgan Chase have all agreed to suspend mortgage payments by 90 days for people affected by the coronavirus. An additional 200 state charter banks and credit unions made similar commitments, Gov. Newsom announced.

200 state charter banks and credit unions made similar commitments, he said. But Newsom noted Bank of America agreed to pause payments for one month. “I hope they will reconsider and join those other banks that are willing to do the right thing,” he said. Newsom said ev-

everyone is eligible, regardless of how much money they make. He said homeowners must submit “some form of documentation,” but he did not give details.

Under traditional loan forbearance programs, monthly payments are temporarily suspended but the homeowner still must make up the deferred amounts at a later time. The news comes after Congress reached an agreement with the Trump administration on a \$2 trillion economic stimulus package to keep the economy afloat during the crisis. The plan would increase weekly unemployment benefits by \$600 more than what states are already providing.

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Governor Urges Against Rush to Phones

Anticipating a surge of requests, Newsom urged homeowners to take their time to get their mortgage documents in order before contacting their lender.

Anticipating a surge of requests, Gov. Gavin Newsom urged homeowners to take their time to get their mortgage documents in order before contacting their lender.

“If every single person with a residential mortgage makes a phone call at the same time to their bank, those call centers will collapse,” Newsom said.



CABALLERO BACKS NEWSOM'S COVID-19 EFFORTS, SEEKS LEGAL STATUS FOR FARMWORKERS

GV Wire/Jahz Telo

March 25, 2020 | David Taub

Like most of her legislative colleagues, state Sen. Anna Caballero (D-Salinas) is working at home instead of the State Capitol in Sacramento. Bills may have stalled, but dealing with the state's response to the COVID-19 outbreak hasn't. Her 12th Senate District covers parts of Fresno, Madera, Stanislaus, and Monterey counties, and all of Merced and San Benito counties.

Caballero supports Gov. Gavin Newsom's actions to nearly shut down the entire state while sheltering in place. One of the last actions legislators took before returning to their homes was to approve a \$1.1 billion coronavirus relief pack-

age to aid healthcare providers, businesses and schools. GV Wire spoke with Caballero over the phone from her Salinas home.

Supports Steps Taken by Governor

Caballero backs Newsom's stay-at-home order issued last week. "I believe it is the right thing to do," Caballero said. "(Newsom) recognized the economic devastation of closing businesses and asking people not to be out and about. But if we are going to get a handle on this .. the experts say the only way is to slow it down." She added that the only way to slow down the spread of COVID-19 and "avoid the...

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AP File

FEDERAL JUDGES URGED TO FREE THOUSANDS OF CALIFORNIA INMATES

March 26, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Attorneys representing California inmates late Wednesday filed an emergency motion asking federal judges to free thousands of infirm and lower-security prisoners to prevent what they predict will otherwise be the catastrophic spread of coronavirus through a vulnerable population. They want the judges to order the release of inmates who are at higher risk for complications from the disease, as well as nonviolent offenders who are within a year of being paroled.

So far, one inmate and nine employees have tested positive. But every day without action is "another lost opportunity to mitigate the effects of what we know is going to be a severe calamity," said Don Specter, director of the nonprofit Prison Law Office and one of the attorneys filing the request. The state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said it will be reviewing the action and already has taken measures such as halting public prison visits and screening everyone...

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PG&E'S FALLING STOCK PRICE WORRIES FIRE VICTIMS EYEING DEAL

March 26, 2020 | AP News

BERKELEY — The stock market turmoil triggered by the coronavirus pandemic is raising worries that Pacific Gas & Electric's \$13.5 billion settlement with victims of catastrophic wildfires may be worth far less by the time the beleaguered company emerges from bankruptcy. A lawyer who represents more than 81,000 wildfire victims flagged the escalating concerns during a Wednesday court hearing held by conference call.

Attorney Robert Julian told U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Dennis Montali that the stock market's steep downturn during the past month may require PG&E to provide more reassurances about the money intended to compensate victims for trauma and property losses suffered during the fires in 2017 and 2018 blamed on PG&E equipment. PG&E agreed to set up the \$13.5 billion fund for the victims as part of its plan to emerge from bankruptcy this summer, with half the amount coming from stock in the company. The prospect of owning stock in the company that ruined their lives has never been popular...

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AP File



3.3 MILLION SEEK US JOBLESS AID, NEARLY 5 TIMES EARLIER HIGH

March 26, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Nearly 3.3 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week — almost five times the previous record set in 1982 — amid a widespread economic shutdown caused by the coronavirus. The surge in weekly applications was a stunning reflection of the damage the viral outbreak is inflicting on the economy.

Filings for unemployment aid generally reflect the pace of layoffs. Layoffs are sure to accelerate as the U.S. economy sinks into a recession. Revenue has collapsed at restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, gyms and airlines. Auto sales are plummeting, and car makers have closed factories. Most such employers face loan payments and other fixed costs, so they're cutting jobs to save money. As job losses mount, some economists say the nation's unemployment rate could approach 13% by May. By comparison, the highest jobless rate during the Great Recession, which ended in 2009, was 10%.

"What seemed impossible just two weeks ago is now reality. The US economy will experience the largest economic contraction on record with the most severe surge in unemployment ever." — Nancy Vanden Houten, an economist at Oxford Economics, a consulting firm

ever." The economic deterioration has been swift. As recently as February, the unemployment rate was at a 50-year low of 3.5%. And the economy was growing steadily if modestly. Yet by the April-June quarter of the year, some economists think the economy will shrink at its steepest annual pace ever — a contraction that could reach 30%. In its report Thursday, the Labor Department said 3.283 million people applied for unem-

ployment benefits last week, up from 282,000 during the previous week. Many people who have lost jobs in recent weeks, though, have been unable to file for unemployment aid because state websites and phone systems have been overwhelmed by a crush of applicants and have frozen up.

Significant Expansion of Unemployment Benefits Included in Economic Relief Bill

That logjam suggests that Thursday's report actually understates the magnitude of job cuts last week. So does the fact that workers who are not on company payrolls — gig workers, free-lancers, the self-employed — aren't currently eligible for unemployment benefits even though in many cases they're no longer able to earn money. With layoffs surging, a significant expansion of unemployment benefits was included in an economic relief bill nearing final approval in Congress. One provision in the bill would provide an extra \$600 a week on top of the unemployment aid that states provide. Another provision would supply 13 additional weeks of benefits beyond the six months of jobless aid that most states offer. The new legislation would also extend unemployment benefits, for the first time, to gig workers and others who are not on company payrolls.

Separate legislation passed last week provides up to \$1 billion to states to enhance their ability to process claims. But that money will take time to be disbursed Worldwide, the United Nations estimates that up to 25 million jobs could be lost in the economic upheaval from the viral outbreak. That would exceed the 22 million that were lost during the 2008 global financial...

Gov. Gavin Newsom said 1 million claims for unemployment benefits had been filed in California since March 13. Many of those applications were likely filed this week, suggesting that next week's report could show an even bigger number of claims.

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TRUMP ADMINISTRATION URGED TO FREE MIGRANTS AS VIRUS SURGES

March 26, 2020 | AP News

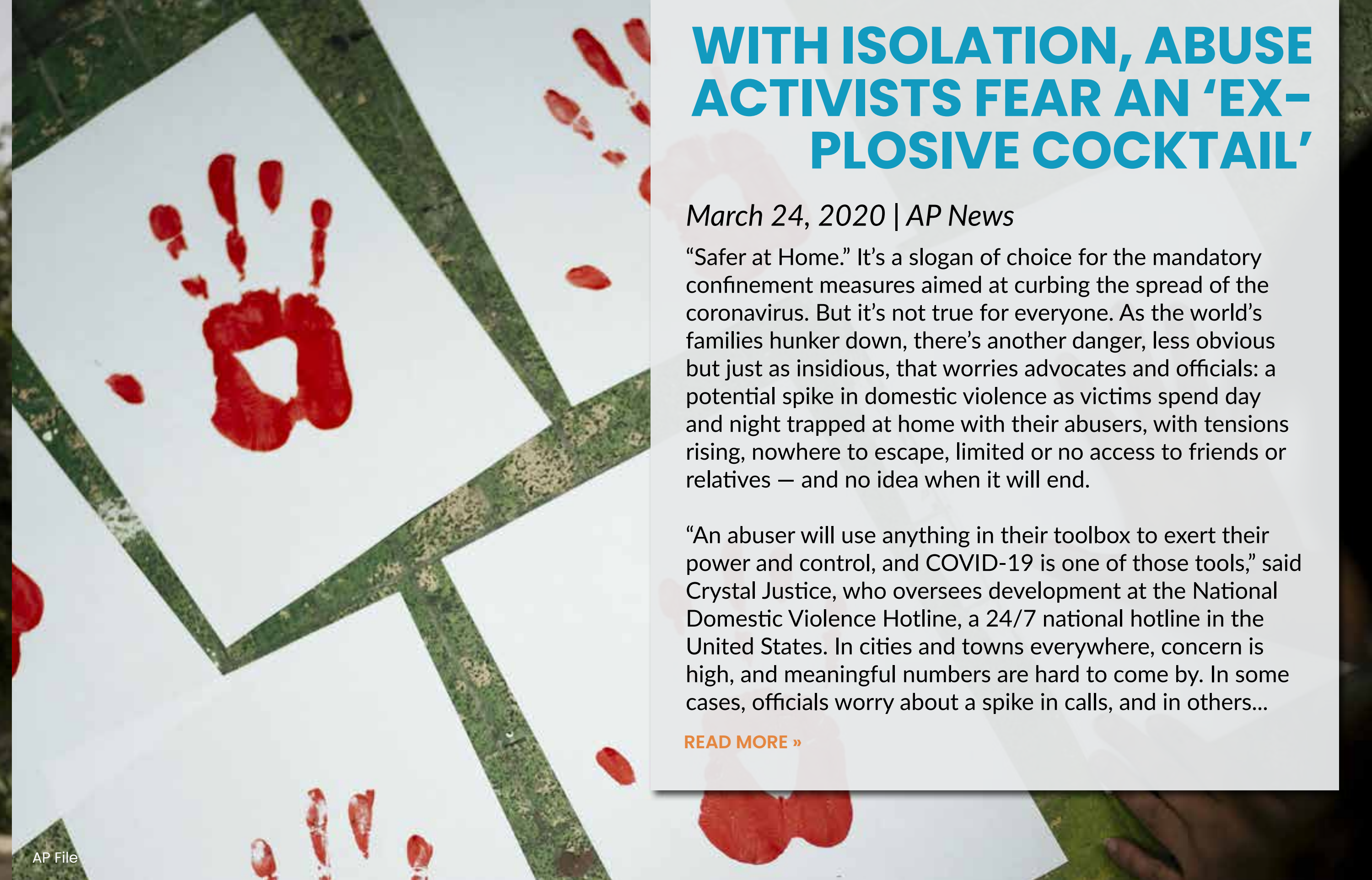
WASHINGTON — Pressure was mounting on the Trump administration Wednesday to release people from immigration detention facilities where at least one detainee has tested positive for COVID-19 and advocates fear tight quarters and overall conditions could cause rapid spread of the virus.

The U.S. holds around 37,000 people in immigration detention. Detainees and advocates say many are vulnerable because of age and pre-existing medical conditions, and because they are often held in open rooms, beds 3-feet apart, and without adequate supplies of masks or other protec-

tions. “It’s impossible to stay calm,” said Marco Battistotti, an Italian who is among 170 people detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Bristol County jail in Massachusetts. “People are panicking. People are in fear.”

The 54-year-old Battistotti was among about 100 detainees at the county jail near Cape Cod who signed a letter released by a local immigration lawyer detailing conditions inside. They asked to be released to await decisions on their immigration cases. “I don’t want to die in an ICE jail,” he said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. “Why can’t I...

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WITH ISOLATION, ABUSE ACTIVISTS FEAR AN ‘EX- PLOSIVE COCKTAIL’

March 24, 2020 | AP News

“Safer at Home.” It’s a slogan of choice for the mandatory confinement measures aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus. But it’s not true for everyone. As the world’s families hunker down, there’s another danger, less obvious but just as insidious, that worries advocates and officials: a potential spike in domestic violence as victims spend day and night trapped at home with their abusers, with tensions rising, nowhere to escape, limited or no access to friends or relatives — and no idea when it will end.

“An abuser will use anything in their toolbox to exert their power and control, and COVID-19 is one of those tools,” said Crystal Justice, who oversees development at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a 24/7 national hotline in the United States. In cities and towns everywhere, concern is high, and meaningful numbers are hard to come by. In some cases, officials worry about a spike in calls, and in others...

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THEY ALREADY HAD AN ANXIETY DISORDER. NOW COMES A PANDEMIC.

March 25, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — At first, Jonathon Seidl wasn’t worried about the coronavirus despite his anxiety disorder. But that changed. The 33-year-old digital media strategist from Dallas, who takes medication, said his concern was less about getting sick than about the battering the economy could sustain. Would he be able to feed his family? Would there be a run on food stores? He could not shake his worries.

So he paced. His heart raced. He wanted to go to bed early “because sleep was the only respite.” But his sleep was rarely restful. “I would wake up during the night,” he said. The pandemic is worrisome enough for most people. For those with anxiety disorders, it presents a special challenge, especially if they are not receiving treatment. That’s the case for about two-thirds of people with anxiety disorders, says Dr. Bruce Schwartz, president of the American Psychiatric Association. “Those are the ones I’m worried about,” he said. Schwartz...

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Brett Seidl via AP



AP/Baderkhan Ahmad

AID GROUP SAYS MIDEAST LOCKDOWNS HINDER HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

March 25, 2020 | AP News

CAIRO — An international aid group said Wednesday that closures aimed at containing the coronavirus pandemic are preventing it from reaching 300,000 people in conflict zones across the Middle East, as the coronavirus arrived in war-torn Libya and three more cases were detected in Syria. The Norwegian Refugee Council

“While governments are taking tough and much-needed measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, millions of refugees and displaced people still depend on humanitarian assistance.”
— Jan Egeland, head of The Norwegian Refugee Council

said it was unable to reach people in Syria, Yemen and the Gaza Strip, where authorities have imposed strict measures to halt the spread of the virus.

All have fragile health care systems that could be overwhelmed by an outbreak, and only Yemen

has yet to report any cases. “While governments are taking tough and much-needed measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, millions of refugees and displaced people still depend on humanitarian assistance,” said Jan Egeland, head of the aid group. In north-western Syria, hundreds of thousands of people are crammed into unsanitary tent camps, sheltering from the government offensive on the war-torn country’s last rebel stronghold. On Wednesday, the U.S. urged the Syrian government to halt its campaign so those displaced can access humanitarian aid.

Otherwise, it warned, the coronavirus would spread “to epic proportions.” On Wednesday, Syria’s tally of cases rose to four and testing began after weeks of obstacles in the rebel-held province. For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms that clear up in two weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness. The virus is highly contagious and can be spread by those who are not even showing any symptoms.

The Israeli Government on Wednesday Approved New Restrictions

Countries across the Middle East have imposed sweeping measures to prevent its spread, including closing their borders, cancelling flights and in some cases imposing round-the-clock curfews. The Israeli government on Wednesday approved new restrictions, including the closure of all synagogues.

Authorities across the region have already shuttered major holy sites sacred to Christians, Muslims and Jews. Many in Israel’s insular ultra-Orthodox communities have defied restrictions on public gatherings, despite the pleas of rabbis and local authorities. That has led to tension with authorities and in at least one case, scuffles with police. Twenty-nine percent of those who contracted the virus in Israel were infected in a synagogue or a yeshiva, according to an analysis by the National Information and Knowledge Center for the Fight Against the Coronavirus, which has been advising the Health Ministry. The new restrictions in Israel will bar most people from venturing more than 100 meters (yards) from their homes. More than 2,100 Israelis have been infected, with 37 in serious condition. Five elderly Israelis with pre-existing medical conditions have died. The Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, has ordered a full lockdown and halted travel between cities, towns and villages. Sixty cases have been reported in the West Bank and another two in Gaza.

Iran is battling the worst outbreak in the region, with over 27,000 confirmed cases and a death toll of at least 2,077.

Libya Mired in Chaos Since the 2011 Uprising

Late Tuesday, the Palestinian Authority ordered all Palestinian workers to return to the West Bank from Israel, which had allowed around 65,000 to stay and work during the crisis, mostly in construction, agriculture...

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NETANYAHU RIVAL BECOMES PARLIAMENT SPEAKER, SIGNALING DEAL

March 26, 2020 | AP News

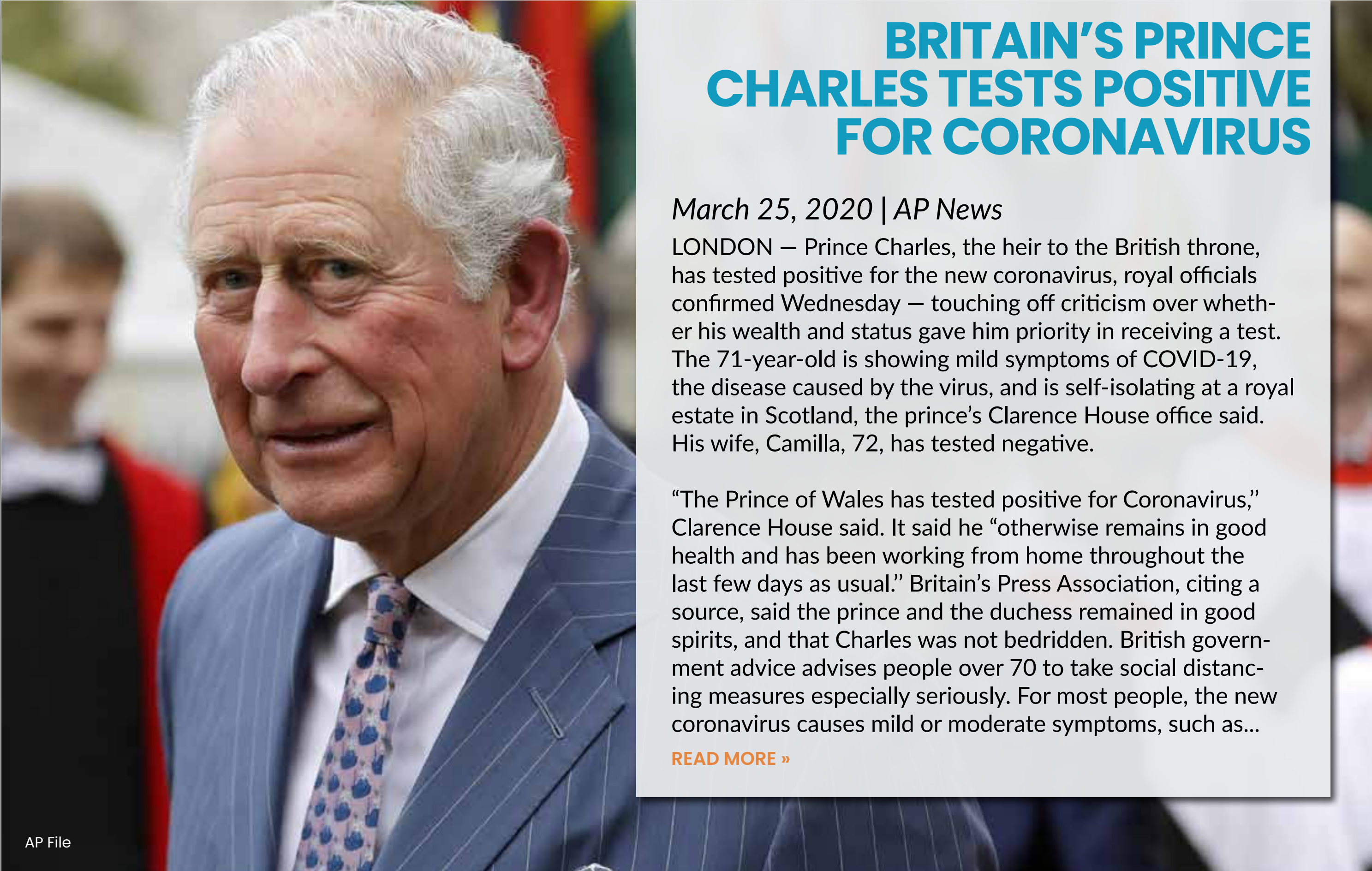
JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s chief rival was chosen on Thursday as the new speaker of parliament, an unexpected step that could pave the way to a power-sharing deal between the two men as the country grapples with a worsening coronavirus crisis.

The sudden turnabout by Benny Gantz, who has spent the past year trying to topple Netanyahu in three inconclusive elections, appeared to give the embattled prime minister a new lease on life as he prepares to go on trial for corruption charges. It also drew angry criticism from his political partners and looked likely to rip apart his Blue and White party,

an alliance of three anti-Netanyahu factions. The vote passed 74-18, with many of Gantz’s former allies, including half of Blue and White, skipping the vote.

“Democracy has won,” Gantz declared in his first speech as speaker, saying he had taken the unpopular step to deal with the national emergency. “These are not regular days and they demand irregular decisions. Therefore as I said, I intend to examine and advance in every way the establishment of national emergency government,” he said. “We will not compromise on the principles that more than 1 million citizens voted for. Netanyahu knows that well.” But in a string of...

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BRITAIN’S PRINCE CHARLES TESTS POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS

March 25, 2020 | AP News

LONDON — Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, has tested positive for the new coronavirus, royal officials confirmed Wednesday — touching off criticism over whether his wealth and status gave him priority in receiving a test. The 71-year-old is showing mild symptoms of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, and is self-isolating at a royal estate in Scotland, the prince’s Clarence House office said. His wife, Camilla, 72, has tested negative.

“The Prince of Wales has tested positive for Coronavirus,” Clarence House said. It said he “otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual.” Britain’s Press Association, citing a source, said the prince and the duchess remained in good spirits, and that Charles was not bedridden. British government advice advises people over 70 to take social distancing measures especially seriously. For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as...

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FACEBOOK BUG WRONGLY DELETED AUTHENTIC CORONAVIRUS NEWS


March 18, 2020 | AP News




The rapid spread of the coronavirus since it was first reported in China has dealt an unprecedented shock to the global economy. Here’s a look at developments from Tuesday as central banks, businesses and workers attempt to navigate a global outbreak that has brought economic activity to a standstill.

Global Economy

G7 officials plan to coordinate weekly on the implementation of various support efforts and they vow they are ready to take further action. They pledged Tuesday to do “whatever is necessary” to restore economic growth and protect jobs and the financial system in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of Seven major industrial countries — the United States, Japan, Germany France, Britain, Italy and Canada — said that they were committed to delivering government...

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A vibrant garden scene featuring a large, leafy tree in the background, a basketball hoop partially visible through the branches, and a large, bushy pink flowering plant in the foreground. A curved concrete path leads through a green lawn area. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

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