

CORONAVIRUS

'IT'S SCARY,' SAYS NURSING STUDENT ON ENTERING COVID-19 WORKFORCE >>>

FRUSTRATED NEWSOM CALLS ON TASK FORCE TO FIX CORONAVIRUS TEST SHORTFALL »

16.8M AMERICANS OUT OF WORK AS ECONOMIC TOLL RISES »



'IT'S SCARY,' SAYS FCC NURSING STUDENT ON ENTERING COVID-19

April 8, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

To graduate, or not. That was the question facing prospective California nursing students until state regulators took action late Friday. But another track is emerging in the medical profession: Those

"I am hoping by June we are seeing a downhill trend but I think this is going to last longer than the general population is predicting. Everyone needs to be mindful of themselves and others. Stay home unless you absolutely need to leave the house and practice good hand hygiene."

— Heather Hart, certified physician assistant in

who have job prospects even as other medical professionals are now hurting for work.

GV Wire spoke with a Fresno City College nursing student, Nicole Barnett, who is happy but "nervous" about entering the workforce during a

pandemic. Meanwhile, other healthcare workers are seeing their hours curtailed as many elective procedures and routine medical office appointments are not being performed. GV Wire spoke with a physician's assistant in Tampa, Florida, who has seen her hours reduced dramatically. "Cuts have been made," said Heather Hart.

Relief and Fear

Tampa, Florida

Barnett said she is feeling a sense of relief followed by a sense of fear. She just learned late last week she'll graduate next month from the Fresno City College nursing program after the state took action.

"Many of us thought that we actually wouldn't be graduating," Barnett said. Barnett is an "extern" in the emergency department at Community Regional Medical Center in Fresno. "Part of the time I work underneath another nurse's license performing nursing duties. And the other part of the time I work as a patient care assistant," Barnett said.

Q&A With Barnett

GV Wire: What About Working During the Possible Height of a Pandemic?

It is scary especially when you hear about the instances of healthcare workers, you know contracting the virus. I am prepared to go into that situation. I think it's a scarier time than it would be if I'd been graduating and none of this was happening. So there's concern but mostly I really want to help.

What Is the Hospital Setting Like Where You're Currently Learning on the Job?

In terms of the number of patients that are in the hospital right now, it's actually lower than it normally is because people are trying to stay away from hospitals.

What Do You Hope to Do After You Graduate? I'm hoping that CRMC wants to keep me in the

emergency department. I've really enjoyed working down there. I enjoy working with all the patients and I enjoy all of my co-workers.

Meanwhile, other healthcare workers are seeing their hours curtailed as many elective procedures and routine medical office appointments are not being performed.

Related Story: Retired Docs, Nursing, Med Students: California Wants You

Thousands of US medical Workers Furloughed

By June, an estimated 60,000 family practices will close or significantly scale back, and 800,000 of their employees will be laid off, furloughed, or have their hours reduced as they see a decline in business during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a HealthLandscape and American Academy of Family Physicians report released last week. The workers...



April 6, 2020 | GV Wire

Recognizing the impact of COVID-19 on the community, Darius Assemi announced Monday morning that Granville Homes is donating \$5,000 for every sold home that closes escrow through May 31.

The donation, which is expected to total \$100,000, will support healthcare workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic and other relief efforts in the Valley, said Assemi, who is president and CEO of Granville Homes and publisher of GV Wire.

"Our community and our nation are facing incredible hardships caused by this pandemic," Assemi said. "The good news is that American ingenuity and grace are coming together to knock the heck out of this disease. "We're seeing the best of our neighbors, from our medical professionals, delivery drivers, and supermarket clerks, to the people spending their days sewing protective masks in their living rooms. These are the people that are stepping up to help us now, and our community needs to make sure they're taken care of."

Related Story: American Ingenuity Will Beat COVID-19. Here's How We'll Get Back to ...

Virtual Home Tours During Pandemic

Granville Homes is scheduled to close escrow on more than 20 homes through the end of May. All Granville Homes sales and corporate offices are closed for the safety of their customers, homeowners, and the community. However, the company is fully operational and able to take buyers from home tour...

HOPING FRESNO'S SUMMER HEAT WILL KILL COVID-19? THINK AGAIN.

April 9, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

COVID-19 may not like the heat, at least not in a lab setting. But countries already in summer climates are experiencing "rapid" virus spread. Experts say human behavior and humidity levels in different settings play a big factor.

New Report Sent to White House

A new report by the National Academies of Sciences-Engineering-Medicine sent to the White House urges caution in hoping that summer temperatures will stop the spread of the virus. "The laboratory data available so far indicate reduced survival of SARS-CoV-2 at elevated temperatures. However, the number of well-controlled studies available at this time on the topic remains small," the report states. "Studies published so far have conflicting results regarding potential seasonal effects, and are hampered by poor data quality."

GV Wire asked about the impact of climate on COVID-19 to scientists from the National Academies during a...

READ MORE »





SIX YEARS SINCE APPROVAL, EXTENSION SOUGHT FOR DOWNTOWN FRESNO PROJECT

April 7, 2020 | David Taub

A downtown Fresno redevelopment project six years in the making is seeking another extension. Developers for the South Stadium Project are asking for one more year to negotiate a deal with the city for a building on Fulton Street. The Fresno City Council, acting as the Housing Successor to the Redevelopment Agency, will discuss at its regular meeting on Thursday. The city received proposals for the now-\$18 million project in 2014, choosing Noyan Frazier Capital, LLP, to redevelop portions of downtown Fresno.

What was once a five-phase project is now down to just two along Fulton Street — an empty lot at the northwest corner of Fulton and Inyo streets and, three doors down, a vacant property known as the Berkeley's Building that once housed a women's clothing store. The sale price from the city to Noyan Frazier Capital? One dollar per property. After the city awarded Noyan Frazier Capital its request for proposal, the two sides negotiated a deal known as a Disposition and Development...

READ MORE »

4 GV Wire Weekly Digest READ MORE »



NEWSOM CALLS ON TASK FORCE TO FIX CORONAVIRUS TEST SHORTFALL

April 7, 2020 | CalMatters

By Rachel Becker, CalMatters

California is finally making a dent in the backlog of tests for the novel coronavirus that, at peak, left 65,000 people waiting to find out if they were infected. But that still isn't good enough, California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a briefing Saturday where he announced a new effort to increase daily tests five-fold. The effort, helmed by a new testing task force, will create five to seven of what Newsom called high-capacity testing "hubs" through a new partnership with UC San Diego and UC Davis. The goal is to increase high-capacity testing and end a massive backlog that, at times, has left people waiting as many as 12 days to receive results. "All of that frustrating you, certainly frustrating

"We only had the capacity to be able to expand using the Cepheid machine. We were really counting on Cepheid providing us with the testing media for our existing equipment so we could start doing more testing in our local public health laboratory."

- Sara Bosse, Madera County public health director me," he said. "The testing space has been a challenging one for us, and I own that, and I have a responsibility as your governor to do better, and to do more testing in the state of California."

Newsom's latest update tallies 126,700 people who have been tested for the virus that has landed at least 1,008 people with

confirmed infections in the intensive care unit, and killed more than 237 people. Of those 126,700 people tested, 13,000 are still waiting on results, Newsom said. It's a sharp decrease from the 59,500 tests with results that were still pending as of Thursday. But it's still not good enough, Newsom said. Newsom attributed the backlog in part to reporting from one of California's largest counties — he did not say which one. Slowdowns have also come from the commercial labs handling testing for California, and Newsom commend-

ed them on the new numbers: "We congratulate them for the good work." Across the nation, testing for the

novel coronavirus has lagged — hampered by both bureaucratic slowdowns and technical flaws. After opting to design its own test rather

Newsom said Saturday that 13 hospital systems in California would partner with Abbott, which had committed to 75 testing sites across the state.

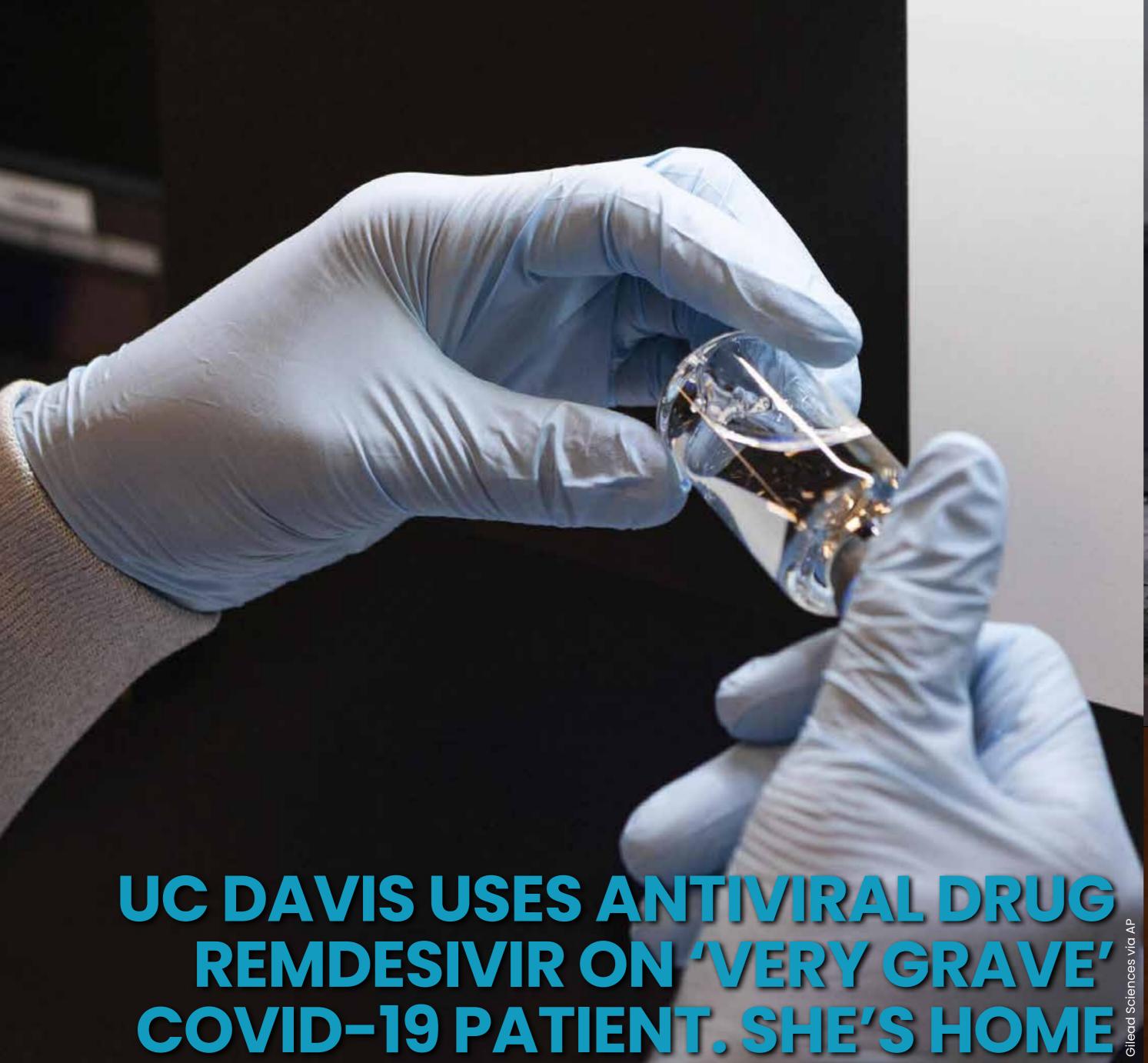
than using an existing protocol published by the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention distributed glitchy tests that produced uninterpretable results. And it took the Food and Drug Administration until the end of February to give labs the go-ahead to create tests themselves.

Since then, the CDC has corrected the flaw in its original test, but the testing supply chain remains riddled with shortages. First, labs in California reported that they were missing key ingredients for extracting genetic material — including the virus's — from patient samples. Then, the swabs for collecting those samples became scarce.

A Common Story Across California

Competition for supplies is a source of anxiety even at UC San Diego, where David Pride, associate director of the clinical microbiology lab, says the team aims for a 12-hour turnaround on test results. "We've got a lot of anxiety for manufacturers that they will make us promises about what they can give us, and then a few days later, they will have had to make other people promises and they can't meet both promises," Pride said.

"The truth of the matter is that we are competing with the folks down the street, even in San Diego, as well as competing with the folks in Northern California all for basically the same sort of slice of the pie, so we can test our patient population." It's a common story...



April 9, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

"A promising investigational drug." Those words are being written quite a bit during these days as politicians, scientists, and the general public explore avenues for combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Those same words were used in a press release from Saint Joseph Hospital in Humbolt County in announcing their participation in a new clinical trial of a drug developed by California-based Gilead Sciences.

Clinical Trials of Anti-Viral Drug Remdesivir

St Joseph Hospital in Eureka said in a news release that it is participating in two national clinical trials of the anti-viral drug remdesivir for the treatment of moderate and severe

COVID-19. The experimental drug has shown promise in some recent emergency uses and patient trials. "This is an important opportunity for future patients who present with COVID-19 at St. Joseph Hospital and meet certain criteria, to have access to remdesivir, a promising investigational drug," said Dr. Roberta Luskin-Hawk, St. Joseph's chief executive. "A promising investigational drug."

Those words are being written quite a bit during these days as politicians, scientists, and the general public explore avenues for combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Those same words were used in a press release from Saint Joseph...

AP/Damian Dovarganes

READ MORE »

MASSIVE EFFORT TO GET LOS ANGELES HOMELESS INTO HOTELS

April 8, 2020 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — To curb the coronavirus spread, Los Angeles has embarked on a massive effort to bring thousands of homeless people off the streets and into hotels to protect them and others from infection. California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced last week that money from the federal government would help pay for at least 15,000 hotel rooms during the pandemic. But Los Angeles County, with the state's largest concentration of homeless people at some 60,000, has set its own goal of 15,000 rooms.

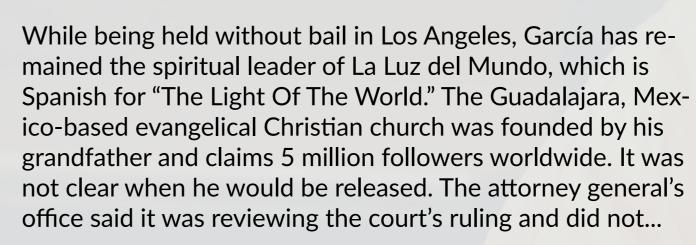
"We're going big in LA," said Heidi Marston, interim director of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. "We based our goal on what the need is here." Marston planned to outline the effort on Wednesday during the daily coronavirus briefing by county health officials. Coronavirus is spread by coughs and sneezes. Most infected people have mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults...

READ MORE »

COURT DROPS RAPE, OTHER CHARGES AGAINST MEGACHURCH LEADER

April 9, 2020 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — A California appeals court ordered the dismissal of a criminal case Tuesday against a Mexican megachurch leader on charges of child rape and human trafficking on procedural grounds. Naasón Joaquín García, the self-proclaimed apostle of La Luz del Mundo, has been in custody since June following his arrest on accusations involving three girls and one woman between 2015 and 2018 in Los Angeles County. Additional allegations of the possession of child pornography in 2019 were later added. He has denied wrongdoing.





WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET YOUR GOVERNMENT STIMULUS CHECK

April 2, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — A staggering 16.8 million Americans have been thrown onto the unemployment rolls in just three weeks, underscoring the terrifying speed with which the coronavirus outbreak has brought world economies to their knees. Meanwhile, world leaders and health officials fervently warned that the hard-won gains against the scourge must not be jeopardized by relaxing social distancing during Easter weekend, one of the busiest travel times of the year on the Continent. Authorities around Europe banned holiday travel and set up roadblocks.

A spike in deaths in Britain and New York and surges of reported new infections in Japan and in India's congested cities made it clear the battle is far from over. Numbers released Thursday by the world's largest economy showed that 6.6 million American workers applied for unemployment benefits last week, on top of more than 10 million in the two weeks before that. That means

Numbers released Thursday by the world's largest economy showed that 6.6 million American workers applied for unemployment benefits last week, on top of more than 10 million in the two weeks before that.

more than 1 in 10 U.S. workers have been forced out of a job since the crisis took hold, the biggest, fastest pileup of job losses since record-keeping began in 1948. The real numbers could be even higher because state unemployment offices around the

country have been overwhelmed with claims, and some people have been unable to get through by telephone or website. And still more job cuts are expected.

In the U.S., the Federal Reserve Said It Would Provide up to \$2.3 Trillion in Loans

The U.S. unemployment rate in April could hit 15% — a number last seen at the tail end of the Depression. Xian Chang, whose Cafe China and two other New York restaurants normally employ around 150 people, said

only about 40 are working. One restaurant is closed, the others are offering takeout only, and workers aren't coming, in some cases because they are sick or afraid. "Frankly, we are losing money every day we're open," he said. In the U.S., the Federal Reserve said it would provide up to \$2.3 trillion in loans targeted toward both households and businesses. In Europe, finance ministers from the 19-nation euro zone were set to make another attempt Thursday to agree on measures to help the bloc weather the crisis.

In many European countries, where the social safety nets tend to be stronger than in the U.S., government programs that subsidize workers' pay are keeping millions of people on payrolls in places like Germany and

"One should not assume that we are going to be rescued by a change in the weather. You must assume that the virus will continue to do its thing."

— Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top American infectious-diseases expert

France, though typically with fewer hours and at lower wages. Such workers are not counted in the countries' unemployment figures. The United Nations' labor organization said the equivalent of 195 million full-time jobs could be lost in the second quarter to business shutdowns caused by the outbreak. The aid organization Oxfam International warned of a looming spike in global poverty, estimating half a billion people worldwide could be pushed into poverty if wealthier nations do not take urgent action.

Fauci Shot Down Hopes That Warmer Spring Weather Would Bring an End to the Crisis

The U.S. has by far the most confirmed infections with over 430,000, three times the number of the next three countries combined. New York state on Wednesday recorded its highest one-day increase in deaths, 779, for an overall death toll of almost 6,300. New York has more than 40% of the U.S. death total of around...



SANDERS DROPS 2020 BID, LEAVING BIDEN AS LIKELY NOMINEE

April 8, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bernie Sanders, who saw his once strong lead in the Democratic primary evaporate as the party's establishment lined swiftly up behind rival Joe Biden, ended his presidential bid on Wednesday, an acknowledgment that the former vice president is too far ahead for him to have any reasonable hope of catching up. The Vermont senator's announcement makes Biden the presumptive Democratic nominee to challenge President Donald Trump in November.

Sanders initially exceeded sky-high expectations about his ability to recreate the magic of his 2016 presidential bid, and even overcame a heart attack last October on the campaign trail. But he found himself unable to convert unwavering support from progressives into a viable path to the nomination amid "electability" fears fueled by questions about whether his democratic socialist ideology would be...

READ MORE »

TRUMP QUIETLY SHUTS DOWN ASYLUM AT US BORDERS TO FIGHT VIRUS

April 9, 2020 | AP News

SAN DIEGO — A U.S. Border Patrol agent wouldn't let Jackeline Reyes explain why she and her 15-year-old daughter needed asylum, pointing to the coronavirus. That confrontation in Texas came just days after the Trump administration quietly shut down the nation's asylum system for the first time in decades in the name of public health.

"The agent told us about the virus and that we couldn't go further, but she didn't let us speak or anything," said Reyes, 35, who was shuttled to a crossing March 24 in Reynosa, Mexico, a violent border city. She tried to get home to

crime-ridden Honduras despite learning her brother had been killed there and her mother and 7-year-old daughter had fled to the Nicaraguan border. But she was stuck in Mexico as the virus closed borders in Central America.

The U.S. government used an obscure public health law to justify one of its most aggressive border crackdowns ever. People fleeing violence and poverty to seek refuge in the U.S. are whisked to the nearest border crossing and returned to Mexico without a chance to apply for asylum. It eclipses President Donald Trump's other policies to curtail...

CORONAVIRUS CLAIMS AN UNEXPECTED VICTIM: FLORIDA VEGETABLES

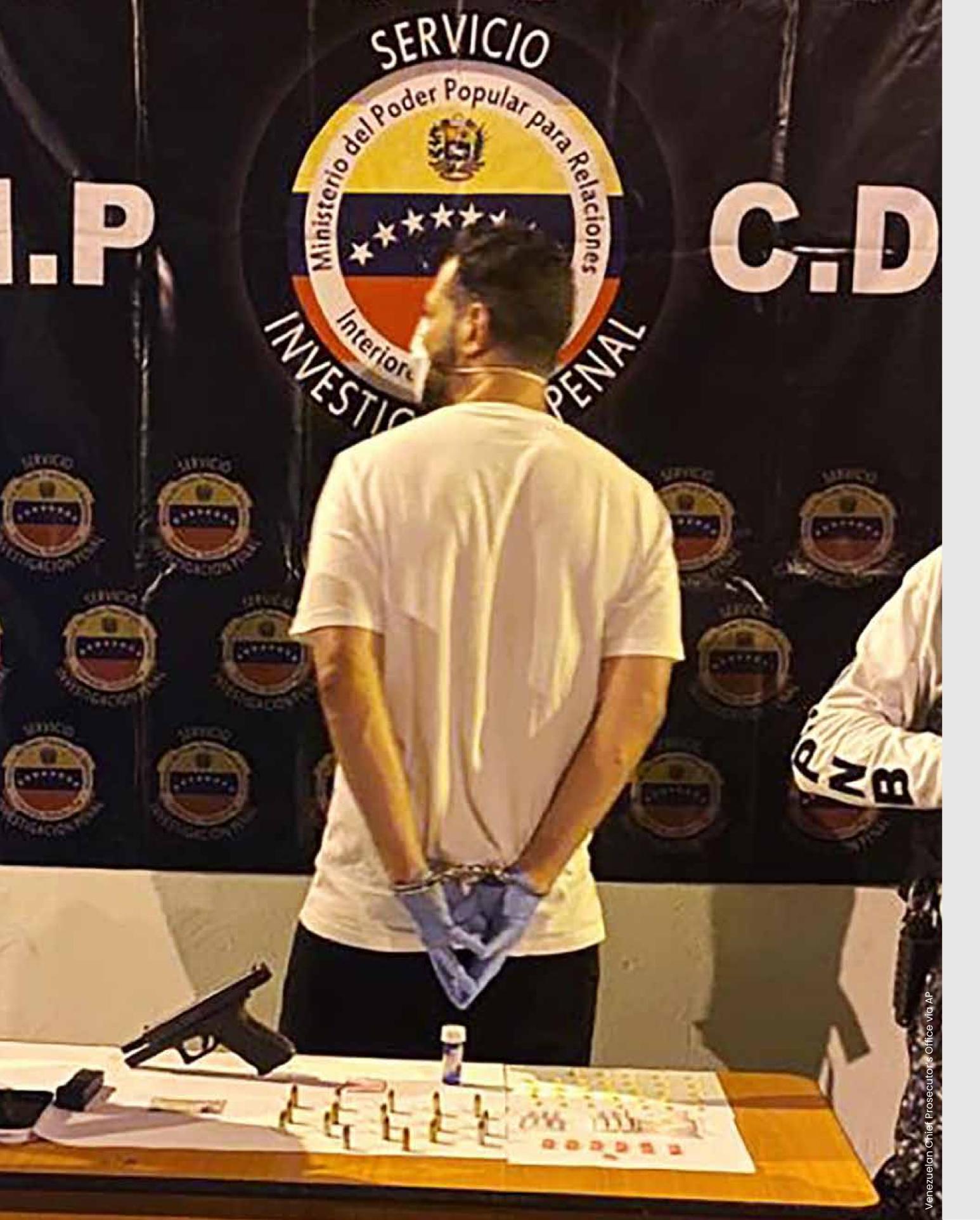
April 8, 2020 | AP News

PALMETTO, Fla. — Mounds of harvested zucchini and yellow squash ripened and then rotted in the hot Florida sun. Juicy tomatoes were left to wither — unpicked — in farmers' fields. Thousands of acres of fruits and vegetables grown in Florida are being plowed over or left to rot because farmers can't sell to restaurants, theme parks or schools nationwide that have closed because of the coronavirus.

Other states are having the same issues — agriculture officials say leafy greens in California are being hit especially hard, and dairy farmers in Vermont and Wisconsin say they have had to dump a surplus of milk intended for restaurants. With most of its harvests in the winter months, the problem is acute in Florida. For example, a few dozen people clamored to buy 25-pound (11- kilogram) boxes of Roma tomatoes direct from a packing plant over the weekend in Palmetto, a city on the western coast. The cost per box? Just \$5...



READ MORE » READ MORE »



WHAT'S ESSENTIAL? IN FRANCE: PASTRY, WINE. IN US: GOLF, GUNS

March 30, 2020 | AP News

MIAMI — They whiled away the week on a sex- and drug-fueled romp: dancing on white-sand beaches and frolicking on a paradisaical Caribbean island with prostitutes from Europe, some snapping selfies with famous reggaeton artists. But unbeknownst to several children of Venezuela's ruling elite, the coronavirus was spread-

"There was a party, on an island, and practically everyone at the party is testing positive." — embattled leader Nicolás Maduro

ing among them. For some of Venezuela's high-flying "Bolichicos" — the privileged offspring of the socialist revolution — the party hasn't stopped amid a widening pandemic in

a country already gripped by crisis. To date, the virus has claimed only seven confirmed fatalities in Venezuela. But the potential is high for the pandemic to overwhelm an already crippled health system, where hospitals lack water, electricity and supplies. It's not clear how many people got sick last month on the Los Roques archipelago. But a raucous party that became a cluster of infections has raised concerns at the highest level of the government and drawn condemnation from Venezuelans locked down at home for weeks.

"There was a party, on an island, and practically everyone at the party is testing positive," embattled leader Nicolás Maduro said on state TV March 20. Three days later, as embarrassing Instagram posts leaked out under the hashtag #CoronavirusParty, he downplayed it. "Who is going to criticize a party? They didn't know they were sick," said Maduro, who was indicted by the U.S. last month on narcotics charges.

Lavish Celebrations Are Even More Vexing

Whether it's crowded Miami beaches during spring break or clandestine raves in Spain and Italy in the pandemic's early days, parties among the young and rich have been tough to tamp down. In Latin America, the world's most unequal region, jet-setting elites are blamed for importing the virus. In Mexico, for example, nearly 20 people were found to be infected after returning from a ski trip to Vail, Colorado. But it's the poor — lacking medical care and struggling to hold down informal jobs — who bear the brunt. In Venezuela, engulfed by food and medicine shortages that have forced 5 million to flee, lavish celebrations are even more vexing. Such pockets of wealth are also harder to see amid incessant propaganda extolling the hardworking poor. The festivities in Los Roques were organized by several government-connected businessmen, according to two people familiar with the gatherings who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

While neither of the two people who spoke to The Associated Press were at the party, they have attended

other gatherings with the same group and are in contact with several of those who went. Among the young revelers was Jesús Amoroso, son of Maduro's top anti-corruption official, who has been sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department for allegedly un-

In a nation plagued by misery, Los Roques is an oasis for the few who can afford it, including aides and relatives of top officials who travel by private plane to the band of tiny islands. Parties in the cluster of tiny islands have become more popular.

dermining Venezuela's democracy. The two people said Venezuelan prostitutes from Madrid and London were flown in just before air travel was closed to Spain, one of the nations hit hardest by the pandemic. A smaller group crossed paths with two famous Puerto Rican reggaeton artists, Zion and Justin Quiles, who are seen with Amoroso on a sun-struck powerboat in photos and videos on social media. A spokeswoman said Zion and Quiles were in the islands to shoot a video and didn't attend any social event. Both tested negative for the virus. In a nation plagued by misery, Los Roques is an oasis for the few who can afford it, including aides...



April 8, 2020 | AP News

CAIRO — The Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen announced Wednesday that its forces would begin a cease-fire starting Thursday, a step that could pave the way for the first direct peace talks between the two sides that have been at war for more than five years.

In a statement carried by Saudi Arabia's official state news agency, a Saudi military spokesman, Col. Turki al-Malki, said that the ceasefire would last two weeks and that it comes in response to U.N. calls to halt hostilities amid the coronavirus pandemic. He said the ceasefire could be extended to pave the way for the parties "to discuss proposals, steps, and

mechanisms for sustainable ceasefire in Yemen ... for a comprehensive political solution in Yemen." There was no immediate reaction from Houthi leaders or Yemen's internationally recognized government to the coalition's statement.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who called for a cease-fire in all global conflicts on March 23 to tackle the virus, welcomed the announcement, saying: "This can help to advance efforts towards peace as well as the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic." He called on Yemen's government, which is backed by the Saudi-led coalition, and the Houthis "to follow through on their commitment to...

16 GV Wire Weekly Digest

READ MORE »



WUHAN ENDS LOCKDOWN AS HEALTH WORKERS BUCKLE UNDER STRAIN

April 8, 2020 | AP News

LONDON — After 76 days in lockdown, the Chinese city at the heart of the global pandemic reopened Wednesday, and tens of thousands immediately hopped on trains and planes to leave. Elsewhere, the economic, political and psychological toll of fighting the virus grew increasingly clear and more difficult to bear. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spent a second night in intensive care with his country in the grips of its biggest crisis since World War II.

The 55-year-old Johnson, the first major world leader confirmed to have COVID-19, was stable and responding to treatment, spokesman James Slack said. Across the Atlantic, New York City endured one of its darkest days yet, with the death toll surging past 4,000, hundreds more than the number killed on 9/11. New York state recorded 731 new coronavirus deaths on Tuesday, its biggest one-day jump yet, for a statewide total of nearly 5,500. New York's mayor acknowledged Wednesday that the true death toll is even...

READ MORE »

US WEIGHS 'WAR BONDS'; FACEBOOK LAUNCHES VIRUS SURVEY

April 6, 2020 | AP News

The outbreak of the coronavirus has dealt a shock to the global economy with unprecedented speed. Following are developments Monday related to the global economy, the work place and the spread of the virus.

Central Banks and Government

The White House is considering coronavirus "war bonds" to fund the federal response to the pandemic. Larry Kudlow, the director of the national economic council, says the federal government, like most Americans, should make the most of low interest rates. The U.S. government has had little trouble finding people willing to lend it money so far, even without anything branded as "war bonds." It's been able to borrow at interest rates near record lows despite ballooning deficits, as investors around the world look for safe places to park cash. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is preparing to announce a 108 trillion yen (\$1 trillion) economic...

READ MORE »





SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER