VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. Via remote, I'm Marissa Melton.

Top U.S. health officials warned Americans on Sunday that the United States will face a shocking coronavirus death toll in the coming week as the pandemic continues to ravage the country.

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said Sunday, "This is going to be the hardest and saddest week of most Americans' lives" as the pandemic's death toll spikes to unprecedented heights during the peak of the outbreak in the United States.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said bluntly on Sunday that the extent of the death toll may be "shocking to some."

The United States has already recorded more than 9,100 deaths and 321,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus, with officials predicting that eventually 100,000 to 240,000 could die from the pandemic. Models of the advance of the virus show the death toll increasing sharply in the next seven to nine days.

Roughly 25 percent of the world's 1.2 million COVID-19 cases have been reported in the United States, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Spain has reported the second highest number of cases with over 130,000. It plans to extend its nationwide lockdown by 15 more days until April 26. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Saturday he would ask parliament to extend lockdown measures for the second time after first extending them to April 11.

Italy has recorded the highest death toll in the world from COVID-19. It's seen more than 11,000 of its medical workers infected by the virus, according to its National Institutes of Health.

China reported 30 new cases of the virus on Sunday, 25 of them coming from overseas. In past weeks, China has reported no new community infections, meaning the [vi...] virus has peaked there.

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The Midwestern U.S. state of Wisconsin is set to hold elections, including a Democratic primary, on Tuesday, with its state officials at odds on how to stop voting during the national coronavirus pandemic.

More than a dozen U.S. states have postponed Democratic presidential primaries in April and May between former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. They've been postponed until weeks from now in hopes of that the effects of the virus will have dissipated enough to allow voters to show up at polling places and cast ballots.

As of Sunday, however, Wisconsin's vote is still on the books even if hundreds of polling places throughout the state cannot open for lack of Election Day workers. The workers by the droves have canceled their promise to work at the polls checking in voters from registration lists.

Biden appears to hold an insurmountable lead over Sanders in pledged delegates to the Democratic presidential nominating contest in August. He is likely to face [President] Republican President Donald Trump in the November national election. Biden has not called directly for the postponement of Tuesday's primary. Sanders has called for the postponement of Wisconsin's Democratic primary elections.

The United States has linked international aid for Afghanistan to the settlement of a protracted political crisis, which has seen the war-shattered country politically paralyzed and threatens to derail a peace [deal] building deal with the Taliban insurgency.

Separately, an American military spokesman has rejected insurgent allegations it was violating terms of the U.S.-Taliban deal signed on February 29.

The political stalemate between President Ashraf Ghani and his chief rival, Abdullah Abdullah, stems from the disputed September 28 Afghan election.

The national election [committ...] commission has declared Ghani as the winner but both candidates held rival presidential inaugurations early last month.

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U.S. President Trump says the intelligence community watchdog that he fired late Friday was "a disgrace."

Trump explained his actions on Saturday with a tweet saying Intelligence Community Inspector General Michael Atkinson should not have told Congress about the whistleblower complaint that led to Trump's impeachment earlier this year.

Trump officially notified the congressional intelligence committees Friday that Atkinson's firing would go into effect in 30 days.

Trump said he would [nan...] name a replacement for Atkinson "at a later date."

A dam that authorities in Rwanda say could contain about 30,000 bodies has been discovered more than a quarter century after the country's genocide [in] in which 800,000 people were killed.

The discovery is deemed extremely significant. Fifty bodies have been exhumed so far but efforts are challenged by the coronavirus lockdown.

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