VOA NEWS

April 20, 2020

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

U.S. President Donald Trump says a deal for loans to small businesses suffering economically could be completed as soon as Monday. He made the statement Sunday at a daily briefing on the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

Earlier in the day, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, [speaking both] both of them speaking to Fox News, agreed that Republicans and Democrats are close to a deal to extend loans to small businesses suffering from drastic drops in business due to the pandemic.

Pence, the leader of the White House coronavirus task force, told "Fox News Sunday" he believes there are a "sufficient" number of test kits available throughout the country "for any state" to move into the first phase of new government guidelines to slowly return the country to work and a sense of normalcy.

The U.S. is currently performing 150,000 coronavirus tests a day, but [some] some experts say that 500,000 a day are needed. Pence said he thinks the government can reach 300,000 a day. He thinks that's [big enough] a big enough number to give Americans the confidence and tools, in his words, "to go back to work."

However, Pelosi, the leader of the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, attacked President Donald Trump's performance in handling the coronavirus crisis in the United States and the government's slow response in testing.

She said also on Fox News, "We're already very late" on testing in the United States. "The president gets an F," she added.

Meanwhile, [corona...] coronavirus cases have surged past 3.3 million around the world, with the United States seeing steady increases while other countries are reporting declining numbers.

The Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center says over 735,000 cases and nearly 40,000 deaths have been recorded in the United States, which is now the epicenter of the virus that first broke out in China late last year.

VOA news.

At least seven people were dead after a 51-year-old man went on a shooting rampage in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia on Sunday, early Sunday morning. It was Canada's deadliest attack in years.

The reports of the victims include a 23-year veteran of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Police said the suspect was also dead by the conclusion of the attack. [da...] the reason for the death in unclear and the motive for the attack is still unclear.

We'll keep you updated on that attack as more information becomes available.

South Korea reported just eight new cases of coronavirus on Sunday. It is the first time in months that South Korea has reported a single digit increase in cases of [ra...] on a daily basis.

But the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 163 people who had the coronavirus have been re-infected. That backs the World Health Organization's assertion that there is no evidence that people who have survived COVID are immune to it.

While the outbreak in East Asia may be dying down, the virus continues its marks through other regions of the world.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa said the pandemic could claim 300,000 lives in Africa this year.

The number of coronavirus infections across Latin America surpassed 100,000 on Sunday, with nearly 5,000 deaths. That's according to a report by AFP [its] tally based on official figures reported by individual countries.

Brazil with population of 210 million has the most cases - 38,654 infections and 2,462 deaths, although [exerts] experts believe in number of infections to be far greater, given that there has been relatively little testing

Based on official figures, Latin America as a whole had 100,952 cases on Sunday, with 4,924 deaths.

While Europe and [north ko...] North America have so far borne the brunt of the pandemic, infections have been steadily rising across Latin America [with] which has little of the health infrastructure of its richer counterparts.

And Orthodox Christians observed the Easter holiday amid extraordinary coronavirus-related restrictions on services that forced many Parishioners to watch today services on television or online.

Church leaders have struggled to figure out how to observe the April 19 holiday. It's the holiest day in the Orthodox calendar. They've been trying to observe the holiday while avoiding spreading the coronavirus.

Some local Parishes have defied orders from public health officials and church leaders and vowed to let people attend services in person.

In Russia and Ukraine, two of the biggest [orthnox] Orthodox denominations, priests in St. Petersburg and Kyiv held services beginning late on April 18.

This is VOA news.