VOA NEWS

June 27, 2020

This is VOA news. Reporting by remote, I'm David Byrd.

For the first time since April, the White House coronavirus task force held a news conference Friday in a Trump administration bid to show it's paying attention to a spike in confirmed coronavirus cases. AP's Sagar Meghani has details.

There was no White House backdrop, no presidential appearance. Instead, the briefing was held at the Health and Human Services Department, with Vice President Pence having to walk a delicate line in acknowledging a surge.

"We now have seen cases begin to rise precipitously across the South," and in noting this is not like the pandemic's early dates.

The nation's better prepared to handle cases while also reopening the economy.

"The reality is we're in a much better place."

But Dr. Anthony Fauci said the nation is facing a serious problem in some areas and reminded Americans to help keep each other safe.

"... we've got to realize that we are part of the process."

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

European Union officials say that American tourists could be banned from traveling to the EU when the continent reopens on July 1.

*The New York Times* and CNN report that the 27-member states have agreed in principle to bar travelers from several countries, including the United States, because they have not met criteria for controlling the coronavirus.

The United States has the world's highest number of coronavirus infections and the highest number of deaths. The infection rate has been increasing in several states in recent days with spikes in Texas, Florida, Arizona and California.

The ban would be a stinging rebuke to the Trump administration's handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

A new meeting on the matter is scheduled for Monday.

You can find more on our website voanews.com. This is VOA news.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday the United States was imposing visa restrictions on Chinese Communist Party officials responsible for restricting freedoms in Hong Kong.

Pompeo said the restrictions apply to current and former CCP officials who are believed to be responsible for or complicit in undermining Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy.

The move comes ahead of a three-day meeting of China's parliament beginning Sunday that's expected to enact new national security legislation for Hong Kong that has alarmed foreign governments and democracy activists in the territory.

Pompeo's announcement also represents the first concrete U.S. step in responding to China's moves.

Europe's biggest travel and tourism company, TUI, is cancelling all vacations to Florida from Britain until December following the introduction of new hygiene rules at Walt Disney World Resort. AP's Zaria Shaklee reports.

The firm says it made the decision because the new regulations would "significantly impact the holiday experience" for its customers.

Walt Disney World Resort, which includes four theme parks, will require visitors aged two and above to wear face coverings except when eating or swimming when it reopens in mid-July. Temperature screenings may be required for entry to some locations and the number of entry tickets will be limited.

TUI customers are being offered alternatives, including delaying their trip until next year or changing their destination.

Zaria Shaklee, London.

Paris's Orly Airport has ramped up security measures as it prepares to resume commercial flights after a nearly three-month hiatus. Reuters Edward Baran has details.

Passengers can no longer enter the terminals with non-flying companions and wearing masks is required. Alcohol gel dispensers are available across the terminals and floor markings urge social distancing.

Thermal cameras are in place at the arrival area, where passengers with a temperature of 38 degrees or above can benefit from a medical consultation but won't be forced to go under quarantine.

Tech firm LabScience has a developed a prototype of an ultraviolet-rays decontaminating tunnel which the airport is testing. The tunnel uses a high concentration of ultraviolet light over 4 to 5 seconds to kill micro-organisms on a piece of luggage or a coat before the objects are scanned by X-ray.

Orly, the second biggest airport serving the French capital, was closed to passengers on March 31.

That's Reuters Edward Baran.

You can find more on our website voanews.com. Reporting by remote, I'm David Byrd.