VOA NEWS

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

The World Health Organization says it is airlifting medical supplies to Lebanon and Russia is also contributing. AP's Charles De Ledesma reports.

The WHO says it expects to cover up to 1,000 trauma and up to 1,000 surgical interventions following the explosion in Beirut.

Supplies airlifted from a "humanitarian hub" in Dubai will be used to treat burns and wounds caused by broken glass and other debris from the massive blast.

Separately, Russian emergency officials say the first Russian plane with medical workers and equipment for a makeshift hospital has left the country and is heading for Lebanon.

Four more flights will follow in the next 24 hours with more rescuers and medical workers.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

The top infectious disease expert in the United States, Dr. Anthony Fauci, says the country might not have to go back into lockdown to stop the coronavirus.

Speaking at an event sponsored by Harvard University, Fauci said if people don't take the virus seriously, the country will continue to have outbreak pockets of infections and deaths.

"Now, there's such a divergence of how people view this and such a divisiveness that has now crept into the politic. Remember, a little while ago, you know, it depends on whether you wear a mask on how you feel politically, which was completely ridiculous."

The head of the National Institute [of] for Allergy and Infectious Diseases said that he expects a safe and effective vaccine to receive approval by the end of this year and tens of millions of doses to be made available.

An up day on Wall Street, with all three major indices finishing trading in positive territory.

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The third biggest school district in the United States is dropping a plan to have students back in the classroom this fall. AP's Sagar Meghani reports.

After pushback from Chicago's powerful Teachers Union to a plan that would have kids attend in-person classes two days a week, the city's mayor now says schools will rely on remote instruction to start the year.

Los Angeles has also decided against reopening for in-person learning, while New York City plans a mix of kids in classrooms and learning from home. The governor, Andrew Cuomo, has not said if he will accept that plan.

The moves come as President Trump continues pushing for schools to fully reopen, telling "Fox and Friends" this morning, it's safe for kids.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Late Wednesday, Facebook took down a post by President Donald Trump which the company said violated its rules against sharing misinformation about the coronavirus.

The post contained a video clip from an interview with "Fox and Friends" in which Trump had claimed that children were "almost immune" to COVID-19.

A Facebook spokesman said the video includes false claims that a group of people is immune from the disease, which he said violated the company's policies around harmful COVID misinformation.

Johnson & Johnson is the latest drug company to announce it will supply a potential COVID-19 vaccine to the United States in exchange for $1 billion. As Reuters Conway G. Gittens reports, it comes as another vaccine maker, Moderna, comes under fire for pricing its potential drug too high.

J&J's potential vaccine is currently in the midst of early-stage clinical trials using healthy volunteers in the United States and Belgium. But Novavax is further along in the process. The company on Tuesday said it could start a high-stakes Phase III trial, involving many more participants as soon as next month.

Moderna, which has one of the few potential vaccines already in final-stage clinical trials, came under fire Wednesday for pricing. It will charge between 64 and $74 per person for a two-dose regimen, compare that to the deal between Pfizer and the U.S., which works out to roughly $40 per person.

That's Reuters Conway G. Gittens.

People in the Japanese city of Hiroshima offered prayers and laid flowers early Thursday to mark the 75th anniversary of the world's first atomic bomb attack.

The atomic device was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, flattening the city and killing 140,000 people. Three days later, the United States dropped another atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki.

The two bombings led to Japan's unconditional surrender and the end of World War II.

Reporting by remote, I'm David Byrd.