

GWIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST
OCTOBER 30, 2020



**COUNTY STAYS IN 'RED' TIER
FOR REOPENING ACCORDING
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COUNTY STAYS IN 'RED' TIER FOR REOPENING ACCORDING TO FRESH STATE DATA

October 27, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

New data out Tuesday morning showed improvements in Fresno County COVID-19 metrics from last week, allowing the county to

Fresno County currently has a 5.0% test positivity rate (down from 5.2% last week), and 6.7 cases per 100,000 residents (down from 7.3 last week). To stay in its current red tier, Fresno County numbers need to continue to have less than an 8% test positivity rate and reduce new cases per 100,000 residents to less than 7 over the next week.

remain in the state's red tier for reopening. This means restaurants, churches and other businesses can continue to offer limited indoor services. There have been concerns in recent weeks that Fresno County might slip back into

the more restrictive purple tier. Fresno County currently has a 5.0% test positivity rate (down from 5.2% last week), and 6.7 cases per 100,000 residents (down from 7.3 last week). To stay in its current red tier, Fresno County numbers need to continue to have less than an 8% test positivity rate and reduce new cases per 100,000 residents to less than 7 over the next week.

The state's new "health equity" positivity rate is at 6.8% (down from 7.9% last week). Fresno County needs to remain below 8% to in this measurement remain in the red tier. The purpose of this metric is to ensure California reopens its economy safely by reducing disease transmission in all communities. *(This is a developing story and will be updated.)*

Fresno County Case Counts

Number of Cases in Fresno County according

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to the county's website:

Last updated: October 26, 2020 at 3:30 PM

- Total Cases: 30,858 (+268 Sunday and Monday.)*
- Total Deaths: 436
- Currently Hospitalized: 88 (-12)**
- Recovered: 20,110 ***
- Test Results Received and Processed: 343,087

Madera County Fails to Make Red Tier

Despite optimism by Madera County officials last week after meeting the state's criteria for the red tier, the county remained in the state's purple tier Tuesday. Last Tuesday, Madera County's adjusted case rate was reported to be 4.8 per 100,000, far below the state's cut-off of 7 cases per

100,000. The county's positivity rate stands at 3.4, well below the maximum allowable rate of 8 percent. Madera County had to meet the criteria for one more week before being able to move to the red tier. However, the new state data shows the county's adjusted case rate at 8.7 cases per 100,000, with a positivity rate of 5.7%.

Despite optimism by Madera County officials last week after meeting the state's criteria for the red tier, the county remained in the state's purple tier Tuesday.

Fresno County Million Mask Giveaway

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors and Fresno County EDC, announced the launch of a free PPE distribution program for small businesses throughout the county at a news conference Tuesday morning. These supplies...



CREATE NEW CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD FOR POLICE, REFORM COMMISSION URGES

October 28, 2020 | David Taub

Fresno should form a new civilian oversight board to monitor the police department which would include full access to police investigation files, says a key recommendation from the city's police reform commission.

The proposed Civilian Oversight Board would be made up of between 11 and 13 members and would have the ability to compel interviews and documents from the department as well, the draft report from the Fresno Commission on Police Reform recommends. The commission is scheduled to finalize the report's 73 recommendations on Thursday, though

members approved all of them in private voting that concluded Oct. 20, chairman Oliver Baines said.

List of 73 Recommendations

A list of the recommendations can be found here. The panel's final meeting takes place Thursday night at 5 p.m. via Zoom and accessible on the city's YouTube and Facebook pages. The report will then be forwarded to the Fresno City Council to decide next steps. "I'm pleased with the effort of the commission," Baines said. This was an incredibly difficult task. This should not be viewed as the end of anything, but really the beginning." The first six recommendations in...

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MOBILE MEAL BUS FEEDS NEEDY CHILDREN DURING SCHOOL BREAKS

October 20, 2020 | Sponsored by Community Medical Centers

Five days a week, families in Fresno's struggling neighborhoods are on the lookout for a brightly colored bus decorated with elementary students' drawings of broccoli stalks with bright eyes, smiling pizza...

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LOCAL RESTAURANT JOINS LEGAL CLAIM FOR FEE REFUNDS OVER COVID CLOSURE

October 27, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

California restaurants have unified to file a claim seeking a refund for state and local fees, including for liquor licenses, health permits, and state tourism assessments. One of those involved is Vino Grille & Spirits in northeast Fresno. What could soon follow is a class action lawsuit involving many more establishments in Fresno County.

The claims come as restaurants across the state face unprecedented challenges to stay open and maintain cash reserves in the COVID-19 era. "They did what they were told by the governor all the way down to local county officials. But at the same time, the same government that told them to close is telling them that they are required to pay their fees," said plaintiff...

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STATE

EARLY POLLING PLACES IN CALIFORNIA QUIET NOW, BUT LINES EXPECTED AHEAD

October 27, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Californians are voting in record numbers, with more than a third of the state's 22.3 million ballots already returned to county election offices one week before Election Day. Yet at the Oak Park Community Center in Sacramento on Sunday, it was so slow that poll worker Tom Martinez had to get up and move every so often to keep the motion-detected lights from going out.

While counties nationwide are reporting hours-long wait times to vote early, voters in the nation's most populous state are putting their ballots in the mail after a state law passed this year required county elections offices to send ballots to all active registered voters at least 29 days before Election Day. Most of the state's in-person polling places — or vote centers — won't open until Saturday. The state allowed counties

to open fewer of them this year because the coronavirus pandemic has made traditional polling places unavailable, like schools and senior centers. Ventura County had 389 polling places in March but will have just 48 vote centers this weekend. Most

Californians already vote by mail. Nearly 58% of ballots cast in the 2016 presidential election were by mail, which rose to 72% in March's primary. Even if that 72% holds this November,

that still leaves millions who could vote in person at vote centers that must maintain physical distancing and take time to clean equipment between each voter. "I guarantee you there is going to be lines around the block in many polling places and in many areas where voters haven't been used to seeing lines," said Paul Mitchell, vice president of Political Data Inc., a bipartisan voter data company based in California.

Los Angeles County opened 118 vote centers on Saturday, with nearly 50,000 people casting ballots in person. There were no long lines, according to Mike Sanchez, spokesman for the Los Angeles Registrar's Office.

Secretary of State Alex Padilla Doesn't Think That Trend Will Last

Is the unprecedented return of mail-in ballots a sign that fewer people will vote in-person this year? Or are those voters people who would vote anyway and just a preview of the crush of people expected on Election Day? State officials hope it isn't the latter. Some vote centers opened in a few counties on Saturday, offering a preview of what voting in person during a pandemic will look like. The NBA's Sacramento Kings donated its cavernous arena as a vote center, allowing people to cast ballots with a view of the court beneath a Jumbotron. It has about 42 voting booths compared to polling places in recent years that had about six. But at lunchtime Monday, the center was mostly deserted. About 178 people voted there over the weekend. Secretary of State Alex Padilla, the...

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SAN FRANCISCO CURBS VIRUS BUT ONCE-VIBRANT DOWNTOWN IS EMPTY

October 29, 2020 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — Before the pandemic, Señor Sisig food trucks were a common sight in downtown San Francisco, dishing out Filipino fusion tacos and burritos to long lines of workers who spilled out of office towers at lunch.

The trucks now are gone, forced into the suburbs because there's practically no one around to feed in the city's center. As the coronavirus pandemic transforms San Francisco's workplace, legions of tech workers have left, able to work remotely from any-

where. Families have fled for roomy suburban homes with backyards. The exodus has pushed rents in the prohibitively expensive city to their lowest in years. Tourists are scarce, and the famed cable cars sit idle.

The food trucks, like many other businesses, are wondering when things will bounce back. "Is it ever going to get back to normal, is it ever going to be as busy as it was — and will that be next year, or in 10 years?" said Evan Kidera, CEO of Señor Sisig. On Tuesday, more of San Francisco reopened for...

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AP File

DEATH PENALTY 'INFECTED BY RACISM' NEWSOM TELLS COURT

October 26, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California's process for imposing the death penalty "is now, and always has been, infected by racism," Gov. Gavin Newsom declared Monday in a brief filed with the state Supreme Court. Newsom filed the brief in the case of Donte Lamont McDaniel, who was sentenced to death in 2009 for the murder of 33-year-old George Brooks and 52-year-old Annette Anderson.

In California, juries can impose the death penalty if they find that "aggravating factors" outweigh "mitigating factors." The decision to sentence someone to death must be unanimous. But juries don't have to unanimously agree on each aggravating factor. McDaniel's case is challenging that interpretation of...

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MERCED CLEANS UP HOMELESS CAMP AS LA CONSIDERS BAN ON CAMPING (AGAIN)

October 28, 2020 | AP News

Dumpsters, garbage trucks, and teams of people from the city of Merced were out Wednesday cleaning up a homeless encampment along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks near Childs Avenue and Highway 99. The city said they needed to take action after numerous public complaints about garbage and unsanitary conditions. The police department said people in the camp would be offered temporary shelter.

Meanwhile, according to the LA Times, the Los Angeles City Council was set for a Wednesday vote on revisions to the city's anti-camping law that would prohibit homeless camps anywhere in the city, but required occupants to be offered alternative shelter first. The council's hearing included hours of...

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Merced Police Dept.



AP File

TRUMP PAINTS APOCALYPTIC PORTRAIT OF LIFE IN US UNDER BIDEN

October 29, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The suburbs wouldn't be the suburbs anymore, the economy would sink into its worst depression ever and police departments

Experts say instilling fear in one's opponent is usually the primary motivating factor behind such talk as candidates seek to give voters a reason to put a checkmark next to their name on the ballot.

would cease to exist. Even America's older adults would be left to figure out how to get by without heat, air conditioning or electricity. This is the apocalyptic version of

American life that President Donald Trump argues would be the dire consequence of turning over the White House to Democrat Joe Biden.

"He'll bury you in regulations, dismantle your police departments, dissolve our borders, confiscate your guns, terminate religious liberty, destroy your suburbs," Trump said in one of many over-the-top pronouncements about Biden in the campaign's final weeks. Trump typically makes his warning about the fate of suburbia as he showcases his own decision to end federal regulations that govern the placement of low-income housing in the suburbs. Campaign rhetoric can often become heated and hyperbolic as candidates scrap for every last advantage before the votes are counted. Experts say instilling fear in one's opponent is usually the primary motivating factor behind such talk as candidates seek to give voters a reason to put a checkmark next to their name on the ballot. "It's pure fear and fear based on a particular kind of ignorance that only works if your hearers have

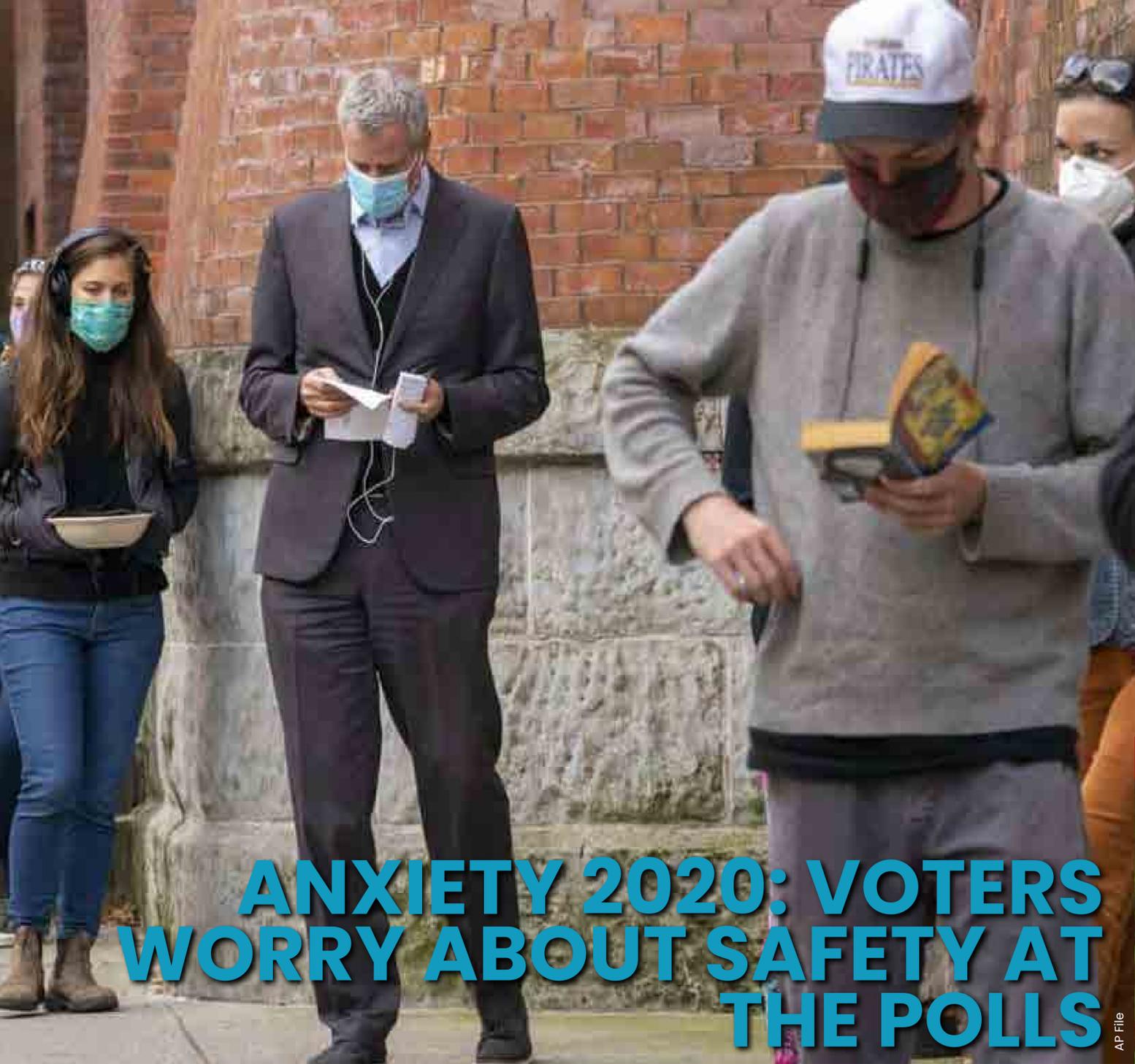
that particular kind of ignorance," Robin Lakoff, professor emerita of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, said of Trump's claims about Biden. Trump made fear — particularly the fear of immigrants — a major theme of his 2016 campaign. Now, he is giving voters a laundry list of mostly implausible reasons to fear a Biden presidency.

Trump Has Criticized Biden for Saying He'd Follow the Scientists

"This election is a choice between a TRUMP RECOVERY or a BIDEN DEPRESSION," the president tweeted, echoing what he tells supporters at rallies. "It's a choice between a TRUMP BOOM or a BIDEN LOCKDOWN. It's a choice between our plan to Kill the virus — or Biden's plan to kill the American Dream!" Trump has criticized Biden for saying he'd follow the scientists, and the president claims the Democrat would shut the country down. In fact, Biden hasn't said whether he'd endorse large-scale shutdowns of the nation's economy, if things get drastically worse, like much of the country did in March. "If you vote for Biden, it means no kids in school, no graduations, no weddings, no Thanksgiving, no Christmas and no Fourth of July together," Trump said at a rally Wednesday in Goodyear, Arizona. "Other than that, you have a wonderful life." Kathleen Hall...

Trump made fear — particularly the fear of immigrants — a major theme of his 2016 campaign. Now, he is giving voters a laundry list of mostly implausible reasons to fear a Biden presidency.

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ANXIETY 2020: VOTERS WORRY ABOUT SAFETY AT THE POLLS

AP File

October 28, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Gary Kauffman says he does not scare easily. So when men waving President Donald Trump flags drive by his house in downtown Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, he stands on his front steps and waves a banner for Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

“Sometimes I yell at them. They yell back at me,” says Kauffman, 54. Still, Kauffman is keeping a closer eye on who they are and what they’re carrying as Elec-

tion Day approaches. Tension has been rising in his town, known best as hallowed ground of the Civil War’s bloodiest battle. Recently, it’s become a hot spot of angry confrontations between Trump supporters and liberal protesters.

Kauffman has seen some of the Trump supporters carrying weapons. “If there’s guns, I’m a bit more cautious,” he said on Monday. Americans Not Accustomed to Worrying About Election Violence...

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YOUNG GRAY WOLF FROM CALIFORNIA SPOTTED IN OREGON

October 29, 2020 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — A young member of California’s only known gray wolf pack has left the state and ventured into Oregon, wildlife officials said. The male wolf, dubbed LAS13M, traveled to Lake County, Oregon, in early October and has remained there, according to a July-through-September report from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The wolf was a member of the Lassen Pack first spotted in 2017. The wolves are only the second pack spotted in far Northern California since the species went extinct there in 1924. A pack of seven wolves was seen in Shasta County in 2015 but vanished within a year. Gray wolves were eradicated in California early in the last century because of...

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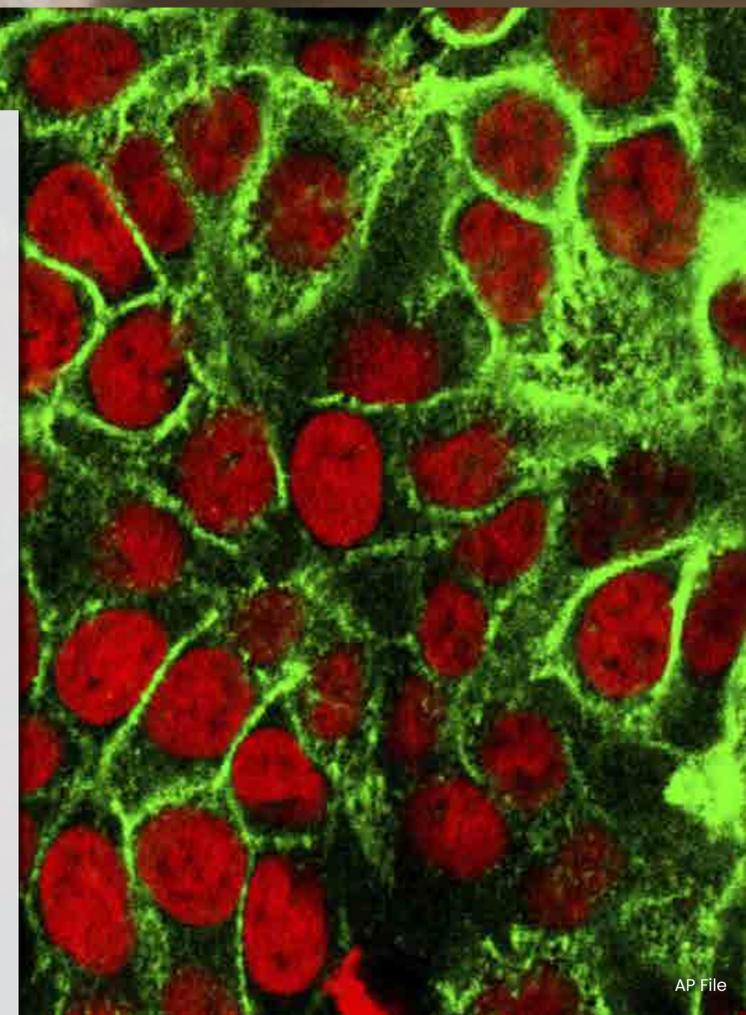
HEALTH PANEL PROPOSES COLON CANCER TESTS START AT 45, NOT 50

October 27, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — A panel of health experts wants U.S. adults to start getting colon cancer screenings at age 45, five years younger than it previously recommended. While overall, colon cancer rates have been declining, the draft guidelines issued Tuesday by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force reflect a growing concern about rising rates in people under the age of 50.

“We’ve seen more data showing that younger people are getting colon cancer at higher rates,” said Dr. Alex Krist, a family doctor at Virginia Commonwealth University and a member of the task force. “Basically a 45-year-old today has the same risk of getting colon cancer as a 50-year-old from years...

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WORLD

EUROPE LOCKING DOWN AGAIN AS COVID SURGES, US CASES ALSO RISING

October 28, 2020 | AP News

A new wave of lockdowns and business closings swept across France, Germany and other places in Europe on Wednesday as surging coronavirus infections there and in the U.S. wipe out months of progress against the scourge on two continents. The resurgence and the resulting clampdown sent a shudder through Wall Street. The S&P 500 fell 3.5%, its biggest drop since June, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 943 points, or 3.4%. French President Emmanuel Macron declared a new nationwide lockdown starting Friday, saying the country has been “overpowered by a second wave.” Many doctors had urged the move, given that 58% of the nation’s intensive care units are now taken up by COVID-19 patients. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a four-week shutdown of bars, restaurants and theaters.

The resurgence and the resulting clampdown sent a shudder through Wall Street. The S&P 500 fell 3.5%, its biggest drop since June, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 943 points, or 3.4%.

“We must act, and now, to avoid an acute national health emergency,” she said. Countries such as Switzerland, Italy, Bulgaria and Greece have closed or otherwise clamped down again on nightspots and imposed other restrictions such as curfews and mandatory mask-wearing. Madrid and other parts of Spain banned all but essential travel in and out of their regions. “We are deep in the second wave,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. “I think that this year’s Christmas will be a different Christ-

mas.” In the U.S., where practically every state is seeing a rise in cases, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers of hard-hit Wisconsin has been reduced to pleading with people to stay home, after an order he issued in the spring was overturned by the courts. Illinois’ governor banned indoor dining and drinking in Chicago this week. Other states are likewise considering reimposing restrictions. The virus has killed more than 250,000 people in Europe and over 227,000 in the U.S., according to the count kept by Johns Hopkins University. The long-feared surge is blamed in part on growing disregard for social distancing and mask-wearing, as well as the onset of cold weather, which is forcing people indoors, where the virus can spread more easily.

The virus has killed more than 250,000 people in Europe and over 227,000 in the U.S., according to the count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

More Than 71,000 People a Day Are Testing Positive on Average

Dr. David Letzer, an infectious-disease specialist who doubles as chairman of the Wisconsin Medical Society’s COVID-19 task force, is getting swamped with patients. He said he was incensed to see people without masks going into a restaurant as he was driving between hospitals. “I’m just coming from a place with ventilators and people are just going to an indoor restaurant,” he said. “Those are the things that are frustrating and take their toll.” In the U.S., more than 71,000 people a day are testing...

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October 26, 2020

POSSIBLE UNDERGROUND CENTRIFUGE ASSEMBLY FACILITY

Natanz, Iran
33.7108° 51.7184°



New or regraded roads

SATELLITE PHOTOS SHOW CONSTRUCTION AT IRAN NUCLEAR SITE

AP File

October 28, 2020 | AP News

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran has begun construction at its Natanz nuclear facility, satellite images released Wednesday show, just as the U.N. nuclear agency acknowledged Tehran is building an underground advanced centrifuge assembly plant after its last one exploded in a reported sabotage attack last summer.

The construction comes as the U.S. nears Election Day in a campaign pitting President Donald Trump, whose maximum pressure campaign against Iran

has led Tehran to abandon all limits on its atomic program, and Joe Biden, who has expressed a willingness to return to the accord. The outcome of the vote likely will decide which approach America takes. Heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S. nearly ignited a war at the start of the year.

Since August, Iran has built a new or regraded road to the south of Natanz toward what analysts believe is a former firing range for security forces at the enrichment facility, images from San Francisco-based...

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NEW DEATHS AS FIGHTING OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH KEEPS FLARING

October 28, 2020 | AP News

YEREVAN, Armenia — Deadly fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh showed no signs of abating Wednesday despite a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that took force just two days ago and has so far failed to halt the flare-up of a decades-old conflict.

Nagorno-Karabakh officials said Azerbaijani forces hit Stepanakert, the region's capital, and the nearby town of Shushi with Smerch long-range multiple rocket systems, a devastating Soviet-designed weapon intended to ravage wide areas with explosives and cluster munitions. One civilian was killed in Shushi and two more were wounded, officials said. The government-run Armenian Unified Infocenter...

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AP File

'WE'RE WORKING ON IT:' POPE'S COVID ADVISERS AND THE MASK

October 27, 2020 | AP News

ROME — Pope Francis' decision to forego wearing a mask has been noticed, with some concern, by the commission of Vatican experts he appointed to help chart the Catholic Church's path through the coronavirus pandemic and the aftermath.

The Rev. Augusto Zampini, one of the key members of the pope's COVID-19 commission, acknowledged Tuesday that at age 83 and with part of his lung removed after an illness in his youth, Francis would be at high risk for complications if he were to become infected with COVID-19. "He has started to use the mask now," Zampini said in response to reporters' questions. "And I hope he will use it in the general audiences, when he is close to the people. If you're...

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