

After Resisting,
Florida Leader
Imposes Limits

Trump and Grim Data
Nudge DeSantis

By PATRICIA MAZZEI
and MAGGIE HABERMAN

MIAMI — Florida’s coronavirus cases kept ballooning, especially in the dense neighborhoods of Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Hospitals in Fort Myers and Naples begged for donations of masks and other protective gear. Young people started to die.

And still, Gov. Ron DeSantis resisted. The man entrusted with keeping many of the country’s grandparents safe did not want to dictate that all Floridians had to stay at home.

What it took for Mr. DeSantis to change his mind on Wednesday and finally issue a statewide order were a phone call with President Trump and a grave reckoning. A day earlier, the White House had projected how many American lives might be lost — up to 240,000 — without a national commitment to immediate, drastic action in every state.

The number of coronavirus infections in Florida had jumped by more than 1,000 on Tuesday, its largest 24-hour increase, to reach nearly 7,000, giving rise to worries that the infection was already dangerously out of hand.

For Mr. DeSantis, a 41-year-old first-term Republican governor considered a contender for higher political office, relenting was an acknowledgment that the Florida economy, so reliant on tourism, would inevitably grind to a halt because of the virus. Without statewide measures, recovery from the pandemic might only take longer.

“People aren’t just going to go back to work” by April 15, Mr. DeSantis said at a news conference in Tallahassee, the state capital, calling the stringent social-distancing orders that take effect on Friday “a national pause button.”

Thirty-seven states have adopted statewide orders for people to stay at home, including most recently Georgia and Mississippi. The full scale of the virus threat delivered by the White House was a powerful new message to conservative governors who have been following the president’s lead.

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TRACKING AN OUTBREAK

VENTILATORS Thousands are in storage, unmaintained, broken or otherwise unusable. PAGE A14

IN THE FIGHT Retired nurses, doctors and other health care workers answer the call. PAGE A12

THREATS Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, a staple at virus press briefings, is getting extra security. PAGE A11

Pro-Trump Media’s Virus Pivot:
From Alarm to Denial to Blame

By JEREMY W. PETERS

On Feb. 27, two days after the first reported case of the coronavirus spreading inside a community in the United States, Candace Owens was underwhelmed. “Now we’re all going to die from Coronavirus,” she wrote sarcastically to her two million Twitter followers, blaming a “doomsday cult” of liberal paranoia for the growing anxiety over the outbreak.

One month later, on the day the United States reached the grim milestone of having more documented coronavirus cases than anywhere in the world, Ms. Owens — a conservative commentator whom President Trump has called “a real star” — was back at it, offering what she said was “a little



GILLES SABRIÉ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BEIJING China, the world’s second-largest economy, is expected to grow by only 2 percent this year.



EMILE DUCKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BERLIN Government restrictions have essentially shut down public life across Europe.



ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

LONDON Most economies might not return to pre-pandemic production levels for two to three years.

For People of Many Religions,
Crisis Has Signs of Apocalypse

By ELIZABETH DIAS

Shaman Webster, who lives in the suburbs outside of Dallas, has seen the signs of a coming apocalypse for a while now, just as the Bible foretold.

Kingdom would rise against kingdom, Jesus taught his disciples in the Book of Luke. Ms. Webster sees widespread political division in this country. There will be fearful events, and great signs from heaven, he said. She sees biblical values slipping away. A government not acting in the people’s best interest. And now this — a pandemic.

But Ms. Webster, 42 and an evangelical Christian, is unafraid. She has been listening online to one of her favorite preachers, who has called the coronavirus pan-

Fault Lines in Society,
and Lessons of Hope

demic a “divine reset.”

“These kinds of moments really get you to re-evaluate everything,” she said. As everyone goes through a period of isolation, she added, God is using it for good, “to teach us and train us on how to live life better.”

For people of many faiths, and even none at all, it can feel lately as if the end of the world is near. Not only is there a plague, but hundreds of billions of locusts are swarming East Africa. Wildfires have ravaged Australia, killing an

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ECONOMISTS FEAR
DRAWN-OUT SLUMP
AS LOSSES DEEPEN

Worldwide Recovery Could Take Years as
the Public Remains Averse to Risk

By PETER S. GOODMAN

LONDON — The world is almost certainly ensnared in a devastating recession delivered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, fears are growing that the downturn could be far more punishing and long lasting than initially feared — potentially enduring into next year, and even beyond — as governments intensify restrictions on business to halt the spread of the pandemic, and as fear of the virus reconfigures the very concept of public space, impeding consumer-led economic growth.

The pandemic is above all a public health emergency. So long as human interaction remains dangerous, business cannot responsibly return to normal. And what was normal before may not be anymore. People may be less inclined to jam into crowded restaurants and concert halls even after the virus is contained.

The abrupt halt of commercial activity threatens to impose economic pain so profound and enduring in every region of the world at once that recovery could take years. The losses to companies, many already saturated with debt, risk triggering a financial crisis of cataclysmic proportions.

Stock markets have reflected the economic alarm. The S&P 500 in the United States fell over 4 percent on Wednesday, as investors braced for worse conditions ahead. That followed a brutal

March, during which a whipsawing S&P 500 fell 12.5 percent, in its worst month since October 2008.

“I feel like the 2008 financial crisis was just a dry run for this,” said Kenneth S. Rogoff, a Harvard economist and co-author of a history of financial crises, “This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly.”

“This is already shaping up as the deepest dive on record for the global economy for over 100 years,” he said. “Everything depends on how long it lasts, but if this goes on for a long time, it’s certainly going to be the mother of all financial crises.”

The situation looks uniquely dire in developing countries, which have seen investment rush for the exits this year, sending currencies plummeting, forcing people to pay more for imported food and fuel, and threatening governments with insolvency — all of this while the pandemic itself threatens to overwhelm inadequate medical systems.

Among investors, a hopeful scenario holds currency: The recession will be painful but short-lived, giving way to a robust recovery this year. The global economy is in a temporary deep freeze, the logic goes. Once the virus is contained, enabling people to return to offices and shopping malls, life will snap back to normal. Jets will fill

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Racing for Cure,
Scientists Unite
In Global Effort

By MATT APUZZO
and DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

Using flag-draped memes and military terminology, the Trump administration and its Chinese counterparts have cast coronavirus research as national imperatives, inciting talk of a biotech arms race.

The world’s scientists, for the most part, have responded with a collective eye roll.

“Absolutely ridiculous,” said Jonathan Heeney, a Cambridge University researcher working on a coronavirus vaccine.

“That isn’t how things happen,” said Adrian Hill, the head of the Jenner Institute at Oxford, one of the largest vaccine research centers at an academic institution.

While political leaders have locked their borders, scientists have been shattering theirs, creating a global collaboration unlike any in history. Never before, researchers say, have so many experts in so many countries focused simultaneously on a single topic and with such urgency. Nearly all other research has ground to a halt.

Normal imperatives like academic credit have been set aside. Online repositories make studies available months ahead of journals. Researchers have identified and shared hundreds of viral genome sequences. More than 200 clinical trials have been initiated, bringing together hospitals and laboratories around the globe.

“I never hear scientists — true scientists, good quality scientists — speak in terms of nationality,” said Dr. Francesco Perrone, who is leading a coronavirus clinical trial in Italy. “My nation, your nation. My language, your language. My geographic location, your geographic location. This is some-

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ANDREW SENG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A hospital triage tent in Washington Heights, Manhattan.

Doctors Facing
Brutal Choices
As Supplies Lag

This article is by Joseph Goldstein, Michael Rothfeld and Benjamin Weiser.

One patient had lymphoma and heart failure. Another was 85 years old with metastatic cancer. A third was 83 and had dementia and lung disease. All were critically ill with the coronavirus, and, a doctor said, all were hooked up to ventilators in recent weeks at a major Manhattan hospital.

But soon, patients such as those might not receive similar aggressive treatment. As people with the virus overwhelm New York City hospitals, doctors have stepped up pressure on state health officials to give them a rare and unsettling power: the right to withhold care from patients who are not likely to recover.

Dwindling supplies mean there might not be enough ventilators or other items for everyone, and many doctors say they are growing increasingly uneasy with treating every patient equally. They believe medical workers soon might need to make difficult choices about treatment.

“Usually, the standard is to intubate and do CPR and do all those

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Tired of Profit Over Pollution

In Fos-sur-Mer, France, above, residents teamed up to reject the trade-off of good jobs for foul air. PAGE A16

Home of the \$100 Hit Men

Residents of a crime-ridden Manila slum fear eviction for a redevelopment project. Philippines Dispatch. PAGE A17

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‘Never Bernie’ Voters Lift Biden

Bernie Sanders’s campaign hit a roadblock as Democrats threw their support to Joseph R. Biden Jr. PAGE A18

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A Global Scramble for Masks

Governments, hospitals and entrepreneurs are scouring the world for personal protective equipment. PAGE B1

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Only Protégé of Miles Davis

The trumpet virtuoso Wallace Roney emerged from Davis’s shadow to become a jazz star. He was 59. PAGE A22



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Touring Museum Mile

A critic and a historian take a socially distant stroll along Fifth Avenue. Above, the Guggenheim. PAGE C1

Composing on the Couch

With performances on hold during the pandemic, artists like Wynton Marsalis are still making music at home. PAGE C1

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Idaho Ban Raises Questions

A new state law bars transgender females from women’s sports, raising the possibility that student athletes may have to consent to sex testing to compete. PAGE B9

No Wimbledon This Year

With the lockdown in Britain intensifying, organizers canceled the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament, which had previously been shut only during World Wars I and II. PAGE B9

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Nicholas Kristof PAGE A24



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The Thrill of Décor Peeping

In a sequestered world, video meetings and home broadcasts take us into other people’s rooms. Above, Sheila Bridges’s ceiling caught some eyes. PAGE D1

