

Global threat

The coronavirus that emerged in central China at the end of last year has now killed more than 1,300 people and spread around the world

We will minimise epidemic's impact, maintain the momentum of economic development, and strive to achieve development goals

VELOCITY OF VIRUS

For the first thousand people to be infected, MERS took 903 days SARS 130 days Coronavirus 48 days

FATALITY RATE

For every 50 infected people, MERS killed 17 people SARS killed five Coronavirus killed one

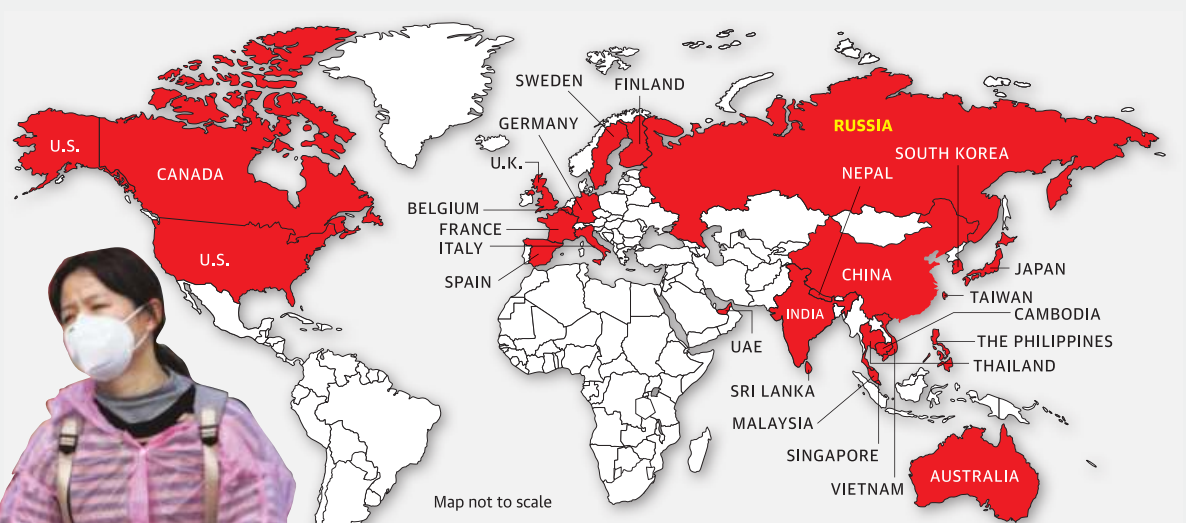
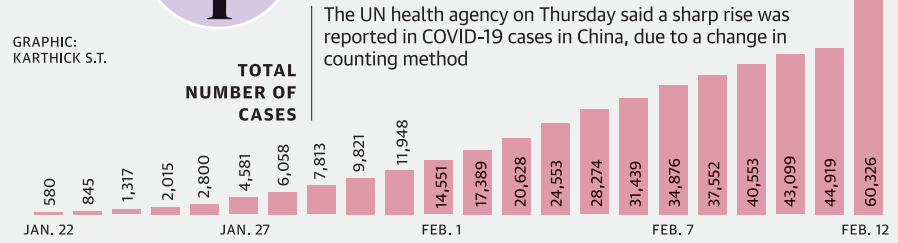


Table titled 'THE GLOBAL SPREAD' showing the number of cases and deaths in various countries like Singapore, India, Britain, etc.



New Hubei chief pledges to contain virus

Top leaders are taking greater control, removing officials for 'shirking duties'

The new Communist Party official of Hubei province, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak in China, said on Thursday he would contain the virus but that the situation remained severe.

han, became the most high-profile officials to be dismissed following the outbreak. The removal of Jiang Chaoliang, the leading Communist Party official of Hubei province, and Ma Guoqiang, party chief in Wuhan, followed the dismissal of two provincial health officials on Tuesday, and is part of a wider effort by Beijing to remove bureaucrats it accuses of shirking their duties.

The central government has set up a special Cabinet task force under Premier Li Keqiang to handle the crisis, and the new appointments in Hubei suggest China's senior leaders are taking greater control.

Defending Wuhan Reporting Mr. Ying's appointment as the new secretary of the Hubei Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, the official Xinhua news agency did not explain why Mr. Jiang had been removed.

In remarks reported in the official Hubei Daily following his appointment, Mr. Ying said he would not fail the party or the people and that he bore a very heavy responsibility.

"At present, the virus situation is still extremely severe," the paper cited him as saying. "We will definitely win the battle to defend Wuhan, the battle to defend Hubei, and the battle to prevent and control the disease."

Jinping during the latter's time as party boss and Governor of Zhejiang province, which neighbours Shanghai.

Mr. Ying, in the same report in the Hubei Daily, cited Mr. Xi as saying that controlling the virus was directly related to social and economic stability and China's opening up, and was the biggest priority at the moment.

Wuhan party chief Mr. Ma has been replaced by Wang Zhonglin, party boss of Jinan, the capital city of eastern Shandong province, Xinhua reported separately.

Virus cases on Japan ship jump to 218

Japan said on Thursday it would allow some elderly passengers off a quarantined cruise ship and into government-designated lodging, as the number of new coronavirus cases on the vessel jumped to 218.

Thousands of passengers and crew on the Diamond Princess - the single largest cluster of infected people outside China - face several days more of quarantine, with many taking to social media to voice their concerns.

"The situation on board is getting worse day by day," 24-year-old ship security officer Sonali Thakkar told AFP.

"This morning they told us that 44 people have been infected and everyone is really scared and wanting to get off as soon as possible," she added.

"All we want is tests to be done and to be separated from those who are positive. We don't want to stay on board."

With passengers mostly confined to their cabins, crew members have to go door-to-door to deliver food and other supplies, and some fear this has reduced the effectiveness of the quarantine.

He said also that some elderly passengers would be allowed off the ship if they test negative for the COVID-19 virus.

Family burnt alive as 'bandits' kill 21 in Nigeria

Six children were among those killed

Armed attackers burned 21 people alive, including 16 members of the same family, in a revenge attack by criminal gangs on a village in northern Nigeria, residents said on Thursday.

Gunmen on motorcycles raided the village of Bakali in Kaduna state on Tuesday, shooting and burning homes and vehicles to avenge a raid on their hideout by local vigilantes, inhabitants said.

"They killed 21 people in the attack," Bakali's community leader Sani Nuhu told AFP.

Residents said the assailants burned alive 16 members of the same family, including six children, and five members of a local self-defence group after locking them in a house.

A police spokesman said the force had "received report of an attack by bandits on Bakali village" but was "still awaiting details".

The area where the attack happened has in recent years been a haven for criminal gangs, who steal cattle and kidnap people for ransom.

Local communities have formed vigilante groups to protect themselves but this has failed to end the violence.

Rishi Sunak appointed Britain's Finance Minister

The three-time MP succeeds Sajid Javid

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed Rishi Sunak as his new Finance Minister, the government said in a statement on Thursday.

Mr. Sunak, 39, who previously served as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the second in command to the Finance Minister, succeeds Pakistan-born Sajid Javid, who has resigned.

Mr. Johnson's team had carefully choreographed the reshuffle, presenting it as an opportunity to foster new talent, particularly among women, while also rewarding loyalists.

But Mr. Javid's resignation - which some commentators said might have been sought by Mr. Johnson's team all along - added to a sense that the Prime Minister would brook no dissent and wanted to have more control over the Treasury.

"Whilst I was very pleased that the Prime Minister wanted to reappoint me, I was unable to accept the conditions that he had attached so I felt I was left with no option but to resign," Mr. Javid said.

"The conditions that were attached was a requirement that I replace all my political advisers... I was unable to accept those conditions, I don't believe any self-respecting Minister would accept such conditions," he added.

Mr. Sunak, a former banker who is married to the daughter of Narayana Murthy, co-founder of IT services company Infosys, is seen by many Conservatives as a safe pair of hands who will easily get on board with Mr. Johnson's agenda for a post-Brexit Britain.

Seen as a smooth media performer and ultra-loyal



Rishi Sunak

member of the Conservative Party, Mr. Sunak has been used by the government to defend their policies in television interviews - a sign of trust from Mr. Johnson, who has a fraught relationship with Britain's media.

'Excellent choice' David Jones, a former Brexit Minister, described Sunak as "very bright" and an "excellent choice".

"Delighted to be appointed," Mr. Sunak said. "Lots to get on with."

The three-time Member of Parliament takes control at a critical juncture for Britain's \$2.7 trillion economy. He will have to steer the economy through the turbulence of leaving the European Union and the forging of new trade links that will define Britain's new relationship with the world.

Mr. Sunak's father was a doctor and his mother ran a chemist shop. Before entering politics, he worked for Goldman Sachs and a hedge fund, then co-founded an investment firm. He also has an MBA from Stanford University in the US.

Ultra-loyal Alok Sharma, a former Minister for international development, was appointed as Minister for Business and also the head of the COP26 climate change summit in Scotland in November, due to be attended by world leaders.

Hope Hicks set to return to White House

She will be working for Jared Kushner

Hope Hicks, a former close adviser to Donald Trump who resigned almost two years ago, will return to the White House as the president's re-election campaign heats up.

"She will be Counselor to the President and Senior Adviser, working for Jared Kushner's office," White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

Mr. Kushner is President Trump's son-in-law and a senior adviser in his administration.

Ms. Hicks, 31, joined Mr. Trump's 2016 presidential early on and rose to become



Hope Hicks

the White House communications director.

Ms. Hicks resigned on March 1, 2018, a day after her closed-door hearing before Congress in the probe on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential race.

U.S. welcomes Saeed's conviction, calls it key step ahead of FATF meet

Pakistan to present its case to escape being blacklisted

The U.S. has welcomed the conviction of the 2008 Mumbai attack mastermind and JuD chief Hafiz Saeed, describing it as an "important step forward" for Pakistan in meeting its international commitments to combat terror financing and not to allow non-state actors to operate from its soil.

The statement of a top State department official came after Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the U.S. has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was sentenced to 11 years in two terror financing cases on Wednesday,



Hafiz Saeed

four days ahead of a crucial meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in Paris, where Pakistan will present its case to escape from being blacklisted.

According to Acting Assistant Secretary of State for

South and Central Asia Alice G Wells, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said it is in the interest of his country's future that it does not allow non-state actors to operate from its soil.

She said in a tweet: "Today's conviction of Hafiz Saeed and his associate is an important step forward - both towards holding LeT accountable for its crimes, and for Pakistan in meeting its international commitments to combat terrorist financing".

The 70-year-old fiery cleric is lodged at the high-security Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore.

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ELSEWHERE



Jeff Bezos buys estate for \$165 million: report

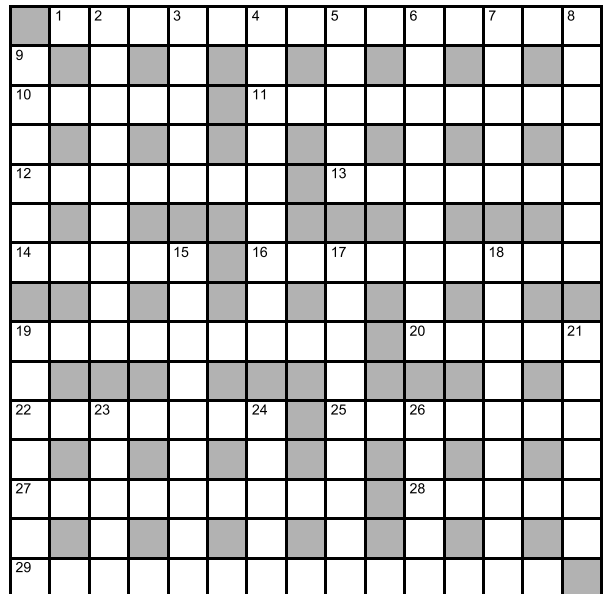
Billionaire Amazon chief Jeff Bezos has purchased a Los Angeles-area estate for \$165 million, setting a new record for the region, The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday. The Warner Estate spans nine acres in Beverly Hills. AFP

Myanmar school hit by mortar, 20 children hurt

Around 20 children were injured on Thursday when mortar fire hit a school in Rakhine state, where the military is locked in a battle with Arakan Army rebels. AFP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12858

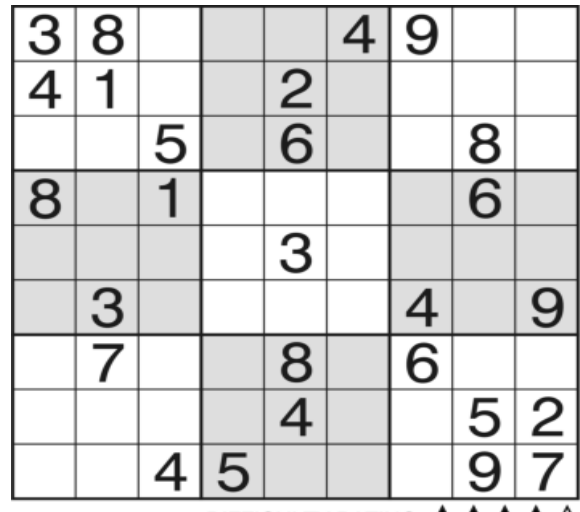
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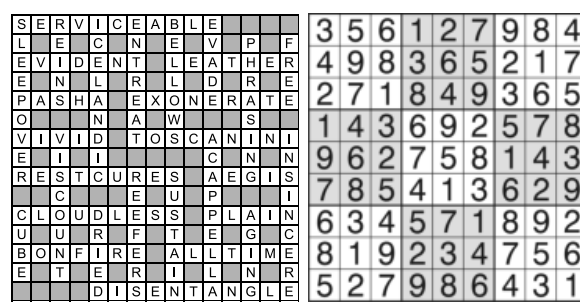
(set by Arden)

- 14 Expect to take note over time (5)
16 Stop a child playing inside canopy (9)
19 One who likes milk takes part in making cheese (9)
20 Go ahead - secret tips for a rendezvous (5)
22 One did have choice over operating system (7)
25 In a defensive position - becomes enraged (2,5)
27 A no man's island, right? Wrong, it's landlocked (3,6)
28 Throughway in view (5)
29 Managed to cheer him - see, he is enamoured by it! (4,6,4)
5 Both sides receive praise from French composer (5)
6 It's dangerous to denigrate the worker (9)
7 Money raised - taking somewhat contrarian view (5)
8 Character's speech disorder shows up in time (7)
9 Solid book, worn out (6)
15 Doctor's in, work at hospital later... (9)
17 ...doctor is home, let's get supple (9)
18 They don't have time to change poster - happens suddenly (3,6)
19 Vintage drink, to be taken in small quantity (7)
21 Drill bit in the centre panel (6)
23 Material dug up from below (5)
24 Key fault with tenor (5)
26 Awarded by law, judge can strike it down (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12857 and Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Continuing connection

Sage Vasistha's son was Sakti, whose son was Parasara. Parasara was the author of the Vishnu Purana. His son was Badarayana, also known as Veda Vyasa, and Vyasa's son was Suka. Just as Vyasa gave us the Mahabharata, his son Suka gave us the Bhagavata Purana. It emerged as his narration to Parikshit, who was awaiting death. Given but a few days to live, Parikshit decided to spend the little time left to him, in listening to Krishna's deeds. Suka's narration to Parikshit, of the story of Krishna, is called Bhagavata Purana. Srimad Bhagavatam can be considered a continuation of the Vishnu Purana. So, Suka, the grandson of sage Parasara, continued what his grandfather had begun. Since it is Lord Krishna who plays the major role in all the happenings in the Mahabharata and since Srimad Bhagavatam is also about His exploits, Suka may also be said to have continued his father Vyasa's work.

Parikshit was the son of Abhimanyu and the grandson of Arjuna. So, the Vyasa-Pandava family connections continued in Suka's time also, said Velukkudi Krishnan, in a discourse. Vishnu dharma was told by sage Saunaka to King Sataneeka. Saunaka was a student of Suta Pauranika. Suta Pauranika was the son of sage Romaharshana. Romaharshana was a disciple of Vyasa. So, the sage who advised King Sataneeka also had a Vyasa connection. As for king Sataneeka, he was the son of Janamejaya and the grandson of Parikshit. So here again we find the Vyasa-Pandava association continuing. Rishis were advisers to kings of yore, because the sages were learned men, who could guide kings in not just matters of religion and belief, but also in administration. They were also well versed in grammar, medicine, gandharva sastra, dharma sastra and many other branches of learning.

