



BRITAIN LONDON STREET NAMED AFTER FREDDIE MERCURY A street in south-west London has been named Freddie Mercury Close in memory of the Indian-origin singer-songwriter who lived in the area with his family...

TOP OF THE WORLD



Rian Johnson is the director of the recent film Knives Out

USA Filmmaker says Apple doesn't want movie villains shown using iPhone

Los Angeles: Filmmaker Rian Johnson said tech giant Apple has mandated that villains in films cannot be shown using its flagship product, the iPhone...

ASIA China to send 'duck army' to help Pakistan fight locusts

Beijing: China is planning to dispatch a 100,000-strong army of ducks to help Pakistan combat a massive locust infestation, a local newspaper reported Thursday...

ISRAEL Ex-housekeeper sues wife of PM Netanyahu

Jerusalem: A former housekeeper at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence is suing the leader's wife Sara for pain and suffering allegedly caused during her employment there...

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK: CASES REPORTED IN 47 COUNTRIES

Saudi cuts access to holy sites, Japan shuts all schools as global alarm rises

Pak shuts all educational institutions in Sindh & Balochistan, suspends Iran flights New US case may be first from unknown origin

AP & PTI BANGKOK, FEBRUARY 27

SAUDI ARABIA cut travel to Islam's holiest sites, South Korea toughened penalties for those breaking quarantines and airports across Latin America looked for signs of sick passengers Thursday as a new virus troubled a mushrooming swath of the globe...



South Korean soldiers spray disinfectant on a street in Daegu on Thursday. AP

hit country outside China, four Busan markets known for colourful silks and a dizzying array of other wares were shuttered while the country's military sent hundreds of its doctors and soldiers to aid in treatment and quarantines...

VIRUS SLOWING DOWN IN CHINA 29 new deaths were reported in China on Thursday, the lowest daily figure since Jan 28 433 new cases reported in the country, up slightly from 406 Wednesday, but significantly lower than in previous weeks 2,744 total number of people killed by the virus in China, mostly in the central province of Hubei



Turkey-backed rebel fighters fire a howitzer toward Syrian government's forces positions near the village of Neirab in Idlib province, Syria, on Thursday. AP

Turkey-backed opposition fighters in Syria retake key town from regime

TURKEY-BACKED SYRIAN opposition fighters on Thursday retook the strategic northwestern town of Saraqeb in Syria that was recently captured by government forces, and cut the highway linking the capital, Damascus, with the northern city of Aleppo days after the government reopened it for the first time since 2012...

E. Explained Blow to Assad's latest offensive

AFTER THE defeat of ISIS and the later withdrawal of US troops from the territory, Assad's Syrian government forces, backed by Russian airstrikes, launched an offensive to take back the rebel-held Idlib province...

Trump faces credibility test as he plays down threat

ASSOCIATED PRESS WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 27

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump faces a critical personal challenge in grappling with the new coronavirus outbreak: Asking Americans to believe him after he and some of his top advisers have contradicted federal scientists in playing down the threat...



Trump tasked Mike Pence with leading the US response to the outbreak

Keenly aware of the stakes not just for public health but also his credibility, Trump conducted a lengthy press conference evening aimed at reassuring everyone that he has the crisis well in hand...

le bigger; it may not get bigger at all." And he continued to distance himself from the stated opinion of public health officials that it's inevitable the virus will spread within the US...

Imran Khan meets Qatar Emir ahead of signing of US-Taliban peace deal

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 27

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan met Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha on Thursday, just two days prior to the signing of a landmark peace deal between the US and the Taliban in the Gulf nation's capital to end the brutal war in Afghanistan...

The Emir of Qatar visited Pakistan in June 2019 and the trip resulted in strengthening the bilateral economic collaboration in diverse areas, the statement said. Khan's visit comes as the US is set to sign a historic peace deal with the Taliban on Saturday...

Gunman kills 5 at US brewery, then kills himself

CARRIE ANTLENGER & GRETCHEN EHLKE MILWAUKEE, FEBRUARY 27

AN EMPLOYEE opened fire Wednesday at one of the nation's largest breweries in Milwaukee, killing five fellow workers before taking his own life, police said...



Near the scene of the shooting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Reuters

everybody goes to work, and they thought they were going to go to work, finish their day and return to their families...

Tragically they never will," Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said.

Trump campaign suing NYT over opinion piece

STEVE HOLLAND WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 27

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump's re-election campaign said on Wednesday it was filing a libel suit accusing the New York Times of intentionally publishing a false opinion article that suggested Russia and the campaign had an over-arching deal in the 2016 US election...

In an escalation of the Republican president's long-running battle with the news media, campaign officials said the lawsuit was being filed in state court in New York. Asked about the suit at a White House news conference later on Wednesday, Trump said the New York Times had "got a lot wrong over the last number of years."

lawsuit "work its way through the courts. And there'll be more coming." He did not elaborate. Separately, Trump assailed two other news organisations that he frequently criticises, the cable TV news channels CNN and MSNBC, accusing them of preventing the danger from the coronavirus in as bad a light as possible and upsetting financial markets.

Authorities offered no immediate motive for the attack and did not release details about the shooter or how it unfolded. None of the victims was identified. Police, who were still contacting relatives, said identities would not be released for at least 24 hours. No one was wounded beyond those who were killed, authorities said. Officers worked for hours to clear the more than 20 buildings in the complex where more than 1,000 people work.

Climate activists win appeal to block new runway at UK's Heathrow airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON, FEBRUARY 27

BRITAIN'S COURT OF Appeal on Thursday ruled in favour of green campaigners who oppose the building of a third runway at London's Heathrow airport, Europe's busiest. The court said the UK government — which in 2018 approved the Heathrow extension — had failed to take into account its commitments to the Paris Agreement to limit climate warming...

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT SAYS THERE WAS A SECRET PLAN FOR A BODY DOUBLE TO MAKE PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Insisting he is real, Putin says vetoed plan to use body double

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 27

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin on Thursday revealed there was a secret plan to use a double to make public appearances for him, while insisting he vetoed it — and that he is the real Putin. Putin's comments showed that a conspiracy theory widespread on the internet that the Russian strongman has been impersonated over the years or even replaced by a lookalike is not entirely without basis...



"I refused to have doubles," Putin said. "It was during the hardest times of the fight against terrorism." Putin as prime minister and then president oversaw the second war against separatists in Chechnya from 1999 to 2000. After Russian armed forces claimed victory, Islamist insurgent attacks became frequent in the North Caucasus while suicide bombers targeted Russia's main cities.

"Was that in the early 2000s?" asked interviewer Andrei Vandenko, who is doing a series of interviews with Putin to mark 20 years since he became president. "Yes," said Putin. "The double would go where things were dodgy?" asked Vandenko. "Well yes, go, put in appearances," Putin said. Conspiracy theories have long circulated suggesting that Putin had died and been replaced by a lookalike.

These centred on the 67-year-old's apparent lack of signs of ageing, the disappearance of bags under his eyes and his seemingly worsening knowledge of German, which he learned when working as a Soviet agent in East Germany. In 2015, Putin disappeared from public view for 10 days, unleashing a frenzy of speculation. "It's boring without gossip," Putin said after reappearing.