



CHILE
VIOLENCE MARKS PINERA'S 2 YRS IN POWER

Students clashed with riot police in Chile's capital Santiago during protests that marked the second anniversary of conservative President Sebastian Pinera taking office on Wednesday. The protests coincided with the 30th anniversary of Chile's return to democracy after Augusto Pinochet's 1973-1990 dictatorship.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

US bans arrivals from Europe for a month

Brazilian official who met Trump tests positive, President says not concerned

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, ROME, MARCH 12

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Wednesday night blocked most visitors from continental Europe to the United States and vowed emergency aid to workers and small businesses as the World Health Organisation declared the coronavirus a global pandemic and millions of people cut themselves off from their regular lives. In an address from the Oval Office, Trump outlined a series of measures intended to tackle the virus and its economic effect as he sought to reassure Americans that he was taking the crisis seriously after previously playing down the scope of the outbreak. He said he would halt travellers from Europe other than Britain for 30 days and asked Congress to support measures like a payroll tax cut. "The virus will not have a chance against us," Trump declared in his speech. After weeks of quarrelling with rivals over his response, even calling their criticisms a "hoax," he called on them to stand down. "We must put politics aside, stop the partisanship and unify together as one nation and one family."



This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history."

—DONALD TRUMP
U.S. PRESIDENT

IN WEST ASIA

IRAN SEEKS \$5 Bn

IRAN'S HEALTH Ministry said the new coronavirus has killed 75 more people, raising the death toll to 429 amid over 10,000 cases as the Islamic Republic revealed it had asked for a \$5-billion loan from the International Monetary fund to fight the virus.

SAUDI WIDENS CURBS

SAUDI ARABIA, which had locked down its eastern Qatif region earlier this week, announced 24 new cases overnight, bringing its total to 45. It halted flights to the EU and 12 other countries, extending an earlier ban on 19 countries.

KUWAIT HOLIDAY

KUWAIT ON Thursday reported eight new coronavirus infections, taking its total to 80, as the country started a two-week public holiday announced by the government as part of measures to contain the spread of infections.

macies and outdoor markets were allowed to operate, as were newspaper stands.

Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Lithuania Algeria and Slovakia joined the growing list of countries shutting down their school systems, and Europe's most successful soccer team, Real Madrid, put all its players into quarantine after one tested positive.



Closed bars and restaurants near Piazza Navona amid an unprecedented lockdown across of all of Italy, in Rome Thursday. Reuters

China senior adviser says coronavirus pandemic over by June if countries act

STELLA QIU & KEVIN YAO
BEIJING, MARCH 12

THE GLOBAL coronavirus pandemic could be over by June if countries mobilize to fight it, a senior Chinese medical adviser said on Thursday, as China declared the peak had passed there and new cases in Hubei fell to single digits for the first time.

Around two-thirds of global cases of the coronavirus have been recorded in China's central Hubei province, where the virus first emerged in December. But in recent weeks the majority of new cases have been outside China.

Zhong Nanshan, the Chinese government's senior medical adviser, said at a news conference on Thursday that as long as countries take the outbreak seriously and are prepared to take firm measures, it could be over worldwide in a matter of months.



Soldiers march past the closed gates to the Forbidden City, usually crowded with tourists, in Beijing Thursday. AP

"My advice is calling for all countries to follow WHO instructions and intervene on a national scale," he said. "If all countries could get mobilised, it could be over by June."

Zhong, an 83-year-old epidemiologist renowned for helping combat the SARS outbreak in 2003, said viruses in the same

family typically become less active in warm months, which could help slow the spread.

"My estimate of June is based on scenarios that all countries take positive measures. But if some countries do not treat the infectiousness and harmfulness seriously, and intervene strongly, it would last longer." AP

EXPLAINED
China shifts focus to outside world

COVID-19, which originated in China's Hubei province, looks to have peaked in the country with the number of new cases going down each day. On Wednesday, only 15 new cases were recorded, down from 24 the day before. Seven of these cases were outside Hubei, a province that has been under lockdown. Six of these seven cases came from abroad. The growing number of such cases — 85 so far — has prompted China to curb arrivals from foreign countries and to quarantine for 14 days anyone coming from abroad.

China spokesman says US military may have brought virus to Wuhan

GABRIEL CROSSLEY
BEIJING, MARCH 12

A SPOKESMAN for China's Foreign Ministry suggested on Thursday the US military might have brought the coronavirus to the Chinese city of Wuhan, which has been hardest hit by the outbreak, doubling down on a war of words with Washington.

China has taken great offence at comments by US officials accusing it of being slow to react to the virus, first detected in Wuhan late last year, and of not being insufficiently transparent.

On Wednesday, US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said the speed of China's reaction to the emergence of the coronavirus had probably cost the world two months when it could have been preparing for the outbreak.

In a strongly worded tweet, written in English on his verified Twitter account, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said it was the United States that lacked transparency.

"When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!" Zhao wrote.

Zhao, an avid and often combative Twitter user, did not offer any evidence for his suggestion that the US military might be to blame for the outbreak in China. REUTERS



UN chief urges all govts to scale up virus fight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS, MARCH 12

UN CHIEF Antonio Guterres on Wednesday urged world governments to urgently scale up their response to the novel coronavirus if they are to stand a chance of stemming its spread.

"Today's declaration of a pandemic is a call to action - for everyone, everywhere," the secretary general said in a statement.

"We can still change the course of this pandemic — but that means addressing inaction," he said. "I call on every government to step up and scale up their efforts — now."

"The best science tells us, if countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilize their people in the response, we can go a long way to mitigating transmission," Guterres said.

PANDEMIC WATCH



EUROPE
Spain minister tests positive for coronavirus

Madrid: Spain's equality minister has tested positive for coronavirus and has been quarantined with her partner, deputy prime minister and Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias, a government statement said on Thursday. "The minister (Irene Montero) is in a good condition and second deputy prime minister Pablo Iglesias is also in quarantine due to the situation," the statement said. "This morning, all members of the government will undergo testing," it added, indicating the results would be published later in the day.

ASIA
Sri Lanka shuts down all schools amid virus scare

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Thursday announced the closure of all schools across the country to combat the spread of the coronavirus. The Education Ministry announced that all schools will remain shut down till April 20, as second person in Sri Lanka tested positive for the virus. The second patient, identified as a 44-year-old man, is said to have had close contact with the first patient detected with the virus in the country. Director-General of Health Services Anil Jasinghe said. The first patient was identified as a 56-year-old who had been on tour with a group of Italians.

ASIA
China cancels Everest permits

Kathmandu: China has cancelled permits for Mount Everest because of the coronavirus, expedition organisers said Thursday, ahead of the spring climbing season on the world's highest peak. Last year's traffic-clogged spring window saw a record 885 people summit Everest, 644 of them from Nepal and 241 from the northern flank in Tibet. The Nepal side remains open for now although some expedition operators have seen cancellations and climbers have been asked to submit a 14-day travel history.

Italy, South Korea outbreaks reveal disparity in deaths, tactics

EMILIO PARODI, STEPHEN JEWKES, SANGMI CHA & JU-MIN PARK
MILAN, SEOUL, MARCH 12

IN ITALY, millions are locked down and more than 1,000 people have died from the coronavirus. In South Korea, hit by the disease at about the same time, only a few thousand are quarantined and 67 people have died. As the virus courses through the world, the story of two outbreaks illustrates a coming problem for countries now grappling with an explosion in cases. It's impractical to test every potential patient, but unless the



Workers spray disinfectant at a subway station in Seoul. AP

OUTBREAK IN NUMBERS

| | DEATHS | | INFECTIONS | |
|-------------|--------|-------|------------|--------|
| | New | Total | New | Total |
| Italy | 189 | 1,016 | 2,651 | 15,113 |
| South Korea | 6 | 67 | 114 | 7,869 |

authorities can find a way to see how widespread infection is, their best answer is lockdown.

Italy started out testing widely, then narrowed the focus so that now, the authorities don't have to process hundreds of thousands of tests. But there's a trade-off: They can't see what's coming and are trying to curb

the movements of the country's entire population of 60 million people to contain the disease.

Thousands of miles away in South Korea, authorities have a different response to a similar-sized outbreak. They are testing hundreds of thousands of people for infections and tracking potential carriers like detectives,

Turkey says it has largely agreed details of Idlib ceasefire with Russia

REUTERS
ANKARA, MARCH 12

TURKISH AND Russian officials have largely agreed details of a ceasefire deal in Syria's Idlib region, Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said on Thursday, the third day of discussions between the two countries.

Last week Turkey and Russia, which back opposing sides in Syria's war, agreed on the ceasefire to halt an escalation of violence in Idlib that displaced nearly a million people and brought the two countries close to direct confrontation.

Under the agreement, Turkish and Russian forces will carry out joint patrols along the M4 highway linking Syria's east

and west, and establish a security corridor either side of it. A Russian delegation arrived in Ankara this week to discuss the details of the agreement.

Russia supports Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey backs rebels who have fought him for nearly nine years.

"We have largely reached an agreement. At the moment, the attacks have stopped, the ceasefire is holding," Akar was cited as saying by his office. "The joint patrols will start along the M4 on March 15. Our colleagues are discussing the details of that," he said.

A senior Turkish official told Reuters that concrete results were expected from the discussions in Ankara. Turkey was prepared to retaliate against violations by the Syrian government, he added.

2 Americans, 1 Briton killed in rocket attack on US coalition base in Iraq

ALISSA J RUBIN & ERIC SCHMITT
BAGHDAD, MARCH 12

A VOLLEY of rockets struck a sprawling military base north of Baghdad on Wednesday evening, killing three service members, two of them Americans and one British, according to a United States official and an Iraqi military officer, both in Iraq.

The attack came less than three months after a similar rocket attack killed an American contractor in Iraq, setting off a spiral of attacks that nearly led to war between the United States and Iran.

The two Americans killed Wednesday were active-duty troops with the Army and Air Force, an American military of-



Twelve members of the US-led military coalition in Iraq of various nationalities were wounded in the attack on the base, Camp Taji. AP file

ficial said. The official said that 12 members of the US-led military coalition in Iraq of various nationalities were wounded in the attack on the base, Camp Taji.

The White House and Pentagon had no immediate comment on the rocket attacks.

A senior Trump administration official said that senior na-

tional security aides were closely following the situation but declined to comment further until a more detailed assessment of what happened and who was responsible was available.

A British defence spokesman confirmed "an incident involving UK service personnel" but declined to comment further.

The American military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the attack was under investigation, said that 30 107-mm Katyusha rockets were fired at the base from improvised truck launchers. Of those, 18 landed on Camp Taji.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility and American officials said Wednesday night that they were still assessing who carried out the attack. NYT

Lawyers: Chelsea Manning attempts suicide in US jail

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, MARCH 12

CHELSEA MANNING'S legal team said Wednesday that the former intelligence analyst tried to take her own life Wednesday, but was transported to a hospital where she is recovering.

Manning has been in jail since May 2019 for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks. She was scheduled to appear in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, on Friday for a hearing on a motion to terminate the civil contempt sanctions stemming from that refusal.

In the motion filed last month, Manning's lawyers argued that Manning has shown during her incarceration that she can't be coerced into testifying before a grand jury.

Manning served seven years



in a military prison for leaking a trove of documents to WikiLeaks before President Barack Obama commuted the remainder of her 35-year sentence in 2017.

Alexandria Sheriff Dana Lawhorne said Wednesday: "There was an incident at approximately 12.11 pm today at the Alexandria Adult Detention Center involving inmate Chelsea Manning. It was handled appropriately by our professional staff and Ms Manning is safe."