

# 12 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

**PANDEMIC WATCH**



Tom Hanks

**USA**  
**Hanks, wife return to LA after quarantine**

Los Angeles: Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson returned to Los Angeles on Friday after spending more than two weeks in quarantine in Australia after testing positive for the coronavirus. The "Forrest Gump" and "Toy Story" actor and Wilson were photographed smiling while driving a vehicle in the city. Celebrity website TMZ said the photographs were taken shortly after the pair landed at a small Los Angeles area airport. Hanks, a double Oscar winner, and Wilson were the first big celebrities to announce they had tested positive for the disease.

**SAUDI ARABIA**  
**Missiles stopped over cities under virus curfew**

Riyadh: Saudi air defenses intercepted ballistic missiles over Riyadh and a city on the Yemen border late Saturday, leaving at least two civilians wounded in the capital that is under curfew in a bid to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Multiple explosions shook Riyadh in the attack, which the Saudi-led military coalition blamed on Yemen's Iran-aligned Huthi rebels who have previously targeted Saudi cities with missiles, rockets and drones. It was the first major assault since the Huthis offered last September to halt attacks.

**USA**  
**Iconic Indian paper closes print edition**

New York: An iconic ethnic Indian newspaper in the US that catered to the Indian diaspora for the last 50 years has announced that it will cease the print edition from Monday due to pre-existing troubles in the publishing industry worsened by the cancellation of advertisements amidst the coronavirus outbreak. Founded by Indian-American publisher Gopal Raju in 1970, India Abroad rose to great heights of popularity by focusing on Indian news meant for expatriate audience. Suresh Ventakachari through his note announced its decision to cease the print edition.

**NEPAL**  
**Govt extends lockdown period**

Kathmandu: The government on Sunday decided to extend the lockdown in Nepal by another week. In a cabinet meeting, it was decided to extend the lockdown restricting people's movements as a preventive measure. With medical staff combat the outbreak without proper safety equipment, the government on Sunday imported 12.6 tonne of protective material, including gowns, goggles and RNA extraction kits. Of the material, 2.6 tonne was granted by the Chinese government while the rest were purchased by Nepal.

# 2,000 deaths in US, global toll 32,000

## Fatalities may cross 1 lakh, says US expert; Trump quarantine idea slammed as 'declaration of war'

**AGENCIES**  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 29

The US government's foremost infection disease expert says the country could experience more than 100,000 deaths and millions of infections from the coronavirus pandemic.

Dr Anthony Fauci, speaking on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, offered his prognosis as the federal government weighs rolling back guidelines on social distancing in areas that have not been as hard-hit by the outbreak at the conclusion of the nationwide 15-day effort to slow the spread of the virus.

"I would say between 100,000 and 200,000 cases," he said, correcting himself to say he meant deaths. "We're going to have millions of cases." But he added "I don't want to be held to that" because the pandemic is "such a moving target."

President Trump said on Saturday night that he would not impose a quarantine on New York, New Jersey and Connecticut but would instead issue a "strong" travel advisory to be implemented by the gov-



A deserted street in New York's Chinatown. AP

ernors of the three states.

Trump made the announcement on Twitter just hours after telling reporters that he was considering a quarantine of the three states in an effort to limit the spread of the coronavirus to Florida and other states.

Several Democratic governors said on Sunday that they feared hospitals in their states would soon be overwhelmed with patients sick with COVID-19.

Deaths from the coronavirus in the US surged past 2,000 on Saturday, doubling in just three

days, as per a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Confirmed cases topped 121,000.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has said Trump's suggestion of a quarantine for the tri-state area would be a "federal declaration of war", resulting in "chaos and mayhem".

"It would be a chaos and mayhem. It's totally opposite everything he's been saying. I don't think it is plausible. I don't think it is legal," he said.

New York alone has reported more than 52,000 cases.

**COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS**

**PELOSI BLAMES TRUMP FOR 'EARLY DENIAL'**

New York: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi put the blame for the nation's flawed response to the pandemic squarely on President Trump.

"His denial at the beginning was deadly," Pelosi, a California Democrat, said on CNN's "State of the Union." "Now I think the best thing would be to do is to prevent more loss of life."

"We really want to work in a unified way to get the job done here," she added, "but we cannot continue to allow him to continue to make these underestimates of what is actually happening here."

"Don't fiddle while people die, Mr President," Pelosi said. The White House had no immediate comment.

**FIRST INFANT DEATH IN U.S. REPORTED**

New York: An infant who tested positive for the coronavirus has died in Chicago, the authorities said on Saturday. It was the first known death of a child younger than a year old with the virus in the US.

Newborns and babies have seemed to be largely unaffected by the coronavirus, but three new studies suggest the virus may reach the fetus in utero.

"There has never before been a death associated with Covid-19 in an infant," said Ngozi Ezike, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health. "A full investigation is underway to determine the cause of death." Older adults have been viewed as the most vulnerable in the outbreak, but younger people have also died. **NYT**



Social distancing outside a supermarket in Madrid. Reuters

## Spain reports 838 more deaths; Italy toll climbs by 756

**AFP & REUTERS**  
MADRID/ROME, MARCH 29

SPAIN CONFIRMED another 838 deaths in 24 hours from coronavirus on Sunday, a new daily record bringing the total number of deaths to 6,528, according to health ministry figures.

Meanwhile, the death toll in Italy climbed by 756 to 10,779, the Civil Protection Agency said on Sunday, the second successive fall in the daily rate.

The number of confirmed cases in Spain has now reached 78,797 -- after the one-day increase of 9.1 percent -- as the country battles the world's second most deadly outbreak after Italy.

Except for a brief lull recorded on Thursday, Spain's death toll has been rising daily.

However, officials have pointed to a slower growth rate for both deaths and confirmed cases and expressed hope that the peak of the outbreak was approaching. Spain also reported Sunday that 14,709 people had

**ACROSS EUROPE,** affluent city dwellers have been leaving hard-hit cities for their second homes, where proximity to the sea or mountains lessens the discomfort of confinement. But they also bring fears that they will spread the coronavirus to regions with few hospitals. The situation has ignited anger over what the pandemic is laying bare every day: the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor

been cured of COVID-19, a rise of 19.7 percent in 24 hours.

The total number of confirmed cases in Italy rose on Sunday to 97,689 from a previous 92,472, the lowest daily rise in new cases since Wednesday.

Of those infected nationwide, 13,030 had fully recovered on Sunday, compared to 12,384 the day before.

## Pak deploys Army, insists virus outbreak under control

**SAJJAD HUSSAIN**  
ISLAMABAD, MARCH 29

PAKISTAN'S TOP health official claimed on Sunday that the situation was under control as the number of confirmed coronavirus cases was still limited to 1,560, even as the army was deployed across the country to enforce strict lockdown to contain the fast spreading viral infection.

Prime Minister's Adviser on Health Dr Zafar Mirza told the media that due to the effective measures by the government, the virus outbreak was under control in Pakistan. However, he said that 1,106 suspected cases were added during the last 24 hours, taking the total number of such cases to 13,324. On Sunday, Pakistan's cases reached 1,560 after more people were tested positive.

The Pakistan Army said on Saturday it has deployed troops across the country. "Army troops are assisting Federal & Provincial administrations in ensuring enforcement measures for containment of COVID-19 with focus on Public Safety. All points of entries (POE) being manned & monitored, establishment of joint Check Posts and joint patrolling with other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) being carried out effectively," it said. **PTI**



In Islamabad, Sunday. AP



## AFTER THE LOCKDOWN

A man gets out through barriers built to block buildings from a street in Wuhan, China, on Sunday. The country has resumed domestic flights in epicentre Hubei, except for Wuhan, as part of a plan to ease a lockdown in the region. Reuters

## Merkel shines in crisis even as power wanes

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
BERLIN, MARCH 29

IN HER first address to the nation on the pandemic, German Chancellor Angela Merkel calmly appealed to citizens' reason and discipline to slow the spread of the virus, acknowledging as a woman who grew up in communist East Germany how difficult it is to give up freedoms, yet as a trained scientist emphasising that the facts don't lie.

Then, wearing the same blue pantsuit from the televised address, the 65-year-old popped into her local supermarket to pick up food, wine and toilet paper to take back to her Berlin apartment. Photos snapped by

**MINISTER KILLS SELF OVER 'CRISIS WORRIES'**

Frankfurt Am Main: Thomas Schaefer, the finance minister of Germany's Hesse state, has committed suicide apparently after becoming "deeply worried" over how to cope with the economic fallout from the virus, state premier Volker Bouffier said Sunday.

Schaefer, 54, was found dead near a railway track on Saturday. The Wiesbaden prosecution's office said they believe he died by suicide.

"We are in shock, we are in disbelief and above all we are immensely sad," Bouffier said in a recorded statement. **AFP**

someone at the grocery store were shared worldwide as a reassuring sign of calm leadership.

With the outbreak, Merkel is reasserting her traditional strengths and putting her stamp firmly on domestic policy after two years in which her star

seemed to be fading, with attention focused on constant bickering in her governing coalition and her own party's troubled efforts to find a successor.

She faces her biggest crisis yet -- a fact underlined by her decision last week to make her first

television address to the nation other than her annual New Year's message. "This is serious -- take it seriously," she told her compatriots. "Since German unification -- no, since World War II -- there has been no challenge to our country in which our acting together in solidarity matters so much."

Merkel's response to the coronavirus pandemic is still very much a work in progress, but a poll released Friday by ZDF television showed 89 per cent of Germans thought the government was handling it well.

The poll saw Merkel strengthen her lead and a strong 7 per cent rise for her bloc after months in which it was weighed down by questions over its future leadership.

**EXPLAINED**  
**E. Trouble with enforcement**

WHILE IRAN took some steps such as closing down many businesses and restricting travel between cities, the moves came long after other countries imposed more stringent measures. In addition, as per reports, the government has faced trouble in imposing its restrictions, with many flouting such directives. This has contributed to recent criticism of the government.

prevent it from selling oil on international markets.

Iran has rejected US offers of humanitarian aid.

State TV on Sunday reported another 123 deaths, pushing Iran's overall toll to 2,640 amid 38,309 confirmed cases.

**'NOW THAT I AM BACK HOME, I FEEL LIKE THE NIGHTMARE ISN'T OVER'**

# Jobless and afraid to hug his children: One of first patients in NY

**EDGAR SANDOVAL**  
NEW YORK, MARCH 29

IT WAS not the joyous homecoming Fatehi Darhan had dreamed about while he lay alone for two weeks in a hospital room in Queens, fighting the coronavirus. He came close to death.

When he entered his small apartment in the Far Rockaway section of the borough and saw his three young children, their eyes longing for a fatherly hug, he fought every instinct to wrap his arms around them. "I froze," Darhan, 34, said. "I wanted to hug

them, but it did not feel safe. I don't know when I would feel safe hugging them again."

Darhan's misgivings underscore the difficulties of returning to normal life after surviving a disease that has changed almost every aspect of living in New York City.

Nearly a month after he became the first Queens resident to test positive, Darhan not only feels he cannot touch his children, but he has lost his job as an Uber driver and has no idea what is next, or how long he can pay his monthly bills. "I'm worried," he said.



Fatehi Darhan, 34, spent over two weeks fighting the virus. NYT

Like Darhan, survivors say they are starting to realise the ramifications of surviving the illness, from lost work to severe anxiety.

Darhan's ordeal began on February 28, when he walked into the emergency room at St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway with difficulty breathing and a rising fever. Hours later, he said, he was discharged and told to follow up with his primary care doctor.

But when he returned home, he found it hard to rest, he said in an interview. His symptoms seemed to worsen. His skin burned, as if lava ran through his

veins, he recalled. It felt as if invisible knives were plunging into his lungs.

"I never felt anything like this before in my life," Darhan said, speaking in Arabic through a translator. "I knew this was different. That's when I thought, maybe it's coronavirus."

His wife and their children -- Ali, HaDeel and Sara -- sleep in one of the two bedrooms in their apartment, he said. He is in the other. When awake, he stays at least six feet away during meals and anytime he shares a room with them.

Darhan, an immigrant from

Yemen, said he longed to play with his children, or to sit close together and watch television. But he cannot escape the fear that remnants of the virus are lingering in his body. So, he talks to them over FaceTime from a different room or several feet apart.

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