

12 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



Volunteers, police stand guard. AP

PAKISTAN

Suspension of domestic, intl flights extended

Islamabad: Pakistan on Friday further extended ban on domestic and international flight operations up to April 21 as the country stepped up efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus, which has infected 4,695 people in the country, authorities said. The Aviation Ministry extended the ban on the domestic and international flight operations. The ministry in a statement said, "As per the decision of the Government of Pakistan, the suspension of International and Domestic flight operations as effected earlier has been extended up to April 21, Tuesday."

RUSSIA

Moscow at 'peak capacity' due to cases

Moscow: Moscow's hospitals and ambulance service are working at peak capacity after a sharp rise in those hospitalised with serious complications, a senior city official said Friday. The city with more than 12 million residents has the largest outbreak in Russia, with 7,822 confirmed coronavirus cases out of a national total of almost 12,000. The number in Moscow's hospitals has doubled since last week and more than 85 percent of these patients have pneumonia, deputy mayor Anastasia Rakova was quoted as saying on the city virus task force's Telegram account.

FRANCE

50 confirmed cases aboard aircraft carrier

Paris: The French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle has registered 50 cases of novel coronavirus among the crew, the armed forces ministry said Friday. Three sailors had been evacuated from the vessel to hospital in the Mediterranean port of Toulon as a "precaution". However, none of the crew who tested positive for COVID-19 and remained on board have suffered "worsening health" so far, the ministry added in a statement. The origin of the virus was not yet known but all crew were now wearing face masks.

GHANA

Lockdown extended in key regions

Accra: Ghana will extend a lockdown on the country's two main regions for one week to help contain the spread of coronavirus, the president said. President Nana Akufo-Addo said the two-week restriction on movement around the capital Accra and in the Kumasi area would be prolonged from Monday. "It is important that we stay the course, and bear with the difficulties that come with it," the leader said in a national broadcast late Thursday. "The final result, hopefully, will be freedom from the virus."

Global death toll passes 100,000

Death count in United States crosses 16,500; Number of patients in New York ICUs sees dip for first time

NEW YORK TIMES

NEW YORK, APRIL 10

THE NUMBER of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide has surged past 1.5 million, according to data collected by *The New York Times* and Johns Hopkins University, and the death toll passed a grim milestone. Fatalities crossed 100,000, with the virus detected in at least 177 countries.

The death toll in the United States has surpassed that of Spain, with more than 16,600 fatalities from the virus reported by Friday morning. Only Italy has reported more deaths.

Although some governments are considering easing restrictions, lockdowns are being extended across much of the world heading into the Easter weekend, and policing measures stepped up.

Fewer coronavirus patients in New York State were in intensive-care units on Friday than on Thursday, Governor Andrew M Cuomo said — the first time the figure has fallen. The drop was small: 17 people, to 4,908, from 4,925 yesterday. But it provides an important data point indicating that the curve of infection is flattening, the governor said. A week ago, the number was growing by more than 300 people per day.

The virus continues to take a tremendous number of lives, however. Another 777 people died, Cuomo said, bringing the state's total to 7,844. But he noted that the one-day death toll has been relatively steady the past three days, and that Friday's figure was lower than Thursday's. "As someone who searches

EU AGREES ON \$550-BILLION RESCUE PACKAGE

ON THE economic front, Europe attempted a fightback with EU finance ministers agreeing in late-night talks to a \$550 billion rescue package aimed at reducing pain across the 27-nation bloc, especially hardest-hit Italy and Spain.

EUROPE HAS decided and is ready to meet the gravity of the crisis, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire tweeted after the talks.

HE WARNED earlier in the day that France's economy was expected to shrink six percent this year, even with the country's own 100-billion-euro relief plan

for solace in all this grief, the leveling off in lives lost is a somewhat hopeful sign," he said.

Tokyo's governor parted ways with Japan's national government by requesting the closure of a range of businesses — including nightclubs, karaoke bars, gyms and movie theaters — during a state of emergency.

Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, went into a partial lockdown amid fears that the country's underfunded and understaffed health care system could easily be overwhelmed.



DRONE DRIVE: A squad uses a drone to spray disinfectant in the streets of Cannes, in France on Friday. Reuters

UK daily death toll climbs by record 980

AFP & PTI

LONDON, APRIL 10

HEALTH SECRETARY Matt Hancock said on Friday that Britain had recorded 980 deaths from coronavirus in the 24-hour period since the last report, the highest daily toll yet.

It brings the total number of fatalities from COVID-19 in UK hospitals to nearly 8,000, while the number of confirmed cases inside the country climbed to more than 65,000.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was shifted out of the intensive care unit (ICU) of a



A man sunbathes on the roof of a canal boat in London on Friday. Reuters

London hospital, has been able to take short walks between periods of rest during the early stages of his recovery after testing positive for coronavirus, Downing Street said on Friday. Johnson, 55, after having spo-

ken to doctors about his progress, is thankful for the "incredible care" he has been receiving at St. Thomas' Hospital, his office said.

"The Prime Minister has been able to do short walks, between

periods of rest, as part of the care he is receiving to aid his recovery," a Downing Street spokesperson said.

"He has spoken to his doctors and thanks the whole clinical team for the incredible care he has received. His thoughts are with those affected by this terrible disease," the spokesperson said.

Earlier on Friday, Johnson's father Stanley Johnson said the whole family was "tremendously grateful" that the Prime Minister had been moved out of the ICU, adding that he thinks his son's illness has "got the whole country to realise this is a serious event".

Pandemic has provided window into how bio-terrorist attack might unfold: Guterres

YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 10

THE COVID-19 pandemic has provided a "window" into how a bio-terrorist attack might unfold across the world, UN chief Antonio Guterres said, issuing a strong warning that non-state groups could gain access to "virulent strains" that could pose similar devastation to societies around the globe.

"While the COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis, its implications are much more far-reaching. The pandemic also poses a significant threat to the maintenance of international peace and security — potentially leading to an increase in social unrest and violence that would greatly undermine our ability to fight the disease," Guterres said.

"The weaknesses and lack of preparedness exposed by this pandemic provide a window onto how a bio-terrorist attack might unfold — and may increase its risks. Non-state groups could gain access to virulent strains that could pose similar devastation to societies around the globe," he said. **PTI**

United Nations: The UN Security Council underlined the need for unity and solidarity with those affected by the COVID-19 and expressed support for the efforts of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the potential impact of the pandemic.

Guterres stressed that the engagement of the council will be critical to mitigate the peace and security implications. "Indeed, a signal of unity and resolve from the Council would count for a lot at this anxious time," he said. "To prevail against the pandemic, we will need to work together. That means heightened solidarity," he said.

He said he is concerned the pandemic threatens to further erode trust in public institutions, "particularly if citizens perceive that their authorities mishandled the response or are not transparent on the scope of the crisis." **PTI**

UNSC CALLS FOR UNITY, SOLIDARITY

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Singapore battles in migrant workers' dorms

AP & PTI

KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 10

AFTER MANAGING to keep on top of the first wave of coronavirus outbreaks, Singapore is grappling with an alarming rise in infections among migrant workers housed in crowded dormitories.

About 250 Indians, with nearly half of them staying in close contact in such dormitories, have tested positive, the Indian High Commission here said on Friday.

Indian High Commissioner

EXPLAINED

Handling of migrant worker cases may play key role in fight

THE MIGRANT worker population is a significant one in Singapore, which reportedly has a million such work permit holders from many countries. This makes them a vulnerable group during the pandemic, as they — unlike white collar foreign employees — live in dormitories in packed conditions which makes social distancing difficult. The handling of these cases could have considerable influence on the overall fight.

Jawed Ashraf told PTI that almost all Indians who have the disease are mostly stable or improving.

Such cases of migrant workers now account for about a quarter of Singapore's 1,910 in-

fections. The government reported 287 new cases Thursday, its biggest daily jump. More than 200 were linked to the foreign workers' dormitories.

Prime Minister Lee has commended the hard work put in by foreign workers and assured them of doing his best to take care of their needs. "If any of their family members watch my video, let me say this to them: We appreciate the work and contributions of your sons, fathers, husbands in Singapore. We feel responsible for their well-being," said Lee on Friday.

Italy eyes lockdown extension to May 3

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ROME, APRIL 10

PRIME MINISTER Giuseppe Conte was reportedly ready Friday to extend most measures of Italy's month-long lockdown until early May in order to avoid a second coronavirus wave.

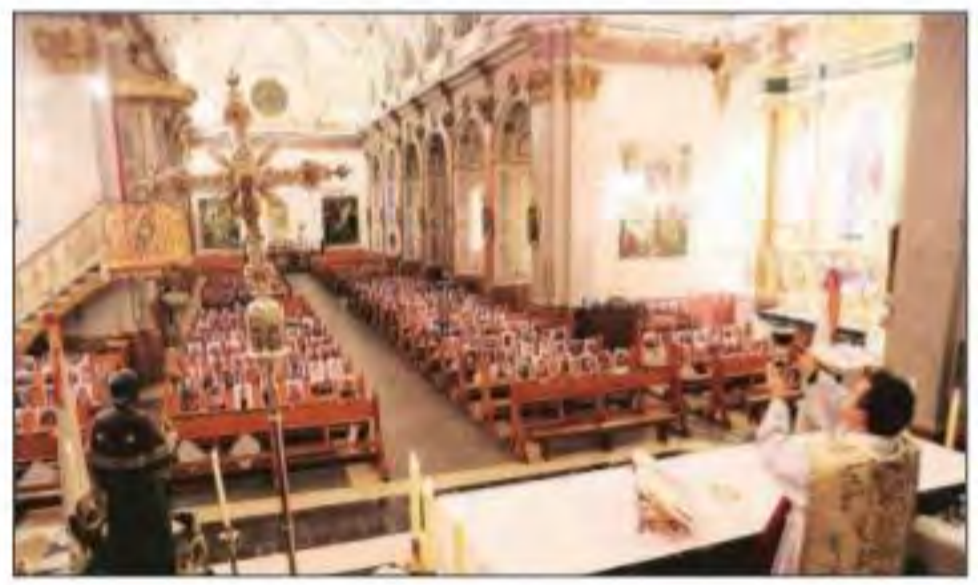
Italy's main newspapers said Conte will publish a decree either Friday or Saturday prohibiting people from taking walks or lounging in parks until May 3.

The reported decision followed days of consultations with government scientists and regional leaders. Italy's death toll from the novel coronavirus has officially reached 18,279 since the end of February, the highest in the world.

The Corriere della Serra newspaper said Conte will bow to growing pressure and allow a tiny number of businesses to open when the existing restrictions expire on April 13.

It will represent "a small, cautious, symbolic opening," the Corriere della Serra wrote.

"We do not have the conditions to restart thing now," Conte reportedly told union and business leaders on Thursday.



Holy Week mass in a village near Valencia in Spain. Reuters

European nations bolster lockdown amid Easter

AGENCIES

APRIL 10

AS AN extended Easter weekend in much of Europe threatened to derail efforts to maintain social distancing measures, police departments across the continent stepped up enforcement efforts.

The coronavirus death toll curve in Spain flattened further on Friday as the government discussed different strategies to start phasing out one of the world's strictest lockdowns.

"Any step towards de-escalation of such an intense lockdown must be done with extreme caution," Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias told a local channel.

In France, where sunny weather is expected over the

weekend, the police were increasing checks to dissuade people from flouting the restrictions on movement.

With the uncharacteristically warm weather, a growing number of places, like the city of Saint-Etienne, are following Paris's lead in banning or limiting physical activity like jogging or running.

Britain, which is expecting sunshine throughout much of the weekend, ramped up efforts to halt travel, with police warning potential visitors to stay away.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany cautioned people not to give in to the temptation to roam outside and congregate. "We can't be reckless," she said at a news conference on Thursday. "We can't allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of security."

'PEOPLE WERE WOUNDED AND CAME BACK TO THE BATTLEFIELD'

Rising from sickbeds, COVID-19 medics head back to frontlines

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS, APRIL 10

"BE STRONG, mum, we really love you," is what Dr Aurelie Gouel's kids tell the ICU physician when she sets off for long hospital shifts trying to save critically ill coronavirus patients.

Although aged just 4 and 6, Gouel's children are acutely aware of how dangerous the disease can be not only because their mother has briefed them but also because she is among the more than 1.6 million people worldwide who have fallen sick. Tell-tale symptoms — fever,

cough, intense fatigue, difficulty breathing — floored Gouel in March. "It was very tough for three, four days," she told *The Associated Press*. But as soon as she felt well enough, she plunged straight back to work at her Paris hospital that treated Europe's first fatal case.

"It was quite frustrating being at home and seeing how badly the hospitals needed help," the 38-year-old said.

"We were trained for this," she added. "The world needs us." "It's a bit like what happened in the First World War. People were wounded and came back to the battlefield," said Dr Philippe



Montravers, head of anaesthesiology and critical care at Bichat Hospital in Paris. The hospital treated the 80-year-old Chinese tourist who in mid-February became the first person outside Asia to die from COVID-19.

"They feel ... very guilty staying at home," Montravers said.

Health workers hope that those among them who recovered and are returning to hospitals are now armed not only with a deeper, more personal understanding of the virus but also with some degree of immunity.

"It helps a lot for them to return to work, and especially for them to return with immunisation. That's really fantastic because it takes away the fear that we have for a second wave of infections," said Dr Julio Mayol,

medical director of the San Carlos Clinic Hospital in Madrid. Nearly 15% of its 1,400 staffers have been infected.

In Italy, those back on duty include Elena Pagliarini, a nurse who was photographed before her diagnosis slumped exhausted next to a computer keyboard, an image that came to symbolise the plight of the worst-hit country, with more than 18,000 dead.

Gouel also says the possibility of immunity reassured her when she went back to dealing with the crush of patients. "I feel that I'm now a durable strength," she said. "If there are things that need

to be done with heavily infected patients, things that are risky, I'm easier with me doing them, rather than my colleagues." Despite being "very worried" when she was sick, Gouel's husband supported her rapid return to work, she said.

And although her kids "know all about the coronavirus, that it is serious and people die of it," they also understand that her drive to fight it means she can't always be with them.

"They give me a kiss and say, 'Be strong, mum, we really love you,'" she said.

"Even though they are small, they know that my rightful place is with the sick."