

# 10 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

**PANDEMIC WATCH**



**FRANCE**  
Google to publish user location data

Paris: Google says it will publish users' location data around the world from Friday to allow governments to gauge the effectiveness of social distancing measures, brought in to stem the COVID-19 pandemic. The reports on users' movements in 131 countries will be made available on a special website and will "chart movement trends over time by geography", according to a post on one of Google's blogs. Trends will display "a percentage point increase or decrease in visits" to locations like parks, shops, homes and places of work, not "the absolute number of visits," said the post.

**SRI LANKA**  
Election in constitutional impasse

Colombo: The parliamentary polls in Sri Lanka cannot be held before the end of May due to the coronavirus pandemic, the election commission said on Friday, expressing concern that the situation could lead to a constitutional impasse as the new Parliament must meet within three months of dissolution. Mahinda Deshapriya, chief of the Independent Elections Commission, said it appeared now the election cannot be held and the new Parliament would not be able to meet on or before June 2, and that "this will cause a conflict with article 70 of the Constitution".

**NIGERIA**  
Man shot dead for violating lockdown rule

Warri: A Nigerian man has been shot dead for allegedly flouting a stay-at-home order aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus, police and a lawmaker said on Friday. Nigeria has introduced a raft of measures, including lockdowns of major cities, to try to contain the virus, which has infected 184 people, two of them fatally. Joseph Pessu, a resident of the oil city of Warri in Delta, was killed on Thursday by a soldier deployed to enforce the lockdown, the sources said. "The incident occurred yesterday with the youths protesting," a state police spokesman said.

**ONE MILLION CONFIRMED CASES**  
recorded worldwide so far

**DEATH TOLL CROSSES 50,000**  
with Italy still recording the most fatalities

**US, SPAIN, BRITAIN SEE HIGHEST**  
one-day death counts till date

## Half the world told to stay home

Spain reports over 900 deaths for second day; experts warn 1 mn cases only 'small proportion' of real figure

**AGENCIES**  
APRIL 3

THE NUMBER of confirmed coronavirus deaths accelerated past 50,000 on Friday as the United States, Spain and Britain grappled with their highest tolls yet and the world economy took a massive hit. Nearly four billion people on the planet — half of humanity — found themselves on Friday under some sort of order to stay in their homes. The human scale of the pandemic has never been more stark — experts warning that more than one million cases of COVID-19 disease confirmed globally is probably only a small proportion of total infections as testing is still not widely available. The United States accounts for around a quarter of confirmed cases but Europe is far from being out of danger — Spain reported more than 900 deaths in 24 hours on Friday, for the second day running. The virus has now killed more than 10,000 people across Spain, but not 29-year-old Javier Lara, who has just returned home after being treated in an overburdened intensive care unit. "I was panicking that my daughter would get infected. When I started showing symptoms, I said I wouldn't hold her or go near her, or change her nappies," he told AFP, describing his fear for his eight-week-old after facing death at the "worst moment in his life". While Italy still leads the world in fatalities, France, Belgium and Britain have also been hard hit. German Chancellor Angela Merkel left her Berlin home for the first time in almost two weeks on Friday after she was quarantined following contact with an infected doctor. Research on the prevention

**Deaths likely undercounted: German official**

Berlin: The head of Germany's disease control agency says the number of people who die of COVID-19 is likely being undercounted. Lothar Wieler of the Robert Koch Institute said Friday that he believes "we have more dead than are officially being reported." It wasn't immediately clear whether Wieler was suggesting that deaths are being undercounted only in Germany, or worldwide, and reporters were unable to ask follow-up questions during his online news conference. Germany's low death rate from coronavirus has drawn international attention. **AP**



Volunteers at a disinfection drive in Wuhan. The city has announced plans to resume 100 passenger trains from April 8 even as officials asked residents to stay at home and avoid non-essential outings amid fears of a possible rebound. **Reuters**

**VIRUS IS SPREAD BY RESPIRATORY DROPLETS: WHO**

THE CORONAVIRUS is primarily transmitted through 'respiratory droplets and close contacts', and does not seem to stay long in the air, a WHO paper said

**SUCH TRANSMISSION** occurs when you have close contact (1 metre) with a person who has respiratory symptoms such as coughing or sneezing, potentially spreading the droplets

**AIRBORNE SPREAD** is different as it refers to the presence of microbes within droplet nuclei, which can remain in the air longer and be spread over a greater distance

## Toll up by 684, UK races for 'immunity passport'

**NEW YORK TIMES**  
APRIL 3

Britain is drawing up plans to issue an "immunity passport" for key workers that would certify those who have recovered from coronavirus — and carry antibodies identifiable by a blood test — that would allow them to resume a normal working life. Although in its early stages, the idea could form part of a broader exit strategy from the countrywide lockdown, once the spread of the disease has been brought under control. Britain on Friday reported a record 684 new COVID-19 deaths in its daily update, as the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus climbed by 4,450 on the previous 24 hours, as per an AFP report. "We have a stream of work



A homeless person sleeps in a doorway at Westminster Cathedral in London on Friday. **Reuters**

underway on immunity," the health secretary, Matthew Hancock, told the BBC on Friday. "We are potentially having immunity certificates so that if people have been through it and when the science is clear about the point at which they are then immune, people can then start getting back to normal." Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, opened the country's newest and largest hospital on Friday, with a capacity for 4,000 beds. Prince Charles, who earlier this week ended self-isolation following his own diagnosis, opened the hospital via a video link from Scotland. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said last week that he had contracted the coronavirus, still has symptoms. "In my own case, although

**EXPLAINED**  
**Plan contingent on testing immunity to coronavirus**

THE QUESTION about allowing frontline workers who have recovered from the virus to resume their duties has been a key one for many nations. However, the feasibility of such a decision is contingent on developing a test that is capable of identifying whether people who were exposed to the virus are likely to be immune to it. Furthermore, given the number of people that medical staff encounter on a daily basis, the test would have to have a high level of accuracy and reliability to be effective in aiding such an initiative.

I'm feeling better and I have done my seven days of isolation, alas, I still have one of the minor symptoms... a temperature, so in accordance with government advice, I must continue my self-isolation until that symptom itself goes," he said, as per AFP.

## Show more unity, ambition, courage: Italy PM tells EU

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
ROME, APRIL 3

ITALIAN PRIME Minister Giuseppe Conte Friday extended his feud about coronavirus money with EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in the pages of a Roman newspaper. Conte wrote a letter to Italy's La Repubblica in response to an apology that von der Leyen had published in the same paper on Thursday. "I am sorry," von der Leyen had told Italians. "The EU is with you now." Conte sounded unimpressed in his letter. "Dear Ursula," he wrote. "I hear ideas (from you) not worthy of Europe." He told her it was time for the EU "to show more ambition, more unity and more courage." Conte wants the EU to start issuing lots of joint debt — dubbed "coronabonds" — that could let countries such as Italy address the crisis more cheaply. Von der Leyen is backing an



In Naples on Friday. **Reuters**

EU-wide guarantee that could raise 100 billion euros (\$108 billion) to aid strained national unemployment schemes. She told Italians said these EU-backed loans were "demonstrating European solidarity". Conte said he "welcomed" the EU's unemployment initiative. But Conte also made it clear that he still wanted the coronabonds. "When fighting a war, you must do everything possible to win and equip yourself with all the tools needed for the (subsequent) reconstruction," he wrote.

## Stay indoors, practice social distancing, says Trump; expert says national lockdown needed

**AGENCIES**  
WASHINGTON, APRIL 3

THE US is at a "very critical" phase in its fight against COVID-19, President Donald Trump has said, advising Americans to stay indoors and practise social distancing for the next four weeks to win the war against the rapidly-spreading coronavirus pandemic. More than 305 million out of the total 330 million Americans are staying indoors as the US battles to contain the spread of the coronavirus which has infected over 235,000 people and claimed 5,800 lives in the country, the White House has said. We are in a very critical phase of our war against the coronavirus; it is vital that every American follows our guidelines on the 30 days to slow the spread. The sacrifices we make over the next four weeks will have countless American lives saved," Trump told reporters



The line at a drive-thru food pantry in Michigan. **AP**

during his daily White House news conference on Thursday. Dr Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease expert, said that he believed that a nationwide lockdown order made sense. "You know, the tension between federally mandated versus states' rights to do what they want is something I don't want to get into," he told CNN on Thursday. "But if you look at what's going on in this country, I just don't understand why we're not doing that." He previously told *The Times* that while he liked "clarity of message," he hoped that states would take the actions themselves.

## Australian PM urges WHO, UN to act against China's wet markets

**NATASHA CHAKU**  
MELBOURNE, APRIL 3

AUSTRALIAN PRIME Minister Scott Morrison on Friday urged the WHO and the UN to act against China's wet markets, like the one where the deadly coronavirus is thought to have originated, as they pose "great risks" to the health and wellbeing of the rest of the world. A wet market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan is believed to be the source of the coronavirus pandemic that began in December last year, crossing from animals to humans. Stating that China based "Wet markets were a very real and significant problem wherever they exist," Morrison in an interview to a news channel on Thursday, said "this virus started in China and went round the world. And that's that's how it started." "We all know that. And these wet markets can be a real problem when it comes to what can

**No economic support for intl students: PM**

Melbourne: Australia Friday refused to offer any economic support to international students who were unable to support themselves in the crisis with Prime Minister Scott Morrison saying the country must focus at present on its citizens and residents. "If they are not in a position to support themselves then there is the alternative for them to return to their home countries..." he said.

occur in those markets. And I think from a world health point of view, this is something the World Health Organisation should do something about. I mean, all this money that comes out of the UN and World Health Organisation," he said. **PTI**

**OTHER TOP GLOBAL STORIES**

## PAK COURT OVERTURNS CONVICTION OF OMAR SHEIKH Affront to victims of terrorism: US court on Pearl verdict

**LALIT K JHA**  
WASHINGTON, APRIL 3

THE US Friday criticised a Pakistani court for overturning the death sentence of British-born top al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, who was convicted in the abduction and murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl, terming the verdict an "affront" to victims of terrorism everywhere. The US' response comes after the Sindh High Court on Thursday found the 46-year-old Sheikh guilty of the lesser charge of kid-



Danny Pearl. **AP/File**

napping and commuted his death sentence to seven years in prison. "The overturning of the convictions for Daniel Pearl's murder is an affront to victims of terrorism everywhere," Alice Wells, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, said in a tweet. Congressman Eliot Engel, Chairman of the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee said he was deeply concerned by Pakistan court's overturning of convictions for the abduction and killing of Pearl. "It's critical Pakistan demonstrate a real commitment to addressing its longstanding terrorism problem by holding those involved accountable," Engel tweeted. **PTI**

## Pakistan invokes Maintenance of Public Order to keep convicts in jail

Karachi: Pakistan's Sindh province government Friday invoked the Maintenance of Public Order to keep in jail al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh. The Sindh government acted swiftly to invoke the MPO which allows it to keep the four convicts behind bars for three months. According to a notification, the release of Sheikh and his three associates could jeopardise the law and order situation, thus necessitating their continued detention. Talking to *Geo News*, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said he was surprised at the timing of the verdict. **PTI**

## Bill Withers, who sang 'Lean on Me' and 'Ain't No Sunshine', dies at 81

**DERRICK BRYSON TAYLOR**  
NEW YORK, APRIL 3



Three-time Grammy winner Bill Withers. **NYT**

BILL WITHERS, the soul singer behind 1970s hits like "Lean on Me," "Lovely Day" and "Ain't No Sunshine," died on Monday in Los Angeles, his family said. He was 81. Withers, a three-time Grammy winner, died from heart complications, his family told *The Associated Press*. "We are devastated by the loss of our beloved, devoted husband

and father," the family's statement said. "A solitary man with a heart driven to connect to the world at large, with his poetry and music, he spoke honestly to people and connected them to each other." The family added, "in this difficult time, we pray his music offers comfort and entertainment as fans hold tight to loved ones." Withers was well into his 30s when he began recording music, after growing up in a segregated coal-mining town in West Virginia, serving in the Navy and working as an aircraft mechanic. But during his 14-year recording career, starting with the album "Just As I Am" in 1971, he wrote and performed songs that have become anthems around the world, drawn from gritty blues, R&B and the era's confessional style of lyrics. **NYT**