

11 THE OUTBREAK THE WORLD

PANDEMIC WATCH



At the airport in Kathmandu. AP

NEPAL
780 foreigners evacuated

Kathmandu: Around 780 foreign tourists, mostly from European countries, stranded in Nepal due to the pandemic, have been evacuated in special flights, as the government intensified its lockdown. The foreigners were evacuated in four different chartered flights arranged by different countries and their diplomatic missions in Nepal, according to officials. The embassies of Germany, the US, Australia, France and other countries had reached out to the Nepal government for permission to evacuate their citizens from Nepal where a lockdown has been imposed by the government to fight the virus.

SINGAPORE
10 of 72 Indian COVID-19 patients recover

Singapore: Ten of the 72 Indian nationals infected with the coronavirus in Singapore have recovered and the rest are mostly stable, India's High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf said Sunday. Over 700 Indian nationals, including over 70 tourists and students, are stranded in the nation due to non-availability of flights. They are being helped by the high commission with their visa extension and where requested with food and accommodation. The high commissioner has assured the Indian workers the Singapore Government will look after them.

GREECE
Case detected in second migrant camp

Athens: Officials in Greece on Sunday placed a second migrant camp near Athens under lockdown after an Afghan resident tested positive for the coronavirus, the migration ministry said. Officials said the camp in Malakasa, some 38 kilometres (24 miles) north-east of Athens, had been placed under "full sanitary lockdown" for 14 days, with no one allowed to enter or leave. The ministry said the 53-year-old Afghan man, who has a prior ailment, had personally sought help with virus symptoms at the in-camp medical facility.

AUSTRALIA
Toll stands at 34; total cases cross 5,500

Melbourne: Australia's coronavirus death toll stood at 34 on Sunday with 5,687 virus positive cases, officials said. Health officials from New South Wales confirmed that there were 2,580 total infections now in the state and four people, including three passengers from Ruby Princess Cruise Ship, died on Saturday night. During a virus update, NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard said, "This is a very dangerous virus and it is still marching through our community. It has killed, at this stage in NSW, 16 people."

'Next week will be our Pearl Harbour'

Nearly 8,500 deaths, 310,000 cases in US; Top expert says virus may assume 'a seasonal nature'

AGENCIES
NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, APR 5

TWO OF the Trump administration's top health officials issued grave warnings to the American public Sunday, saying the next week — when the outbreak is expected to reach its peak in places like New York — will be "our Pearl Harbour."

"The next week is going to be our Pearl Harbour moment," said the United States surgeon general, Dr Jerome M Adams, on the news show "Meet the Press." "It's going to be our 9/11 moment. It's going to be the hardest moment for many Americans in their entire lives." Almost 8,500 of the US's reported 310,000 coronavirus patients have died, and governors are hunting for scarce ventilators. Adams' dire warnings were echoed by Dr Anthony S Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who urged Americans to "buckle down" on the news show "Face the Nation." "This is going to be a bad week," he said, adding later: "It is going to be shocking to some, it certainly is really disturbing to see that, but that's what's going to happen before it turns around."



Healthcare workers wheel the bodies of deceased people from a hospital. Reuters

US President Trump had on Saturday predicted a surging death toll in what he said may be "the toughest week" of the pandemic. "There will be a lot of death," he said at the White House. While Dr Fauci said the mitigation strategies around the country appeared to be having an effect, he pushed back

against a suggestion that the outbreak is under control. "I'm not saying we have it under control," he said. "That would be a false statement. We are struggling to get it under control." He added that because of the delay in the onset of the illness, even if the number of new cases begins to flatten, "the

deaths will be about one to two weeks more." Fauci says there is a very good chance the new coronavirus "will assume a seasonal nature" because it is unlikely to be under control globally. He says the virus is unlikely to be completely eradicated from the planet this year. That means the US could see the

EXPLAINED
Tussle with states grows

EVEN AS the US heads into its "hardest" week, the tension between the federal government and some of the hardest-hit states has become a key concern. Governors are criticising the Trump administration for not doing enough to prepare for the outbreak in January and February, before the virus began its exponential spread in the US. This, they say, would at least have ensured availability of key equipment.

"beginning of a resurgence" during the next flu season. Fauci says the prospect of a resurgence is the reason the US is working so hard to get its preparedness "better than it was." He says that includes working to develop a vaccine and conducting clinical trials on therapeutic interventions.

NY tops 4,000 deaths, but sees dip in toll

NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK, APRIL 5

NEW YORK State has now topped 4,000 deaths from the virus, Governor Andrew M Cuomo said Sunday. But the governor pointed to early indications that the crisis could be plateauing, though he cautioned against jumping to any conclusions. The number of deaths in the state has reached 4,159, Cuomo said. But, notably, there were slightly fewer fatalities on Saturday than on Friday. In addition, the number of new hospitalisations on Saturday was significantly lower than in previous days. "You could argue that you're seeing a slight plateauing in the

CHINA DONATES 1,000 VENTILATORS

- China donated 1,000 ventilators to New York as authorities grappled with an insufficient supply of the life saving equipment
- Governor Andrew Cuomo on Saturday said New York had ordered 17,000 ventilators from the federal government
- "China is remarkably the repository for all of these orders. Ventilators, PPE, it all goes back to China..." he said
- "The Chinese govt is going to facilitate a donation of 1,000 ventilators" that came in to JFK Airport, he added

data, which obviously would be good news," Cuomo said at his daily briefing in Albany. But he noted that it was too soon to say whether the changes in the num-

bers were indicative of a trend. Cuomo also said he would seek to shift patients from overloaded hospitals to other facilities with lighter workloads and more equipment. "I can't say to a hospital I will send you all the supplies you need, all the vents you need," he said. "We don't have them. You are going to have to shift and deploy to different locations based on the need of that location." Responding to concerns from residents in other parts of the state who were concerned that they would be left vulnerable if the state redeployed ventilators and other equipment away from their area. "I don't see any other operational model," he said. "You cannot handle this without your brothers and sister." So far, the governor said, the state has not redeployed any ventilators or equipment.

Biden considers virtual convention

New York: Former Vice President Joe Biden, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, said on Sunday the party may be forced to host a "virtual" nominating convention in August. The Democratic Party already postponed its convention from July to August last week, citing worries over the outbreak that has prompted a majority of US states to order their residents to stay at home. "We may have to do a virtual convention," Biden said on ABC's "This Week" program. "I think we should be thinking about that right now... We may not be able to put 10, 20, 30,000 people in one place." REUTERS

UK govt warns of tougher measures on social distancing

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON, APRIL 5

BRITAIN'S HEALTH Secretary Matt Hancock on Sunday warned the government could ban outside exercise if people flout stringent guidelines to cut the spread of coronavirus. Warmer weekend weather has stoked fears that Britons could congregate in parks and open spaces, potentially increasing transmission, as the country goes into a third week of lockdown. Hancock, who himself tested positive for COVID-19, told Sky News television sunbathing was "against the rules" and anyone doing so put lives at risk. He later told the BBC most people were following guidance only to leave their homes to shop for essential supplies and medicine, and to exercise once a day.

But he said it was "quite unbelievable" that a minority were not. "The truth is the more people go out from home, the more the virus spreads," he added. "I don't want to have to take away exercise as a reason to leave home because people are not following the rules..." "If the result of that is that too many people go out and flout the rules I'm afraid we'll have to take action." Meanwhile, police in Dorset said they charged a man with a public order offence for allegedly wiping his saliva on items in a supermarket. Hancock's warning came after another record day-on-day rise in reported deaths from COVID-19 that took the overall toll in Britain to 4,313, and confirmed hospital cases to 41,903. The death toll includes a five-year-old child, as well as seven healthcare workers.



A priest holds mass with photos of believers after the service was closed in Achern, Germany, on Sunday. Reuters

STAND-IN SERVICE

A priest holds mass with photos of believers after the service was closed in Achern, Germany, on Sunday. Reuters

THE WIDELY-VIEWED VIDEO UNDERScoreD DANGERS BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS FACE

Days after fuming about coughing passenger, bus driver dies

MICHAEL LEVENSON
NEW YORK, APRIL 5

JASON HARGROVE was furious. A woman on his bus had just coughed four or five times, unguarded. He went on Facebook and vented his anger, cursing at times. In a video posted on March 21, he railed against the disrespect that he said passengers like her had shown workers like him who were trying to make Detroit run in the midst of a pandemic. "We're out here as public workers, doing our job, trying to make an honest living to take care of our families," he said. "But

for you to get on the bus, and stand on the bus, and cough several times without covering up your mouth, and you know that we're in the middle of a pandemic, that lets me know that some folks don't care." On Wednesday, a week and a half after recording the video outside his bus, Hargrove, a 50-year-old, married father of six, died from complications of Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, according to his union and city officials. Hargrove's video has since been viewed more than half a million times, and has resonated as a reminder of the dangers that



Jason Hargrove said he felt violated both for himself and for other passengers who were on the bus. NYT

transit employees and other blue-collar workers face as they suddenly find themselves on the front lines of the coronavirus. "He knew his life was being put in jeopardy — even though he was going to work for the cit-

izens of Detroit every day — by somebody who just didn't care, somebody who didn't take this seriously," Mayor Mike Duggan told reporters on Thursday. "And now he's gone." Mayor Duggan said he

thought of Hargrove and other workers who put themselves at risk whenever he saw people violating social distancing rules. "You're putting really good people like Jason Hargrove's lives on the line," he said. "I hope the people in this city and in this country will watch his video and listen to his words, because it's a message this country needs to hear." But even before his death, Detroit's bus drivers had complained that the city was not doing enough to protect them, said Glenn Tolbert, the president of the local transit workers' union, who himself tested positive for

the coronavirus on Thursday. Tolbert said on Saturday that 200 of the union's 525 members were in quarantine. On March 17, Detroit's bus drivers refused to go to work until the city acted. The same day, Mayor Duggan announced several changes to protect the drivers, including waiving fares; requiring passengers to use only the rear doors; and making sure drivers had gloves, masks and disinfecting wipes. The city also stepped up the cleaning and sanitising of buses, according to John Roach, a city spokesman. In his video, Hargrove said

the woman who coughed on his bus without covering her mouth showed that some people were not taking the virus seriously. "It's folks dying out here," he said, adding that he felt violated both for himself and for other passengers who were on the bus. "He was frustrated, but he was a professional guy to the end," Tolbert said. "I just don't want his death to be in vain," he added. "I want us to get through this thing, and I want the transit operators around the world to be recognised as first responders and given the necessary equipment." NYT

Pakistan: 300 Tablighi members test positive

M ZULQERNAIN
LAHORE, APRIL 5

OVER 300 Tablighi Jamaat members have been tested coronavirus positive till Sunday in Pakistan's Punjab province, amid efforts by authorities to track down and quarantine thousands of people who attended a massive congregation of the Islamic group last month. Authorities have placed the entire city of Raiwind that houses headquarters of the Pakistani faction of the Jamaat under quarantine and completely restricted the mobility of people within or outside the city.



Cases in Pakistan have risen to 2,900. Reuters/Representational

According to the data released by the primary and secondary health care corona monitoring room on Sunday, over 300 preachers of the Tablighi Jamaat at quarantine centres in different parts of Punjab province have so far been tested positive for COVID-19. Most of them belong to Lahore's Tablighi Jamaat Markaz that has been turned into quarantine centre. The other centres where Tablighi preachers have been kept include Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Nankana Sahib, Sargodha, Vehari, Faisalabad, Kalashah Kaku and Rahim Yar Khan districts of Punjab. A large number of preachers who are suspected to be COVID-19 carrier are also being kept in these quarantine centres. A large number of preachers who had attended a major congregation in early March in its headquarters in Lahore were later tracked down across the country and placed in quarantine centres. Some 50 members of the Jamaat, including five Nigerian women, suspected to be carriers of coronavirus, are admitted to a quarantine centre in Kasur, some 50 kms from Lahore. According to the government,

SAFRICAN CLERIC DIES AFTER GOING TO NIZAMUDDIN CONGREGATION

Johannesburg: An 80-year-old South African Muslim cleric, who recently returned from India after attending the Nizamuddin congregation, has died after contracting the novel coronavirus, according to his family members. Moulana Yusuf Tootla attended the March 1-15 Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Nizamuddin. Tootla, who died on Tuesday, was buried after his body was collected in a bag by the Islamic Burial Council (IBC). Tootla was reportedly advised not to travel to India for the gathering, but he was adamant to go. "He (Tootla) said his fate is in Allah's hands, as He (God) had already decided when he would recall him," a family member on the basis of anonymity said. PTI

in March the Tablighi Jamaat went ahead with its annual congregation in Raiwind, Lahore against its 'advice' that the gathering might spread the virus. PTI

Italy records lowest toll in over 2 weeks

REUTERS
MILAN, APRIL 5

ITALY REPORTED its lowest daily COVID-19 death toll for more than two weeks on Sunday as authorities began to look ahead to a second phase of the battle against the new coronavirus once the lockdown imposed almost a month ago is eventually eased. The toll from the world's deadliest outbreak reached 15,887, almost a quarter of the global death total, but the rise of 525 from a day earlier was the smallest daily increase since March 19. "The curve has reached a plateau and begun to descend," said Silvio Brusaferrò, head of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy's top health institute. "It is a result that we have to achieve day after day." "If this is confirmed, we need to start thinking about the second phase and keep down the spread of this disease."