

Brewin vs Patterson clash delayed but inevitable

John Brewin and Sam Patterson are two of mixed martial arts' hottest prospects right now. **P12**

Some say there is a trade-off: save lives or save jobs - this is a false dilemma

THE DAILY tribune

Banking sector responds positively to COVID 19 tackling efforts

Americans told to wear masks

Airport now open for transit passengers

TDT | Manama

The Civil Aviation Affairs issued a circular yesterday stating that transit passengers of all nationalities are now permitted to travel through Bahrain International Airport.

This has been implemented since Friday.

The circular stated that the entry of travelers to Bahrain would remain restricted to Bahraini citizens, residents of the Kingdom, and those holding a letter of prior permission to enter.

Recovered COVID-19 cases in Bahrain reaches 423

TDT | Manama

The number of people who have recovered from the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Bahrain reached 423 as of late last night.

This was announced by the Ministry of Health.

It follows the discharge of an additional 24 patients from isolation and treatment centres, the Ministry said on social media.

According to the Health Ministry's official website, the total number of active cases was 261, all but three of which were stable.

Among the active cases are a pair of Bahraini infants aged just three and four months.

The three-month-old is a boy who tested positive as a contact of two other positive cases, one of whom has already been discharged. The four-month-old is a girl who also tested positive as a contact of two other cases, one of whom has also already recovered.

The number of total tested reached 39,379.



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210 fils (includes VAT)



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His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa stressed yesterday that the world needs to enhance cooperation and human solidarity on the basis of a sincere conscience that promotes benevolence and hope.

This, in light of the present global challenges and exceptional circumstances, bolsters humanity's quest for growth and advancement.

"The world today is facing major transformations, unlike anything it has ever seen before, because of the spread of the coronavirus and the heavy losses it has inflicted," HRH the Premier said. "This requires a clear joint visualisation to contain all the threats that humanity faces."

HRH the Premier was speaking in a message to the world marking the International Day of Conscience (IDC), which is to be observed every April 5.

HRH the Prime Minister stressed the importance of the value of conscience as a human pivot that alerts the world to the necessity of shouldering its collective responsibilities towards everything that could bring human beings closer, and fulfill aspirations for growth and stability.

HRH the Prime Minister expressed hope that the IDC, which was the product of a personal initiative on his part, will be a factor that contributes to the achievement of joint aspirations for a world of peace and harmony.

"Our initiative in calling for the observance of an IDC stems from the values, principles, civilisation, and historical heritage of the Kingdom of Bahrain which combines culture, heritage, and the principles of true Islamic religion," HRH Premier said.

"Bahrain has lived and continues to live as a cohesive, developing society based on diversity and the multiplicity of civilisations and cul-

A message to the world

HRH the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa marks International Day of Conscience, which promotes peace and harmony



HRH the Prime Minister

tures," the Prime Minister added.

HRH the Premier noted that these values have been enshrined by the Kingdom of Bahrain under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. They were further entrenched in the National Action Charter and the Constitution, which have bolstered the values of freedom, equality, and justice for all.

"Only a reassured and truthful conscience can uphold righteousness and inspire humanity in dealing with the crises of poverty and epidemics, as well as in attaining



The world today is facing major transformations, unlike anything it has ever seen before, because of the spread of the coronavirus and the heavy losses it has inflicted. This requires a clear joint visualisation to contain all the threats that humanity faces.

HRH THE PREMIER PRINCE KHALIFA BIN SALMAN AL KHALIFA

sustainable peace," he said.

HRH the Prime Minister stressed that we are facing a major responsibility towards the world's future and that the international community - on the IDC and on every single day - must seek, under the umbrella of the United Nations, to lead and pioneer on the road of righteousness and to combat evil trends.

HRH the Prime Minister urged intellectuals, thinkers, and the social elite to undertake a pioneering role in promoting determination and harnessing the philosophy of

conscience to serve humanitarian objectives and develop joint international perceptions promoting security and reassurance.

He emphasised the necessity to maximise all the potentials for change and the incentives for development that seek the welfare and happiness of humans.

"Conscience will continue to be a beautiful illumination within human beings that promotes good deeds and is based on them," the Prime Minister said.

He noted that the conditions in the world today, after the spread of coronavirus, have enhanced joint efforts and bolstered human unity in facing this threat, which makes no distinction on the basis of race, colour or creed.

HRH the Prime Minister said that the world needs today to draft new strategies that bolster the concept of "global health security". He added that the lesson gained from this crisis is that globalisation, in its traditional sense that is based on control and subservience, no longer has any place in today's world which is witnessing what might be called a shift towards "humanitarian globalisation".

HRH the Prime Minister again thanked the UN for its pioneering role in advancing knowledge and the culture of peace.

Arab League welcomes IDC

The Arab League welcomed the declaration of April 5 as the International Day of Conscience (IDC), following an initiative by His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Arab League secretary general Ahmed Abul Gheit yesterday commended the initiative, which, he said, reflects an accurate understanding of the values that the world needs nowadays to instill international order, as well as strengthen relations between states and peoples.



In a statement reported by the Middle East News Agency (MENA), he said that COVID-19

pandemic is a wake-up call to realise that all humanity is in one boat and that solidarity is the only way to escape from major crises.

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly last year endorsed HRH the Premier's initiative announcing April 5 as the IDC - an annual occasion to harness international efforts to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity in order to build a sustainable world based on peace and solidarity.

Bahraini citizens in Jordan and Saudi Arabia brought back home

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's embassies in Jordan and Saudi Arabia yesterday facilitated the safe return of Bahraini citizens as part of ongoing national efforts in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Both embassies worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health. The embassy in Jordan provided the Bahraini nationals

with all the basic needs and supplies while in Amman, following the outbreak of COVID-19.

Bahrain Ambassador to Jordan Ahmed bin Yusuf Al Rowaie affirmed that the embassy continues to support all nationals until their return to the Kingdom. He also expressed thanks and appreciation to the relevant authorities of both countries for their cooperation during the evacuation process. Meanwhile, the embassy in



Officials check the temperature of a young boy as he is brought back to Bahrain with his family from Saudi

Saudi facilitated the return of a number of Bahrainis stranded in Riyadh through the King Fahad Causeway. Bahrain Ambassador to Saudi Shaikh Hmood bin Abdullah Al Khalifa affirmed the embassy's keenness to facilitate the safe return of Bahraini nationals still currently present there.

He too expressed his thanks and appreciation to all the authorities in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia for their cooperation in the repatriation.

IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNACCEPTABLE

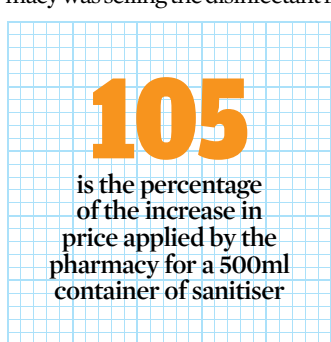
Pharmacy in Riffa shut down for violating consumer protection laws

TDT | Manama

A pharmacy in Riffa was shut down last night for violating consumer protection laws.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism closed the store after it was found to have raised the prices of sanitisers without official authorisation in an effort to take advantage of the current situation relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Ministry said that the pharmacy was selling the disinfectant in



a container of 250ml in volume at a price that was 81 per cent higher than the regular cost.

Meanwhile, the price of the same product in a larger volume of 500ml was hiked by 105 per cent of the original cost.

The Ministry slammed the greedy hiking of prices as an irresponsible and unacceptable act. It had stated recently that such actions would be addressed with zero tolerance, especially at a time when such goods are necessary and are



A picture of the Ministry's notice of the closure of the pharmacy

in great demand as the public tries to maintain its health and safety

amidst the COVID-19 fight.

The Ministry asserted that it is proceeding with its inspection plans to ensure the full compliance of pharmacies, shops, markets and various outlets with regular prices of all kinds of essential goods.

The Ministry will take all legal measures to deter violators.

The Ministry calls on all stores, before offering any commodity, to take into account a reasonable profit margin and not exaggerate prices, in order to serve public interest.

COVID-19 contact tracing enhanced

Information and eGovernment Authority begins distribution of electronic bracelets compatible with 'BeAware' app

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The Information and eGovernment Authority (IGA) yesterday began the distribution of electronic bracelets compatible with Bahrain's COVID-19 contact tracing app "BeAware".

The move is in line with the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to deploy emerging technologies to help mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The distribution began with the support of the Minister of Interior General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa.

The "BeAware" app complements the efforts of the National Taskforce for Combatting the Coronavirus in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 by advancing contact tracing efforts to swiftly identify and keep track all active cases and their contacts.



An official straps the bracelet on to a patient

IGA Chief Executive Mohammed Ali Al Qaed noted that the app is an example of how Bahrain is leveraging technology to safeguard the well-being of citi-

zens and residents. He explained that the bracelet supports the Ministry of Health's mandate to address public health concerns amidst the global pandemic.

"The decision issued by the Minister of Health, Faeqa bint Saeed Al Saleh, obliges self-isolating individuals to wear the electronic bracelet that will

Self-isolating individuals must wear the electronic bracelet which will notify the monitoring station whenever they are 15 meters away from their phone, in which case a warning will be sent.

IGA CHIEF EXECUTIVE MOHAMMED ALI AL QAEED

notify the monitoring station whenever they are 15 meters away from their phone, in which case a warning will be sent," explained Al Qaed.

"Violators will face legal penalties, potentially be sentenced to imprisonment for a period of not less than three months and pay a fine between BD1,000 and BD10,000, or either one of the two penalties."

Al Qaed added that the IGA will guide users through the app and all of its features, which requires

them to ensure their smart devices are charged and that their location services, Bluetooth, GPS and internet connection are on. iPhone users will need to ensure that the "Allow Location Access" is set at "Always".

Self-isolating individuals using the app must identify their isolation location, in most cases their home, by selecting "Set Home Location" upon arrival. Users can correct location information by calling 444.

Ministry of Health officials may randomly send picture requests to which self-isolating individuals must respond with a photo that clearly shows their face and bracelet. Attempting to remove or tamper with the bracelet is a violation and officials confirmed the bracelet is waterproof.

Self-isolating individuals are also required to schedule a COVID-19 test date three days prior to the end of their self-isolation period by calling 444 or visiting the Ministry of Health's website.

Guidelines set for higher education e-learning

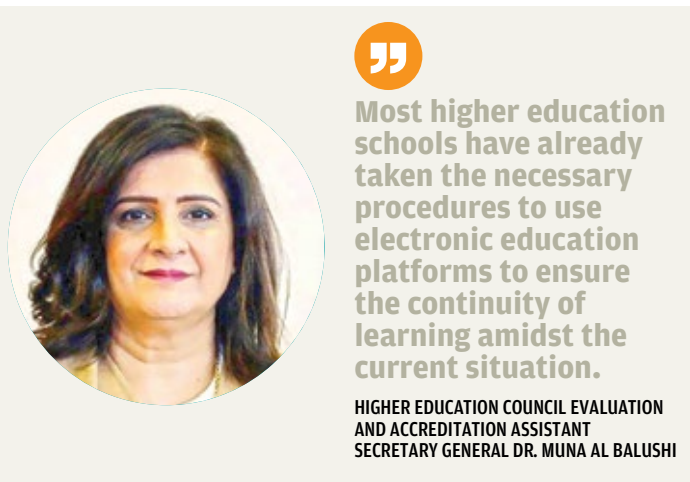
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Higher education institutions across the Kingdom must have a clear strategy towards e-learning and distance learning in the circumstances that require it.

This was asserted yesterday by Higher Education Council (HEC) Evaluation and Accreditation assistant secretary general Dr. Muna Al Balushi, who laid out guidelines and standards for e-learning at higher institutions.

Amongst other guidelines, Dr. Al Balushi said that these schools should engage the stakeholders in developing their plans and explain their goals to them.

She added that they must apply the e-learning systems using all available means to achieve the preset goals, and also keep the evidence supporting the academic and administrative activity and train all faculty members to use the available



Most higher education schools have already taken the necessary procedures to use electronic education platforms to ensure the continuity of learning amidst the current situation.

HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL DR. MUNA AL BALUSHI

means.

Higher education institutions should also verify the efficiency of the information and communication technology infrastructure, and enhance its ability to meet the requirements of e-learning.

Dr. Al Balushi indicated that these guidelines are in line with the institutional accreditation standards in force in the Kingdom, and to which private high-

er education institutions should be committed.

Dr. Al Balushi added that most higher education schools in Bahrain have already taken the necessary procedures to use electronic education platforms to ensure the continuity of learning amidst the current situation.

She said that it is in line with the directives of the HEC's secretariat general.

Cop attacker loses appeal

TDI | Manama

The First Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal upheld the punishment of a man who assaulted a policeman while resisting arrest.

The appellant was earlier sentenced to three years' imprisonment for injuring the victim's eye in the parking lots of Muharrag Police Station.

The details of the case showed that the man approached the police station to report his missing wallet. In the reception, and after entering the man's data in the police system, it was revealed that the man was wanted by Hidd Police Station for his involvement in two criminal cases. The appellant, who was asked

by the police to wait in the men's waiting area inside the station, felt suspicious and tried to escape.

A policeman noticed the man and chased him until he was eventually able to catch him in the parking area. There, the appellant resisted arrest and hit the cop in the eye.

In the interrogations of the Public Prosecution, the victim told investigators that the defendant hit him in the eye with his elbow.

The prosecution charged the man on November 11 of last year for assault on an on-duty public servant who was performing his duties, and for causing the injuries mentioned in a medical report.

Major shift online of traffic services

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Eighty per cent of traffic services were processed electronically in the second half of March, it was revealed yesterday.

Director-General of Traffic Brigadier Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Abdulwahab Al Khalifa said that the department continues to offer high quality and swift services.

This is as part of the directives of the Interior Minister and in line with the department's long-term strategy.

The Director-General said that the progress shows the awareness of the public to contribute to limiting the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

He noted that the online services are available on bahrain.bh and on the e-traffic application.

House fire trio rescued



A section of the house that caught on fire

TDI | Manama

Three individuals were rescued yesterday from a house fire in Bilad Al Qadeem.

The Civil Defence saved the residents and took them to the

hospital while putting out the blaze.

Five vehicles and 16 firefighters were needed to extinguish the fire. Initial details indicate that a short circuit was the reason for the incident.

No further details were available.

Customs Affairs calls on clients to make payments online

TDI | Manama

The Customs Affairs yesterday called on all its clients to pay customs taxes and fees through the e-payment system "Fawateer" of the Benefit Company.

This move is part of the dedication to follow the precautionary measures to prevent the further spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and to ensure the health and safety of the public.

The Customs Affairs highlighted that the system is linked to the e-customs clearance system and the payment could be through any local bank.

Random testing, disinfection operations continue



Ministry officials conducting COVID-19 tests

TDI | Manama

In cooperation with the Ministry of Interior through the Civil Defence and Community Police, the Ministry of Health is continuing its field visits across the Kingdom. This is in line with precautionary and preventive measures in the coronavirus (COVID-19) fight.

Officials continue to conduct random tests of citizens and residents at all kinds of locations, while disinfection operations are also being carried out at various areas.



Disinfection operations being carried out in a children's playground



HM the King

A quantum leap for judicial procedures

Technical system for remote investigation and criminal trial on the way

● **Attorney-General praises His Majesty the King's ratification and issuance of Criminal Procedures Law**

● **New amendments are consistent with recent trends in the field of criminal justice**

TDT | Manama

Work is underway to create a technical system for remote investigation and criminal trial.

This is according to Attorney-General Dr. Ali bin Fadhl Al Buainain, who was speaking as he praised His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's ratification and issuance of Law 7/2020, amending some provisions of the Criminal Procedures Law promulgated by Decree 46/2002 after its approval by the Shura and Representatives councils.

Dr. Al Buainain said that the work is in coordination between the Public Prosecution, the Supreme Judicial Council, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments.

He stressed that the move represents a quantum leap towards developing judicial procedures.

The Attorney General further explained that the use of remote technology in the public prosecution and criminal courts paves the way for launching a new stage in the development



Dr. Al Buainain

of criminal proceedings, based on the ultimate goal of achieving a fair trial.

He underlined the importance of the new amendments to the Criminal Procedures Law, which, he said, are consistent with the recent trends in the field of criminal justice.

Dr. Al Buainain said that they aim to facilitate investigation and trial procedures, establish witness protection, protect the presumption of innocence principle (the accused is innocent until proven guilty), ensure

open hearings, develop easier solutions to the criminal procedures without prejudice to the rights, ensure the control of the evidence of the criminal case and the execution of the rulings issued therein, as well as use the technological means to initiate and prove the procedures, whether in the stage of evidence-collecting, investigation or trial.

This is all within the framework of establishing the principles of full justice and human rights.

Storekeeper commits suicide

TDT | Manama

A storekeeper was found hanging at his accommodation in Hamad Town yesterday.



Kumar

The deceased was later identified as 41-year-old Indian national Sathish Kumar.

He leaves behind his wife and two children who are in his hometown of Kollam, Kerala.

His company is trying to repatriate his body.

No other information was available.

Bahraini dies in tragic traffic accident

TDT | Manama



A picture of the victim during happier times

A 24-year-old Bahraini died in a tragic traffic accident on Friday night.

The deceased was travelling on his motorcycle along Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Highway heading towards Zallaq near the tunnel of Roundabout 14 when he had a collision with an unidentified vehicle.

According to reports, the victim was surprised by the vehicle's sudden change in lane and could not avoid hitting it. That resulted in him losing control of his motorbike and flipping in the air several times. He sustained severe injuries in the process.

Passers-by tried to come to the victim's aid until he was rushed to the hospital by relevant authorities, but he later died due to his injuries.

Meanwhile, the vehicle that caused the collision fled the site. Authorities have opened an investigation into the accident and are in the process of tracking down the driver of the runaway vehicle.

It is understood that the Bahraini victim had just gotten married two months ago. No other details were available.

AUBH announces assessment process for current semester

TDT | Manama

The American University of Bahrain (AUBH) yesterday confirmed that the current semester's programmes will be graded normally, and will count towards students' cumulative grade point average (GPA).

As both AUBH's student body and faculty have seamlessly adapted to online learning and used leading-edge technology to ensure continuation of classes from the first day of isolation, no modification of the grading system to pass or fail has been necessary.

AUBH is ensuring the continuation of learning from a distance, with zero teaching days missed on the academic calendar.

Mid-term examinations will be administered through ProctorU, a US-based, artificial intelligence-enabled secure online assessment platform which protects the integrity and credibility of high-stakes exams. ProctorU is used by more than 1,000 institutions and universities in the US.



Dr. Shermis

"Our students and faculty miss being on campus, but have adapted well to the distance-learning format," said AUBH Provost Dr. Mark D. Shermis. "We are proud that our students have gained the technical savvy to be able to participate in secure remote proctored tests and other kinds of computer-based assessments. Our technical staff have been extremely attentive and supportive of the innovative ideas that have arisen from this otherwise difficult time."

Thief arrested for stealing valuables from parked cars

TDT | Manama

A 26-year-old expatriate has been arrested after being suspected of stealing hand watches, mobile phones and laptops from cars parked in Juffair.

This was announced yesterday by the Capital Governorate Police Director-General.

He said that an investigation into the case led to identifying and arresting the suspect.

Some of the stolen items were confiscated from his home.

Legal proceedings are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution.

AD Global Trading imports quality goods

TDT | Manama

An emerging wholesale distributor is importing quality products from 21 countries to help fulfill the needs of Bahrain's people.

AD Global Trading Company is bringing in all kinds of fresh goods including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, frozen foods and other foodstuffs from all over the globe.

The goods are from nations in six continents, including Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, North America and South America. They are set to arrive within the next few weeks.



Some of the goods

List of imports from various countries:

- **Pakistan** – Mandarins and all types of vegetables
- **Sri Lanka** – Strawberries, mangoes, papayas, avocado, guavas and all types of vegetables
- **India** – Bananas, ginger, garlic, mangoes
- **China** – Garlic, ginger, apples, carrots
- **Italy** – Assorted variety of apples, plums, kiwi, water
- **Philippines** – Bananas, pineapples
- **South Africa** – Lemons, assorted variety of apples, pears, grapes, persimmons, pomegranates
- **Portugal and Poland** – Apples
- **Australia** – Carrots
- **Greece and Spain** – Kiwis, apples, peaches, olives
- **US** – Apples, berries
- **Lebanon** – Assorted pickles
- **Turkey** – Lemons
- **Egypt** – Citrus, strawberries, broccoli
- **Mexico** – Strawberries
- **Holland and Bulgaria** – Cheese varieties
- **Belgium** – Mozzarella
- **Chile** – Apples, kiwis, plums, pomegranates

BUSINESS

Banking sector responds positively to COVID 19 tackling efforts

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's banking sector responded positively to COVID-19 tackling efforts, thanks to the Central Bank of Bahrain's 'open banking services', said a top BAB official.

Dr Waheed Al Qassim, CEO of The Bahrain Associations of Banks (BAB), said the ability of the banks and financial institutions here to activate electronic communication channels quickly, reflects the success of their long investments in building an effective and reliable electronic system.

Dr Al Qassim said that the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) had been proactive in issuing directives to activate "open banking services" implemented so far by a good number of retail banks in Bahrain.

He added: "With the coronavirus ordeal in Bahrain and the world, it became clear that these services have other great benefits, among them reducing human interaction as possible and limiting the circulation of cash that may carry the virus."

"Today we harvest the fruits of the great efforts made by stakeholders in the government and e-government sectors in particular to provide advanced technical infrastruc-



Dr Waheed Al Qassim

ture, and the current virus situation represented a real test of those efforts that we managed to pass successfully," Dr Al Qassim said, stressing the importance of studying best practices.

On this note, Dr Al Qassim renewed BAB's admiration of the royal directives allocating 4.3 billion dinars to help citizens and businesses to overcome coronavirus inflicted difficulties, noting the wise management of His Highness the Crown Prince to the Bahrain team in this crisis.

He said: "Everyone demonstrated his best ability to pass this difficult test, and everyone is an active member of the Bahrain team."

OPEC+ meeting delayed

Reuters | Dubai/Moscow

OPEC and Russia have postponed a meeting planned for tomorrow until later next week, OPEC sources said yesterday.

The meeting's delay came despite pressure from US President Donald Trump for the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, known as OPEC+, to urgently stabilise global oil markets.

OPEC+ is working on an unprecedented oil output curb equal to about 10 per cent of world supply, or 10 million barrels per day, in what member states expect to be a global effort that will include the United States.

Oil prices hit an 18-year low on March 30 due to sliding demand caused by government lockdowns to contain the coronavirus outbreak, and the failure of OPEC and other producers led by Russia to extend an earlier deal on output curbs that



The logo of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) sits outside its headquarters ahead of the OPEC and NON-OPEC meeting, Austria

expired on March 31.

Putin, speaking during a video conference with government officials and heads of Russian major oil producers on Friday, said the first reason for the fall in prices was the impact of the coronavirus on demand.

"The second reason behind the collapse of prices is the withdrawal of our partners from

Saudi Arabia from the OPEC+ deal, their production increase and information, which came out at the same time, about the readiness of our partners to even provide a discount for oil," Putin said prompting a firm response from Riyadh.

"The Russian Minister of Energy was the first to declare to the media that all the partici-

pating countries are absolved of their commitments starting from the first of April, leading to the decision that the countries have taken to raise their production," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said in a statement carried by state news agency SPA.

Three OPEC sources, who asked not be identified, said the emergency virtual meeting planned for tomorrow would likely be postponed until April 8 or 9 to allow more time for negotiations.

Sources later said the atmosphere was still positive, although there is no draft deal yet or agreement on details such as a reference level from which to make the supply cuts.

"The first problem is that we have to cut from the current production level now, not to go back to the one before the crisis," one of the OPEC sources said. "The second issue is the Americans, they have to play a part."



The United States is not part of OPEC+ and the idea of Washington curbing production has long been seen as impossible, not least because of US antitrust laws. Still, the oil crash has spurred regulators in Texas, the heart of US oil production, to consider regulating output for the first time in nearly 50 years.



The International Energy Agency warned on Friday that a cut of 10 million bpd would not be enough to counter the huge fall in oil demand. Even with such a cut, inventories would increase by 15 million bpd in the second quarter.

Virus patients in Spain get five-star hotel quarantine

Instead of arriving with a suitcase, the hotel's new clients carry bags containing just a few personal belongings and their medical report



Spain is taking recovering virus patients out of hospitals and putting them in quarantine in hotels



of Barcelona's network of health care clinics.

Catalonia's regional health minister Alba Verges said these workers were the "containment line" that is preventing admissions to already overloaded hospitals.

'Very moving'

Inside the hotel, contact between people is kept to a minimum. There is an elevator for staff and one for patients. The hallways are silent.

Patients receive four meals a day, which are left outside their rooms. A staff member knocks on the door and the patient must count to five before opening it.

Relatives of the patients cannot enter the hotel and most leave clothes or magazines, laptops or other devices for their loved ones with staff outside.

"I am bringing this bag for my wife's aunt, who was hospitalised with pneumonia and they have sent her here now," said a middle-aged man who declined to be named.

"She is doing OK. Her daughter not so much... she is in the intensive care unit but her mother still does not know."

The conversion of the hotels into care facilities has given their staff, who would have been out of work otherwise, a boost.

"It's very moving, said Marga Carballo who is now in charge of the Melia Sarria hotel's reception.

"At home I felt bad watching all this without being able to help."

AFP | Barcelona

An ambulance driver wearing a white protective gown enters a Barcelona hotel and announces the arrival of three new "customers" -- a trio of coronavirus patients discharged from hospital into luxury quarantine.

"Good morning! How are you? My name is Enrique Aranda and I am probably the first non health care worker you see in several days," says the director of the five-star Melia Sarria hotel, peering into the ambulance.

into a clinic.

"Some patients arrive thinking that they were taken out of hospital to be left to die, many people are frightened. I try to make them forget all that," said Aranda, wearing mask and gloves.

"I don't let them out of the ambulance until I get a smile out of them. I want them to enter in another way, that they see that they aren't in a hospital anymore, it is a hotel."

Instead of arriving with a suitcase, the hotel's new clients carry bags containing just a few personal belongings and their medical report.

They are not welcomed by bellhops, but by a team of nurses wearing green or blue gowns, gloves and face masks.

As soon as patients enter, the nurses take their temperature, revise their medical reports and ask if they need to contact any family member while hotel employees assign them to a room.

'Containment line'

The government ordered all hotels to shut to fight the pandemic, which has so far claimed 10,935 lives in Spain -- the world's second-highest toll after Italy.

Hotels across the country have been converted into medical care centres to free up beds in hospitals which have been flooded with COVID-19 cases.

In the Madrid region, the hardest-hit area in Spain and the first to adopt the measure, there are now just over 700 patients in quarantine in hotels.

In second-city Barcelona, hoteliers have made 2,500 beds available. The Melia Sarria opened to patients on March 29 and currently has 107 guests with 50 more expected each day until all 307 rooms are full.

"They are cases of people who

are already OK, who have passed through the hospital and are in the final phase of their recovery here, in the hotel," said Gemma Fanlo, a nurse at the facility.

Staff at a nearby health clinic work round the clock to monitor COVID-19 patients recovering in hotels or at home, either in person or virtually, while at the same time still treating people needing help for other ailments.

"Healthcare professionals are working longer hours, and are even working from home, to ensure no one is left untreated. We are working at full stretch," said Belen Enfedaque, care director

Abu Dhabi's oil company says committed to targets in production capacity growth



General view of the Borouge petrochemical facility at ADNOC's Ruwais Industrial Complex in Ruwais, United Arab Emirates

Reuters | Dubai

The United Arab Emirates' Abu Dhabi National Oil Co is committed to reaching its targets in production capacity growth, the state-run WAM news agency cited its chief executive Sultan Al-Jaber as saying yesterday.

"We will continue to invest responsibly and smartly through the downturn," he said, alluding to the collapse in global oil prices. "ADNOC remains committed to its targets in production capacity growth in order to ensure a stable and reliable supply of energy products to its global customers."

US small businesses seek \$5.4bn in virus relief loans

AFP | Washington

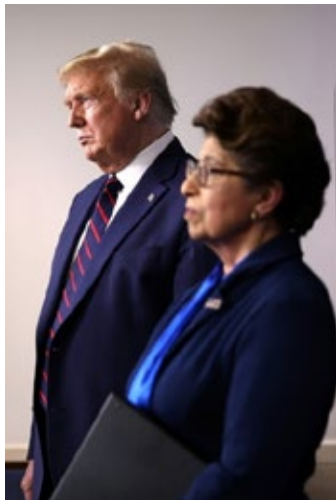
Small and medium-size US businesses have applied for more than \$5.4 billion in government-backed loans as a key pillar of the country's coronavirus relief plan took effect, the Trump administration said.

Jovita Carranza, who heads the federal Small Business Administration, said late Friday on Twitter that 17,503 companies -- those with 500 or fewer employees -- had filed applications through local banks for loans totaling more than \$5.4 billion.

Friday was the first day the companies were able to apply for the money, intended in large part to help them pay employees' salaries.

The loans, which could eventually total \$350 billion, constitute a central part of the \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief plan adopted by Congress and then signed into law by President Donald Trump on March 27.

Companies that receive the money and do not fire their workers -- or that otherwise



Trump stands with the head of the Small Business Administration, Jovita Carranza, during a White House briefing

re-hire those they have laid off -- will have their debt forgiven.

The funds are intended to help hundreds of thousands of restaurants, hair salons and other small and medium businesses pay wages and rent for eight weeks, allowing them to keep staff on the payroll during virus-enforced closures.

"If we run out of money we're going to go back to Congress and get more money," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told Fox Business Network on Friday. "This is a great, great program with bipartisan support."

On Friday, most applications were submitted to local banks. Some of the biggest US banks -- including the largest, JPMorgan Chase -- said they had encountered difficulties implementing the program and were awaiting guidance from the government.

But Mnuchin said he was working with key bank executives to iron out any kinks and expected the largest banks to be taking part in the coming week.

Mnuchin also said money transfers to households would start within two weeks, down from the previously estimated three weeks. A family of four can receive up to \$3,000 under the larger relief package.

The first economic effects of the crisis struck across the United States in March, when 701,000 jobs were lost. The unemployment rate rose to 4.4 percent.

US warns airlines to quickly refund tickets after canceled flights

Reuters | Washington

The US Transportation Department on Friday issued a notice to airlines reminding them they are obligated to refund tickets when they cancel a flight or make a significant flight schedule change that passengers opt not to accept, but will not take any immediate action against airlines.

U.S. and foreign airlines have canceled hundreds of thousands of flights and eliminated millions of seats in the wake of a massive falloff in travel demand because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Transportation Department said it is receiving a rising number of complaints and inquiries from passengers seeking refunds. Earlier this week, nine Democratic US senators urged the chief executives of 11 major airlines to issue full cash refunds to customers who cancel their flights.

The department said the "longstanding obligation of carriers to provide refunds for flights that carriers cancel or significantly delay does not cease when the flight disruptions are outside of the carrier's control."

The department said it could take an enforcement



American Airlines passenger planes crowd a runway where they are parked due to flight reductions made to slow the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at Tulsa International Airport in Tulsa, Oklahoma, US

action when airlines deny refunds when a "carrier cancels a flight, makes a significant schedule change, or significantly delays a flight to be a violation of the carriers' obligation." But the department said given the massive crisis it "will exercise its prosecutorial discretion and provide carriers an opportunity to become compliant before taking further action."

Airlines must contact in a timely manner passengers who were given vouchers "to notify those passengers that they have the option of a refund" and they must update refund policies to make it clear that they give refunds after a significant schedule change or canceled flight.

Hungary prepares \$30 billion coronavirus package to jump-start economy



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban

Reuters | Budapest

Hungary is preparing to announce a roughly \$30 billion package of measures to help jump-start the economy, a top government official said on Saturday, as the coronavirus outbreak shutters factories and raises the spectre of recession.

Parliament, where the ruling Fidesz party has a strong majority, has granted Prime Minister Viktor Orban the right to rule by decree to fight the coronavirus, ignoring calls by opponents and rights groups to put a timeframe on the extra powers.

Orban, who has been in power for a decade, has flagged the biggest economic package of the country's history to offset the economic impacts of the pandemic, which has already led to tens of thousands of job losses.

The premier is expected to unveil the measures on Monday, after the government approves them, his chief of staff Gergely Gulyas told a news conference. The National Bank of Hungary will announce steps after its policy-making Monetary Council meets on Tuesday.

Video app Zoom rockets to fame, with some hiccups

AFP | San Francisco

What does British Prime Minister Boris Johnson have in common with virtual happy hour celebrants and thousands of students around the world?

All use the Zoom videoconferencing application to get together while staying apart during the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

But amid its newfound fame, the Silicon Valley-based company has come under stepped-up scrutiny over how it handles privacy and security -- including allowing uninvited guests to barge in on sessions.

Created by engineer Eric Yuan in 2011 and listed on the Nasdaq a year ago, Zoom has seen its market value skyrocket to some \$35 billion.

Yuan has spoken of a passion for communication technologies that dates back to the 1990s when, as a university student in mainland China, he longed for a way to see his girlfriend without needing to travel hours by train.

Zoom hit the market as a tool for people working apart to collaborate on business, competing with offerings from the likes of Microsoft, Facebook, Google and others.

Poker and funerals

As people around the world stay home due to coronavirus risk, Zoom has become a go-to service for remote education, exercise classes, poker games, church services and happy hour celebrations.

Couples have gotten married in "zoomed" ceremonies. Birthdays have been celebrated. Funerals have been virtually attended.

"It's really easy to use, and free; that's nice," said US school teacher Justin Minkel, who instructs students remotely using Zoom. "Just click a link."

Home chaos such as dogs barking or outbursts from siblings can be disruptive, but



Prime Minister Boris Johnson (top left) holds a cabinet meeting via Zoom on March 31



Zoom founder and CEO Eric Yuan (right) is seen at the Nasdaq market debut of the company in April 2019

Minkel cures that by "muting" students' microphones until he needs to hear them.

According to Yuan, the number of people taking part in Zoom meetings daily eclipsed 200 million in March, up from just 10 million at the end of last year.

Video calls have surged on all messaging platforms including WhatsApp, Messenger, and Google Hangouts, but Zoom has become a star.

It lets as many as 100 people simultaneously attend a video-conference, allowing 40 minutes free and then charging

for premium accounts that provide more time and features for \$15 monthly.

Zoom lifted the 40-minute limit on free accounts for teachers in an array of countries.

Among Zoom settings is an option to choose a backdrop image, such as the Golden Gate Bridge or tropical beach, hiding what is really behind a user.

Zoombombing

Digital learning coach Stephanie DeMichele credits the surge in Zoom use to fear of being disconnected from schools, friends, families and others in

rupted religious ceremonies, remote classes, and other Zoom gatherings. In some cases, pornographic images have been displayed.

US media has reported that Zoom shares some data with third parties and questioned how well virtual meeting data is defended.

Prosecutors from several US states including Connecticut, New York, and Florida are investigating the company's privacy and security practices. The FBI has warned of Zoom sessions being hijacked.

Yuan vowed this week to step up data security, and apologized.

"We recognize that we have fallen short of the community's -- and our own -- privacy and security expectations," Yuan said in a message posted online.

"For that, I am deeply sorry."

Zoom was designed primarily for use by large businesses with their own tech teams to provide support and protection, according to Yuan.

"We did not design the product with the foresight that, in a matter of weeks, every person in the world would suddenly be working, studying, and socializing from home," Yuan said.

"These new, mostly consumer use cases have helped us uncover unforeseen issues with our platform."

While encouraged that Zoom is admitting it has security problems, it still has "a ton of work" to do to fix them and restore trust in the platform, according to Electronic Frontier Foundation associate director of research Gennie Gebhart.

While tending to its immediate concerns, Zoom would be wise to keep an eye on the future, said Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanese.

"Replicating what Zoom has is not too difficult," Milanese said. "They need to think about what else they want to be."



Lauryn Morley, a lower school substitute teacher for the Washington Waldorf School in Bethesda, Maryland, talks to a student on a Zoom conference



Chaukei Ngai conducts a class from Hong Kong on her YogaUP service via Zoom videoconference

our lives.

"And here comes Zoom saying 'It's free, available, and you won't feel isolated,'" said DeMichele. "So people grabbed onto it."

A "Zoombombing" phenomenon has sparked warnings about lax security, however.

Virtual intruders have inter-

Some say there is a trade-off: Save lives or save jobs – this is a false dilemma

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA & DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS

As the world responds to COVID-19, country after country is faced with the need to contain the spread of the virus at the cost of bringing its society and economy to a standstill.

At face value there is a trade-off to make: either save lives or save livelihoods. This is a false dilemma – getting the virus under control is, if anything, a prerequisite to saving livelihoods.

This is what brings the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) so closely together – the WHO is there to protect the health of people and well-placed to advise on health priorities; the IMF exists to protect the health of the world economy – it advises on economic priorities, and also helps provide financing.



Our joint appeal to policymakers, especially in emerging market and developing economies, is to recognise that protecting public health and putting people back to work go hand-in-hand.

The WHO is on the front line of this crisis by the virtue of its mandate, but so is the IMF. In the short time since COVID-19 started spreading across the world, the demand for IMF financing has skyrocketed.

Never in the 75 years history of the institution have so many countries – 85 so far – found themselves in need of IMF emergency financing. And this financing is being made available in record short time, with the first projects already being approved and money disbursed to provide much needed assistance to shield countries against dramatic increase in financial needs at a time of sudden drop in economic activities and in revenues.

As financing to support severely constrained public bud-

Some say there is a trade-off in tackling COVID-19: save lives or save jobs. This is a false dilemma. We must protect both lives and livelihoods. We must focus on the priority actions needed to get this done.

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA
Managing Director, IMF

DR. TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS
Director-General, WHO



gets reaches the countries in need, our joint plea is to place health expenditures at the top of the priority list.

Paying salaries to doctors and nurses, supporting hospitals and emergency rooms, establishing make-shift field clinics, buying

protective gear and essential medical equipment, carrying out public awareness campaigns about simple measures like hand washing – these are critical investments to protect people against the pandemic.

In far too many places health

systems are unprepared for an onslaught of COVID-19 patients and it is paramount to give them a boost.

And this can and must go together with support for economy-wide priorities required to reduce unemployment, min-

The course of the global health crisis and the fate of the global economy are inseparably intertwined. Fighting the pandemic is a necessity for the economy to rebound. That is why the WHO and IMF are cooperating closely with one another, and with other international organisations, to help address countries' priority needs.

imise bankruptcies and, over time, ensure recovery.

They come in addition to – not as a substitute for – health spending, and aim to provide targeted support to most-affected households and firms, including cash transfers, wage subsidies, and short-time work, strengthening unemployment benefits and social safety nets, and limiting the rise in borrowing costs.

We recognise how difficult it is to strike the right balance. Economic activity is plummeting as infections and measures to combat the pandemic affect workers, firms, and supply chains, job losses and uncertainty drag down spending, financial conditions sharply tighten, and the oil price collapse hits commodity exporters – all with cross-border spillovers.

In countries with large informal economies families depend on daily wages to survive. Highly congested urban slums make social distancing impossible.

We are convinced, however, that emergency financing can only help if countries strike this balance. The WHO can help in vital areas for coordination such as ensuring the production and delivery of medical supplies to those in need, in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner – by facilitating advance purchase agreements, for example.

The WHO is also working with

suppliers of personal protective equipment for health workers to ensure that supply chains are functioning. And this is an area where collaboration with other international organisations can be so effective – for example, the World Bank's capacity to aggregate demand to purchase medical supplies in bulk.

The IMF for its part aims to help by doubling its emergency response capacity from \$50 billion up to \$100 billion – making it possible for countries to get twice as much money from the Fund as had been made available during emergencies. Its total lending capacity of \$1 trillion is now secured thanks to decisive actions of its membership.

The Fund is also increasing its capacity to ease debt service obligations of its poorest members through the Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust for which generous donors are providing grant resources. And together with the World Bank it is advocating for a standstill of debt service from the poorest countries to official bilateral creditors for as long as the world economy is paralysed by the pandemic.

The course of the global health crisis and the fate of the global economy are inseparably intertwined. Fighting the pandemic is a necessity for the economy to rebound. That is why the WHO and IMF are cooperating closely with one another, and with other international organisations, to help address countries' priority needs.

As we all work together, with little time and finite resources, it is essential that we focus on the right priorities to save lives and livelihoods. Our joint appeal is that in one of humanity's darkest hours, leaders must step up right now for people living in emerging markets.

Kristalina Georgieva is Managing Director of the IMF, and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is Director-General of the WHO

The Impact of Covid 19 on Bahrain's Islamic Finance

DR. SUTAN EMIR HIDAYAT

The Coronavirus-Covid 19, which has been declared as a pandemic, has taken a significant impact on all sectors of the economy including the Islamic financial industry.

The impact of the virus outbreak on Islamic financial industry can be seen in countries that are regarded as the world's global hubs of Islamic finance such as the Kingdom of Bahrain.

It is important to note that the first death case due to the covid 19 in the GCC occurred in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Since the first confirmed case of covid 19 announced, stock market across the GCC has been diving signif-

icantly including the indices in Bahrain Bourse.

As we know, there are many companies listed in Bahrain all share index having shariah compliant businesses and the kingdom even has its own Islamic index. The fall of the indices has given impacts on the wealth of Shariah conscious investors.

In addition, the decision taken by the CBB to delay the financing installments until 6 months will absolutely impact financial performance of Islamic financial institutions in the kingdom. With the social distancing and curfew are currently in place in the kingdom, businesses are very much affected and number of financing application to Islamic banks is



A man wearing a surgical mask is pictured in Manama.

It is very clear that Islamic finance is not immune to the crisis though it still needs further research to assess the impacts and its difference from the impacts on its conventional counterpart.

surely declining. Islamic financial institutions are also investors in shariah compliant shares. The

decline of the share prices surely impacts their earnings and asset quality.

It is very clear that Islamic finance is not immune to the crisis though it still needs further research to assess the impacts and its difference from the impact on its conventional counterpart.

We really hope the epidemic will end soon so the normal economic activities will be restored. The Islamic finance stakeholders in the kingdom must coordinate their efforts to minimize the impacts and find solutions to the current crisis.

(Dr. Sutan Emir Hidayat is Director of Education and Research at the National Committee of Islamic Economy and Finance (KNEKS), Indonesia)

1951

Cold War: Ethel and Julius Rosenberg are sentenced to death for spying for the Soviet Union.

1956

Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro declares himself at war with Cuban President Fulgencio Batista.



1956

In Sri Lanka, the **Mahajana Eksath Peramuna** win the general elections in a landslide and S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike is sworn in as the Prime Minister of Ceylon.

1957

In India, Communists win the first elections in united Kerala and **E. M. S. Namboodiripad** is sworn in as the first Chief Minister.

Outrunning the COVID-19 bear



A grizzly bear roams through the Hayden Valley in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming.

HOWARD LEEDHAM

There is an answer to an old hypothetical question that can help you survive any threat, whether it is to your security, your way of life — or even your health in the form of a pandemic.

It is a question I often use in security scenarios to influence the mindset of my clients: “How do you survive a bear attack?” The responses range from “curl into a ball” to “make yourself as large and loud possible.” These approaches may or may not have merit, but then I tell them the only sure-fire way to survive a bear attack: “You simply have to run faster than the person you’re with.”

Of course there is an element of cynicism to this theory — but the point I am making is that whatever threat you face in life, you have a choice about where you place yourself on the victim scale.

Such life-preserving choices can, for example, include the seat you choose on an aircraft, where you sit in a restaurant and even what shoes you wear. It is a personal choice to be aware of your surroundings, understand potential dangers and consciously decide on which choice to make when your safety is threatened. The threat posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and its potentially fatal consequences, is no exception.

Take the case of choosing a seat on an aircraft, for example. If you are seated within seven

rows of an exit and there is a serious incident during take-off or landing, which is when most fatal accidents occur, statistically your chances of survival are about 80 percent greater than if you are seated eight rows or further from an exit.

In a restaurant, the seat furthest from, but facing, the entrance gives you the maximum time to respond in the event of an attack or robbery. Your choice of footwear when walking down the street or visiting a mall becomes important if the need ever arises for you to run from a threat.

In the case of any threat, your choices are rapidly reduced to just one of three options: Fight, flight or freeze. That is to say, do you take on the threat (by attempting to put out a fire for example), take flight and run away from the danger, or do you freeze and stay in place hoping that the threat does not see or reach you?

In most threat scenarios, the “freeze” option is rarely recommended. Yet when it comes to COVID-19, staying put is not a choice, it is a necessity to give yourself the best chance of surviving a metaphorical COVID bear.

The only way to avoid a fight with COVID-19 is to freeze. The only way to outrun (or rather, outlast) the chance of infection by the coronavirus is to freeze. Self-isolation is the most effective way to maximize your chances of not succumbing. If you ignore the advice and fail to do so, you are simply ensuring

In the Asia-Pacific region, South Korea and Singapore have led the world with their COVID-testing protocols. These helped them to quickly find, isolate and treat infected individuals. It appears to have worked, as they have managed to maintain relatively low fatality levels.

you will be the slowest runner when the COVID bear is hot on your heels.

In addition to remaining in place, medical experts have additional advice that can help you to further stack the deck in your favor should the virus get too close.

First and foremost, keep clean; regularly washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water should be a new pastime. If you must leave the house for essentials such as food or medicine, shower as soon as you return and wash your clothes. While you are out, maintain a distance of at least two meters between yourself and others.

Spray your phone, keys and keyboard with alcohol-based sanitizer. Maintain your health through exercise (at home) and a balanced diet. Ensure your vitamin and zinc levels are maintained. Practice preventative medicine for any existing con-

ditions. Regularly gargle with mouthwash, suck on throat lozenges, and keep paracetamol in your house in case you develop a temperature.

Through these, and each and every other small precautionary measure that you take, your chance of outrunning the COVID bear increases.

Countries in the Middle East have moved quickly to try to slow initial infection rates: Flights and border crossings have been suspended; schools and social venues have been closed for weeks; curfews are in place. Virus testing rates are among the highest in the world, and hundreds of thousands have responded to the offer of volunteer Community Immunity Ambassador certification.

In the Asia-Pacific region, South Korea and Singapore have led the world with their COVID-testing protocols. These helped them to quickly find, isolate and treat infected individuals. It appears to have worked, as they have managed to maintain relatively low fatality levels.

But as countries continue to take differing approaches to the pandemic, the world watches in an attempt to understand why some are managing to outrun the bear and others are not. Italy and Spain were taken by surprise. Germany and the UK had more warning and have taken a scientific approach, although the latter is reportedly lagging in implementing testing.

The US, with its disparate health system that varies from

state to state, faces different, stark and potentially deadly problems against a virus with no respect for state lines, the dictates of private health insurance companies or social status.

The post-COVID normal into which the world will emerge when the immediate health crisis is over has yet to be ascertained. However, it seems inevitable that when developed countries have fought their battles, our attention will have to turn to developing countries that lack modern health infrastructure and which might, therefore, have to rely on herd-immunity protocols. This will mean localized epidemic levels of infection. Such countries might well face border lockdowns and travel restrictions for the foreseeable future.

Many of the long-term complexities that COVID-19 is unleashing on the world are as hard to see as the virus itself. So while each country fights its own pandemic battle, the situation requires each of us to make the paradoxical decision to “freeze” (self-isolate) so that we are running faster from the virus than those who will not or cannot.

Without doubt the human spirit will prevail over this pandemic, and in doing so it will doubtless establish a “new normal.” Who knows, we might even figure out that the world’s health is more important than the health of the financial markets, because without the former the bears will surely consume the latter.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Had an extensive telephone conversation with President @realDonaldTrump. We had a good discussion, and agreed to deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership to fight COVID-19.

@narendramodi

02



708 people in the UK have died of #coronavirus in the past 24hrs where the death toll now stands at 4313. Amongst the dead, a 5 year old. The youngest victim to die of #COVID19 in the country so far. The UK now has the 4th highest mortality rate in the world.

@aliarouzi

03



Withering indictment of Trump’s response to coronavirus: “The failure has echoes of the period leading up to 9/11: Warnings were sounded, including at the highest levels of government, but the president was deaf to them until the enemy had already struck.”

@nycjim

04

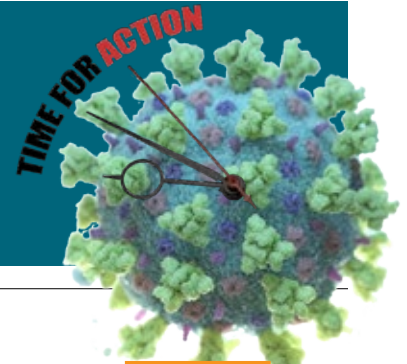


Our public spaces will only stay open if Londoners follow the rules. If you were planning to meet people outside this weekend, don’t. If someone asks you to meet, say no. Stay strong and stay home.

@MayorofLondon

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

world



Global

Americans told to wear masks

● President Donald Trump's administration on Friday suggested widespread use of simple masks or scarves might help slow the spread

● German authorities joined the US and other countries in encouraging citizens to wear self-made masks

AFP | Madrid

Americans yesterday came to grips with recommendations to wear masks against the coronavirus, while Spain added to hopes that Europe could be turning a corner in the pandemic with a second daily drop in deaths.

China meanwhile came to a standstill as the nation where the virus first appeared held three minutes of silence to mourn the patients and medical staff killed by the outbreak.

Since COVID-19 emerged late last year, more than 1.1 million people have fallen ill. Nearly 60,000 people have died.

Across China, cars, trains and ships sounded their horns, and air-raid sirens wailed, as flags were flown at half-staff from 10 am (0200 GMT).

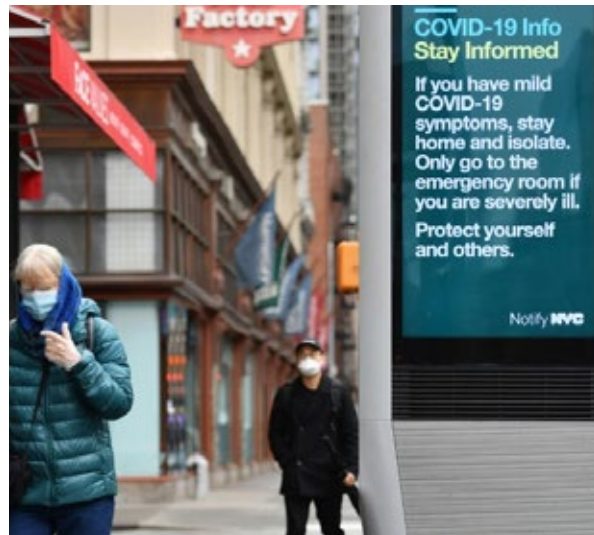
But large swathes of the world remain in crisis mode.

Europe accounts for the lion's share of virus fatalities, but America logged another rise in its death toll to bring the total to just over 7,100.

President Donald Trump's administration on Friday suggested widespread use of simple masks or scarves might help slow the spread -- even if the US leader said he himself wouldn't be following the advice.

"It's going to be really a voluntary thing," Trump said. "You don't have to do it and I'm choosing not to do it, but some people may want to do it and that's okay."

The US recommendation will likely worsen an already severe shortage of



Officials in New York, the worst affected part of the US, began advising people to wear masks some days ago, and there were signs on the streets that the advice was being heeded



Coronavirus: Three-minutes of mourning at Wuhan railway station

masks in the United States and Europe, which both rely heavily on imports from China.

Officials in New York, the worst affected part of the US, began advising people to wear masks some days ago, and there were signs on the streets that the advice was being heeded.

"I am trying to protect me and my family. If everybody protects themselves, it's better for all of us," Eddie Marrero, a 58-year-old handyman, told AFP.

Hope in Europe

In Europe, Italy and Spain continue to bear the brunt of a pandemic that has

kept millions of citizens confined to their homes, closed schools and businesses and overwhelmed healthcare systems.

But official figures suggested unprecedented measures to restrict people's movements were working and that the peak may have hit on the continent.

Spain, which is under a near-total lockdown, on Saturday recorded a second successive daily fall in coronavirus-related deaths with 809 fatalities.

The total number of deaths in the country now stands at 11,744, second only to Italy.

The number of new Spanish cases also slowed at 7,026, taking the total to

124,736.

Spaniard Javier Lara survived after being put on oxygen in an overcrowded intensive care unit -- a shock to a 29-year-old who was athletic and does not smoke.

"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," he said, describing facing death with an eight-week-old as the "worst moment" in his life.

Italy reported late Friday that the daily rise of officially registered infections dropped to a new low of just four percent, while the number of people who had fully recovered was rising.

"The numbers are improving," said Giulio Gallera, chief medical officer of Italy's worst-hit Lombardy region.

"Our hospitals are starting to breathe."

Easter holidays

European governments have nevertheless warned citizens not to expect a loosening of the restrictions anytime soon.

In Germany, where the death toll rose again on Saturday, Chancellor Angela Merkel said figures showing the virus's spread was slowing "give us a little bit of hope".

German authorities joined the US and other countries in encouraging citizens to wear self-made masks in public, prompting a flurry of on-line tutorials and debate about how to maximise protection.

In France, 160,000 police officers and gendarmes fanned out nationwide to ensure people were heeding the confinement rules despite the start of the Easter holidays, when French families traditionally head to the beach, countryside or mountains.

Covid-19 Cases:

1,167,063

Deaths

62,691

Recovered:

241,742

Active cases

862,630

Closed cases

304,433

Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths
USA	297,768	+694	8,098
Spain	124,736	+546	11,744
Italy	124,632	+681	15,362
Germany	92,150	+55	1,330
France	82,165		6,507
China	81,639	+4	3,326
Iran	55,743	+158	3,452
UK	41,903	+708	4,313
Turkey	20,921		425
Switzerland	20,278	+50	641
Belgium	18,431	+140	1,283
Netherlands	16,627	+164	1,651
Austria	11,781	+18	186
Portugal	10,524	+20	266
S. Korea	10,156	+3	177
Brazil	9,391	+13	376
Israel	7,589	+4	44
Sweden	6,443	+15	373
Denmark	4,077	+22	161
Romania	3,613	+13	146
Malaysia	3,483	+4	57
Philippines	3,094	+8	144
India	3,082		86
Pakistan	2,748	+1	41
Indonesia	2,092	+10	191
Thailand	2,067	+1	20
Mexico	1,688	+10	60
Algeria	1,251	+25	130
Hungary	678	+6	32
Bangladesh	70	+2	8
Bolivia	139	+1	10
Sri Lanka	162	+1	5

Figures as of closing

'Corona cake' spreading fast in Gaza



Palestinian baker Eyad Abu Rezqa says he wants to raise awareness - and spirits - with his 'corona cake'

Khan Yunis | Palestinian Territories

As he watched the world trying to raise awareness about the new coronavirus and convince people to stay at home, Palestinian baker Eyad Abu Rezqa cooked up an idea.

The head of the Al-Nada bakery in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza has created a 'corona cake' depicting a woman wearing a blue face mask, aiming to remind people of the importance of social distancing.

He first posted the design on social media and now dozens of people are ordering them each day in the impoverished Palestinian enclave, he said.

"Straight away it got great interest, customers starting saying 'I want that cake'," Abu Rezqa said.

"Every day our clients' demand for the mask cake is increasing."

He stressed he was not bearing the risk of the deadly disease which has killed more than 50,000 people but trying to keep spirits up while promoting awareness.

Loyal US carrier sailors cheer captain relieved of command

Washington

US Navy Captain Brett Crozier was cheered by hundreds of sailors as he left the USS Roosevelt docked in Guam after his controversial firing by the Pentagon, videos showed Friday.

The respected head of the aircraft carrier, hit by the fast-moving coronavirus pandemic, was removed from his command by Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly Thursday after a letter Crozier wrote pleading with the Pentagon for support for the crew was leaked into the public.

Crozier "demonstrated extremely poor judgment in the middle of a crisis" in his handling of the letter, Modly said.

But the crew of the Roosevelt openly signaled their support in videos taken from the ship as he



strode alone solemnly down the gangway, saluting briefly to the crew before getting into a waiting car on the pier.

"Captain Crozier, Captain Crozier," sailors on the deck of the warship chanted as they clapped.

"That's how you send out one of the greatest captains you ever had," an unidentified person can be heard saying on one of the videos posted on social media.

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Bahrain	688	+16	4		423	261	3	404
Saudi Arabia	2,179	+140	29	+4	420	1,730	41	63
UAE	1,505	+241	10	+1	125	1,370	2	152
Kuwait	479	+62	1	+1	93	385	17	112
Oman	277	+25	1		61	215	3	54
Jordan	310		5		58	247	5	30
Iraq	878	+58	56	+2	259	563		22
Egypt	985		66		216	703		10

Bolsonaro's disapproval rating rises amid virus havoc



Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro

Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's disapproval rating has surged as the far-right leader has taken a vocal stance against coronavirus containment measures, two polls out Friday found.

Bolsonaro, who has compared COVID-19 to a "bit of sniffles" and criticised the "hysteria" around it, has found himself increasingly isolated on the issue as the pandemic advances.

Thirty-nine percent of Brazilians disapprove of his handling of the crisis, up six points from two weeks ago, polling firm Datafolha found.

That was similar to the result reported by polling firm XP Ip Espe, which found Bolsonaro's disapproval rating hit its highest level since he took office in January 2019.

Forty-two percent of Brazilians said the president's overall performance was "bad" or "terrible," up six points in a month, it said.

Both polls found the president's approval rating was essentially stable: 33 percent, in the Datafolha poll, which asked specifically about his handling of the coronavirus pandemic; and 28 percent, according to XP, which focused on overall performance.

Kuwait reports first death from coronavirus outbreak

Reuters | Dubai

Kuwait recorded yesterday its first death from the coronavirus outbreak, state news agency KUNA reported, citing a health ministry spokesman.

The total number of people diagnosed with the disease increased by 62 in the past 24 hours to 479 cases, he said, according to KUNA.

Trump fires intelligence official

Washington

President Donald Trump announced Friday he was firing a senior intelligence official who had a central role in the complaint last August that sparked the impeachment trial of the US leader.

In a letter to the Senate Intelligence Committee, Trump said he had lost confidence in Michael Atkinson, the independent inspector general of the broad US intelligence community.

Indian officials warn of lockdown extensions

Reuters | Mumbai

The number of confirmed new coronavirus cases in South Asia neared 6,000 yesterday, even as authorities in some cities tightened restrictions on movement and warned lockdowns could be extended in a bid to rein in the pandemic.

"If people don't obey the rules seriously and cases continue to rise, then there may be no option but to extend the lockdown," Rajesh Tope, the health minister of Maharashtra, said. "It could be extended in Mumbai and urban areas of Maharashtra by two weeks."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said this week the country will pull out of the planned three-week lockdown in a phased manner. India has been hardest hit by the disease in South Asia with some 2,902 cases, of which 68 have died.

Maharashtra has 516 confirmed cases of COVID-19 - the disease caused by the coronavirus - and 26 people have died.

While the government does plan to review the lockdown, set to end on April 14, three senior officials said this will depend on an assessment of the situation in each state, and lockdowns and restrictions would be extended in districts where the coronavirus case spread has continued.

Public transport in large metros such as Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi, may only be restored in a phased manner days after the lockdown ends, said the officials, who asked not to be named as the plans were still under discussion.

Restrictions tightened

The number of COVID-19 cases have more than doubled in South Asia in the last week. Health experts warn an epidemic in the region, home to a fifth of the world's population, could overwhelm its already

Indian power grid operators scramble to prepare for Modi's 'lights off' plan

Reuters | Chennai/Mumbai

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to citizens to switch off lights across India today to mark the coronavirus fight is generating a lot more work and some tough challenges for India's power sector workers.

On Friday, Modi appealed to Indians to turn out their lights for nine minutes at 9 pm on Sunday to show solidarity amid the coronavirus lockdown with a show of lamps, candles and flashlights.

The appeal, however, set off alarm bells for those in charge of India's power grid, prompting a flurry of orders to officials manning generation plants and managing grid load, amid concerns that a surge in voltage due to a steep dip in demand could harm the grid and cause widespread outages.

India's Power System Operation Corp (POSOCO), which oversees the national power grid, ordered all senior officials to be present at generating stations, substations and load despatch centres across India between 6 pm and 10 pm today.

It advised engineers to start reducing output from baseload plants such as coal-fired power stations just ahead of 9 pm and ramp up generation from hydro and gas plants, typically used to address peak power demand, to manage the anticipated gyration in demand.

POSOCO expects consumption to dip by over 10pc when Indians switch off lights, it said in an advisory sent to grid operators across the country, calling the expected reduction in load and rapid recovery, "unprecedented".

POSOCO's parent body, Power Grid Corp of India, asked regional electricity transmission centre employees to be on "high alert," as the lights out plan could "lead to outage of grid elements due to grid constraints".

India's Ministry of Power sought to allay concerns though, and said in a statement, "The Indian Electricity grid is robust and stable and adequate arrangements and protocols are in place to handle the variation in demand."

Modi has ordered India's 1.3 billion people indoors to avert a massive outbreak of coronavirus infections.

weak public health systems.

But Muslim-majority Pakistan and Bangladesh, and India, home to the world's largest Muslim minority, have struggled to convince conservative religious groups to maintain social distancing.

On Friday, Pakistani Muslims at a Karachi mosque clashed with baton-wielding police trying to enforce new curbs on gatherings to prevent Friday prayers and contain coronavirus infections, officials said.

This came after the government in the southern province of Sindh, home to the financial hub of Karachi, enforced a three-hour curfew on Friday afternoon, in a bid to persuade worshippers to pray at home.

Pakistan has so far reported 2,547 coronavirus infections, fuelled by a jump in cases related to members of the Tablighi Jamaat, an orthodox Muslim proselytising group.



UAE extends coronavirus curfew and Saudi Arabia locks down parts of Jeddah

Reuters | Dubai/Riyadh

The United Arab Emirates has extended a de facto overnight curfew indefinitely to disinfect public areas to fight the spread of coronavirus and Saudi Arabia has locked down parts of the Red Sea city of Jeddah.

The UAE's disinfection drive, which consists of spraying streets, parks and public transport facilities, runs from 8 p.m. (1600 GMT) to 6 a.m. and people must stay at home during those hours, state-run news agency WAM said late on Friday.

The curfew came in on March 26 and was extended last week until April 5.

"The Ministry of Health Prevention and the Ministry of Interior have announced the continuation of the National Disinfection Programme," WAM said, without saying when the operation would end.

The oil-rich federation has



A man wearing a protective face mask walks through the deserted Barajeel Souq, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in old Dubai, United Arab Emirates

reported an uptick in coronavirus cases with several hundred people diagnosed since April 1. The UAE recommends that people wear masks when leaving home, a health ministry spokeswoman told a news conference broadcast on TV.

Yesterday, UAE reported 241 infections and one death over the past 24 hours, taking the total confirmed cases to 1,505 and the death toll to 10, according to government tweets.

In neighbouring Saudi Ara-

bia, the authorities announced a lockdown and a partial curfew in seven neighbourhoods of Jeddah starting on Saturday as part of measures to contain the outbreak, the interior ministry said in a statement.

The interior ministry said residents in the seven Jeddah neighbourhoods could only go out for grocery shopping and medical care between 6 a.m (0300 GMT) and 3 p.m and movement in and out of the areas will be restricted.

Latest developments

Passengers from a virus-hit cruise ship and its sister vessel, also struck with a handful of cases, started heading home Friday from Florida, after being stranded at sea for days.

The Zaandam, operated by Holland America Line, began its stranger-than-fiction journey on March 7 in Buenos

Aires -- before international restrictions to curb the spread of the coronavirus were in full force. It was meant to dock two weeks later in Chile, but when passengers aboard fell ill, several countries refused to let the ship dock.



The Falklands Islands government has confirmed the territory's first case of the new coronavirus. A patient tested positive after being admitted to hospital with symptoms on March 31, according to a statement released on Friday that said they were in isolation and in "stable condition".

South African public healthcare workers dispersed into the buzzing streets of Johannesburg's Yeoville neighbourhood

as Africa's worst virus-hit country rolled out mass door-to-door testing for COVID-19. Armed with screening questionnaires and testing kits, medics and volunteers set up their testing station on the front porch of a block of flats in the gritty business neighbourhood.

South Korea has expanded a social distancing campaign by another two weeks to April 19 to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Four acquitted in Daniel Pearl murder

rearrested pending appeal. Daniel Pearl was the South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal when he was abducted in Karachi in January 2002 while researching a story about Islamist militants. Three alleged accomplices also had their convictions overturned.



Medical staff in Varese, northern Italy, with Ivo the robot who helps them treat seriously ill coronavirus patients and reduce the risk of them getting infected. The country's medical association said Friday that at least 70 medics have died from various causes since Italy recorded the first official COVID-19 death on February 21

A gas explosion at a residential block near Moscow killed at least one person and injured four on Saturday, destroying several floors of the building housing 80 apartments, Russia's emergency ministry said.

Spain overtook Italy for the first time for the number of confirmed cases, but the overnight death toll fell from the previous day. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will ask parliament to extend lockdown measures by 15 more days until April 26.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he was remaining in isolation with mild symptoms, seven days after he was confirmed to be infected. Britain's health minister said the curve of deaths could peak on Easter Sunday. Queen Elizabeth will make an extremely rare address to the nation on Sunday.

The top official in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the virus was first identified, warned residents to stay vigilant and avoid going out.

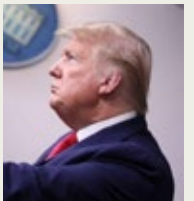
More than 120,000 people have signed a petition calling on the U.S. Navy to reinstate the captain of a coronavirus-stricken aircraft carrier a day after he was relieved of his command for a letter sent to superiors urging stronger measures to halt the outbreak.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi postponed the launch of mega-projects including the Grand Egyptian Museum and moving civil servants to a planned new capital city to 2021 from 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak, the presidency said

A man armed with a knife attacked people out shopping in the southeastern French town of Romans-sur-Isere on Saturday, killing two and wounding four, the mayor said. The town is currently under a coronavirus lockdown, although people are allowed out to buy essentials.

US President Donald Trump said he would ask

Congress for more money to make loans to small businesses struggling with the economic fallout from the coronavirus outbreak if the original \$349 billion allocated in a fiscal stimulus bill runs out. "I will immediately ask Congress for more money to support small businesses under the @ppploan if the allocated money runs out," Trump wrote in a post on Twitter.



28 feared dead after Solomons ferry ignores storm warning

Reuters

At least 28 ferry passengers were swept overboard in a powerful storm off the Solomon Islands, reports said Saturday, with the captain unaware he had lost anyone until the boat docked.

The passengers were heading from the capital Honiara to West Are'are, more than 120 kilometres (75 miles) away, under a government programme to evacuate people to their home villages during the global coronavirus epidemic. The MV Taimareho set sail on Thursday night as tropical cyclone Harold bore down on the Solomons, and with weather forecasters warning against any unnecessary voyages. But the captain ignored advice not to sail, the nation's leader said, as survivors reported dozens of people were swept overboard by huge waves and strong winds. Local media put the death toll at 28. But police said it was impossible to verify the number.



CELEBS



Jessica Chastain

Why Jessica Chastain snubbed 'Doctor Strange' role

Los Angeles

Jessica Chastain turned down the chance to play Dr. Christine Palmer in the Benedict Cumberbatch starrer Doctor Strange as she only wants to appear in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) as a superhero. Writer of Doctor Strange, C Robert Cargill, said that director Scott Derrickson wanted to rope in Chastain for the role of Strange's former lover Dr. Christine Palmer, reports femalefirst.co.uk. When Chastain turned down the role, it went to actress Rachel McAdams. Speaking on the Junkfood Cinema podcast, Cargill said: "The interesting thing that Hollywood's starting to find out is that a lot of the actresses out there want to be superheroes as much as the actors do."



Orlando and Katy

Katy Perry reveals gender of her first child with Orlando Bloom

Los Angeles

American-singer songwriter Katy Perry has revealed a piece of happy news that she and Orlando Bloom are expecting a baby girl. The 35-year-old singer took to Instagram on Friday and announced, "It's a girl!" and posted a sweet picture of Bloom smiling with pink cream on his face. The adorable picture of the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star appeared to be from gender reveal celebration. She also wrote, "Girls Run the World" along with the post. This comes about one month after the 'Roar' singer announced her pregnancy in the music video for her song 'Never Worn White'.

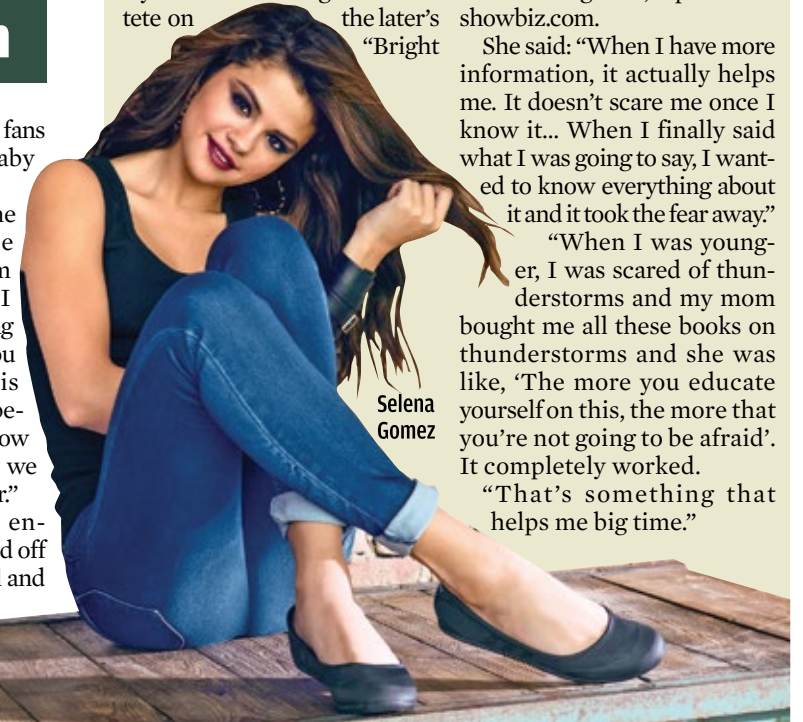
At the end of the short film, fans saw Perry cradling her baby bump. According to E!News, the 13-time Grammy nominee said that during an Instagram Live video last month, "And I like to tell you guys everything but I knew I would tell you in the best way, which is through a piece of music because that's... I guess that's how I speak to you. That's how we speak together to each other." Orlando and Katy got engaged last year. Bloom pulled off quite the romantic proposal and popped the question on Valentine's Day. However, the dynamic duo made it clear they're not rushing down the aisle.

Selena Gomez is battling bipolar disorder

Los Angeles

Singer Selena Gomez has revealed that she's battling bipolar disorder and said that learning about her the disorder took the fear away. Gomez shared the news with her friend and singer Miley Cyrus during a tete-a-tete on the later's "Bright

Minded" Instagram Live show on April 3, saying that she learned about her mental health condition during a visit to Massachusetts' McLean Hospital. Gomez told Cyrus and the viewers that the more information she gathered about being bipolar, the easier it was to deal with the diagnosis, reports aceshowbiz.com. She said: "When I have more information, it actually helps me. It doesn't scare me once I know it... When I finally said what I was going to say, I wanted to know everything about it and it took the fear away." "When I was younger, I was scared of thunderstorms and my mom bought me all these books on thunderstorms and she was like, 'The more you educate yourself on this, the more that you're not going to be afraid'. It completely worked. "That's something that helps me big time."



Selena Gomez

SRK gives four-storied office space for BMC quarantine facility

Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan and his wife Gauri have offered their four-storied personal office space to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), to be utilised as a quarantine facility for women, children and the elderly. The superstar's decision to donate his office comes just a couple of days after he made huge contributions to the government to aid the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. SRK, through his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), has committed to contribute to the PM-Cares Fund. Through his film production banner, Red Chillies Entertainment, he will give to the Maharashtra CM's Relief Fund. The superstar has also pledged Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health-care providers and workers in Maharashtra and West Bengal.



Shah Rukh Khan

Jennifer Aniston gifts COVID-affected nurse \$10K food delivery card

Los Angeles

Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston has joined hands with TV host Jimmy Kimmel to give a nurse from Utah and each member of her team a \$10K-food delivery gift card. Kimmel is currently filming his late night talk show "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" from his home during self-isolation amid the global COVID-19 crisis, and on April 2 he helped Aniston spread some joy to one fan, reports aceshowbiz.com. Appearing on the show via video link, the "FRIENDS" star shared about being stuck at home had been a challenge, after spending the past three weeks in isolation. In the final segment of her appearance, the star helped surprise a fan named Kimball Fairbanks, a cardiovascular nurse in Utah who contracted Covid-19 last week.



Jennifer Aniston

Deepika turns 'masterchef' for hubby Ranveer

Mumbai

Ranveer took to Instagram stories, where he shared a string of photographs. In one image Deepika is seen wearing an apron. He later shared that the "Chhappak" actress made Thai salad and tom yum soup. In one image, Ranveer wrote: "Pati Parmeshwar ke life apne haathon se khaana banane wali cutie meri Deepu... love you babes." In the last picture, Ranveer was seen savouring some dessert and captioned it: "Deepu my babes ur my one true love."



Ranveer Singh and Deepika

Pink, son are COVID-19 free after testing positive

Los Angeles

Singer Pink has shared that she and her son had coronavirus. Pink has been regularly updating her Instagram to share her family's activities while in home during the lockdown, but on April 3 she shared about her and her son's diagnosis. She took to her social media accounts that she and her three-year-old son Jameson showed symptoms of COVID-19 two weeks ago and tested positive for the disease, reports aceshowbiz.com.



"Two weeks ago my three-year old son, Jameson, and I are were showing symptoms of COVID-19. Fortunately, our primary care physician had access to tests and I tested positive. "My family was already sheltering at home and we continued to do so for the last two weeks following the instruction of our doctor," Pink wrote.

"Black Widow", "Indiana Jones 5" among Disney biggies to get new release dates

Los Angeles

New release dates have been announced for several major Disney films including "Black Widow", "The Eternals" and "Indiana Jones 5" that have been pushed ahead owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Black Widow", starring Scarlett Johansson in the title

role, was delayed last month. The film will now open on November 6, in the place of fellow Marvel adventure "The Eternals", reports variety.com. In turn, "The Eternals" moves to February 12 next year. "Shang-Chi And The Legend Of The Ten Rings", which introduces Hollywood's first Asian superhero, moves to May 7, while "Doctor Strange 2" will

now release on November 5, 2021. "Thor: Love And Thunder" on February 18, 2022. "Black Panther 2" will still debut on May 6, 2022, while "Captain Marvel 2" has been set for July 8, 2022. The studio's live-action remake of "Mulan" has been pushed to July 24, 2020.

SUDOKU

7			4	3	9			
			1					5
	9	2				6		
5			7		1	2		
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1			5	6				
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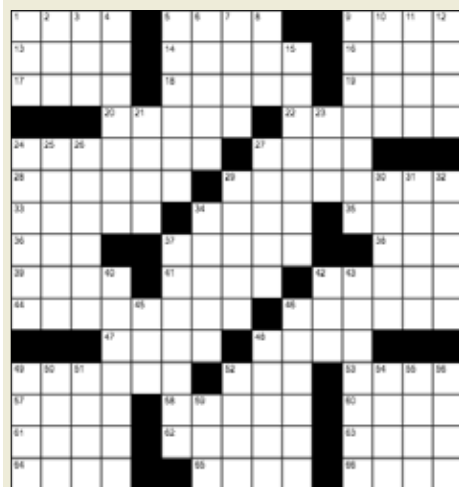
Yesterday's solution

9	5	8	1	3	4	2	7	6
2	7	4	9	6	5	3	8	1
6	3	1	2	7	8	9	4	5
1	8	9	7	4	2	6	5	3
7	4	6	5	9	3	1	2	8
5	2	3	6	8	1	7	9	4
3	1	5	4	2	7	8	6	9
4	9	2	8	1	6	5	3	7
8	6	7	3	5	9	4	1	2

How to play

Place a number in the empty boxes in a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1- Overdue; 5- Pro follower; 9- ... d'etat; 13- On the ocean; 14- Upright; 16- Aske; 17- Come again; 18- Poem; 19- Drop of water expelled by the eye; 20- Like a roc; 22- Sewing instrument; 24- Acariasis; 27- North Sea feeder; 28- Whimbrel; 29- Legislative capital of South Africa; 33- Equipped; 34- Prefix with drome; 35- Presidential battleground state; 36- One circuit; 37- Viewpoint; 38- Say further; 39- Take ... from me; 41- Sibilate; 42- Having auricular protuberances; 44- Recover; 46- Empire State capital; 47- Dies ...; 48- "Only Time" singer; 49- Neck scarf; 52- Guadalajara gold; 53- American space agency; 57- ... Camera; 58- Painter Rousseau; 60- Faucet problem; 61- Russian no; 62- John of England; 63- A single time; 64- Being; to Brutus; 65- Rifle (through); 66- At hand;

Down

- 1- Legal science; 2- Blonde shade; 3- Green or black, e.g.; 4- OK to consume; 5- Critique; 6- Zones; 7- Small gull; 8- Cooling units, for short; 9- Indulge; 10- Due; 11- River to the Caspian; 12- Combustible heap; 15- Sawbuck; 21- Competed; 23- Extra-wide shoe size; 24- Graduated; 25- Prepare an exhibition; 26- Axilla; 27- Tall tales; 29- Knock off; 30- Butler's love; 31- Broaden; 32- Simpleton; 34- In play; 37- Encase; 40- Personal; 42- Cathedral city of England; 43- Forsake; 45- 401(k) alternative; 46- Apply chrym; 48- Slip; 49- Motion picture; 50- Beams; 51- City on the Skunk; 52- Not tricked by; 54- "Rule Britannia" composer; 55- Director Vittorio De ...; 56- Impersonator; 59- They loop the Loop;

Yesterday's solution

S	T	E	T	S	O	L	A	V	S	C	A	T		
E	A	T	I	N	M	A	R	E	T	H	I	S		
C	R	E	P	E	I	C	E	R	A	I	R	E		
T	A	S	T	E	T	E	N	D	E	N	C	Y		
S	T	Y	E	W	H	O	S	P	I	E	R	S		
P	E	A	O	N	E	R	C	L	O	S	E	T		
U	N	C	A	R	E	M	O	N	I	O	U	S	L	Y
M	O	H	A	I	R	N	A	V	I	E	E	L		
E	N	T	R	E	G	O	B	I	A	N	T	E		
N	O	R	L	A	D	S								
P	I	N	T	S	I	Z	E	N	L	A	G	R	E	S
O	T	O	E	K	E	E	N	A	S	T	R	E	S	
B	A	T	S	A	V	I	D	M	E	T	A	L		
I	S	A	T	R	E	N	O	S	A	K	A			

SPORTS

At least I can be champion for two years, says Halep

Reuters | London

Simon Halep is trying to look on the bright side regarding the suspension of the tennis season due to the coronavirus pandemic, which means at least she will be referred to as reigning Wimbledon champion for two years.

The Romanian former world number one produced a flawless performance to beat Serena Williams in last year's final but this week's cancellation of the grasscourt Grand Slam means she will not get to defend her title this summer.

Halep, 28, is currently back in her native Romania where she has been locked down at home for 22 days, only popping out briefly to jog around the grounds of her residence.

Asked about the Wimbledon cancellation, announced on Wednesday, Halep told Eurosport's Tennis Legends podcast: "I take it positively, because I am now the defending champion for two years. So, I have to live with that for one more year so that's a good thing again."

"I am excited that I will be able to play the first match on (the) Tuesday I think on Centre



Simona Halep (ROU) poses with her trophy after defeating Serena Williams (USA) in Wimbledon women's singles final (file photo)

Court. So, I really want to make this experience. It's going to be great for sure."

The WTA Tour and ATP Tour have been shut down until the middle of July, at least, but Halep is geared up for a longer suspension of the season, possibly the whole year.

"I know that the worst scenario in my head is that this year is going to be canceled and, yeah, I'm sure we're going to overcome this period if we listen and stay home safely," she said.

"For the moment, I think it's going to be longer than July. We hope for the U.S. Open (scheduled for Aug. 31 to Sept. 13) but it's not sure because New York is struggling now."

Lots of sleep

After so many years jet-setting around the globe, Halep said the enforced time off from the Tour had been welcome in some respects, even if the circumstances were dreadful.

"It's the longest period that

I haven't touched a racket. Not the ball, the racket -- since Dubai," she said. "And I want to keep it that way for one more month."

"I just kept it very safe because I am a little bit scared about it. And I just want to stay chilled. I wake up at around 10 or 11. It's very good to have a lot of sleep."

"No alarm clock, no schedule, so I just wake up. I have a late breakfast and then I do some running here in the complex. Because we are allowed to do it, it's a private residence."

"In the house I work on my core and my other exercises. So, every day I am working and I feel fit yes."

Halep said that while she missed her job, it was right that sport had faded into the background at a time of global crisis.

"It's just a world problem and I just want to say that it's safer that everything got canceled. It's not a small problem, it's a huge problem. And we just have to listen to what they say, to stay home and being very safe," she said.

Neymar donates \$1M to fight coronavirus

AFP | Rio de Janeiro

Neymar has donated \$1 million to fight the impact of the new coronavirus in his native Brazil, according to TV network SBT.

The Paris Saint-Germain star, the world's third-highest-paid footballer, donated part of the money to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the rest to a charitable fund launched by his friend Luciano Huck, a Brazilian TV presenter, the report said.

The striker's press office declined to comment, saying: "We never talk about donations or amounts."

Neymar, 28, followed the example of PSG teammate Kylian Mbappe, who last month

made what was

described as a major donation -- amount undisclosed -- to a French charity

helping fight the impact of COVID-19.

Huck, who has been touted as a possible can-

didate in Brazil's 2022 presidential election, launched his fund to help poor Rio de Janeiro neighbourhoods particularly vulnerable to coronavirus.

The donations come as high-paid footballers face pressure to forego some of their salaries amid the crisis, which has ground the sporting world to a halt and left some clubs struggling to pay their staff.

Neymar is riding out the pandemic at his luxury villa in Mangaratiba, a resort town outside Rio.

He faced criticism last week after he was photographed relaxing with a group of friends on a beach volleyball court, even as half the world's population -- including most of Brazil -- is in confinement to slow the virus' spread.



Neymar donated part of the money to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the rest to a charitable fund launched by his friend Luciano Huck



Xavi donates 1 mn euros to Barcelona hospital

AFP | Madrid

Former Barcelona and Spain star Xavi Hernandez and his wife have donated one million euros (\$1.08 million) to the city's Hospital Clinic to help the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

"Xavi Hernandez and Nuria Cunillera have made a donation of one million euros to the clinic to face up to COVID-19. Thanks a lot for your help and support... All together, we will get there," the hospital tweeted yesterday.

"Nuria and I, we support the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona's fight against the coronavirus. Thanks to the donations they are receiving, the hospital has acquired equipment for patients and healthcare professionals," Xavi said in a video posted on his Twitter account.

The former World Cup winner and two-time European champion with Spain is currently in charge of Al-Sadd in Qatar and turned down an approach from Barcelona in January after the club sacked Ernesto Valverde.

Lionel Messi, Pep Guardiola, Rafael Nadal and Pau Gasol are among several Spanish sports stars to have donated or led fundraising campaigns to help combat the deadly virus.

Xavi Hernandez



De Bruyne recommends voided season amid injury fears

Omnisport | London

Kevin De Bruyne believes Premier League teams would be hit by an instant injury crisis if the 2019-20 campaign is swiftly resumed and feels canceling the season might be a better option.

Football in England is suspended until April 30 due to the coronavirus pandemic, with the Football Association committed to extending the season indefinitely beyond its normal cut-off point of June 1.

De Bruyne has been in sparkling form for Pep Guardiola's

men this term, racking up eight goals and 16 assists in the Premier League before inspiring a 2-1 first-leg win for City in their now on-hold Champions League last-16 tie against Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu.

And yet, the Belgium midfielder would accept those impressive returns being torn from the record books due to bigger

picture concerns.

"I have no idea when we will be playing again. We haven't played for six weeks," De Bruyne, who missed City's last two games before the shutdown due to a shoulder injury sustained during the EFL Cup final win over Aston Villa, told HLN. "Normally you'd need a preparation of three to four weeks. If we restart immediately then everybody will be injured after a few games."

"I know that there's lots of money involved. But I think that waiting so long to make a decision can cause issues next season."

"There won't be a long summer break and you can just post-

pone everything.

"I would feel sad if the season is stopped after such a good year, but if it avoids issues for next season, it must be done."

City were due to host Liverpool this weekend, with Jurgen Klopp's side on the cusp of taking the Premier League title out of the possession of Guardiola's team. They boast a 25-point lead after 29 matches, with City having played a game less.

De Bruyne's impressive returns this season come after an injury-plagued 2018-19 where, having returned to action after helping Belgium to the semi-finals of the 2018 World Cup, he suffered two separate instances lateral knee ligament damage.



Berbatov says Liverpool fully deserve title

Reuters | London

Former Manchester United striker Dimitar Berbatov said their traditional foes Liverpool deserve to be crowned Premier League champions and it would be unfair on the Anfield side if the season cannot be completed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The campaign has been suspended with the league saying it was keeping the restart date

under "constant review".

Liverpool, who have a 25-point advantage over reigning champions Manchester City and nine games left, need six more points to guarantee lifting their first title in 30 years.

"People are suggesting to give the title to Liverpool, and honestly they deserve it the way they had been playing, nobody was going to catch them," Berbatov said.

Lukaku questions why Serie A only stopped after player contracted COVID-19

Omnisport | Milan

Inter striker Romelu Lukaku hit out at officials for allowing Serie A to continue until a player tested positive for coronavirus, insisting health is paramount.

The 2019-20 Serie A season has been suspended amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 53,100 people worldwide. Juventus defend-

er Daniele Rugani was listed as the first Serie A player to contract coronavirus following the club's 2-0 win over Inter behind closed doors on March 8.

With Italy hit hardest by the virus -- more than 13,910 deaths -- Belgium star Lukaku questioned why the league was not postponed sooner.

"Health comes first. Why should we play if there are people in the world who are risking their lives?" Lukaku said in an interview with Thierry Henry via Puma's Instagram.



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Bahrain to replace Sebring in WEC calendar



Cars in action during Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain at BIC (file photo)

TDT | Manama

8 Hours of Bahrain will replace the cancelled 1000 Miles of Sebring on 21st November in for 2019-2020 FIA WEC calendar as a result of the COVID-19 situation.

The WEC's Season 8 will re-start with the TOTAL 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on 15th August, the traditional prelude to the 24 Hours of Le Mans which, as previously an-

nounced by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, will be held on 19/20th September.

The number of events remains the same in order to guarantee fairness and equal sporting terms for all competitors.

The calendar for Season 9 (originally 2020-2021) will be completely re-worked and it's reasonable to say that it will not start before March 2021.

Premier League players' 'backs against wall' over coronavirus, says Rose

AFP | London

Newcastle defender Danny Rose is willing to contribute a portion of his wages to those fighting the coronavirus outbreak but says Premier League players feel their "backs are against the wall".

Top-flight stars have come under increasing pressure to take pay cuts from government officials after a number of clubs said they would use public money to subsidise pay for non-playing staff.

The Premier League said on Friday that clubs would consult players over a combination of pay cuts and deferrals amounting to 30 percent of their annual salary.

They agreed to provide a £125 million (\$153 million) fund for the English Football League and National League and pledged £20 million in charitable support for those affected by the coronavirus.

Talks were due to take place yesterday between the league, clubs and players' representatives.

Newcastle, where Rose is



Danny Rose kicks the ball during a match (file photo)

on loan, and his parent club, Tottenham, are among clubs to have furloughed some non-playing staff during the crisis, prompting criticism as players continue to receive their full salary.

"We're all keen to make something happen," Rose told the BBC.

"I can only speak for myself but I would have no problems whatsoever contributing some of my wages to people who are fighting this on the front line and to people who have been affected by what's happening at the minute."

Brewin vs Patterson clash delayed but inevitable

John Brewin and Sam Patterson were set to meet in the main event at BRAVE CF 36 in Romania



Sam Patterson reacts before a bout (file photo)

TDT | Manama

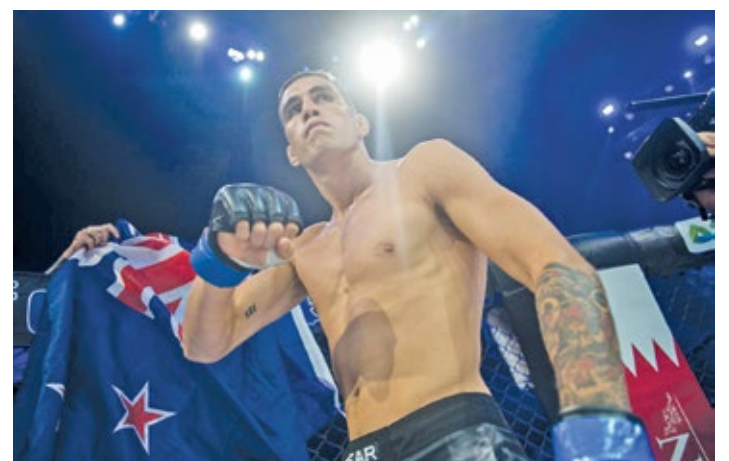
John Brewin and Sam Patterson are two of mixed martial arts' hottest prospects right now. The duo was set to face each other in a blockbuster main event for BRAVE Combat Federation's return to Romania, which was to take place on April 13th. However, the spread of the Covid-19 virus has postponed all shows and they will have to wait to reclaim their spots as Lightweight's next big thing.

Brewin was especially aggrieved by the delay, since he hasn't fought since October, but recognizes that pause was much needed in light of the worldwide pandemic. John has had a very

bright start to his career and has been picked up by BRAVE Combat Federation in 2018.

John had his first bout for the promotion back at BRAVE CF 12, in only his second professional bout. The New Zealand representative beat Hardeep Rai by TKO and has never looked back. His only hiccup so far has been a decision loss to Morocco's Anas Siraj Mounir, but otherwise, he has looked incredible and better in each outing, forging a 4-1 record under BRAVE CF, with 6-1 overall as a professional.

He was set to face one of England's biggest hopes at Lightweight. Similarly to his foe, Sam Patterson only has one career loss, against Hardeep Rai, in his BRAVE CF debut, back in 2017.



John Brewin reacts prior to a bout (file photo)



John Brewin won his first bout for the promotion back at BRAVE CF 12, in only his second professional bout

"The Future" has evolved into one of the greatest prospects of the division through his hard work with Team Crossface, in Watford, England.

Patterson is coming off a ca-

reer-defining win. Last December, he surprised the world by out striking muay thai champion Cian Cowley through two rounds before locking in a guillotine submission and putting his Irish adversary to sleep. The fight took place at BRAVE CF 33, in Saudi Arabia, and propelled him to the forefront of the MMA world.

His bout against John Brewin was a chance for Sam to look ahead into his future by knocking out one of his rivals en route to an eventual title shot at Lightweight. Both men will have to wait but the clash of the top prospects seems inevitable at this point in time and should take place very soon inside the BRAVE CF Arena.

Burnley face 50 mln pounds shortfall if season cancelled

Reuters | London

Burnley could lose up to 50 million pounds (\$61.30 million) in revenue if the Premier League season is not completed due the coronavirus outbreak, with the club adding yesterday that other top-flight clubs could miss out on double that amount.

The Premier League said on Friday the current campaign had been postponed indefinitely, adding that the "2019/20 season will only return when it is safe and appropriate to do so".

Burnley expect to lose five million pounds in match-day revenue as their remaining



General view inside Burnley's Turf Moor stadium

home games will likely be played behind closed doors should the league resume.

In addition, if the season is cancelled altogether, the club

will miss out on 45 million pounds in "broadcasting revenue and other items", Burnley said in a statement on their website.

"It's a completely unprecedented situation that we and other Premier League clubs face and which we could not have foreseen in any way only just a few weeks ago," Burnley chairman Mike Garlick said.

"It's now not just about Burnley or any other individual club anymore, it's about the whole football ecosystem from the Premier League downwards and all the other businesses and communities that feed from that ecosystem."

Burnley said they were releasing the figures to be "transparent with supporters, staff and stakeholders".

Ex-F1 ringmaster Ecclestone to be father again at age of 89

AFP | London

Colourful former Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone is to become a father at the age of 89 with his wife Fabiana Flosi, who is half his age, expecting a son in July, he told The Daily Mail on Friday.

Ecclestone, who revolutionised Formula One as chief executive from 1978 to 2017, has three adult daughters from two previous marriages.

"There's nothing that unusual is there?" he told the newspaper from the couple's home in Brazil.

"I haven't had a job for a little while so I have had plenty of time to practise!"

"I don't see there's any difference between being 89 and 29."

Ecclestone said his greatest delight was for his 44-year-old marketing executive wife.

"Yes, she (his wife) is thrilled," he said. "We're not sure what all the fuss is about!"

"I'm very happy and happy really for my wife, she's been looking forward to this happening for quite a few years so I'm happy she'll have someone after I'm gone."

Ecclestone, who said his daughters were delighted with the news of the family addition, hoped age had improved his parenting skills.

"We don't know, probably bet-



Former Formula 1 boss Bernie Ecclestone (L) and his wife Fabiana Flosi talk in the paddock ahead of the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix

"I'm very happy and happy really for my wife, she's been looking forward to this happening for quite a few years so I'm happy she'll have someone after I'm gone"

BERNIE ECCLESTONE

ter than before, probably a bit more relaxed!"

The former F1 ringmaster said he was mindful of the dangers posed by the coronavirus pan-

demic. "You hope it's not going to happen but these things do happen so you just have to cope, what else can you do?" he told the Mail Online.

"You have to hope that the people who are looking after everything have not caught anything themselves."

"I'm not too sure we're ever going to get rid of this bloody nonsense, anymore than the flu that happens every year."

"It's just that at the moment this is a little bit more dangerous than what we've been used to but when it settles down I think the world will have changed an awful lot."