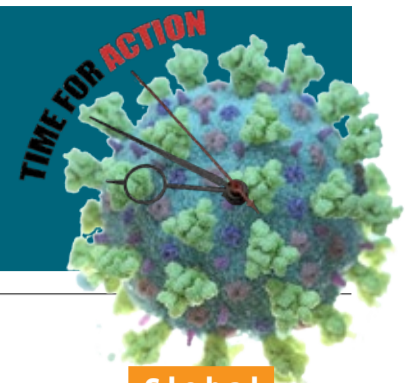


WORLD



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.

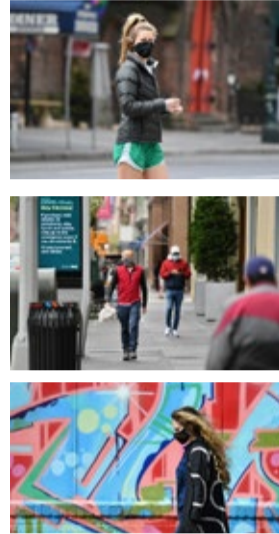
President Donald Trump's administration on Friday suggested widespread use of simple masks or scarves might help slow the spread -- even if the US leader said he himself wouldn't be following the advice.

"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



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.



Coronavirus: Three-minutes of mourning at Wuhan railway station

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

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"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

Global

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 belittling 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