

Virus-hit cruise ship evacuees head to Europe

Hondius is a rare strain that can be transmitted between humans

● Two sick crew members and another person who had been in contact with one of the confirmed cases were taken from the ship

● Health experts warned of the risk of a wider outbreak after it emerged the Dutch woman who died had flown on a commercial plane

● The cruise ship originally counted 88 passengers and 59 crew, with 23 nationalities on board

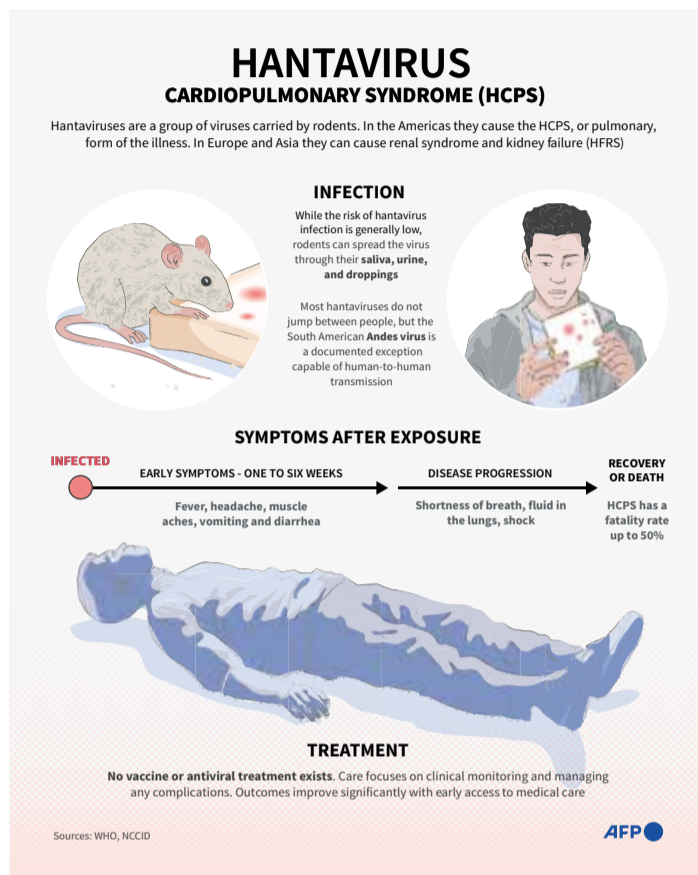
AFP | Praia, Cape Verde

A medical plane that left Cape Verde following the evacuation of a cruise ship hit by the hantavirus landed in Spain's Canary Islands yesterday, while a second flight headed for the Netherlands.

Downplaying fears over the deadly outbreak aboard the MV Hondius, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insisted it was not comparable to the Covid pandemic.

As the WHO said emergency crews had evacuated three people from the ship, experts confirmed the version of the virus detected aboard the Hondius is a rare strain that can be transmitted between humans.

Two sick crew members and another person who had been in contact with one of the con-



firmed cases were taken from the ship, which was moored off Cape Verde, the WHO said.

They later boarded flights at the airport in Cape Verde's capital Praia.

Plane tracker FlightRadar24 indicated one had taken off bound for Amsterdam, where it was due to land at 1730 GMT.

The other flight, a medical transport plane, landed at Las

Palmas in Spain's Canary Islands on Wednesday afternoon, an AFP journalist there saw.

It has not been specified who was on the planes.

Low risk: WHO

Health officials played down fears of a wider global outbreak from the virus, which is less contagious than Covid.

UN health agency chief Tedros told AFP it was not like the Covid-19 pandemic, adding: "The risk to the rest of the world is low."

The ship has been at the centre of an international health scare since Saturday, when the WHO was informed that three passengers had died and the suspected cause was hantavirus.

The rare respiratory disease is usually spread from infected rodents, typically through urine, droppings and saliva.

Passengers began falling ill a month ago.

A Dutch man died on board on April 11, and his wife, who left the ship to accompany his body to South Africa, died there 15 days later after also falling ill.

Two other people are still being treated -- one in Johannesburg and one in the Swiss city of Zurich.

Spanish Health Minister Monica Garcia Gomez said the vessel would dock within the next three days in Tenerife, in the Canaries, and all foreign passengers would be flown back to their home countries from there if their health allowed.

The Hondius set sail from Ushuaia in Argentina on April 1, and has been anchored off Cape Verde since Sunday while emergency teams try to deal with the situation.

Pioneering CNN founder Ted Turner dead at 87



Media mogul Ted Turner and his wife, actress Jane Fonda

AFP | New York, United States

Ted Turner, the flamboyant US entrepreneur who transformed television news with the creation of CNN in 1980, has died at the age of 87, the network said yesterday.

The mustached southerner, yachting enthusiast and philanthropist, whose empire also included sports clubs, had been suffering from the degenerative disease Lewy Body Dementia.

Cable News Network upended established broadcasting with its dedication to around-the-clock breaking news and shot to global recognition with its coverage of the Gulf War in 1990-91.

The 24-hour network was the first in the United States to run non-stop news and quickly built a worldwide footprint.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio in November 1938, Robert Edward "Ted" Turner III went to a military boarding school in Tennessee, and then attended

Brown University, but was expelled before graduating.

Turner took over a faltering family advertising business after his father, dependent over financial problems, committed suicide.

After buying a number of radio stations, Turner's purchase of a struggling Atlanta station in 1970 was his first move into television.

Ten years later, that became the flagship of his nationwide Turner Broadcasting System, the profits from which he parlayed into the launch of CNN.

CNN's success inspired the creation of other 24-hour news channels including Fox News by longtime Turner rival Rupert Murdoch, MSNBC and countless networks worldwide.

Turner's television empire expanded beyond CNN and included TBS and TNT channels for sports and entertainment, Turner Classic Movies and Cartoon Network, among others.

Britain's Princess Catherine to make official visit to Italy

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Britain's Princess Catherine, will next week carry out her first overseas royal visit since her cancer diagnosis when she travels to Italy, Kensington palace said yesterday.

The trip to Reggio Emilia in northern Italy will focus on the Princess of Wales's work in early years child development, said a palace statement.



"The princess is very much looking forward to visiting Italy next week and seeing first-hand how the Reggio Emilia approach creates environments where nature and loving human relationships come together to support children's development."

Catherine, who is married to heir to the throne Prince William, announced in January 2025 that she was in remission from cancer, and has been gradually returning to public royal duties.

India, Vietnam target \$25 bn in bilateral trade by 2030: Modi

AFP | New Delhi, India

India and Vietnam are looking to ramp up bilateral trade to \$25 billion by 2030, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday, following talks with President To Lam in New Delhi.

"Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has doubled in the last decade and reached \$16 billion. Today, we have taken several important decisions to take it to \$25 billion by 2030," Modi said in a speech.

"We will take our cooperation to new heights."

Lam, on his first visit to India as president, said the two countries "will elevate defence and security cooperation" and contribute to "strengthening an environment of peace and stability".

Both sides said the discussions focused on sectors like education, rare earth minerals and digital payment systems, reflecting "the enhanced compre-



India's President Droupadi Murmu (L) alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) poses for a photograph with her Vietnamese counterpart To Lam during a ceremonial reception at the presidential palace Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi

hensive strategic partnership between India and Vietnam", according to Modi.

Lam was earlier accorded a red-carpet welcome at the presidential palace, with Modi standing alongside him as troops marched past in an honour guard parade.

The Vietnamese president kicked off his India trip a day earlier, with a visit to the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodhi Gaya -- where the Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment -- in the eastern state of Bihar.

Lam is accompanied by a

large business delegation, and is also due to visit India's financial hub Mumbai.

Vietnam has been seeking to enhance economic cooperation with India, with companies such as electric vehicle giant VinFast trying to make inroads into the world's most populous nation.

Indian media had suggested Wednesday's discussions might include a potential \$700 million deal for India's long-range BrahMos cruise missiles, but no such announcement was made by either leader.

Lam met India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Tuesday to discuss "strengthening" the partnership between the countries, Delhi's foreign ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said.

On Thursday, Lam will leave for Sri Lanka for a two-day visit that will focus on trade, investment and tourism, Colombo said in a statement.

North Korea drops references to unification from constitution

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

North Korea has deleted all references to uniting with South Korea from its constitution, a document reviewed by AFP yesterday showed, underscoring Pyongyang's push for a more hostile policy towards Seoul.

North and South Korea remain technically at war because their 1950-53 war ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. Pyongyang's constitution had previously contained

a clause stating that it aimed "to realise the unification of the motherland".

That reference no longer appears in the latest version, presented on Wednesday by a professor during a news conference at South Korea's Unification Ministry and subsequently seen by AFP.

North Korean officials considered constitutional amendments at a major congress in March, where leader Kim Jong Un labelled Seoul as the "most hostile state".