

Queen Elizabeth thanks health workers around the world

Reuters | London

Britain's Queen Elizabeth yesterday sent a message of "enduring appreciation and good wishes" to health workers around the world for World Health Day.

"I want to thank all those working in the healthcare profession for your selfless commitment and diligence as you undertake vitally important roles to protect and improve the health and well-being of people," the queen said.

The queen's words were shown on a video released by the royal family's Twitter account, which featured images of the queen and other members of her family visiting hospitals and meeting healthcare workers.

Included in the video were three of the queen's children: Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, Princess Anne, and Prince Edward. The queen's grandson Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton were

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Queen Elizabeth speaks to Johnson from Windsor Castle for her weekly audience in Windsor on 25 March 2020

also pictured.

"In testing times, we often observe that the best of the human spirit comes to the fore; the dedication to service of countless nurses, midwives and other health workers, in these most challenging of circumstances, is an example to us all," she said.

"My family and I send our enduring appreciation and good

wishes," the queen said.

The 93-year-old monarch is staying at her Windsor Castle home with her husband Prince Philip, 98.

On Sunday, in a rare televised address, the queen told the British people that they would overcome the coronavirus outbreak if they stayed resolute in the face of lockdown and self-isolation.

She invoked the wartime spirit by saying "we will meet again" - a direct reference to the most famous British song from the war years of the 1940s.

Prince Charles, 71, has recovered after suffering mild symptoms of the virus and opened a new field hospital in London via video link from his home in Scotland on Friday.

World short of six million nurses: WHO

AFP | Geneva

As COVID-19 captures global headlines, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned yesterday that the world needs nearly six million nurses.

The UN's health agency along with partners Nursing Now and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) underscored in a report the crucial role played by nurses, who make up more than half of all health workers worldwide.

"Nurses are the backbone of any health system," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

"Today, many nurses find themselves on the frontline in the battle against COVID-19," he noted, adding that it was vital they "get the support they need to keep the world healthy."

The report said that there are just under 28 million nurses on the planet.

In the five years leading up to 2018, the number grew by 4.7 million.

"But this still leaves a global shortfall of 5.9 million," the WHO said, pointing out that the greatest gaps were in poorer countries in Africa, southeast Asia, the Middle East and parts of South America.

The report urged countries to identify gaps in their nursing workforce and invest in nursing education, jobs and leadership.

Shortages 'exhaust workforce'

ICN chief executive Howard Catton told a virtual briefing that infection rates, medication errors and mortality rates "are all higher where there are too few nurses".

Catton said that 23 nurses had died in Italy and cited figures suggesting that around 100 health workers had died around the world.



The experts said nursing remains female-dominated and needed to recruit more men

Meanwhile he said there were reports of nine percent of health workers being infected in Italy and "we're now hearing of rates of infections up to 14 percent in Spain".

He also cited reports of "completely unacceptable and reprehensible" attacks on health workers battling COVID-19, largely due to ignorance about their work, combined with countries not doing enough to protect them.

Male recruitment

Beyond COVID-19, Watkins said many wealthier countries were not producing enough nurses to meet their own healthcare needs, and were therefore reliant on migration, exacerbating shortages in poorer countries.

"Eighty percent of the world's nurses only currently serve 50 percent of the world's population," she noted.

Catton warned of risks that richer countries would rely on the Philippines and India to "supply the world with nurses", which could lead to significant shortages in India.

The experts said nursing remains female-dominated and needed to recruit more men.

"There is clear evidence that where there are more men in any profession in the world, the pay and the terms and conditions improve," Watkins said.

Japan declares state of emergency over coronavirus

Tokyo

Japan yesterday declared a state of emergency over a spike in coronavirus cases, ramping up efforts to contain infections but stopping short of the strict lockdowns seen in other parts of the world.

"As I decided that a situation feared to gravely affect people's lives and the economy has occurred... I am declaring a state of emergency," Abe said.

The move allows governors in seven affected regions including Tokyo to ask people to stay indoors and request businesses close.

But many supermarkets and other shops will stay open, transport will continue to run and there are neither enforcement mechanisms nor penalties laid out for those who fail to comply with government requests. "Although a state of



Seven regions are covered by the month-long declaration: Tokyo, neighbouring Chiba, Kanagawa and Saitama, the western hub of Osaka and neighbouring Hyogo, and the southwestern region of Fukuoka.

emergency is declared, it won't mean a city lockdown as seen overseas," Abe said.

"We will prevent the spread of infection while maintaining economic and social services such as public transport as much as possible." The measure will last through to the end of the Golden Week holiday period, when much of the country travels in a rare break.

Kiwi health minister breaks lockdown, keeps job

Wellington

New Zealand's health minister described himself as "an idiot" yesterday for breaking lockdown restrictions, but kept his job coordinating the South Pacific nation's COVID-19 response.

Health Minister David Clark said he offered his resignation to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern after revealing he took a 20-kilometre (12.5-mile) drive to the beach with his family.

Clark admitted the trip was a clear breach of the country's strict lockdown rules, under which families must stay close to home, and his position meant he should have been setting an example.

"At a time when we are asking New Zealanders to make historic sacrifices, I've let the team down," he said in a statement.

"I've been an idiot and I understand why people will be angry with me."

Clark also said he had been on short two-kilometre drives with his family, which he said were within the rules.

Ardern said under normal



David Clark

circumstances, she would have sacked Clark -- but instead, she stripped him of the junior role of associated finance minister and demoted him in the cabinet rankings.

"What he did was wrong, and there are no excuses," she said.

"But right now, my priority is our collective fight against COVID-19. We cannot afford massive disruption in the health sector or to our response. For that reason, and that reason alone, Dr Clark will maintain his role."

Scotland's chief medical officer Catherine Calderwood resigned Sunday for breaking the rules after twice visiting her second home, despite fronting an ad campaign calling for Scots to stay at home.

Latest developments

● **A vast cathedral in central New York is being converted into a field hospital during the coronavirus pandemic, its dean said Monday, as the US struggles to cope with the mounting crisis.**

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan will house nine climate-controlled medical tents in its 600-foot-long nave and subterranean crypt, dean Clifton Daniel told the New York Times. The tents will be able to hold a total of at least 200 patients beneath the stained-glass windows of the building, which describes itself as the largest Gothic cathedral in the world.



● **Brazil's Sao Paulo state has said it expects 100,000 COVID-19 deaths in the next six months, and has extended its stay-at-home measures another two weeks.**

● **A forest fire is underway in the restricted zone around Chernobyl, scene of the world's worst nuclear accident, but Ukrainian government agencies have denied an official's claim that the fire caused a spike in radiation levels.**



● **New York Governor Andrew Cuomo extended a shutdown in the epicenter of America's deadly coronavirus pandemic until April 29**

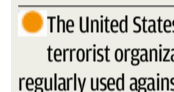


An Australian cruise ship off South America faced a growing crisis with more than 80 mostly-elderly passengers and crew battling COVID-19, the cruise company and Uruguayan officials said.

● **The United States has begun taking blood samples from across the country to determine the true number of people infected with the coronavirus, using a test that works retrospectively, according to reports.** The new tests are based on serological surveys, which differ from the nasal swabs used to determine if someone currently has the virus. Instead, they look for whether certain antibodies are present in the blood which shows that the person fought and then recovered from the illness -- even if they never showed symptoms.



● **Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has been in self-isolation since his wife Sophie tested positive for coronavirus last month, said he would try to keep working from home "as much as possible."**



The United States on Monday branded a Russian far-right group as a foreign terrorist organization, the first time it has targeted white supremacists with tools regularly used against jihadist groups.

● **Mainland China reported no coronavirus deaths for the first time since the pandemic began, and a drop in new cases, a day before the central city of Wuhan, where the virus emerged late in December, is set to lift its lockdown.**

Britain set for 66,000 COVID-19 deaths

Britain could see as many as 66,000 COVID-19 deaths during the first wave of the current pandemic, new research showed Tuesday, making the outbreak there by far the deadliest in Europe. Modelling conducted by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington's School of Medicine showed that approximately 151,680 people were likely to die from the virus across the continent.

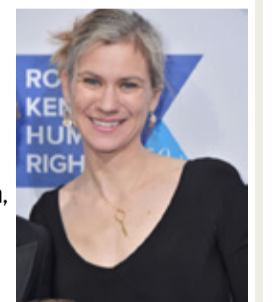


A baby tiger who was born during quarantine has been called "Covid" at the Mexican Africa Bio Zoo in Cordoba (Veracruz). Zoo staff say the name is one of "hope" because the virus, despite being deadly, has forced people to "rethink".

Body of missing Kennedy family member found

Washington

The body of John F. Kennedy's grand-niece who disappeared during a canoe trip with her young son was recovered Monday, US media reported. Maeve Kennedy McKean, 40, and her eight-year-old son Gideon went missing Thursday while canoeing in the vast Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The search for Gideon continues, the Washington Post reported, citing Maryland Natural Resources Police. The family said Saturday that mother and son were presumed dead.



Maeve Kennedy McKean

Cardinal Pell freed after winning appeal over child sex abuse

Lara | Australia

Cardinal George Pell was released from prison yesterday, hours after Australia's High Court quashed his conviction for child sex abuse, bringing to an abrupt end the most high-profile paedophilia case faced by the Catholic Church. The 78-year-old left Barwon Prison near Melbourne after the court overturned five counts of sexually abusing two 13-year-old choirboys in the 1990s. Pell, who had steadfastly maintained his innocence throughout a lengthy court process, left the jail where he has been held for the last year and issued a statement saying that a "serious injustice" had been remedied by the decision.

