

# world

## Britain's Johnson enters third day in intensive care

AFP | London

Prime Minister Boris Johnson began a third day in intensive care yesterday battling the coronavirus, which has struck at the heart of the British government. "I understand the prime minister is in a stable condition, he's comfortable and in good spirits," Edward Argar, a junior health minister, told Sky News.

"He has in the past had some oxygen but he's not on ventilation."

The Times reported Johnson's persistently high temperature had fallen, while the Daily Telegraph said he was being cared for by one of Britain's leading lung doctors.

Newspapers urged Britons to keep their stricken leader at the forefront of their minds, with the country in lockdown to try to stem the spread of COVID-19 in its third week.

"He stayed at work for you... now pray at home for him," The Sun tabloid splashed across its front page. "Boris 'will pull through'" said the Daily Express. Deputising for Johnson, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab called him "a fighter" and predicted "he'll be back, leading us through this crisis in short order".

Johnson, 55, is the most high-profile government leader to become infected with COVID-19 and messages of support flooded in from across Britain and the world.

He was admitted to intensive care on Monday evening after spending Sunday night in hospital following concerns he still had a cough and high temperature 10 days after being diagnosed with COVID-19.

His transfer to intensive care



**”**  
The latest from the hospital is that the prime minister remains in intensive care where his condition is improving. I can also tell you that he has been sitting up in bed and been engaging positively with the clinical team people

FINANCE MINISTER RISHI SUNAK

is unprecedented for a prime minister during a national emergency.

For many people, it brought home the seriousness of the disease that has so far seen 6,159 deaths in Britain, with a record 786 more reported in a daily update on Tuesday.

**'Work goes on'**

Despite the record daily death toll, there was more encouraging news with the number of new daily cases remaining at a roughly stable 3,643.

Raab chaired the daily coronavirus meeting in the prime minister's place on Tuesday.

## India considers narrowing lockdown to virus hotspots

Reuters | New Delhi

India is considering plans to seal off coronavirus hotspots in Delhi, Mumbai and parts of the south while easing curbs elsewhere as a way out of a three-week lockdown that has caused deep economic distress, officials said on Wednesday.

The sweeping lockdown of India's 1.3 billion people to prevent an epidemic of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, ends on April 14 and Prime Minister Narendra

**A second stimulus package India is poised to announce in coming days will be worth around 1 trillion rupees (\$13 billion) and focus on help for small and medium businesses weathering the coronavirus outbreak, two senior officials said on Wednesday.**

Modi is due to take a decision this week on whether

er to extend it. More than 80 per cent of the positive cases of the coronavirus have been traced to 62 districts — less than 10pc of India's landmass — according to government data.

These are concentrated in the western state of Maharashtra, home to financial capital Mumbai, Delhi and the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala.

Many parts of the country have not reported a single case.

## Joy, relief as exodus from Wuhan begins

AFP | Wuhan China

Voicing joy and excitement from behind face masks, tens of thousands of people fled Wuhan on Wednesday after a 76-day travel ban was lifted on the Chinese city where the coronavirus first emerged.

Previously quiet train and bus stations bustled as an exodus began from the city of 11 million, with some passengers wearing hazmat suits.

Hao Mei, a single parent from the nearby city of Enshi, said her two children had been home alone since she got stuck in Wuhan, where she works in a school kitchen.

"You have no idea! I was already up around 4 am. I felt so good. My kids are so excited. Mum is finally coming home," the 39-year-old told AFP as she waited to board a train.

"At the start of the lockdown, I cried every night. I was really miserable, because my little girl is still young, she's only 10."

Up to 55,000 people are expected to leave Wuhan on Wednesday just by



A medical worker leaving Wuhan hugs colleagues before boarding a plane back home



Previously quiet train and bus stations bustled as an exodus began from the city of 11 million



Cars queued at highway toll stations in Wuhan yesterday night as they prepared to leave the city

with queuing passengers in protective wear wheeling cases and staff spraying disinfectant on the floor.

State news agency Xinhua said there would be around 200 flights on Wednesday.

A group of medics leaving Wuhan tearfully hugged colleagues from the city goodbye as they prepared to board flights home.

### World-first lockdown

Wuhan led the world with an unprecedented quarantine lockdown on January 23 in a bid to stop the spread of the then-mysterious respiratory virus.

Chinese disease control officials said in January that the virus likely leapt from wildlife to humans at a Wuhan market that sold wild animals for food.

The rest of surrounding Hubei province quickly followed Wuhan, cutting tens of millions of people off from the world.

The officially reported number of new deaths has plummeted in recent weeks.

