

# Egypt allows Gazans to leave strip for first time in months



Passengers ride a car and wait at the gate to be check by Hamas security officers to cross the border to the Egyptian side of Rafah crossing, in Rafah, Gaza Strip



Passengers sit next to their luggage as they wait to cross the border to the Egyptian side of Rafah crossing, in Rafah, Gaza Strip



Hamas security officers stand guard the gate of the border to the Egyptian side of Rafah crossing, in Rafah, Gaza Strip

● **Gaza appears to have managed to keep the pandemic in check — in part of because of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade**

AP | Rafah, Gaza Strip

Egypt yesterday reopened Gaza's main passenger crossing point for the first time in months for thousands of Palestinians who have been stranded on both sides of the border due to the coronavirus crisis.

Gaza residents holding Egyptian passports, foreign passports and patients seeking treatment abroad were to leave through the Rafah crossing point during its three-day opening, the Hamas-run interior ministry in Gaza said. Some 500 people were scheduled to exit Tuesday, the first time the crossing has

allowed departures since March. Palestinians stranded in Egypt and abroad will be allowed to return home, the ministry added. Traffic for arrivals had been shut since May.

Gaza appears to have managed to keep the pandemic in check — in part of because of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade that severely restricts movement in and out of the territory. Israel and Egypt imposed the blockade after the Islamic militant group Hamas seized control of Gaza

in 2007.

Gaza has reported 81 cases of the coronavirus, but all of the cases were people who were in mandatory quarantine centers set up by Hamas for anyone returning to the territory. There have been no reported cases of community transmission inside Gaza.

To prepare for thousands of Palestinians expected to return via Rafah, Hamas has opened more isolation facilities across the Gaza Strip.

Life in Gaza has returned to normal with the virus at bay. Last week, schools reopened normally. Mosques, wedding halls, cafes and gyms are also open.

On Tuesday, Israel closed its only commercial crossing point with Gaza in response to explosives-laden balloons being launched by Palestinians into Israel. The balloons started dozens of fires in Israeli farmland near Gaza.

Israel said the Kerem Sha-

lom crossing will be closed until further notice, but the passage of fuel, food and humanitarian goods is not affected.

The balloons have broken a months-long lull that prevailed during the pandemic. Palestinian media reports suggested that Hamas is allowing the resumption of the balloon launches to press Israel into further easing its restrictions on Gaza and allow large scale economic projects.

## Global coronavirus cases have doubled in 45 days to reach 20 million



A team from the Brazilian armed forces sanitise a bus in Curitiba on Monday.

● **The total number of deaths worldwide now stands at more than 737,000.**

Yahoo News UK

The number of coronavirus cases worldwide has reached 20 million, doubling in just 45 days.

The figure was reached in the early hours of Tuesday, according to Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 dashboard.

By 4.45pm on Tuesday, the global number of cases had increased to 20,126,452.

It took six months to get to 10 million cases after COVID-19 was identified in Wuhan, China, in December last year – but only a month-and-a-half for that figure to double.

The total number of deaths worldwide now stands at more than 737,000.

Almost a quarter of the cases – more than five million – have been in the US, where there have been more than 163,000 deaths.

Brazil is the second worst affected country with more than 101,000 deaths, while there have been more than 53,000 in Mexico.

According to Johns Hopkins, there have been more than 46,600 deaths in the UK, though figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on Tuesday showed 51,710 deaths involving COVID-19 were recorded up to the week ending 31 July in England and Wales alone.

Meanwhile, there have been more than three million cases in Brazil, 2.2 million in India and almost 900,000 in Russia.

The US, India and Brazil combined accounted for almost two-thirds of reported COVID-19 infections since the global figure passed 15 million on 22 July.

However, some health experts believe the real figure of cases worldwide is in fact far higher than the Johns Hopkins tally, due to testing limitations and suggestions that as many as 40% of people infected have no symptoms.

Meanwhile, in the 45 days it took reported infections to double to 20 million, the number of reported virus deaths climbed from 499,000 to 736,000, an average of more than 5,200 fatalities each day.

On Tuesday, New Zealand announced it had recorded its first new community transmission cases of coronavirus for more than 100 days.

## Delay routine dental checkups, WHO urges, until COVID risk is known

● **There is currently no data on the spread of coronavirus from the dentist's chair**

● **Dental facilities must have adequate ventilation to reduce the risk of the virus spreading**

Reuters | Geneva

Dental patients and staff need to be protected from any potential infection by aerosol-generating procedures, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday, as dentists return to work in areas where the COVID-19 pandemic is easing.

There is currently no data on the spread of coronavirus from the dentist's chair, it said, calling for more research into common procedures that produce tiny floating particles that may cause infection if inhaled.

These include three-way air/



A dentist tends to a patient at Silveroaks Dental Surgery as it opens for non aerosol generating assessments in Milton Keynes, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Milton Keynes, Britain

water spray, ultrasonic cleaning equipment that removes deposits from the tooth surface, and polishing, the WHO said in new guidance.

"WHO guidance recommends in case of community transmission to give priority to urgent or emergency oral cases, to avoid or minimise procedures that may generate aerosol, prioritise a set of clinical interventions that are performed using an instrument and of course to

delay routine non-essential oral health care," Benoit Varenne, a WHO dental officer, told a news briefing.

He added: "The likelihood of COVID-19 being transmitted through aerosol, micro-particles or airborne particles ... today I think is unknown, it's open to question at least. This means that more research is needed."

Dental facilities must have adequate ventilation to reduce the risk of the virus spreading



The WHO last month released general guidelines on the transmission of the coronavirus which acknowledged some reports of airborne transmission, but stopped short of confirming that the virus spreads through the air.

in closed settings, it said on Tuesday.

"We think that the most pressing issue is related to the availability of essential personal protective equipment, PPE, for all health care personnel undertaking or assisting in the clinical procedures," Varenne said.

## Sea life around Mauritius dying as spill spreads

Reuters | Nairobi

Mauritian volunteers fished dead eels from oily waters on Tuesday as they tried to clean up damage to the Indian Ocean island's most pristine beaches after a Japanese bulk carrier leaked an estimated 1,000 tonnes of oil.

The ship, MV Wakashio, owned by Nagashiki Shipping and operated by Mitsui OSK

Lines Ltd, struck a coral reef on Mauritius' southeast coast on July 25, and began leaking oil last week, raising fears of a major ecological crisis.

Activists told Reuters that dead eels were floating in the water and dead starfish washed in the sticky black liquid. Crabs and seabirds are also dying.

"We don't know what may happen further with the boat, it may crack more," said clean up

volunteer Yvan Luckhun.

The MV Wakashio is still holding some 2,000 tonnes of oil and it is expected to eventually break up, Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth said late on Monday, warning that the country must brace for the worst.

Tourism is a key part of the Mauritius economy and the government, which has declared a state of emergency due to the spill, is working with former

colonial ruler France to try to remove the oil.

The spill has set back two decades worth of restoring the natural wildlife and plants in the lagoon, which started after the government banned sand harvesting in the area back in 2000, said Vikash Tatayah, conservation director at Mauritius Wildlife Foundation, a non-governmental organisation.

A general view shows the bulk carrier ship MV Wakashio, that ran aground on a reef, at Riviere des Creoles

