

China sees rise in new cases

Reuters, Beijing

Mainland China reported 30 new coronavirus cases yesterday, up from 19 a day earlier as the number of cases involving travellers from abroad as well as local transmissions increased, highlighting the difficulty in stamping out the outbreak.

The National Health Commission said in a statement that 25 of the latest cases involved people who had entered from abroad, compared with 18 such cases a day earlier. Five new locally transmitted infections were also reported on Saturday, all in the southern coastal province of Guangdong, up from a day earlier.

The mainland has now reported a total of 81,669 cases, while the death toll has risen by three to 3,329.

Though daily infections have fallen dramatically from the height of the epidemic in February, when hundreds of new cases were reported daily, Beijing remains unable to completely halt new infections despite imposing some of the most drastic measures to curb the virus' spread.

The so-called imported cases and asymptomatic patients, who have the virus and can give it to others but show no symptoms, have become among China's chief concerns in recent weeks. The country has closed off its borders to almost all foreigners as the virus spread globally, though most of the imported cases involve Chinese nationals returning from overseas.

The central government seeks to avoid second wave before travel bans lifted and also has pushed local authorities to identify and isolate the asymptomatic patients.



Residents light candles and turn on their mobile phone lights in their balcony to observe a nine-minute vigil called by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a show of unity and solidarity in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

LATEST UPDATES

VIRUS CONTAGION SLOWS FOR FOURTH DAY: IRAN

Iran's new cases of coronavirus have dropped for the fourth consecutive day, official figures released Saturday showed, as a two-week holiday in the Islamic republic came to an end. Iran registered 2,560 new infections of COVID-19 in the previous 24 hours, health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told a televised news conference. It is the fourth consecutive day in new cases since Tehran declared 3,111 on March 31.

MODI DISCUSSES SITUATIONS WITH SONIA, PRANAB

Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday spoke to several leaders, including his predecessor Manmohan Singh, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and former president Pranab Mukherjee, on the situation arising out of the novel coronavirus pandemic. Sources said Modi also called up various leaders, including Mulayam Singh Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik.

MAN SHOT DEAD IN PHILIPPINES

A 63-year-old man was shot dead in the Philippines after threatening village officials and police with a scythe at a coronavirus checkpoint, police said on Saturday. The man is believed to have been drunk when he threatened village officials and police manning the checkpoint in the town of Nasipit in the southern province of Agusan del Norte on Thursday, a police report said.

GREECE QUARANTINES SECOND MIGRANT CAMP

Officials in Greece yesterday placed a second migrant camp near Athens under lockdown after an Afghan resident tested positive for the coronavirus, the migration ministry said. Officials said the camp in Malakasa, some 38 kilometres (24 miles) northeast of Athens, had been placed under "full sanitary isolation" for 14 days, with no one allowed to enter or leave.

PAKISTAN HUNTS WORSHIPPERS

Pakistani authorities are searching for tens of thousands of worshippers who attended an Islamic gathering in Lahore last month amid fears they could be spreading Covid-19 across the country. At least 154 attendees have tested positive following the Tablighi Jamaat event, which attracted 100,000 people.

JAPAN 'ON THE BRINK'

Japan will ban entry to foreigners from 73 countries and ask everyone arriving from abroad to quarantine themselves for two weeks as it struggles to contain the coronavirus, with a senior minister warning the country had been pushed "to the brink". Medical experts advising Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a news conference that the rapid spread of contagion was severely straining hospitals in Tokyo.

SOURCE: AFP, TNN, AL JAZEERA

Italy, Spain see drop in deaths India gives nod for rapid antibody tests

Officials say lockdown measures starting to show results

AGENCIES

Italy and Spain reported their lowest daily rise in Covid-19 deaths and said the number of patients in intensive care had fallen for the first time.

Italian officials urged the country not to flout strict lockdown measures they said were starting to show results, although new cases rose by 4,805 on Saturday which was slightly higher than recent daily increases.

The country's Civil Protection department reported 681 deaths on Saturday, bringing the total to 15,632 since the outbreak of the new coronavirus epidemic in northern Italy on February 21. It was the lowest daily rise in deaths since March 23.

"This is an important piece of news because it allows our hospitals to breathe," Civil Protection head Angelo Borelli told a regular daily briefing where he has announced the grim daily tally of the world's most deadly outbreak of the disease.

For days, Italian officials have said that broadly stable rises in the number

of cases suggested that the outbreak had reached a plateau and that the numbers would begin to go down - if strict lockdown measures were respected.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte decided to impose an economically crippling lockdown in a bid to save the health care system from collapse.

He called in thousands of retired

Italian PM decides to impose economically crippling lockdown

Calls on thousands of retired doctors to sign up for virus battle

doctors and spent hundreds of millions of euros to shore up Italy's emergency wards.

Spain saw its third consecutive daily decline in the number of people dying from the coronavirus pandemic as the country recorded another 674 fatalities yesterday.

The health ministry said total deaths

were now 12,418, the highest in the world after Italy, since the pandemic emerged in China in December.

The 674 fatalities, which were sharply down on the record 950 recorded on April 2, represented an increase of 5.7 percent over the last 24 hours, compared to a 30 percent leap in one recent day.

The World Health Organization's director for Europe, Hans Kluge, tweeted about Spain: "Careful optimism as result of bold measures, innovative approaches & courageous decisions."

The number of infections in the country rose 4.8 percent to 130,759, indicating a slowdown in the spread from 8.2 percent on April 1 and 14 percent 10 days ago.

The number of people declared to have recovered has increased by 11 percent, rising above 38,080.

The authorities say they believe they have stabilised the spread of the virus but have decided to extend until midnight April 25 a strict lockdown imposed on Spain's 46.6 million people since March 14.

Curbs diagnostic testing kit exports

AGENCIES

Expanding the testing strategy in line with its containment plans in high-risk areas and Covid-19 hotspots, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) issued an advisory on Saturday to start rapid antibody-based blood test for coronavirus.

The strategy for using the test includes clusters (containment zone) and large migration gatherings or evacuees' centres.

"As a matter of abundant precaution, all symptomatic ILI (influenza-like illness) are to be monitored in health facilities. Any surge in cases to be monitored and brought to the notice of surveillance officer/CMO for additional investigation," the advisory said.

It added all ILI persons should be home-quarantined for 14 days. At facility level, all symptomatic people with influenza-like illness having cough, cold, low-grade fever and sore throat will be tested with rapid antibody tests, reports TNN.

If a patient tests positive after a rapid antibody test, decision will be taken based on clinical assessment and treatment in hospital will follow. As per protocol, contact tracing will also be done.

India is also restricting the export of most diagnostic testing kits, as cases in the South Asian nation topped 3,350 yesterday despite a three-week nationwide lockdown to slow the spread of the respiratory disease, reports Reuters.

Malaysia intercepts boat ferrying 202 Rohingyas

Malaysian authorities said yesterday they had intercepted a boat ferrying a group of 202 people believed to be ethnic Rohingya. Malaysia, which does not recognise refugee status, is a favoured destination for ethnic Rohingya fleeing a military-led crackdown in Myanmar and squalid conditions at refugee camps in Bangladesh. The boat was found adrift around one nautical mile from a luxury beachside resort on the holiday island of Langkawi, off the west coast of the Malaysian peninsula, the Malaysian maritime enforcement agency said in a statement. The group included 152 men, 45 women and 5 children. All 202 have been detained at the coastguard's Kedah state headquarters. The group will be handed over to immigration authorities for attempting to enter the country illegally, the coastguard said. The agency said it would also investigate complaints from the migrants about three alleged members of a migrant smuggling syndicate who escaped from the boat while out at sea.

Third man arrested in French 'terror' stabbing

French police have arrested a third suspect, another Sudanese national, in an expanding



terror probe after a knife attack in the country's southeast left two people dead, investigators said yesterday. The attack in broad daylight Saturday in the riverside town of Romans-sur-Isere, took place with the country on lockdown to stem the spread of the deadly coronavirus. Prosecutors have launched an investigation into "murder linked to a terrorist enterprise" and "association with terrorist wrongdoers" after the rampage through a string of shops in the town with a population of 35,000. The alleged assailant, identified as Abdallah Ahmed-Osman -- a Sudanese refugee in his 30s who lives in the town -- was arrested without a fight.

China rights lawyer freed after five years in jail

A leading Chinese human rights lawyer has been released from prison after almost five years behind bars, his wife said yesterday. Wang Quanzhang, 44, was first detained in 2015 in a sweeping crackdown on more than 200 lawyers and government critics in China as President Xi Jinping tightened his grip on power. But Wang has yet to return home to his family in Beijing and was instead escorted to a property he owns in eastern Shandong province for 14 days in quarantine as a precaution against the coronavirus, according to wife Li Wenzu. Li told AFP from Beijing, where she lives with the couple's young son, she feared Wang would be placed under house arrest despite his release from prison, and would be subject to surveillance.

SOURCE: AFP



A patient arrives in Wyckoff Hospital in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn in New York yesterday. The coronavirus death toll in New York state spiked to 4,159, the governor said, up from 3,565 a day prior.

PHOTO: AFP

S'pore reports record cases

Quarantines 20,000 migrant workers in virus fight

Reuters, Singapore

Singapore reported 120 new coronavirus cases yesterday, by far its highest daily rise, and quarantined nearly 20,000 migrant workers in their dormitories.

Of yesterday's new cases, 116 were locally transmitted and many were linked to two dormitories that house migrant workers, who will now have to stay in their rooms for 14 days.

The number of new cases is a 60% increase over the 75 reported on Saturday, which was the previous biggest daily rise. Singapore has reported a total of 1,309 infections and six deaths from the novel coronavirus.

Tens of thousands of blue-collar foreign workers live within close quarters in various dormitories in the tiny Southeast Asian nation, an island city-state. They form a significant part of the labour force, working in sectors from construction to cleaning.

There are about 280,000 foreign construction workers in the city-state from countries including Bangladesh and China, with many housed in shared rooms in large dormitory complexes.

"Efforts are also underway in the larger dormitories to reduce the density of their resident workers, by transferring some among them to alternative accommodation during this period," said a joint statement from two government

ministries.

The individuals will continue to be paid by their employers while they are quarantined, officials added.

The spike in cases comes two days before the country will begin closing schools and most workplaces for a month as part of tighter restrictions to combat the Covid-19 disease.

Singapore was one of the worst-hit countries when the virus first spread from China in January, but a strict surveillance and quarantine regime helped stem the tide. Recent spikes in locally transmitted cases have, however, raised fresh concerns.

The government is also converting a large exhibition venue to east of the island into a medical facility to accommodate patients who have mostly recovered from Covid-19 but may still be infectious.

It will be the second such facility after a hotel was converted last month to isolate up to 500 such people.

The city-state has won international praise for its two-month long battle against a virus that has infected over a million people globally, avoiding lockdown measures increasingly common around the world.

Prime Minister Lee urged everyone to stay at home as much as possible and to avoid socialising with others beyond their own household.



France to test plasma of survivors to treat sick

AFP, Paris

France is to begin clinical trials involving transfusions of blood plasma from coronavirus survivors into patients who have severe symptoms in a bid to treat the illness, the institutions involved said Saturday.

Drugmakers are racing to develop a vaccine and treatment for the pandemic, which has killed over 60,000 people since the coronavirus first emerged in China in December.

Plasma, the fluid in blood teeming with antibodies post-illness, has already proven effective in small studies to treat infectious diseases including Ebola and SARS.

The French trials are to start on Tuesday, according to a joint statement from the Paris hospital authority AP-HP, the national medical research institute INSERM, and the national blood service EFS.

"This clinical trial involves the transfusion of plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19, containing antibodies against the virus, and who could transfer this immunity to a patient suffering from COVID-19," it said.

"The plasma of the people who have recovered contains these antibodies that their organisms have developed. These antibodies could help patients in an acute stage of the disease to fight the virus."

The trials will involve 60 patients in Paris hospitals, half of whom will receive the plasma from the persons who have recovered.

It said the first results could be known two to three weeks after the trials.

The US Food and Drug Administration has already authorised physicians to experiment with the strategy to fight the coronavirus. Tests are also being done in China.

Bangladesh Bank Financial Sector Support Project (FSSP); IDA Credit No. 5664		
3rd Corrigendum Notice		
Date: 05 April 2020		
This is in reference to the Invitation for Bid (IFB) Number: BB(G)IT-16 Dated 05.02.2020 and Subsequent Corrigendum-2 Notice Dated 25.03.2020		
For		
Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Implementation and related services of Management Software for Three (03) Data Centers		
Single-Stage Bidding		
IFB Number: BB(G)IT-16, Credit Number: 56640		
This is general information to all concerned that the following amendments have been made in the Bid Data Sheet (BDS) of BB(G)IT-16 package under Financial Sector Support Project (FSSP):		
Particulars	As per Second Corrigendum Notice on 25.03.2020	As per latest Corrigendum
ITB 21.1: Bid Submission Date and Time	13 April 2020 03.00pm BST	13 May 2020 11.00am BST
ITB 24.1: Bid Opening Date and Time	13 April 2020 03.10pm BST	13 May 2020 11.10am BST
ITB 18.1: Bid Validity Period	11 August 2020	09 September 2020
ITB 18.1: Bid Security expiration	22 September 2020	07 October 2020
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