Over 250 global artists urge Israel to end Gaza blockade

More than 250 global artists and writers including rocker Peter Gabriel, director Ken Loach and actor Viggo Mortensen have appealed to Israel to stop the "siege" of Gaza. The coronavirus epidemic could have a devastating effect in "the world's largest open air prison", the artists said in an online letter. "Long before the global outbreak of COVID-19 threatened to overwhelm the already devastated healthcare system in Gaza, the UN had predicted that the blockaded coastal strip would be unliveable by 2020," the letter said. "With the pandemic, Gaza's almost two million inhabitants, predominantly refugees, face a mortal threat in the world's largest open-air prison," it added. Other signatories included poet Taha Adnan, Canadian writer Naomi Klein and British group Massive Attack.

Nepal fires at Indian farmers who tried to cross border

Nepal's police fired live rounds into the air to deter Indian farmers trying to cross the border to harvest their corn amid the coronavirus lockdown, an official said yesterday. Nearly 150 Indians who rent land in Jhapa district in far-east Nepal -- which borders India's Bihar and West Bengal states -- tried to force their way across on Saturday, district chief Udaya Bahadur Ranamagar told AFP. No-one was injured, he added. Earlier this month police in the same district fired blank rounds to disperse dozens of Indians trying to cross the border, Ranamagar said. It was not clear if they were also farmers.

Probe launched as Trump fires State Dept watchdog



Democrats in Congress on Saturday launched an investigation into President Donald Trump's move to oust the State Department's internal watchdog, accusing the president of escalating his fight against any oversight of his administration. Trump announced the planned removal of Inspector General Steve Linick in a letter to House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi late Friday night, making Linick the latest government inspector general to be ousted in recent weeks under the Republican president. The two Democrats said it was their understanding that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo personally recommended Linick's firing because the inspector general "had opened an investigation into wrongdoing by Secretary Pompeo himself." Asked about the investigation, a White House official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said: "Secretary Pompeo recommended the move and President Trump agreed.'



People try to keep social distance as they enjoy a warm day during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at Domino Park in Brooklyn, New York, yesterday.

second virus wave

China faces a potential second wave of coronavirus infections due to a lack of immunity among its population, its government's senior medical advisor has

After months of lockdowns and curbs on travel China has largely brought the virus under control, but fears of a second wave have risen as clusters have emerged in northeast provinces and in the central city of Wuhan.

"The majority of... Chinese at the moment are still susceptible of the Covid-19 infection, because (of) a lack of immunity," Zhong Nanshan, the public face of government's response to the pandemic, told CNN.

"We are facing (a) big challenge," Zhong added. "It's not better than the foreign countries I think at the moment."

Zhong, who helped expose the scale of the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), also said authorities in ground-zero Wuhan had under-reported cases during the early days of the pandemic.

But he added he believed data published after Wuhan was locked down in late January, and when the central government: took control of the response, "will be

Top China expert India extends curbs to May 31 warns of potential 'Lockdown 4' eases some restrictions; country sees record cases

India yesterday extended its nationwide coronavirus lockdown for two weeks, as cases exceeded 90,000 and further clashes erupted between police and

"Lockdown measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 will continue for a period of up to (May 31)," the Home Affairs Ministry said in a statement. The National Disaster Management Authority

added that the restrictions would be updated "as necessary, keeping in view the need to open up economic activities while containing the spread of The recommendation for phase 4 of lockdown

comes as the country crossed the 90,000-mark in coronavirus cases, recording the biggest single-day jump of 4,987 new patients, bringing the total to India has now reported more cases than China,

where the virus first emerged late last year, although its number of deaths so far, at 2,872, is much lower than China's 4,600. The death toll in the United States and some European countries is much higher. India's current lockdown, introduced on March

25 and extended several times, is due to expire at While announcing the extensions last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said it would

come in a "completely different form", with new

"Corona will be with us for a long time but our lives cannot revolve around it. We will wear masks, we will follow doh gaj doori (six-foot distance), but we won't let it derail our targets," he stressed.

According to the guidelines, barbershops, salons, shopping complexes and markets can now open starting today. However, domestic flights, schools/ colleges and hotels will continue to remain shut throughout the country. The government has also allowed inter-state movement of passenger vehicles and buses with mutual consent of states. The MHA said states will decide various zones, taking into consideration parameters shared by the Health



Sports complexes and stadia can open, however, spectators will not be allowed, the home ministry guidelines read. All places of worship shall also be closed for public and religious congregations are strictly prohibited, the government said.

Earlier yestrday, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu joined Punjab and Mizoram in extending the lockdown till May 31. Telangana has already extended it till May 29. Karnataka became the third southern state to extend the lockdown.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

KEY UPDATES

MORE THAN 311,000 DEAD

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 311,959 people since the outbreak first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT on Sunday. At least 4,647,980 cases of coronavirus have been registered in 196 countries and territories. The United States has the highest number of deaths overall with 88,754 from 1,467,884 cases. Britain has the second highest toll overall, with 34,466 deaths from 240,161 cases. It is followed by Italy with 31,763 deaths, Spain with 27,650 fatalities and France with 27,625 deaths.

NOT ONLY A RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

The desperate need of severely ill coronavirus patients for mechanical ventilators to help them breathe had led many people to think of COVID-19 primarily as a respiratory disease, at least in adults. But among nearly 5,500 coronavirus patients in the largest New York health system, more than one in three hospitalized patients developed acute kidney injuries, and nearly 15% required dialysis, researchers reported on Thursday in the medical journal Kidney International. Other research teams have reported that the virus can infect cells in the small intestine. And on Wednesday, researchers reported in The New England Journal of Medicine that autopsies of 27 people who died of COVID-19 showed the virus in tissues of 17 hearts, 17 livers, 8 brains and the kidneys of 13 people. There have also been reports of the virus causing blood clots that can lead to strokes.

SINGLE DIGIT CASES IN S KOREA

South Korea yesterday reported five new domestic cases of coronavirus, all linked to a cluster of cases centred around bars and nightclubs in the capital which has raised fears in the country of a fresh wave of contagion. After weeks of nearly no new domestic coronavirus cases, South Korea relaxed its lockdown on May 6, but a subsequent spike in infections linked to Seoul's Itaewon nightlife

neighbourhood forced a rapid re-think. **WEAR MASKS, OR GO TO JAIL**

Qatar yesterday began enforcing the world's toughest penalties of up to three years' imprisonment or and fines of as much as \$55,000 for failing to wear masks in public. More than 30,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the tiny Gulf country -- 1.1 percent of the 2.75 million population -- although just 15 people have died. Only the micro-states of San Marino and the Vatican had higher per-capita infection rates, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

FIRST VIRUS DEATH IN NEPAL

Nepal reported its first coronavirus death late Saturday -- a 29-year-old woman who recently gave birth -- as the total number of people infected in the country reached 281. In January, Nepal was the first south Asian country to report a case of coronavirus. The country has been under lockdown since March 24 after a second case was confirmed.



shopping mall in Bangkok, yesterday. Shoppers flocked to Thailand's top-end malls yesterday as shopping centres reopened in a gradual easing of restrictions to revive the virus-ravaged economy.

Afghan rivals sign powersharing deal

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah signed a power-sharing deal yesterday, ending a bitter months-long feud that plunged the country into political crisis.

The breakthrough, which sees Abdullah heading peace talks with the Taliban, comes as Afghanistan battles a series of crises, including a rapid spread of the deadly coronavirus and surging militant violence that saw dozens killed in brutal attacks last week.

"Doctor Abdullah will lead the National Reconciliation High Commission and members of his team will be included in the cabinet," Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for Ghani, wrote on Twitter.

Abdullah's spokesman, Fraidoon Khawzoon, said the deal ensures Abdullah's group gets 50 percent of the cabinet and other provincial governors' posts.

Khawzoon added that the implementation of the deal will be monitored by respected political and national figures.

Pictures released by the presidential palace showed Abdullah and Ghani sitting side by side for a signing ceremony.

Abdullah had previously served as Afghanistan's "chief executive" under an earlier power-sharing deal, but lost that post after he was defeated in a presidential election that incumbent Ghani won in September amid claims of fraud.

Abdullah, an ophthalmologist, declared himself president and held his own swearing-in ceremony on March 9, the day Ghani was re-installed as president.

On Sunday the two rivals agreed on a new power-sharing deal, which experts feel could help pull Afghanistan out of political

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Project Director Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP) Department of Livestock Services Krishi Khamar Sharak, Farmgate, Dhaka, Bangladesh www.lddp.portal.gov.bd



Date: 17/05/2020.

GD-860

Memo No: 33.01.0000.828.07.115.20-356

Request for Bids Goods (One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Bangladesh

Name of Project: Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP) Contract Title: Procurement of 180 Nos. Mobile Veterinary Clinic (MVC) Credit No..: IDA 6330-BD; RFB Reference No.: ICB/GD-66

- The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Procurement of Mobile Veterinary Clinic (MVC).
- The Livestock and Dairy Development Project under the Department of Livestock Services now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Procurement of the following goods:

Description	Quantity	Delivery Location	Delivery Period	Margin of Preference
Procurement of 180 Nos. Mobile Veterinary Clinic (MVC)	180 (One Hundred Eighty) Nos.	Kriehi Khamar Sarak	20 Weeks from the date of opening L/C	No

- Bidding will be conducted through international competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers", July 2016,[revised in November, 2017] ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- 4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Project Director, Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP), Department of Livestock (DLS), Email: lddp@dls.gov.bd and inspect the bidding document during office hours i.e. 09:00 to 17:00 hours at the address given
- The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of equivalent US\$ 150.00 (US\$ One Hundred Fifty). The method of payment will be Cash/Bank Draft. The document will be sent by airmail for overseas delivery and courier for local delivery.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 14:00 hours on 15 July, 2020. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below at 15:00 hours on 15 July, 2020.
- 7. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security amount US\$ 120,000.00 (US\$ One hundred twenty thousand) or an equivalent amount in any freely convertible currency in favor of the Project Director, Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP).
- The address referred to above is:

Office of the Project Director, Livestock and Dairy Development Project (LDDP), Department of Livestock Services (DLS), Bhaban-2 (Level-07), Krishi Khamar Sharak, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh



E-mail: lddp@dls.gov.bd



Israel swears in unity govt

Netanyahu insists on West Bank annexation

Israel's parliament swore in its new unity government yesterday led by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his former rival Benny Gantz, ending the longest political crisis in the nation's history.

Lawmakers in the 120-person parliament, the Knesset, formally approved the threeyear coalition government with 73 voting for and 49 against. One member was absent for the vote.

Addressing the Knesset the before Netanyahu vowed to push controversial plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank. Netanyahu said his incoming government should apply Israeli sovereignty over West

Bank settlements. "It's time to apply the Israeli law and write another glorious chapter in the history of Zionism," Netanyahu said on the issue of Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Such a move is seen likely to cause international uproar and inflame tensions in the West Bank, home to nearly three million Palestinians and some 400,000 Israelis living in settlements considered

illegal under international law. Netanyahu told the chamber that annexation "won't distance us from peace, it will bring

Israel's unity government starts work amid the coronavirus pandemic and after a political crisis that saw three inconclusive elections and left the country in political limbo for more than 500 days.

The coalition government was agreed last month between veteran right-wing leader Netanyahu and the centrist Gantz, a former army chief.

the three-Under year coalition deal, Netanyahu will serve as prime minister for the coming 18 months a major victory for a leader due to stand trial in a week on corruption charges, which he denies. Gantz will be alternate prime minister, a new

position governance, for the first half of the deal, before he and Netanyahu swap roles.

The Netanyahu-Gantz deal says the government can from July 1 initiate moves to implement US President Donald Trump's controversial peace plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The plan, rejected by the Palestinians, gives the green light from Washington for Israel to annex Jewish settlements and other territory in the West Bank.

Some experts warn that it might create a severe crisis in the region.