

Korea extends intensive social distancing

South Korea yesterday said it will extend its intensive social distancing campaign scheduled to end on Monday by two weeks in a bid to curb the rate of coronavirus infections to around 50 a day.

The country has largely managed to bring under control Asia's largest epidemic outside China with around 100 or fewer new daily cases. But smaller outbreaks in churches, hospitals and nursing homes, as well as infections among travellers, continue to emerge.

This week, the government has been gauging whether it should extend a 15-day intensive social distancing policy it implemented on March 21, under which high-risk facilities were urged to close and religious, sports and entertainment gatherings were banned.

But it is "too early to be at ease," Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said, citing a recent spike in imported cases and small cluster infections which also prompted the government to cancel the re-opening of schools next week.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported 94 new cases on Saturday, taking the national tally to 10,156. The death toll rose by three to 177.

Social distancing played a role in restraining domestic group transmissions by some 70% during the first 11 days compared with the last 11 days before it took effect, Park said.

But there are signs that people restarted going out and socialising as fatigue about isolation grew, he said.

"We are well aware that many citizens are feeling exhausted and lethargic under continued social distancing," Park said. "But if we get loose, the strenuous efforts that the government and the people have made so far might come to nothing."



People observe 3-minute silence to mourn patients and medical staff killed by coronavirus pandemic in Beijing, yesterday.

SOURCE: AFP

Europe sees ray of hope

Drop in cases in European hotspots indicate pandemic might have peaked

AGENCIES

Americans yesterday came to grips with recommendations to wear masks against the coronavirus, while Spain added to hopes that Europe could be turning a corner in the pandemic with a second daily drop in deaths.

China meanwhile came to a standstill as the nation where the virus first appeared held three minutes of silence to mourn the patients and medical staff killed by the outbreak.

Since COVID-19 emerged late last year, more than 1.1 million people have fallen ill. More than 60,000 people have died.

China, where over 3,000 people have died from the virus, appears to be over the worst of its outbreak and there are signs of normality returning.

But large swathes of the world remain in crisis mode.

Europe accounts for the lion's share of virus fatalities, but America logged

China pauses in memory of victims and 'martyrs'

Americans told to wear masks

UK COVID-19 deaths climb by new high of 708

Spain to extend lockdown until April 25



another rise in its death toll to bring the total to just over 7,100.

President Donald Trump's administration on Friday suggested widespread use of simple masks or scarves might help slow the spread.

In Europe, Italy and Spain continue to bear the brunt of a pandemic that has kept millions of citizens confined to their homes, closed schools and businesses and overwhelmed

healthcare systems.

But official figures suggested unprecedented measures to restrict people's movements were working and that the peak may have hit on the continent.

Spain, which is under a near-total lockdown, on Saturday recorded a second successive daily fall in coronavirus-related deaths with 809 fatalities. The total number of deaths

Four acquitted in Pearl murder rearrested

Four men acquitted in the kidnapping and killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan have been rearrested and will stay in jail while prosecutors appeal the ruling, officials said. A Pakistani court sparked US outrage on Thursday after it quashed the murder conviction of British-born militant Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh who had been on death row over the 2002 killing. Three alleged accomplices also had their convictions overturned. But Pakistan's interior ministry said late Friday the four would remain in jail while prosecutors appeal their acquittals in the country's Supreme Court. Pearl, 38, was the South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal when he was abducted in Karachi in January 2002 while researching a story about Islamist militants. A graphic video showing his decapitation was delivered to the US consulate in the city nearly a month later.

Trump fires intel official who set his impeachment

President Donald Trump announced Friday he was firing a senior intelligence official who had a central role in the complaint last August that sparked the impeachment trial of the US leader. In a letter to the Senate Intelligence Committee, Trump said he had lost confidence in Michael Atkinson, the independent inspector general of the broad US intelligence community. Atkinson reviewed and transmitted an anonymous whistle-blower's complaint in August that alleged that Trump had sought personal political favors from Ukraine in violation of US law. The complaint became the basis for Trump's impeachment, which saw him put through a historic trial for removal in the Senate in January. Ultimately Trump was voted not guilty by the Republican-controlled Senate in early February.

G77, China demand end to sanctions in pandemic

The Group of 77 and China called Friday for an end to unilateral sanctions against developing countries during the coronavirus crisis, warning they could hinder efforts to tackle the pandemic. In a statement implicitly aimed at the United States, which has tough sanctions against Iran and Venezuela. It warned that such measures would affect targeted countries' acquisition of medical equipment and supplies "to adequately treat their populations in the face of this pandemic." China takes part in G77 business but does not consider itself to be a member of the 134-member coalition, meaning official statements are issued by the "G77 and China." The grouping represents three quarters of United Nations members and some 80 percent of the world's population, according to the UN.

SOURCE: AFP



A drone used by police to monitor activities of people and spread awareness announcements is seen during a nationwide lockdown in Chennai, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pandemic is making Earth vibrate less

CNN ONLINE

Once-crowded city streets are now empty. Highway traffic has slowed to a minimum. And fewer and fewer people can be found milling about outside.

Global containment measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus have seemingly made the world much quieter. Scientists are noticing it, too.

Around the world, seismologists are observing a lot less ambient seismic noise -- meaning, the vibrations generated by cars, trains, buses and people going about their daily lives. And in the absence of that noise, Earth's upper crust is moving just a little less.

Thomas Lecocq, a geologist and seismologist at the Royal Observatory in Belgium, first pointed out this phenomenon in Brussels.

Brussels is seeing about a 30% to 50% reduction in ambient seismic noise since mid-March, around the time the country started implementing school and business closures and other social distancing measures, according to Lecocq.

Seismologists in other cities are seeing similar effects in their own cities. Lecocq said the graphs charting human noise are evidence that people are listening to authorities' warnings to stay inside and minimize outside activity as much as possible.

"From the seismological point of view, we can motivate people to say, 'OK look, people. You feel like you're alone at home, but we can tell you that everyone is home. Everyone is doing the same. Everyone is respecting the rules,'" he said.

The data can also be used to identify where containment measures might not be as effective, said Raphael De Plaen, a postdoctoral researcher at Universidad Nacional Aut3noma de M3xico.

Virus may spread through air via normal breathing

AFP, Washington

The new coronavirus might spread through the air via normal breathing and speaking, a top US scientist said Friday as the government recommended the use of face masks for everyone.

Anthony Fauci, head of infectious diseases at the National Institutes of Health, told Fox News the guidance on masks would be changed "because of some recent information that the virus can actually be spread even when people just speak, as opposed to coughing and sneezing."

As it stands, the official advice is that only sick people need to cover their faces, as well as those caring for them at home.

Fauci's comments come after the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) sent a letter to the White House on April 1 that summarized recent research on the subject.

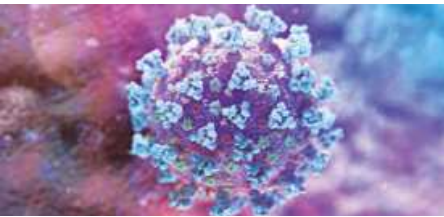
It said that though the research isn't yet conclusive, "the results of available studies are consistent with aerosolization of virus from normal breathing."

Until now, US health agencies have said that the primary pathway of transmission is respiratory

droplets, about one millimeter in diameter, expelled by sick people when they sneeze or cough.

These quickly fall to the ground around a meter away.

But if the virus can be suspended in the ultrafine mist we expel when we exhale, in other words an aerosol, it becomes much harder to prevent its spread, which in turn is an argument in favor of everyone covering their faces.



because the team behind the study used a medical device called a nebulizer to deliberately create a viral mist and argued this would not occur naturally.

So far, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been more cautious on the airborne threat.

In an analysis published on March 29, it wrote that aerosol transmission was only known to occur during particular medical treatments that required assisted breathing.

4 BED Apartments

Single Apartment Per Floor

At the best locations of

Uttara & Bashundhara Residential Areas

Please Feel Free To Call

01714 039846, 01713 367486

01714 016717

Tel: (+8802) 55068001-5

Asset DEVELOPMENTS

Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd

91 Gulshan Avenue