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Meeting Venue
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Meeting Time
17h45 for 18h15

Face book page
Pinelands Rotary, Cape
Town Facebook

Saturday
4th APRIL
2020
5th Edition

Message from:
Tanya Stone

Paparazzi
Editor
Pinelands Rotary Club

Saturday 4th April 2020



Dear Fellow Rotarians

Lockdown day 8

I hope you and your family are safely at home and looking after yourselves.

Things are still exceptionally quiet in my neighbourhood, except for the sound of children playing next door and the odd car driving past.

People have started to be incredibly creative in their now extra time at home.
I expect a lot of entrepreneurs coming out of the woodwork!

The lockdown has given us more time to reflect and how one chooses to use the time which can greatly reduce uncertainties, and anxiety.

Take time in your daily schedule to read, catch up on your favourite series and discover new hobbies. This will also mean spending less time obsessing over the latest update on the virus.

News and articles are below.

Take care and stay safe
Tanya



**Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak situation
SATURDAY 4th APRIL 2020**

PLEASE NOTE: Figures are time of publish and fluctuate constantly

1,097,163

Confirmed cases

Updated : 4th April 2020

59,140

Confirmed deaths

Updated : 4th April 2020

205

**Countries, areas or territories
with cases**

Updated : 4th April 2020

228,370

Recovered

Updated : 4th April 2020

**UPDATE
SOUTH AFRICA
Saturday 4th April 2020**

South Africa now has **1,505** confirmed cases.

Official South African statistics from the Department of Health on COVID-19

1,505

Positive Cases Identified

479,650

**Covid-19 Tests
Completed**

9

Deaths

MESSAGE BY HEALTH MINISTER ZWELI MKHIZE

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize confirms total of 1 462 cases of Corona Virus COVID-19

As at today the total number of COVID-29 positive cases is 1 462- this is an increase of 82 cases.

We are still observing that the increase of cases is below what we had initially projected and we believe this is due to the restriction we have placed on movement and border crossing.

However, I still want to caution that, until we have a clear sense of what is happening in our densely populated areas, in particular townships, we should not be lulled into complacency but continue to venture forth in full combat by proactively conducting wall to wall testing and finding all COVID-19 affected people in the country.

That way we can do what needs to be done to break the cycle of transmission and beat COVID-19 as a nation.

We had last reported five deaths. We wish to indicate that we are awaiting the reports of two more deaths- once these have been concluded and verified we will inform the public of the revised number of deaths.

We are slowly seeing an increase in numbers of recoveries, however recovery numbers do tend to lag behind because of the criteria for recovery. Our focus right now is finding all active cases and treating those who are very ill.

Matters Arising: 2 April 2020

Today was a very exciting day in Gauteng Province and the Free State.

Gauteng

In Gauteng, we started the day by receiving 1500 mobile devices from the CEO of Samsung Mr Sung Yoon. In addition Telkom sponsored the equivalent number of sim cards which will be loaded with 3 gigs of data per month, free of charge, for the duration of the COVID-19 combat. We were very honoured to receive these sim cards from the Telkom Group CEO Mr Siphon Maseko. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both these business leaders for heeding the Thuma Mina call and joining hands with us to fight COVID-19 using advanced technology for tracking and tracing. We will distribute these devices to our current places of most urgent need: Gauteng, Free State Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal.

1500 devices to assist our field workers with tracking and tracing COVID-19 contacts is a very good start however we are fielding 10 000 workers for community screening, We therefore call on all Telecommunications companies to follow the lead of Samsung and Telkom and assist us to equip all 10 000 workers with devices to assist track and trace COVID-19 affected citizens.

Today, as the world exceeds one million cases, South Korea now sits at number 15. South Korea succeeded in containing what was threatening to be a runaway situation by a proactive approach to large scale sanitizing, testing and early lockdowns. We look forward to continuing to learn from and partner with South Korea.

Whilst engaging the Head of Samsung for Africa, who is from South Korea, I took the opportunity of discussing how important it has been for us to study and learn from the successes of South Korea. Not so long ago, South Korea was the second most affected country in the world.

Free State

I have to say that it has been a most exciting afternoon spent at the Free State.

We know that in the Free State, the epicenter of the outbreak was a church gathering in Mangaung, Bloemfontein. Again having learnt from situations like in Daegu, South Korea, we knew that it was vital to act quickly in the Free State and mobilize resources to the area for large scale testing, track and tracing and quarantine.

As you know the Free State was the first to receive mobile testing units to ensure every church member was tested. I am pleased to report that, further to this the tracking and tracing of all contacts has gone extremely well, extending to all provinces where affected congregants may have travelled to after the conference. It is remarkable that of 1700 contacts 1600 have been traced already.

I had an opportunity to visit the operations centre and the infectious diseases unit and could see that all the right things were being done.

A lot of innovative work has emerged here which not only bodes well for the fight against COVID-19 but also for the future of medicine in this country and the world.

It has been a real pleasure interacting with the clinicians and health care professionals at the academic hospital, Universities. The work that has been done here will surely filter through the entire health system in the province and country and this is very exciting.

I was exposed to innovations such as printing of PEEP ventilation masks as well as face masks. With 3-D printing technology it will be possible to print

33 000 face masks. As the world faces mask shortage this was most gratifying to discover and I congratulate all those who have been involved with such innovations.

The teams here have confidently and proactively gone about preparing for all eventualities of COVID-19.

The ICU capacity has been increased from 16 beds to 86 beds- this is no mean feat. Maternal and neonatal wards have also been equipped to safely manage COVID-19 patients without the threat of cross contamination.

Strategies to reducing hospital burden and freeing up beds have included lengthening the course of repeat scripts from three to six months, early discharge and reducing the number of repeat hospital visits.

Training of all staff, including porters and cleaners has been intensified- the full work force is now well versed on COVID-19, the donning and doffing of personal protective equipment and the overall knowledge that one needs to safely manage COVID-19 affected clients. This really is a very important aspect and I congratulate the team here for the stellar work done.

I really want to thank Premiers, MEC's, clinicians, frontline and field workers for the incredible work being done in the fight against COVID-19

I would also like to thank all South Africans for heeding the call to stay at home- as I traverse the length and breadth of the country I can see that our people have truly partnered with the Government- this was also an observation made by the aforementioned Mr Yoon of Samsung, who observed that we share with the people of South Korea- this bodes very well for our ability to beat COVID-19.

As the flu season approaches, I make a special call to South Africans to take good care of themselves: keep warm and avoid the cold, if possible do get a flu vaccine this season. Pursue healthy lifestyles by eating well, exercising even while under lockdown in your homes and present early if you have flu- like symptoms. For those on chronic medication, please adhere to your treatment. Please know your HIV status and adhere to your ARV's if you are a person living with HIV.

Healthy bodies with strong immune systems and healthy, positive minds are key in this war against COVID-19

We also thank you all for the messages of encouragement, inspiration and appreciation which give us strength during these trying times.

Please continue to stay home and stay safe.

Issued by:

Department of Health

NEWS

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's ruthlessly efficient fight against coronavirus

By Andrew Harding Africa correspondent

One week into South Africa's nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus, and it is tempting - dangerously tempting - to breathe a sigh of relief.

After all, look at how much has already been achieved. More than 47,000 people have been tested, and 67 mobile testing units have been organised.

South Africa has done the most testing in Africa for Covid-19

There are even drive-through testing centres. Soon the country will be able to test 30,000 people every day. To date, only five deaths from the virus have been confirmed. About 1,400 have tested positive for Covid-19.

'Formidable leadership'

South Africa seems to have acted faster, more efficiently, and more ruthlessly than many other countries around the world

Heading the fight here against Covid-19, President Cyril Ramaphosa has emerged as a formidable leader - composed, compassionate, but seized by the urgency of the moment and wasting no time in imposing tough restrictive steps and galvanising crucial support from the private sector.

And one rung below the president, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has likewise garnered near universal praise for his no-nonsense, energetic performance, and his sober, deeply knowledgeable, daily briefings.



"What we may currently be experiencing is the calm before a heavy and devastating storm"

Zweli Mkhize

South Africa's Health Minister

Of course, there have been mistakes, and worse. The police and army have, at times, acted with thuggish abandon in their attempts to enforce the three-week-long lockdown, humiliating, beating, and even shooting civilians on the streets of the commercial capital, Johannesburg, and elsewhere.



There has been confusion about some of the regulations, clumsy messaging and U-turns from some of the country's less impressive ministers.

Above all, there has been the struggle to impose social distancing and effective hygiene in South Africa's poorest, most crowded neighbourhoods, where many fear the virus could yet wreak havoc.

But overall, as South Africans mark their first week under one of the strictest lockdowns introduced anywhere in the world - no jogging outside, no sales of alcohol or cigarettes, no dog-walking, no leaving home except for essential trips and prison or heavy fines for law-breaking - there is an argument to be made that a government so often attacked as corrupt and inefficient, and a private sector so often seen as aloof and greedy, are rising to meet what is widely anticipated to be the greatest challenge this young democracy has ever seen.

It is fitting that the man now loudly warning the nation against any hint of complacency - indeed about the profound dangers of such complacency - is the health minister himself.

"What we may currently be experiencing is the calm before a heavy and devastating storm," said Dr Mkhize, gravely, at Wednesday's official launch of a new batch of mobile laboratories.

"Unless we move fast we will soon be swarmed. There will therefore be no further warning before the pounding descends upon us.

"There will not be time to prepare what we will not have put in place in the next seven days," Dr Mkhize said, noting that the virus has already begun to spread inside the country and that "we don't as yet have a true picture of the size of the problem".

In other words, for all South Africa's impressive early steps, the real battle lies ahead and the real test of the country's health system has yet to begin.



Coronavirus in SA: WHO boss praises South Africa's response to Covid-19 pandemic

By **Jonisayi Maromo**
IOL



Long Street in the Cape Town CBD is deserted after a 21-day national lockdown was called in an attempt to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Pretoria - World Health Organisation (WHO) director-general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus this week praised President Cyril Ramaphosa's leadership as the country battles the highest coronavirus (Covid-19) infection cases on the continent.

In a series of tweets, Ghebreyesus also appealed to South Africans to adhere to the measures implemented to curb the spread of the virus.

"I thank President Cyril Ramaphosa for his leadership and all South Africa's government and all of society Covid-19 response with citizens doing their best to adhere to the measures taken to contain the coronavirus," the WHO boss tweeted on Tuesday.

In another tweet, Ghebreyesus tweeted: "Today a massive door-to-door campaign to test identify Covid-19 patients in South Africa has started. Those who test positive will be isolated and receive necessary care, and their contacts will be traced".

The death of Professor Gita Ramjee

By **Jenni Evans**
News24



The world has lost a bold and compassionate leader in the response to HIV, The Aurum Institute group CEO Professor Gavin Churchyard said of Ramjee, whose death was confirmed on Tuesday.

The decorated and world-renowned scientist was the chief scientific officer at the institute and worked tirelessly to research ways to prevent HIV infection, especially among women.

She died in an Umhlanga hospital after being admitted for pneumonia, **Daily Maverick** reported. According to the publication, Ramjee had recently returned from a trip to London.

A critical player in the field of HIV prevention clinical trials, she was acknowledged internationally for her expertise in the field of microbicide research, including a Lifetime Achievement Award for HIV Prevention methods.

Two years ago, she received the Outstanding Female Scientist Award by the European Development Clinical Trials Partnerships for her life's work, which focused on finding new HIV prevention methods.

Ramjee was the chief specialist scientist and director of the HIV Prevention Research Unit at the SA Medical Research Council before her appointment at The Aurum Institute.

Home tests for coronavirus starting in Western Cape on Monday

By Siphokazi Vuso and Okuhle Hlati

CAPE TIMES



Cape Town – From Monday, Western Cape residents can expect to be screened for Covid-19 in the comfort of their homes.

This forms part of the government's intensified drive to stop the spread of the virus, which has infected 393 people in the province.

The latest to test positive were the seventh case in Mitchells Plain, a second in Khayelitsha, and another University of Cape Town student, bringing the number to six at the institution.

The number of cases countrywide stands at 1 462.

The provincial Health Department will undertake targeted community screening and testing, using the identified geo-located cases of local transmission in vulnerable and high-risk communities, starting from the Metro and fanning out.

This follows President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement on Monday that 10 000 field workers will be visiting homes in villages, towns and cities to screen residents for Covid-19 symptoms.

Saftu General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi has tested positive for COVID-19, he revealed on Thursday.

"All I had was a flu from Friday and it got worse by Saturday, Sunday. So I went to test just to be on the safe side."

"Not that I had any of the big signs like chest or respiratory problems, no nothing. Just a flu feeling a little bit down and out of my stride."

He said he has no idea where he could have come into contact with the virus.

Vavi said he is in self-isolation until he recovers.

Source by eNCA
DStv403

The Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha and Klipfontein areas were of greatest concern in the metro, said provincial Head of Health, Dr Keith Cloete.

"Our concern is that we might have community transmission in those areas," he said.

Cloete said community health workers and NGOs would collectively embark on the community-based screening and testing.

If required, tests would be conducted at mobile testing labs.

The fieldworkers doing the screening and testing would be clearly identified, to avoid scammers taking advantage of the situation.

"We want to especially target those areas and go into households where cases have already been documented of local transmission. Our strategy as of Monday is to identify all the areas we are going into. We are putting all the logistics together so there will be screening, access to testing and, out of that, there will be a screening of someone who requires isolation and quarantine out of that process," Cloete said.

Covid-19 repatriations: SAA to fly visitors to home countries

Tourists, foreign workers and students stranded in SA by the sudden Covid-19 lockdown will be able to return home on chartered flights operated by SAA.

This was announced on Thursday by SAA's business rescue practitioners Les Matuson and Siviwe Dongwana.

The first of these chartered flights will be for the repatriation of German citizens to their home country. They are expected to depart from Friday — from Johannesburg to Munich and Cape Town to Frankfurt.

Negotiations are ongoing with other governments for the repatriation of their citizens.

Source by Dispatch Live

Is this the fittest man in SA during Covid-19 lockdown?

By Murray Williams
News24



Meet Bongile Yabo.

He is aged 50 but runs like the wind. It's his job. While exercise junkies across South Africa are pacing up and down their yards like caged animals because of a 21-day lockdown, Yabo runs freely - and is getting fitter by the day.

Yabo is an employee of Waste-Mart, the contracted rubbish collection service in suburbs and towns across the country.

This super-fit team member's singular task is their front runner. He sprints ahead of the waste removal truck, always a block ahead, on their carefully mapped routes. And he prepares each black wheelie bin by safely wiping down its handles - ready for his colleagues to grab, race to the truck, tip and return. Sprint, wipe, sprint, wipe - for up to six hours on a single shift.

His team members told News24 they respect and applaud him.

Yabo is a father of three children, aged 24, 19 and 12, back home in Khayelitsha.

His passion is soccer and he usually plays number nine or 10. There are no games now but he's happy to be keeping his body in peak physical condition during the novel coronavirus crisis.

"I don't know how far I run each day. I just run..." he told News24.

One resident quipped Yabo may have the best job in South Africa right now.

WATCH YABO IN ACTION

<https://youtu.be/ygeFFtaZsQU>

Dolphins frolic in deserted Hout Bay

Published by *Nidha Narrandes* on April 2, 2020



Dolphins or porpoises (because we are not experts) did not get the memo about social distancing, or the news about the 21-day national lockdown. A huge pod, with scores of dolphins, spent the morning entertaining Hout Bay residents lucky enough to have a view of the beach.

The dolphins frolicked in the water, circling each other and racing for the front spot. Hout Bay residents snapped pictures and videos from their homes, and enjoyed every little bit of entertainment Mother Nature had to offer. Some residents commented that this is the largest pod they had seen in many years.

No doubt, **while the humans are inside, Mother Nature is taking full advantage of the freedom and putting on her biggest show.**

ENTERTAINMENT DURING LOCKDOWN

Are you a nature lover and suffering from cabin fever? Here is one way of virtually stepping out into the Wild.

WildEarth's safariLIVE is an award winning, expert hosted LIVE safari, broadcast directly from the African wilderness into your home.

Available on both the internet and television, this show enables you to interact with an expert game ranger in real time.

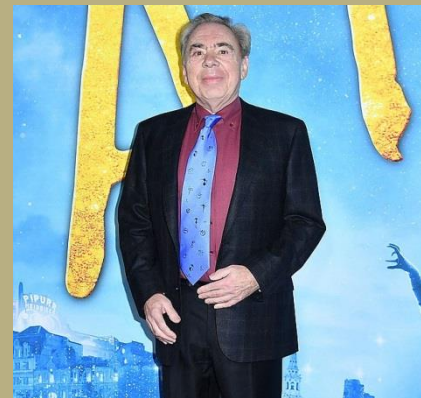
Safari vehicles, guides on foot, drones, balloons, rovers and remote cams are all searching for their favourite characters. Completely unscripted and unpredictable – this show is reality TV as it is supposed to be. Authentic and REAL.



[FIND SafariLIVE HERE](#)

and watch live African Wildlife!

Andrew Lloyd Webber's Official Announcement | The Shows Must Go On - Stay Home #WithMe



Theatre fans can enjoy their very own West End experience at home as Andrew Lloyd-Webber puts some of his famous musicals on YouTube during the **coronavirus** crisis.

The YouTube channel, [The Show Must Go On](#) will enable fans from around the world to enjoy the famous composer's hit musicals including Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and Jesus Christ Superstar.

Each show will be available for free from 7pm on the day of release and viewers can tune in for 48 hours with further shows soon to be announced.

Alongside full-length shows, clips of famous performances and behind-the-scenes footage will also be uploaded regularly to the channel.

Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6XjXfQmZ4Q>

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD



UK

What a gemors! UK shows how NOT to do a lockdown

By Alistair Smout and Michael Holden
TIMES SELECT

People happily carry on with their lives as before, while government keeps on bungling its messages

Britain went into virtual lockdown on Tuesday to try to curb the spread of the coronavirus, but London underground trains were crammed and streets were far from deserted amid confusion over the government's advice to workers.

In a TV message watched by more than 27 million people on Monday evening, PM Boris Johnson ordered people to stay at home, banned social gatherings and said nearly all shops must close.

The unprecedented peacetime restrictions, which will last at least three weeks, are intended to stop the state-run National Health Service (NHS) being overwhelmed after the number of deaths from the coronavirus in Britain rose to 335.

However, critics said the government was sowing confusion by not immediately offering financial support to the self-employed or explaining clearly who should still go to work.

"I hope that people will follow this advice. If for any reason they don't, penalties are there," Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove told BBC TV. "People must stay at home to protect themselves, to protect the NHS and to save lives."



IT'S A JUMBLE OUT THERE Passengers squeeze on to a busy Central Line underground train at Stratford station, east London

Despite the message for people to stay at home, some roads, while far quieter than usual, were still busy, and utility workmen and others were still mingling close together.

"The government needs to urgently provide clearer guidance on who should be working and who shouldn't," said Rebecca Long-Bailey, the opposition Labour Party's business spokesperson. "No one should be asked to work if they are not providing an essential function in this crisis."

Under the curbs on movement, people should leave their homes only for very limited reasons such as going to supermarkets for vital supplies or for exercise once a day.

WEST AFRICA RWANDA



KIGALI, April 3 Rwanda has secured a \$109.4 million in emergency coronavirus funding from the International Monetary Fund, the first African country to do so, the fund said late on Thursday.

Report by Clement Uwiringiyimana
DAILY MAVERICK

The East African country has registered 84 coronavirus cases, data from the World Health Organization shows, and Rwandans are grappling with high food prices as the government on Thursday extended a national lockdown by 15 days.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has ground Rwanda’s economy to a halt, creating an urgent balance of payments need,” Tao Zhang, IMF deputy managing director, said in a statement.

The loan, which comes under the Rapid Credit Facility, will help alleviate pressure on trade, tourism and foreign exchange reserves, while enabling greater health spending, the funding announcement said.

While Rwanda was the first African country to secure this kind of coronavirus funding, the global lender said on Twitter it was “working hard on other requests”.

Rwanda, which is heavily reliant on tourism to boost its foreign exchange reserves, last month closed its borders to travellers as a part of a broader lockdown designed to curb the spread of the disease.

“This pandemic has already started showing effects on tourism, air transportation, conferences that have been stopped affecting hotels, restaurants and other services,” Rwanda’s finance minister Uzziel Ndagijimana told Rwanda’s state radio on Thursday. Both import and export markets have also been affected, he added.

The IMF is projecting Rwandan GDP growth this year to tumble to 5.1%. Last year, growth hit 9.4% according to government data.

Separately, the World Bank approved \$1.9 billion in global coronavirus funding on Thursday, including \$82.6 million to Ethiopia, \$50 million to Kenya, and \$47 million to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

United States

Leonardo DiCaprio teamed up with Apple to launch America's Food Fund



By **Josephine Moulds**
Freelance journalist

America's Food Fund hopes to raise \$15 million for vulnerable communities.

It aims to provide reliable access to food across the United States.

Oprah Winfrey is among the high profile donors to the fund.

Leonardo DiCaprio is helping to launch a food fund for communities impacted by the COVID-19 coronavirus, part of a wave of philanthropic efforts to ease the damage inflicted by the worsening pandemic. Amazon's Jeff Bezos, for example, announced Thursday he has donated \$100 million to [Feeding America](#), which has a network of food banks across the US.

DiCaprio has teamed up with Apple, the philanthropist Laurene Powell Jobs, and the Ford Foundation to raise \$15 million to support low-income families, the elderly, children who rely on free school meals and people facing job disruptions across the US.

In the past two weeks, around 10 million Americans lost their jobs.

America's Food Fund raised \$12.6 million in just one day. High profile donors include Oprah Winfrey, who gave \$1 million to the fund, on top of \$9 million she has donated to other food charities.

PARIS

The worldwide number of officially confirmed fatalities from the novel coronavirus rose to 53 693 on Friday, according to a tally compiled by AFP.

US and Spanish deaths surge as world virus toll breaks 50 000

Madrid – The number of confirmed coronavirus deaths accelerated past 50 000 on Friday as the United States, Spain and Britain grappled with their highest tolls yet and the world economy took a massive hit.

The human scale of the pandemic has never been more stark – experts warning that more than one million cases of Covid-19 disease confirmed globally is probably only a small proportion of total infections as testing is still not widely available.

The United States accounts for around a quarter of confirmed cases but Europe is far from being out of danger – Spain reported more than 900 deaths in 24 hours on Friday, for the second day running.

While Italy still leads the world in fatalities, France, Belgium and Britain have also been hard hit. The UK government is rushing to build field hospitals after a one-day toll of 569.

-AFP

GERMANY

Germany's Merkel returns to office after quarantine stint

Berlin – German Chancellor Angela Merkel left her Berlin home for the first time in almost two weeks on Friday, after she was forced into quarantine following contact with a Covid-19-infected doctor.

Merkel has returned to her office, where she will continue to observe social distancing rules and lead the country via video and audio conferencing, her spokesperson Steffen Seibert said in Berlin.

The 65-year-old leader had been in self-isolation at her flat in the German capital's museum district. She learned on 22 March that a doctor who gave her a vaccination two days before was infected with the virus.

Merkel was tested several times, with all tests coming back negative. While in isolation, Merkel kept working and held government meetings via video link.

- AFP

GERMANY..cont

As of Thursday, Germany has recorded a high number of cases but a low mortality rate.

The low mortality rate in Germany is far below its neighbouring European countries.

This has been put down to Germany's decision to implement widespread testing of people suspected as having the coronavirus.

Germany seems to be taking the epidemic in its stride with a high number of cases but a low number of deaths.

-CNBC

IRAN

Iran coronavirus death toll rises by 134 to 3 294

Tehran – Iran on Friday announced 134 more deaths from the novel coronavirus, bringing the officially confirmed total to 3 294.

Health ministry spokesperson Kianoush Jahanpour told a news conference that 2 715 new infections had been confirmed in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 53 183.

Iran is one of the countries worst hit by the coronavirus pandemic and has been struggling to contain the outbreak since it reported its first deaths on 19 February.

Jahanpour said 17 935 of those hospitalised with the virus had recovered, while 4 035 were in a critical condition.

- AFP

UK

Brits are being urged to stay at home this weekend - with a government advisor saying disobeying social distancing rules "will lead to high levels of infections for weeks".

Professor Neil Ferguson this morning said lockdown measures may be relaxed in late May if people stick to them.

Authorities have warned Brits that they could be fined for going out and enjoying the sunshine as the country grapples with the Covid-19 crisis.

England's Chief Nursing Officer Ruth May made the plea on behalf of two nurses who died from Covid-19. The country is expecting a warm, sunny weekend with temperatures of 20C, with police chiefs fearing the "biggest challenge of the lockdown so far".

The UK's death rate is now steeper than Italy's, hitting 3,605 on Friday.

The Queen will give a televised address to the nation over the crisis on Sunday - and is expected to tell people that "we can all get through it together".

-AFP

ITALY



Four weeks into a nationwide lockdown, very few Italians are still singing from their balconies or banging pots and pans in solidarity. Instead, flags were lowered to half-staff this week for the nearly 15,000 coronavirus victims including doctors, nurses and health care professionals who have perished since February 23.

The lockdown, which was originally scheduled to end Friday, April 3, has now been extended to beyond Easter, and Italians from north to south are nearing a breaking point just as the draconian measures have begun to show signs of stopping the spread of Covid-19. Italy's wealthy northern provinces have taken the brunt of the coronavirus outbreak with more than 75% of overall cases and deaths north of Tuscany, in the center of the country, per the Italian Civil Protection agency.

More than 10,000 health care workers in the northern provinces have been infected with the virus, according to the Italian Doctor's Federation, as a lack of proper protective gear made contagion inside healthcare facilities a contributor to the rampant spread. Some of the best health structures in all of Europe are in northern Italy, but they were pushed to near collapse with the sheer number of Covid-19 patients in need of urgent care.

Had the initial infection cluster started in the poorer southern regions, which do not have the same strong infrastructure, no one disputes that the crisis would have been even worse.

But the southern regions are struggling, too. The so-called "mezzogiorno" is where organized crime syndicate hubs are based and where unemployment hovers around 20% for adults and up to 50% for those under 24 during the best of times, according to figures from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT).

Even with the outbreak in some southern communities affecting "only" a few thousand, the facilities are stretched and care for non-Covid patients has been severely compromised.

-CNN

Windows of hope: what lockdowns look like in other countries

By TIMES SELECT

Virtual evening drinks, chatting through windows, mass singalongs – this is how they're keeping their spirits up

From the elderly Italian woman who routinely lines up the glasses of water she sets herself to drink every day, to the British composer leading a virtual orchestra, life for Europeans under coronavirus lockdown is an uncharted mix of resilience and creativity.

Hundreds of millions of people have suddenly undergone the biggest change to daily life since World War 2 as governments order them to stay at home in a bid to beat the disease.

Amid disaster movie-like scenes of deserted streets, the main challenge for many is simply keeping up their spirits despite the boredom and isolation of being confined at home.

Whether it's having evening drinks on video phone, chatting to neighbours through open windows, or joining in mass singalongs and applause, staying connected with the outside world is key.

Rome

Carla Basagni, 86, a retired artist living in Rome's Trastevere neighbourhood, has made herself a routine to get through the days alone.

"Since I can't go out, I do gymnastic exercises in my house. I drink at least five times a day: I've got five glasses of water lined up in my kitchen so I don't forget!" she said.

But she added that she drinks "only a little wine, even if I love it!"

In Italy, which rolled out new restrictions at the weekend after becoming the new epicentre of the disease, people need a special personal declaration to leave the house confirming that it's for work, grocery shopping or a critical reason such as health.

Anyone caught breaching the lockdown risks three months in prison and a €206 (R380) fine.

Stuck in her house for nearly 24 hours a day, Basagni says she cooks "nice little meals, I read, and sometimes I lie down for a little sleep on my sofa or on my bed".



STUCK A Spiderman toy is seen on a ledge as Italians stay home as part of a lockdown against the spread of coronavirus.

Madrid

Paula Perez, a 19-year-old medical student who lives in a Madrid flat with her mother, said she was "very moved" the first time she heard the applause for health workers.

In their little 50m² flat, they follow the same ritual every evening: at 8pm, after the applause, neighbours speak to one another from of their windows.

"Our neighbour above works in a hospital and tells us what's happening," said Perez.

Spaniards are under strict lockdown and can only leave home to work if they can't do so at home, to buy medicines or food, or to briefly walk the dog.

Madrid's usually crowded streets are now practically empty. Instead, people play music from their balconies or have lottery parties with their neighbours, shouting out numbers from one window to the other.

Perez's mother, Maria Jimenez, 48, an agricultural engineer, works remotely from a table in the front room after all her work visits were cancelled.

She speaks every day to her elderly parents in a village in the southern region of Andalucia, while worrying about her siblings, some of whom work in health or for the police. She adds that sometimes she feels "guilty" for being "useless".

"I read the newspapers on the internet, we watch the TV news over dinner," adds Perez, "but I don't want to think about the epidemic all day: that makes me anxious."



PICTURE OF LONELINESS A street cartoonist waits for customers at the usually overcrowded Plaza Mayor in central Madrid.

London

Ben Morales Frost, a composer based in southeast London, is using his self-enforced quarantine to spearhead a global music initiative called “lockdown orchestra”.

He said that for most musicians “suddenly, the rug’s been pulled from underneath them”.
“So I thought it’d be quite nice to set up a virtual orchestra.”

Following an appeal to musicians shuttered in their homes around the world, Frost has recruited more than 500 – enough to staff seven full-size orchestras – on six continents to collaborate on a piece of music he recently wrote.

They will send him clips that he’ll then edit together with a remote team, before the virtual concert goes on YouTube on Friday.
“It’s gone nuts actually. I did not expect that at all.”

Paris

Baptiste Saude, a freelance documentary director in his 30s who lives in Paris, says the “most difficult thing is the absence of any social life”.

Normally he would play sport or see friends in the evening, but since the lockdown he’s been experimenting with a “Skype apero” – an evening drink via video call – with other locked-down friends.

France last week adopted similar rules to Italy and Spain except that going out for some “physical activity” is allowed. Violators face a fine of €135.

Saude says he, at least, has previous experience of being under lockdown while he was in the French military on a base in Mali.

He’s also helping elderly people in his neighbourhood by calling them for a chat, including 84-year-old Odile, whom he helps to record herself doing scales for a remote piano lesson.



DINNER FOR ONE A man raises his glass via video chat with friends in Paris .

These satellite photos show how COVID-19 lockdowns have impacted global emissions

Published by Iman Ghosh
Visual Capitalist

The Emissions Impact of Coronavirus Lockdowns

There's a high chance you're reading this while practicing social distancing, or while your corner of the world is under some type of advised or enforced lockdown.

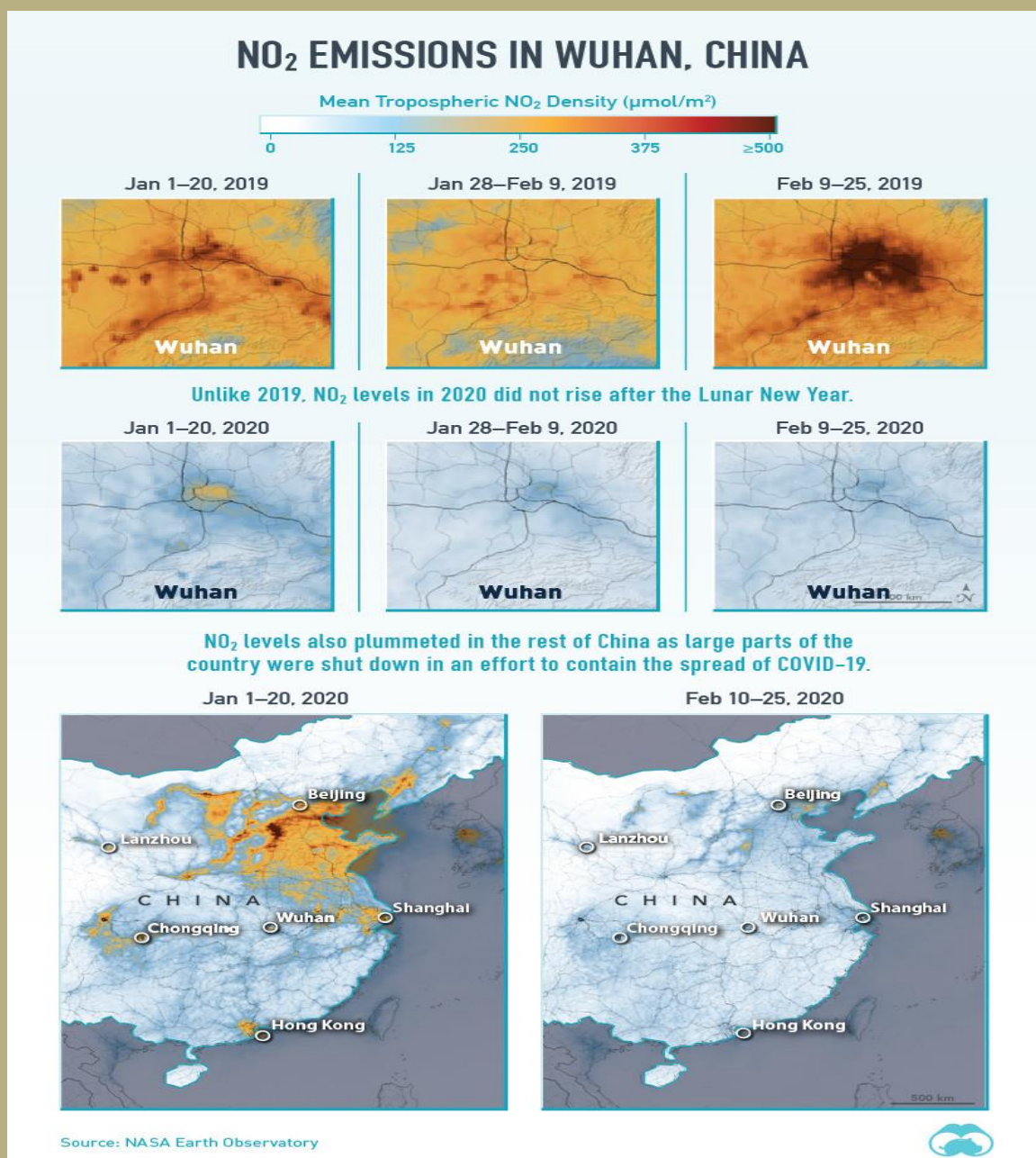
While these are necessary measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, such economic interruption is unprecedented in many ways—resulting in some surprising side effects.

The Evidence is in NO₂ Emissions

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions, a major air pollutant, are closely linked to factory output and vehicles operating on the road.

As both industry and transport come to a halt during this pandemic, NO₂ emissions can be a good indicator of global economic activity—and the changes are visible from space.

These images from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), as well as satellite footage from NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA), show a drastic decline in NO₂ emissions over recent months, particularly across Italy and China.

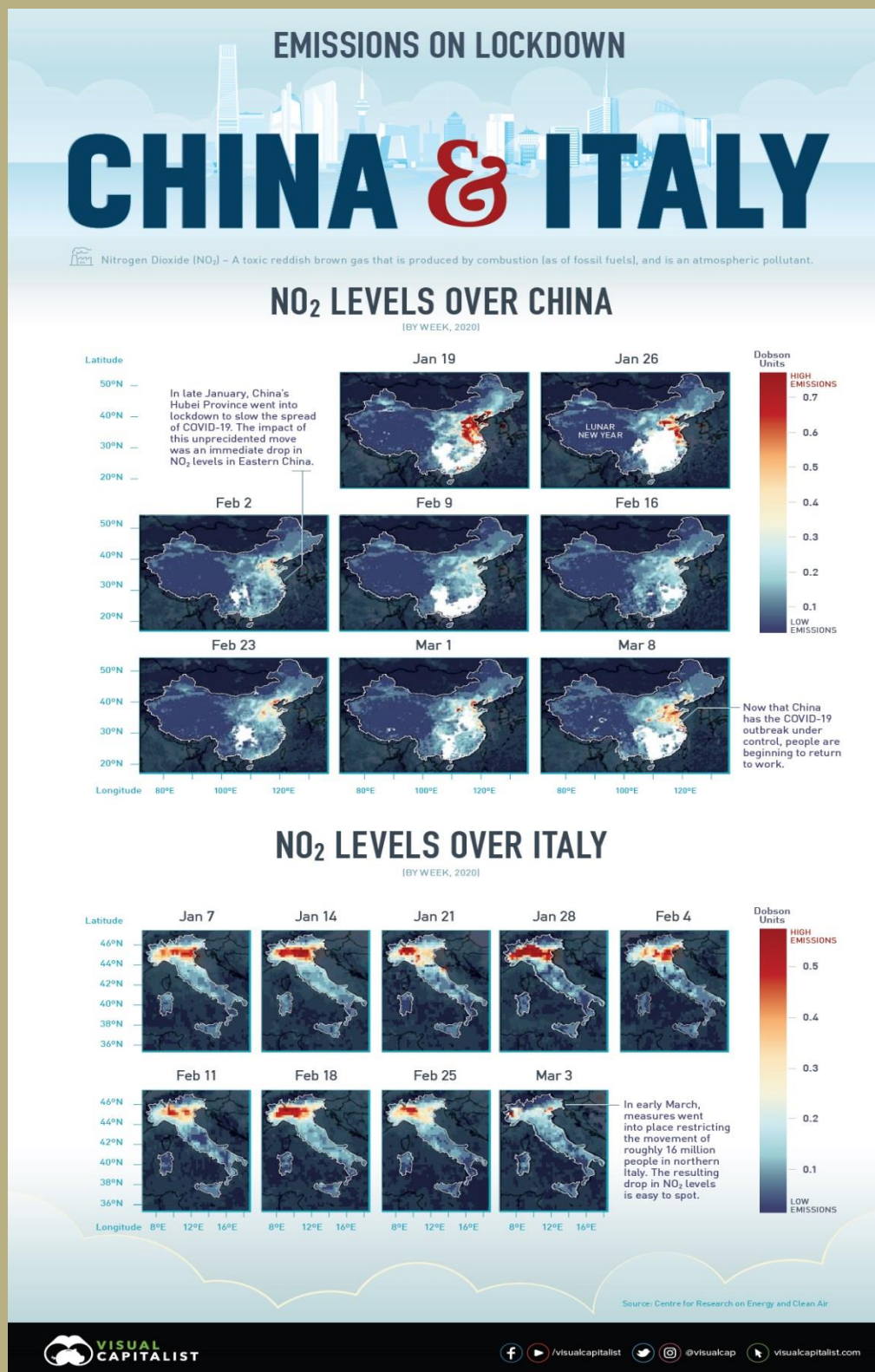


NO₂ Emissions Across Italy

In Italy, the number of active COVID-19 cases has surpassed China (including the death toll). Amid emergency actions to lock down the entire nation, everything from schools and shops, to restaurants and even some churches, are closed.

Italy is also an industrial hub, with the sector accounting for nearly 24% of GDP. With many Italians urged to work from home if possible, visible economic activity has dropped considerably.

This 10-day moving average animation (from January 1st—March 11th, 2020) of nitrogen dioxide emissions across Europe clearly demonstrates how the drop in Italy's economic activity has impacted the environment.



That's not all: a drop in boat traffic also means that Venice's canals are clear for the time being, as small fish have begun inhabiting the waterways again. Experts are cautious to note that this does not necessarily mean the water quality is better.

NO₂ Emissions Across China

The emissions changes above China are possibly even more obvious to the eye. China is the world's most important manufacturing hub and a significant contributor to greenhouse gases globally. But in the month following Lunar New Year (a week-long festival in early February), satellite imagery painted a different picture.

NO₂ emissions around the Hubei province, the original epicenter of the virus, steeply dropped as factories were forced to shutter their doors for the time being.

What's more, there were measurable effects in the decline of other emission types from the drop in coal use during the same time, compared to years prior.

In recent weeks, China has been able to 'flatten the curve' of its total COVID-19 cases. As a result, the government is beginning to ease its restrictions—and it's clear that social and economic activities are starting to pick back up in March.

With the regular chain of events beginning to resume, it remains to be seen whether NO₂ emissions will rebound right back to their pre-pandemic levels.

This bounce-back effect—which can sometimes reverse any overall drop in emissions—is [called] “revenge pollution”. And in China, it has precedent.

— Li Shuo, Senior climate policy advisor, Greenpeace East Asia

PLEASE

STAY HOME. SAVE LIVES.

Help stop coronavirus

***STAY** home as much as you can*

***KEEP** a safe distance*

***WASH** hands often*

***COVER** your cough*

***SICK?** Call ahead*



April Fools Article

from

DispatchLIVE

Avid East London mountaineer rescued from garden tree

A man was rescued from a tree in East London on Monday after his attempt to summit Mount Kenya was cancelled due to travel restrictions.

Gowan Klayman, 43, was close to his “summit” — an owl box he built 25m up a magnificent erythrina tree in his garden — when his spiked ice-climbing boot pierced a hornet’s nest and he was stung multiple times.

A firefighter, who is not authorised to speak to the media, said the aspirant mountaineer was fortunate that he had ice axes in both hands.

“I think they call it a ‘self arrest’ because when he fell he managed to hook one axe in a branch but the other axe got caught in his mountain pants and was stuck there,” the firefighter said. “Unfortunately, the wasps were very angry and some got in where they should not.”

The firefighter described the rescue operation as “very tricky”.

“His wife was shouting at him from below that she had told him to run around the garden, and his dog was barking and also we had a small problem with our extender ladder.”

A neighbour, who asked not to be named, said she saw two of the man’s climbing friends race to the house and quickly climb up “with ropes and things” to cut him free. However, a spokesperson said a municipal rescue team got to Klayman first.

“A man was treated for swelling in the torso and below area. He was first tested to see if he had the Covid-19 virus.

“It was of great help that he was wearing his high-altitude oxygen mask at the time, which assisted in sanitising the scene.”

The spokesperson warned citizens to desist from creating unorthodox ways of releasing stress, saying an angler in Cambridge managed to hook himself in the ear while casting from his lounge couch and an adventure biker was arrested after a “wheelie on his bar went wrong and he crashed into his neighbour’s illegal beer-brewing kit, which led to a brawl”.

A swimmer was treated for mild concussion when the stretchy surfboard leash she was using as resistance snapped and she hit her head against the pool edge. The pool was only 4m long. A special appeal was also made to skydiving, kiteboarding, cage-fighting and homing pigeon enthusiasts.

“Please, whatever you are thinking of doing during this lockdown period, just don’t!”

Look after yourselves, stay safe and take care.

Until next time...