

Deaths near 100K as some countries weigh reopening business

April 10 2020, by Matt Sedensky and Jim Mustian



Priest Frank Heidkamp talks to believers in their cars prior a Good Friday church service at a drive-in cinema when all German churches are closed for worships due to the coronavirus outbreak in Duesseldorf, Germany, Friday, April 10, 2020. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)

The worldwide death toll from the coronavirus closed in on 100,000 as Christians around the globe marked a Good Friday unlike any other—in front of computer screens instead of in church pews—and some countries tiptoed toward reopening segments of their battered economies.

Public health officials warned people against violating the social distancing rules over Easter and allowing the virus to surge again. Authorities resorted to using roadblocks and other means to discourage travel.

In Italy, officials used helicopters, drones and stepped-up police checks to make sure people don't slip out of their homes over the holiday. On Thursday alone, police stopped some 300,000 people around Italy to ensure they had permission to travel. About 10,000 were issued summonses.

Some churches held virtual services online, while others arranged prayers at drive-in theaters. Fire-scarred Notre Dame Cathedral came back to life briefly in locked-down Paris, days before the first anniversary of the April 15 inferno that ravaged it. Services were broadcast from the nearly empty, closed-to-the-public cathedral.

The death toll kept by Johns Hopkins University neared another sad milestone, though the true number of lives lost is believed be much higher because of limited testing, different rules for counting the dead and cover-ups by some governments. The number confirmed to be infected was more than 1.6 million.



Believers pray in a old Volkswagen bus during a Good Friday church service at a drive-in cinema when all German churches are closed for worships due to the coronavirus outbreak in Duesseldorf, Germany, Friday, April 10, 2020. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)

In the U.S., the number of deaths climbed past 16,700, with close to half in New York state. Still, there were signs of hope.

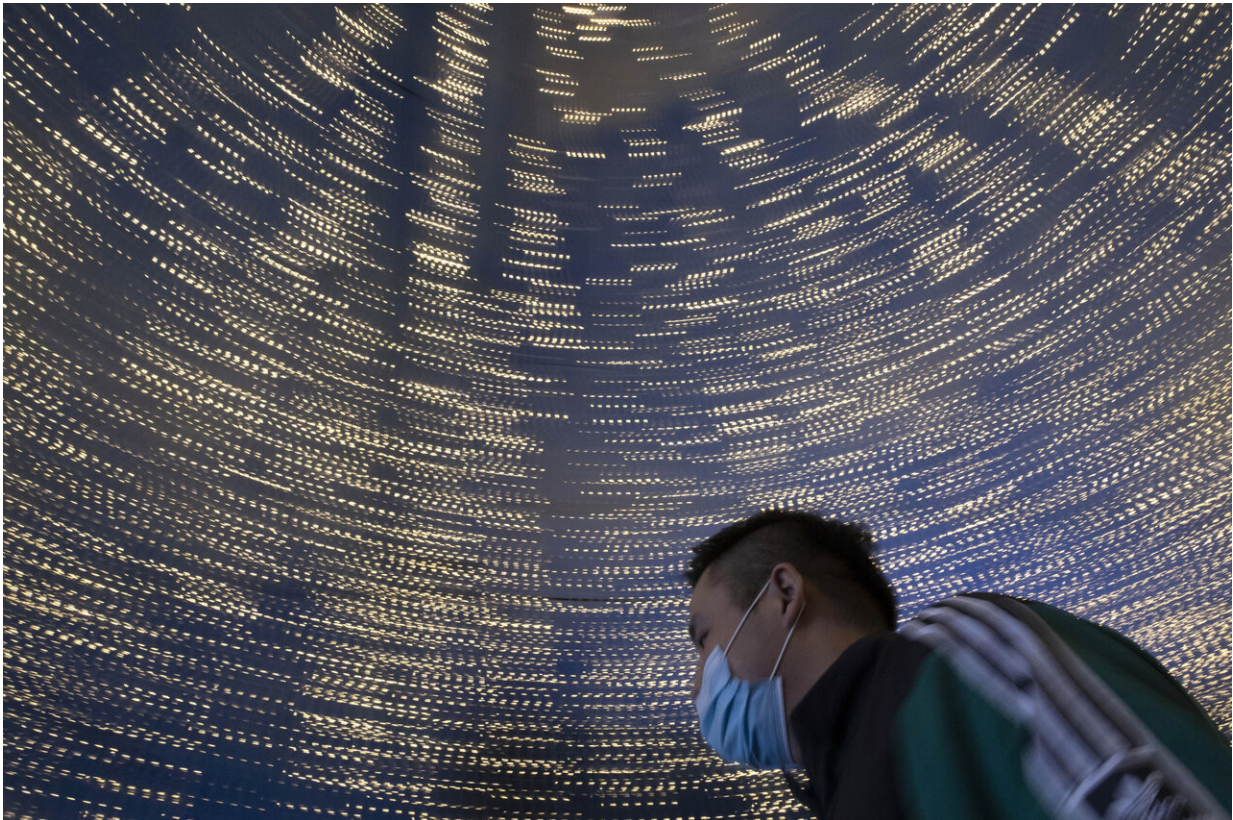
New York state reported 777 new deaths, down slightly from the day before, for an overall toll of over 7,800. And Gov. Andrew Cuomo said hospitalizations are slowing and the number of people in intensive care dropped.

"I understand intellectually why it's happening," he said of the staggering

number of deaths. ""It doesn't make it any easier to accept."

"There is a light at the end of the tunnel," said Dr. Jolion McGreevy, medical director of Mount Sinai Hospital's emergency department. "It's getting better, but it's not like it's going to just drop off overnight. I think it's going to continue to slowly decline over the next weeks and months."

With the pandemic slamming economies, the head of the International Monetary Fund warned that the global economy is headed for the worst recession since the Depression.



A man wearing a face mask against coronavirus walks past light decorations at a retail street in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province on Friday, April 10, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it

can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

In Europe, the 19 countries that use the euro currency overcame weeks of bitter divisions to agree on spending \$550 billion to cushion the recession caused by the virus. Mario Centeno, who heads the eurozone finance ministers' group, called the package "totally unprecedented. ... Tonight Europe has shown it can deliver when the will is there."

As weeks of lockdowns were extended in nation after nation, governments were pressed to ease restrictions on key businesses and industries.

After a two-week freeze on all nonessential economic activity, Spain decided to allow factories and construction sites to resume work on Monday, while schools, most shops and offices will remain closed. Spanish authorities said they trust that the move won't cause a significant surge in infections.

"We wouldn't be adopting them otherwise," said María José Sierra of Spain's health emergency center.



A priest walks during a Stations of the Cross, in an empty Santa Maria Cathedral during Good Friday after celebrations and services were cancelled due to the outbreak of coronavirus, in Pamplona, northern Spain, Friday, April 10, 2020. COVID-19 causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)

Yet some experts warned that relaxing the two-week "hibernation" of [economic activity](#) comes too early.

In Italy, the industrial lobbies in regions representing 45% of the country's economic output urged the government to ease its two-week lockdown on all nonessential manufacturing, saying the country "risks definitively shutting down its own motor, and every day that passes the

risk grows not to be able to restart it."

Malaysia's [prime minister](#) announced a two-week extension to the country's lockdown but said selected economic sectors can reopen in phases while following strict hygiene rules.

In the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, people desperate for food stampeded, pushing through a gate at a district office in the Kibera slum. Police fired tear gas, injuring several people.

In Japan, the world's third-largest economy, many have criticized Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as being too slow to act against the pandemic. In a rare rebuke, the Japanese prefecture of Aichi, home to the Toyota car company, declared its own state of emergency, saying it cannot wait for the government.

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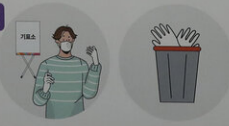
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A voter wearing face mask to help curb the spread of the new coronavirus waits in a line near a banner showing precautions against the new coronavirus during an early voting for the April 15 general elections at a local polling station in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, April 10, 2020. The early voting for the April 15 general elections start for two-days on April 10-11 at 3,508 polling stations across the country. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)



A Jewish man wears a face mask to curb the spread of the coronavirus as he reads from a Torah scroll at the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray in Jerusalem's old city, Friday, April 10, 2020. (AP Photo/Sebastian Scheiner)



A man uses a mirror to put on a face mask at a market closed due to the coronavirus outbreak in Jakarta, Indonesia, Friday, April 10, 2020. Mosques usually filled for Friday prayers and streets normally clogged with cars and motorcycles were empty as authorities in Indonesia's capital enforced stricter measures to halt the coronavirus' spread after deaths spiked in the past week. (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)



A man wearing protective mask walks in Paris Friday April 10, 2020, during a nationwide confinement to counter the COVID-19. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Francois Mori)



Central Reserve Police Force soldiers stitch face masks for health workers combating the spread of the new coronavirus in New Delhi, India, Friday, April 10, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)



People wearing face masks to help curb the spread of the new coronavirus laugh as they cross an intersection in Beijing, Friday, April 10, 2020. China on Friday reported 42 new coronavirus cases, 38 of them imported, along with one additional death in the hardest-hit city of Wuhan. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)



Begona Diaz, 58, looks at her husband, Jose Mari Perez, 59, a member of "Santa Vera Cruz" brotherhood known as "Los Picaos" wearing a mask for protection while ringing a bell outside of his house on Maundy Thursday after celebrations were cancelled due to the outbreak of coronavirus, in San Vicente de La Sonsierra, northern Spain, Thursday, April 9, 2020. COVID-19 causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)



Residents desperate for a planned distribution of food for those suffering under Kenya's coronavirus-related movement restrictions push through a gate and create a stampede, causing police to fire tear gas and leaving several injured, at a district office in the Kibera slum, or informal settlement, of Nairobi, Kenya, Friday, April 10, 2020. (AP Photo/Brian Inganga)



People observe social distancing in an attempt to stop the spread of coronavirus by standing behind tape lines as they queue up to shop outside a branch of the Tesco supermarket chain in west London, Friday, April 10, 2020. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)



A man with a protective mask to help curb the spread of the coronavirus crosses a pedestrian walkway on Friday, April 10, 2020, in Tokyo. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared a state of emergency last Tuesday for Tokyo and six other prefectures to ramp up defenses against the spread of the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)



Medical personnel choose amongst flowers donated by local florists in appreciation of the medical community, Friday, April 10, 2020, at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)



Georg Baetzing, Bishop of Limburg and chairman of the German Bishop Conference, walks alone through the portal of Limburg Cathedral prior to the Good Friday service in Limburg, Germany, Friday, April 10, 2020. Due to the Corona pandemic, the service will be broadcast exclusively by live stream, visitors are not allowed inside the church. (Boris Roessler/dpa via AP)

"The situation is critical," said Aichi Gov. Hideaki Omura. "We decided to do everything we can to protect Aichi residents' lives and health."

Japan has the world's oldest population, and COVID-19 can be especially serious for the elderly.

In some of the worst-hit countries, Italy and Spain, new infections,

hospitalizations and deaths have been leveling off. But the daily tolls remain shocking.

The 605 new deaths announced in Spain were the lowest in more than two weeks. The [coronavirus](#) has claimed more than 15,800 lives there, though the rates of contagion and deaths are dropping.

Britain recorded more than 900 new deaths, for close to 9,000 in all.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was moved out of [intensive care](#) on Thursday after spending three nights there being treated for the virus. The 55-year-old remained hospitalized in London. His father, Stanley Johnson, said the prime minister needs to "rest up" before returning to work.

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