

Friday Times International

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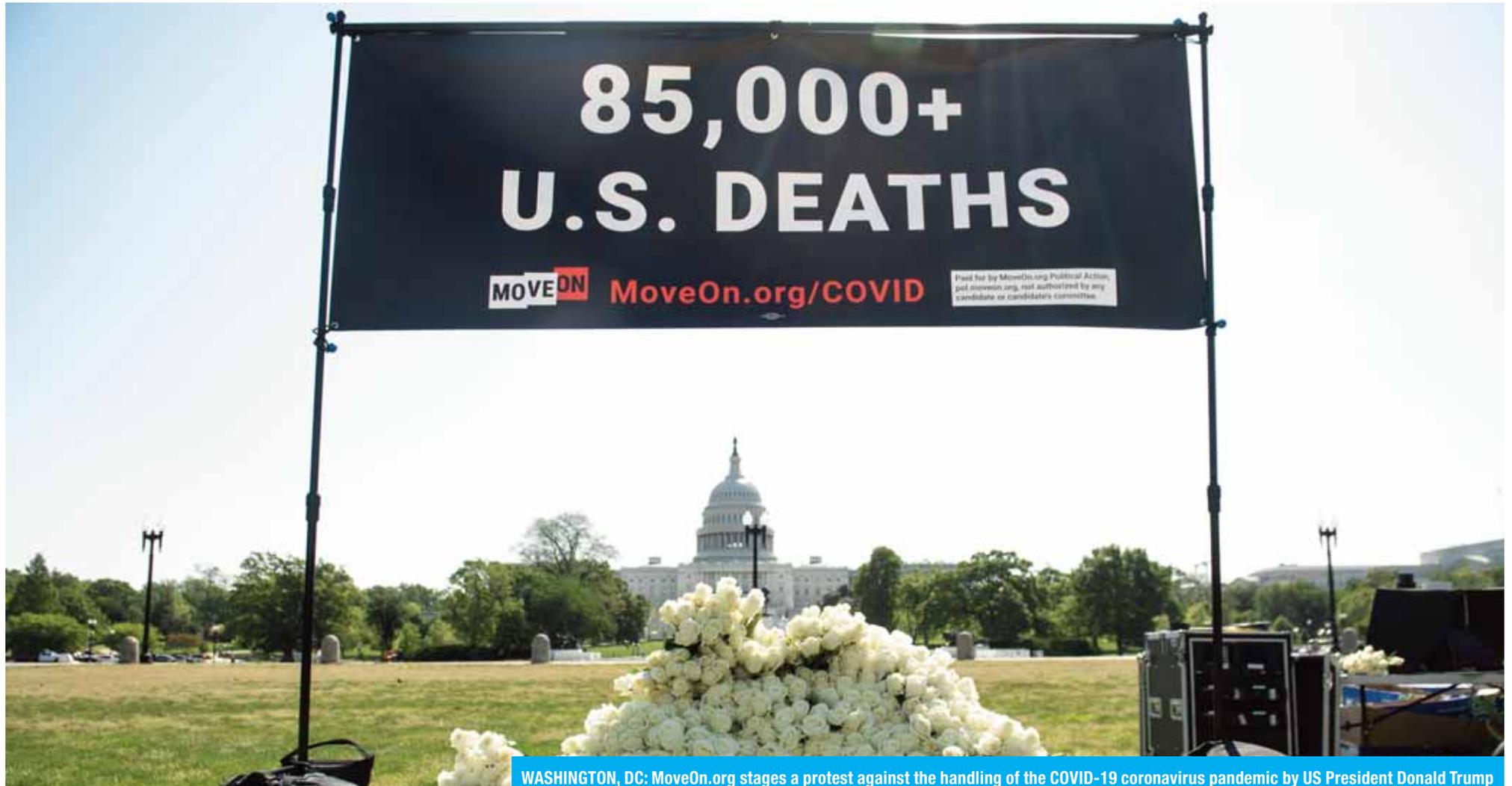


For worshippers, shrine visits go virtual in virus-hit Iraq

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Trump: Fauci remarks on reopening schools and economy unacceptable

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WASHINGTON, DC: MoveOn.org stages a protest against the handling of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic by US President Donald Trump with signs and white roses to remember the people who died from the disease, near the US Capitol in Washington, DC — AFP

Coronavirus may never go away: WHO

COVID-19 toll nears 300,000; US deaths hit 84,059

GENEVA: The coronavirus may never go away and populations will have to learn to live with it just as they have HIV, the World Health Organization has warned, as the global death toll from the disease nears 300,000. There were also gloomy forecasts from the US Federal Reserve, which said prolonged shutdowns to stem the spread of the virus could cause lasting economic damage in America.

Washington ratcheted up tensions over the pandemic by accusing China of trying to steal research into a vaccine, while US President Donald Trump upped the rhetoric with a colorful phrase that could anger Beijing. "We just made a great Trade Deal, the ink was barely dry, and the World was hit by the Plague from China. 100 Trade Deals wouldn't make up the difference—and all those innocent lives lost!" Trump tweeted.

The United States logged more than 1,800 deaths on Wednesday, bringing the nation's total to 84,059. The president has increasingly looked to pin the blame on China, where the virus first emerged late last year. Two US security agencies piled further pressure on Beijing Wednesday by saying Chinese hackers were attempting to steal intellectual property related to treatments. "China's efforts to target

these sectors pose a significant threat to our nation's response to COVID-19," the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) said.

Neither agency offered evidence to support the allegation.

'May never go away'

A vaccine could allow countries and economies to fully re-open from lockdowns and potentially earn millions of dollars for its creators. But the WHO said the virus may never be wiped out entirely.

"This virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities and this virus may never go away," said Michael Ryan, the global health body's emergencies director in Geneva. "HIV has not gone away—but we have come to terms with the virus."

The prospect of the disease hanging around leaves governments across the world facing a delicate balancing act between suppressing the pathogen and getting economies up and running. Trump has been pushing for a swift resumption of economic activity in the US, often against the advice of health officials, as he tries to jumpstart the world's largest economy before a November election. Top infectious

diseases expert Anthony Fauci has said re-opening too soon risks triggering uncontrollable outbreaks, but the president Wednesday dismissed that call for caution as "not acceptable".

In an excerpt of an interview with Fox Business to air in full yesterday, Trump said: "I totally disagree with him on schools." The tensions between health and the economy were thrown into sharp relief Wednesday when Federal Reserve chief Jay Powell warned of a potential "wave of bankruptcies" that could cause lasting harm.

Border controls

Re-opening of economies continued in earnest across Europe, with officials pushing ahead with plans to restore summer tourism even as fears persist of a second wave of infections. Desperate to save millions of jobs, the European Union set out proposals for a phased restart of travel, with border controls to be eventually lifted, along with measures to minimise transmission.

Some beaches re-opened in France on Wednesday—but only for swimming and fishing—and people in England were allowed to leave their homes more freely.—AFP