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JOHNSON TELLS CAFES, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS TO CLOSE

London.—Prime Minister Boris Johnson told cafes, pubs and restaurants across the country to close last night and to stay shut indefinitely to help slow the spread of the coronavirus outbreak.

“We are telling cafes, bars and restaurants to close tonight as soon as they reasonably can and not to open tomorrow,” Johnson told reporters in Downing Street. “Though to be clear, they can continue to provide takeout services. Some people may of course be tempted to go out tonight, and I say to those people, ‘please don’t,’” John-

son said. He said the government had to enforce the closure of cafes, pubs, restaurants as well as gyms and leisure centres to slow the spread of the virus. “We’re also telling nightclubs, theatres, cinemas, gyms and leisure centres to close on the same timescale,” Johnson said. “The sad thing is today, for now, at least physically, we need to keep people apart.” Another 39 people have died in England after testing positive for the coronavirus, bringing the total number of confirmed deaths in the country to 167. **SEE PAGES 18-19**

More police patrols to enforce “Stay at home” law

Spain to close all hotels, help nursing homes as coronavirus deaths climb

Madrid.—Spanish authorities promised to take special measures to prevent more deaths from coronavirus in nursing homes after cases of mass contagion there swelled the country’s death toll to 767 yesterday, 209 more than the previous day.

The government also promised that no one in a “difficult situation” would have home utility services cut for nonpayment.

With 17,149 total cases, up by a quarter from

Wednesday, Spain is the second worst-hit country in Europe after Italy, and the government has imposed a state of emergency that largely bars people from all but essential outings.

Authorities said 49 people had been arrested for flouting the bans in the past few hours.

“The toughest moments are still to come, those moments when we will continue to see an increase in the number of cases,” Health Minister Salvador

Illa said. Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias said that nursing homes had to be urgently equipped with proper medical facilities and staff, calling it “an absolute priority.”

Prosecutors in Madrid, the epicentre of the country’s epidemic, opened an investigation on Wednesday into more than 17 coronavirus-related deaths at a nursing home where patients had been locked down without access to hospital care.



The Civil Guard has increased patrols on suburban roads and highways across the Balearic Islands to prevent residents from travelling to second homes over the weekend. Officers will be deployed at roundabouts and access roads to towns to prevent people from breaking the State of Emergency which restricts movement to prevent the coronavirus. Travelling to and from resi-

dences other than the one occupied when the restrictions came into force is strictly prohibited and only one person is allowed in each vehicle, except in specific cases. Surveillance was stepped up yesterday and will continue today and tomorrow and residents are asked to respect the movement restrictions now in place. Breaking the rules will result in a fine of between 600 and 3,000 euros.

Other similar cases were reported elsewhere and the prosecutor general’s office said on Thursday it was also looking into the issue. The technical nurses union said that staff at nursing homes do not have enough gloves and masks.

The authorities did not say how many people had died in nursing homes in total.

Fernando Simon, the head of the health emergency centre, said Spain was “probably slowly ap-

proaching the peak of cases.” The epidemic continued to hammer the labour market with IAG’s Iberia airlines proposing temporarily laying off up to 90% of its flying staff for three months, and car-maker Nissan saying it would indefinitely send home up to 3,000 workers.

In downtown Madrid, the Ayre Gran Hotel Colon that had offered to host patients with mild symptoms from an overcrowded hospital nearby, opened its doors on Thurs-

day after fitting its rooms with medical equipment. Hotels in Madrid have offered 60,000 beds to the health service, authorities said.

Several thousand troops have been deployed in dozens of cities across Spain to help with decontamination efforts, triage and policing. Army units were deployed for the first time on Thursday in the independence-minded region of Catalonia, for disinfection tasks at Barcelona’s airport and port.