Who would have thought on the sunset of 2019 what 2020 was bringing on!
From the day COVID-19 originated it has sent shock waves across the globe irrespective of the religion, race, gender and power. From the outbreak in Wuhan, it has crossed all borders and has spread at varying speed across the globe. The preparations for it by all the countries have left a big question mark.

**TIMELINE**
A brief timeline of the events since the origin is as follows:[2, 3]

- **01 Dec 2019** Index patient of coronavirus in China became symptomatic.[4]
- **31 Dec 2019** China informed WHO of a pneumonia of unknown aetiology found in the city of Wuhan in the Hubei province.
- **01 Jan 2020** Wuhan seafood market, thought to be the source of outbreak, closed.
- **03 Jan 2020** China reported 44 patients with pneumonia of unknown aetiology.
- **05 Jan 2020** WHO published its first risk assessment and advice: “Continue surveillance of influenza and severe acute respiratory illness, no specific measures for travelers”.
- **07 Jan 2020** A new type of virus, called novel coronavirus is identified by Chinese researchers.
- **10 Jan 2020** WHO issued its first guidance on the novel coronavirus with reference to other coronaviruses such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).
- **11 Jan 2020** China reported its first death due to the novel coronavirus. Patient was 61 years old who passed away on 9th Jan 2020.
- **12 Jan 2020** China shares the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus.
- **13 Jan 2020** First case of novel coronavirus reported outside China in Thailand.
- **15 Jan 2020** China reports second death.
- **16 Jan 2020** Japan reports its first coronavirus case.
- **18 Jan 2020** China reports third death.
- **19 Jan 2020** First confirmed cases reported outside of Wuhan.
- **20 Jan 2020** First case in South Korea and United States (U.S.).
- **21 Jan 2020** Human to human transmission of virus confirmed.
- **22 Jan 2020** WHO makes field visit to Wuhan.
- **23 Jan 2020** Taiwan reported its first case of Coronavirus. Global cases reach 222.
- **24 Jan 2020** Hong Kong and Macau report their first cases.
- **25 Jan 2020** City of Wuhan goes into lock down.
- **26 Jan 2020** Singapore and Vietnam report their first Coronavirus cases.

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WHO issues guidance on mass gathering and taking care of ill travelers.

First case in **Nepal & France**. China announces the total confirmed cases at 1287 with 41 deaths.
First case in **Australia, Malaysia and Canada**. China reports confirmed cases to 1975 with 56 deaths. Liang Wudong, first doctor to die from Coronavirus (Hospital acquired infection).

Global deaths surpass 100. **Cambodia, Germany** and **Sri Lanka** report their first Coronavirus cases.

Number of cases in China increase to 5974 with 132 deaths. Confirmed cases globally over 6000.

First case in **United Arab Emirates** and **Finland**. Confirmed cases globally increase to 7816 with 170 deaths.

WHO declared Public Health Emergency of International Concern. 7834 confirmed cases with 7736 in China and 98 cases in 18 other countries. 170 people dead due to this outbreak, all of them in China. **India, Italy** and **Philippines** report their first Coronavirus cases.

First case in **United Kingdom (UK), Russia, Spain** and **Sweden**. U.S. bans foreign nationals from entering if they were in China within the prior two weeks.

First death outside China is recorded in **Philippines**.

Belgium reports its first Coronavirus case. Global cases **24000** with 492 deaths.

**Hong Kong** introduced prison sentences for anyone breaching quarantine rules.

Global deaths due to COVID-19 increase to 811 surpassing the death toll of the SARS epidemic in 2002 and 2003 which killed 773 people.

Global deaths count increase to 1000 surpassing that associated with MERS which claimed 858 lives.

WHO names the novel coronavirus as **COVID-19**. Death toll from the outbreak reaches over 1000.

**Japan** announces first death related to coronavirus.

First case in **France & Europe**.

First case reported in **Egypt**.

**Taiwan** announces first death.

WHO issues guidance on mass gathering and taking care of ill travelers.

**Iran** reports its first case and first deaths. The death toll from COVID-19 surpasses **2000**.

**South Korea** reports its first COVID-19 death.

**Italy** outbreak begins. **Israel** and **Lebanon** report their first COVID-19 cases. **WHO** warns that the window of opportunity is “narrowing”.

**Italy** closes **Venice Carnival** to limit spread of coronavirus.

First case in **Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and Oman**.

First case in **Algeria, Austria, Brazil, Croatia, and Switzerland**. Iran's deputy health minister confirms he has coronavirus.

First case in **Georgia, Greece, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan** and **Romania**. First time since the outbreak began, there are more reported cases outside China in a single day 459, than in China, 412.

3474 cases of COVID-19 outside China in **44 countries**. First case in **Denmark, Estonia, San Marino** and **Netherland**.
WHO raises the global risk of spread of COVID-19 from “high” to “very high”. First case in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Iceland, Lithuania, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand and Wales.

USA reports first American death on American soil. First case in Ecuador, Ireland, Luxembourg and Qatar.

First case in Armenia, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Saint Barthélemy and Saint Martin. Global deaths surpass 3000. South Korea with 3736 and Italy with 1128 cases have the most cases outside China. First case in Andorra, Indonesia, Jordan, Latvia, Morocco, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Tunisia.

First case in Argentina, Chile, Gibraltar, Liechtenstein and Ukraine.

Saudi Arabia suspended Umrah pilgrimage. First case in Faroe Islands, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

First case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Martinique, Palestine and South Africa.

WHO publishes draft R & D blueprint for COVID-19. First case in Bhutan, Cameroon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Serbia, Slovakia, Togo and Vatican City.

First case in Maldives, Malta, Moldova and Paraguay. Global cases surpass 100,000.

Saudi authorities lock down eastern Qatif. COVID-19 in over 100 countries reported. First case in Albania, Bangladesh and Bulgaria.

Italy places all 60 million residents on lock down. Global deaths surpass 4000. First case in Brunei, Cyprus, Guernsey and Panama.

Lebanon and Morocco report their first death. First case in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Jamaica, Jersey, Mongolia, Northern Cyprus and Turkey.

“WHO declares COVID-19 as a pandemic”. First case in Cuba, French Polynesia, Honduras, Ivory Coast and Réunion. U.S. bans all travel from 26 European countries.

First case in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

WHO declares Europe as the epicentre of the pandemic. Global deaths surpass 5000. A U.S. national emergency is declared over the outbreak. First case in Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Sudan, Suriname, US Virgin Islands, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Nationwide lock down started in Spain. First case in Central African Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Mauritania, Mayotte, Namibia, Rwanda and Seychelles.

First case in Akrotiri and Dhekelia, Bahamas, Guam and Uzbekistan.

First case in Benin, Greenland, Liberia, Somalia and Tanzania. For the first time since the outbreak, infections and deaths outside China surpass those within China.

First case in Barbados, Gambia, Montenegro, and Sint Maarten.
Chile and Guatemala shut down their borders. First case in Bermuda, Djibouti, El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritius, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Nicaragua and Zambia.

Global cases surpass 200,000 with over 10'000 deaths. It took nine weeks to reach 100,000 cases and just 12 days to reach 200,000. For the first time since the outbreak began, Wuhan reported no new cases. First case reported in Angola, Chad, Fiji, Haiti, Isle of Man and Niger.

First case in Cape Verde, East Timor, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

First case in Áland Islands, Eritrea and Transnistria.

Germany under partial lock down.

Global cases surpass 300,000. It took nine weeks to reach 100,000 cases, 12 days to reach 200,000 and 3 days to reach 300,000.

First case in Dominica, Grenada, Mozambique and Syria.

Britain under lock down.

Global deaths surpass 15,000. First Case in Belize, Myanmar and Turks and Caicos Islands.

First Pakistani Doctor (Dr Usama Riaz) embraces martyrdom.

Global cases surpass 400,000. It took nine weeks to reach 100,000 cases, 12 days to reach 200,000, 3 days to reach 300,000 and 2 days to reach 400,000.

First case in Laos and Libya.

New Zealand under lock down.

Global deaths surpass 20,000. First case in British Virgin Islands, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Global cases surpass 500,000. Total confirmed cases in the U.S. reach 82,404 – the highest in the world – surpassing China’s 81,782 and Italy’s 80,589.

First case in Anguilla.

Dr Usama Riaz (Pakistan) awarded Nishan i Kashmir post humously. Global deaths surpass 25,000.

Global cases surpass 600,000. It took 9 weeks to reach 100,000 and it increased 6 times in 3 weeks. Spain (832) and Italy (889) hit new record for the number of deaths in one day.

Global cases surpass 700,000. Global deaths surpass 30,000.

First case in Northern Mariana Islands.

Global deaths surpass 35,000. First case in Botswana.

More than 1/3 of humanity under some form of lock down.

Global cases surpass 800,000. Global deaths surpass 40,000.

First case in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Sint Eustatius and Somaliland.

Global cases surpass 900,000. Global deaths surpass 45,000.

Global cases surpass 1 million. Global deaths surpass 50,000. Malawi report first case.
As we look back on the spread of this pandemic, countries that were proactive in taking strict social distancing like Singapore and South Korea, managed to control the pandemic appropriately while the countries which delayed in acting like US and Italy their figures of mortality are disastrous. While most of the countries now are in some sort of lockdown, these strict measures may well in be place over the coming several months or perhaps even a year. These social distancing measures have made people retreat in their homes, business to shut down, global economic crisis and exacerbation of the health of the vulnerable group of people. So, what's next?

Health authorities around the globe are talking about “flattening the curve” meaning to reduce the rate at which new infection arise in order to avoid the overburden on the healthcare system and preventing it to collapse. That's the reason lock down and social distancing have been implemented.

IMMUNITY TO COVID-19

Lots of talk going around so called “herd immunity” which means that when enough of the global population becomes acquire the immune response to virus, further progression can be dampened. There are two possible pathways, neither of them is proven for COVID-19. First is the individual gets infected and acquires the immune response and second is by getting vaccinated without getting sick. A number of trials and attempts at vaccine
development are ongoing around the world.[3, 4]

MASS TESTING
Given the economic burden of the disease all countries do not have the resources to do mass testing. The theory behind it is that without knowing the actual burden of the disease (those that get infected whether symptomatic or asymptomatic) scientist cannot draw conclusions and identify population at risk.

CONCLUSION
COVID-19 pandemic is not a sprint rather it is a marathon with destination not visible at this particular moment and time. Collective efforts and resilience of millions of people is the need for the hour. Lockdowns and strict social distancing cannot be sustained forever but timing is the key to it, as letting up too soon may worsen the situation further.

REFERENCES

HOW TO CITE

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declared no conflict of interest

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MANUSCRIPT PROCESSING
Submission: PJSM-2020-173-O-09-Apr-2020
Processing:
PJSM-2020-173-C-17-Apr-2020
PJSM-2020-173-P-25-Apr-2020
PJSM-2020-173-P-26-Apr-2020
PJSM-2020-173-C-26-Apr-2020
PJSM-2020-173-E-27-Apr-2020
PJSM-2020-173-DAA-10-May-2020