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First death in UK from coronavirus as toll rises

Elderly victim had no contact with known case

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor
Kat Lay Health Correspondent

A British woman has become the first to die from the new coronavirus in this country after having the disease diagnosed during routine testing of pneumonia sufferers, it is understood.

The frail patient, who had underlying health conditions and is believed to have been 75, died at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading, it was announced yesterday. She is thought to have had the virus diagnosed after the NHS started testing intensive care patients with respiratory problems.

The woman had not travelled abroad or been in contact with a known case, as evidence mounts that the virus is being passed on undetected in the UK.

Boris Johnson said that his "sympathies are very much with the victim and their family" as Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer, said that the country was entering the next phase of the outbreak. Officers have drawn up a "menu of options" to delay the spread of the virus after the number of cases doubled in two days to 116.

Advising people with flu-like symptoms to stay at home even if they have not travelled recently is likely to be among early measures, with the cancellation of sporting events and other public gatherings held in reserve in plans due to be published next week.

"You've got a range of things that you can do to arrest or check the spread of a disease," Mr Johnson said. "But you can't fire your shots too early." Professor Whitty warned that the NHS could run out of intensive care beds during the peak of an outbreak, when

medical students could be asked to help on hospital wards. NHS 111 reported taking 100,000 more calls last week than over the same period last year. More than half of the 98 coronavirus patients who are yet to recover are being treated at home through a daily phone call from the NHS.

The developments came as:

- Britons returning from anywhere in Italy were told by the NHS to self-isolate if they had symptoms.
- Supermarkets were inundated with demand for everyday staples as panic buying began to set in.
- HSBC had about 100 staff evacuate its office in Canary Wharf after a staff member tested positive.
- The Premier League banned traditional handshakes between footballers before kick-off until further notice.
- Police drew up worst-case scenario plans to have more armed officers available to counter the threat of looting and disorder.
- Italy was warned that the virus could wipe £10 billion from its tourist industry.

Of the 116 people who have tested positive, up from 51 two days ago, 105 are in England, two in Wales, six in Scotland and three in Northern Ireland. The Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool said yesterday that a child there had had the coronavirus diagnosed.

Professor Whitty said that the vast majority of patients had only a bad cold and told older people that contracting it did not mean they were "a goner". He said that "planning is now going in full tilt for the delay phase", as he revealed. **Continued on page 9, col 4**



Last lap The Duchess of Sussex was back in Britain last night for her first public appearance with Prince Harry since the couple announced they would give up their royal duties. They attended an event for military veterans in London. **Page 7**

Dubai ruler kidnapped his own daughters

David Brown

The billionaire ruler of Dubai kidnapped two of his daughters and left the youngest of his six wives in fear of her life after discovering her affair with a bodyguard, a senior judge has found.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, a friend of the Queen, may have broken UK and international criminal law, according to the ruling, which could cause significant diplomatic difficulties with Britain's allies in the Middle East.

Extraordinary claims about some of the region's most powerful families were revealed after the Supreme Court lifted a secrecy order over details of the custody battle for the two children and allowed the ruling to be published.

Sheikh Mohammed, 70, has 25 children and is the prime minister and vice-president of the United Arab Emirates. He was accused in court of having used "the state and its apparatus to threaten, intimidate, mistreat and oppress with a total disregard for the rule of law".

Tony Blair's government was accused of interfering in the police investigation into the kidnapping in Britain of one of the sheikh's daughters, who has since been held in captivity by her father for 20 years.

The court battle began after the ruler's former wife, Princess Haya bint al-Hussein, fled to her £75 million mansion in west London with his two youngest children last year.

The Times revealed that the sheikh had become concerned at her closeness to her bodyguard, a married former British Army officer who was later named as Russell Flowers, 36.

Sheikh Mohammed started action in the family division of the High Court to secure the return of his daughter, Jalila, now 12, and son Zayed, seven, to Dubai. Princess Haya, 45, a half-sister of King Abdullah of Jordan, opposed their return and said she feared that the sheikh was negotiating to marry Jalila to Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. She said she was worried that Sheikh Mohammed would order the kidnapping of their children as he had two of their older half-sisters who tried to escape his control.

Princess Latifa, 34, was initially **Continued on page 2, col 3**

IN THE NEWS

Tory Huawei rebels

Boris Johnson faces his first Commons rebellion next week as Tory MPs demand that he ban the Chinese company Huawei from Britain's 5G network in two years. **Page 2**

Nuts 'cut cancer risk'

Replacing one serving of red meat a day with nuts, beans or whole grains could sharply lower the risk of heart disease and cancer, according to a study. **Page 6**

Trade deal warning

Britain and the European Union face "very grave and serious" disagreements that could scupper a Brexit trade deal, according to the EU's chief negotiator. **Page 16**

Airports under threat

Regional airports are facing a bleak future after the collapse of Flybe threatened to undermine a government pledge to "level up" the economy. **Page 19**

Putin ceasefire deal

President Putin and President Erdogan agreed a ceasefire deal that brought respite to the Idlib province in Syria and eased tensions between Turkey and Russia. **Page 30**

Dier investigation

The Metropolitan Police want to interview the Tottenham player Eric Dier as part of an investigation into his altercation with a fan after an FA Cup match. **Page 72**

News Royal in exile

Polished princess whose affair engulfed her in storm of abuse

News

David Brown

Princess Haya once personified the image of Dubai as an oasis of tolerance in a desert ruled by tribal conservatism.

The marriage of the Jordanian princess to Dubai's powerful ruler cemented connections between the royal families and led to her international role with the United Nations.

After 15 years travelling the world selling the idealised image of the city state on the shores of the Gulf she has been forced into exile in London after betraying the strict rules beneath the veneer of western values.

Princess Haya, 45, the half-sister of King Abdullah of Jordan, was educated at Bryanston School in Dorset and St Hilda's College, Oxford where she read philosophy, politics and economics. She represented Jordan in showjumping at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

She became the sixth and youngest wife of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, who is 25 years her senior, in 2004.

They had a daughter, Jalila, now 12, and a son, Zayed, seven. Even though they had not "enjoyed an intimate relationship with each other for a significant period of time" they remained on good terms, the family division of the High Court in London was told.

Sheikh Mohammed had apparently known for some time that the princess was having an affair with one of her bodyguards, but the first sign of his displeasure was a poem he wrote in December 2018.

Entitled *The morality of a knight*, it warned: "If my friend transgresses, I forgive once but if he repeats the offence, I ensure my regret ... I was repelled by your great wrongdoing."

From then on the princess experienced a "progressively more hostile climate".

Trusted palace staff were replaced by those whom she had previously found troubling, the court was told. She was publicly humiliated when she was told that she had lost her desk at the Ruler's Court.

Princess Haya said that she was terrified when her husband telephoned her and said: "I have heard that you are sitting in the palace with the British security [a reference to the bodyguard]. I am starting to doubt you."

The following month she endured "one of the longest and most frightening days I ever remember living" when one of the sheikh's helicopters arrived at her palace. The pilot said that he had orders to take her to al-Awir, a prison in the desert.

A series of anonymous notes was left in her bedroom. One said: "We will take your son — your daughter is ours — your life is over," she said. She twice found a gun left on her bed with the muzzle pointing towards the door and the safety catch off. The princess who had done so much to promote Dubai finally sought sanctuary with her children in London in April last year. She claims that her husband called to warn: "You and the children will never be safe in England."

The day after she arrived she received a message from Saeed bin Suroor, the lead trainer at her husband's Godolphin racing stables in Newmarket, Suffolk. It contained a viral video of a man smashing a television after it kept changing channels while he was watching a football match. The man did not realise that his wife was using a second remote control.

A message accompanying the video read: "If he found out about it he would

have slaughtered his wife in anger." Haya understood the message to refer to how the sheikh's advisers saw her affair.

In May she discovered that the sheikh had ended their marriage without her knowledge. In an added insult he had backdated the divorce three months to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the death of her father, King Hussein.

The sheikh continued to publish traditional poems which the princess believes are messages to his followers denouncing her.

In one called *You Lived and You Died* he meditated on the response to betrayal. It includes the lines: "You betrayer, you betrayed the most precious trust, and your game has been revealed; Your days of lying are over and it doesn't matter what we were and what you are."

He appeared in a video posted on Instagram performing a traditional dance of victory over his enemies.

The sheikh also hired a powerful team of British lawyers to take legal action to secure his children's return to Dubai. His former wife responded by seeking a forced marriage protection order over Jalila and a non-molestation order. Princess Haya finally emerged in public for the first time in months for a private hearing at the High Court in July last year.

On the second day of the hearing the sheikh published a poem. "His glorious words have sharpened edges, they can cut when sheathed, let alone when they're unsheathed," he wrote. "He has countless soldiers to repel enemies. Those protected by heroes cannot be defeated."

According to the princess this was further evidence of



Princess Haya, who is friends with the Queen, says that her husband, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, used



menacing poetry to threaten her. The sheikh's daughter, Princess Shamsa, is said to have been kept captive for 20 years



A shared love of horses and tea with the Queen

David Brown

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum and his former wife, Princess Haya, were described by a senior judge yesterday as being on "respectful and friendly terms with the British royal family".

A shared love of horses allowed the ruler of Dubai to develop a friendship with the Queen that transcends the normal royal protocol. Sheikh Mohammed and Princess Haya, an Olympic showjumper educated in Britain, have regularly been invited to join her at Royal Ascot.

The sheikh has invested a fortune turning Godolphin in Newmarket, Suffolk, into one of the top racing stables. He has presented the Queen with four racehorses, including Carlton House, one of her most successful.

The royal family have longstanding links with Princess Haya's Anglophile

father, King Hussein of Jordan. The Prince of Wales attended his funeral in Jordan in 1999.

The Queen has not severed links with the sheikh or princess despite the controversy surrounding the breakdown of their marriage, which led to the custody battle in the family division of the High Court.

Princess Haya, who also owns racehorses, was said to have met the Queen privately for tea at Windsor Castle during the Royal Windsor Horse Show in May last year.

The next month Sheikh Mohammed attended Royal Ascot and was photographed with the Queen and the Duke of Cambridge. The Queen presented him with a trophy after one of his horses won a race.

The Duke of York visited Dubai in October last year, seven months after the Earl of Wessex attended a series of events in the Gulf state.

Profile

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, ruler of Dubai, prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, and close friend of the British royal family, is nothing if not conscious of his status (Richard Spencer writes).

He is Dubai's emblem: modern, adventurous, closely tied to the West, with a love for the high-tech and forbling. He also has deep roots in the patriarchal, tough-minded, often charming but sometimes violent practices of the desert society from which Dubai has sprung.

Those two sides of his character met in his personal life, with his two main wives, Princess Haya of Jordan and Sheikhha Hind bint Maktoum al-Maktoum. Sheikhha Hind is his first, senior, and so-called dynastic wife, a cousin who has borne him 12 children. Their son Sheikh Hamdan is heir.

In keeping with the Gulf's

conservative conventions, her photograph has never been published. She lives mostly in their estate at Longcross, Surrey.

Princess Haya, young, western-oriented, and a case study in how to be a modern royal, appeared regularly at Sheikh Mohammed's side at Ascot and other racing events. She owns her own horses.

The two formal wives were not the only women in his life. He also maintained at various times four other women, whose exact marriage status has never been made clear. All six women kept separate households, dotted around Dubai, with their own children, between 20 and 30 in total. The daughters of one woman, an Algerian believed to be named Houria Ahmed Lamara, have caused him particular grief.

It was Sheikhha Shamsa who first ran away, in 1999. Her younger sister Latifa, who spent years trying to rescue Shamsa from

semi-imprisonment, escaped two years ago, before being returned in the incident that led to Princess Haya's own flight.

Sheikh Mohammed was furious about the women's disobedience, despite the love poems he subsequently wrote to Princess Haya.

There have been glimpses of his temper before, not least in a rare meeting with foreign journalists in 2009 when he was deeply uncomfortable at being challenged over his handling of the financial crisis in the emirate.

By then, he had also moved decisively against his eldest son, Sheikh Rashid, the previous crown prince. Sheikh Rashid is thought to have suffered a drug problem, and to have pulled a gun on, and even shot, a member of staff. He was not only disinherited, but his father also had his villa demolished. He died, apparently broken, in 2015.

Clash of the legal giants

David Brown

The child custody battle between members of two Middle Eastern royal families featured some of Britain's most respected — and expensive — lawyers. The total legal bills are estimated to have already passed £5 million.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum used Lord Pannick, QC, to head his legal team. The barrister fought the Supreme Court case preventing the prorogation of parliament last year.

The sheikh's solicitors included Lady Helen Ward, the "Grande Dame of Divorce", who represented Guy Ritchie in his divorce from Madonna. Princess Haya was advised by Baroness Shackleton of Belgravia, who handled Prince Charles's split from Diana, Princess of Wales, and had a jug of water emptied over her by Lady Mills while she was representing Sir Paul McCartney in their divorce.

Police were told to drop kidnap inquiry

David Brown

A police investigation into the kidnaping of a teenage Arab princess after she escaped from her father's British mansion was halted following interest by Tony Blair's government.

Princess Shamsa was 19 when she was snatched from a street in Cambridge in August 2000 and has been kept captive since by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, a court was told.

The princess had an apparently gilded childhood at the heart of the Dubai royal family. Aged 14 she had beaten Princess Anne in a long-distance horse race across the Arabian desert.

Five years later she fled her father's Longcross estate near Cobham in Surrey, where the family spent their holidays. She moved into a hostel in south London and later stayed with friends in Cambridge. Then she disappeared.

The princess's own account of her abduction was revealed yesterday with the publication of a fact-finding judgment relating to the custody battle of two of her half-siblings.

In an email in February 2001 to a London immigration lawyer she explained: "My father ... sent four Arab men to catch me, they were carrying guns and threatening me, they drove me to my father's place in Newmarket. There they gave me two injections and a handful of tablets, the very next morning a helicopter came and flew me to the plane, which took me back to Dubai. I am locked up until today."

The lawyer called the police and Detective Chief Inspector David Beck, of Cambridgeshire police, opened an investigation.

Mohammed al-Shaibani, the present director-general of the Ruler's Court in Dubai, told him that on the day the princess disappeared he had travelled with three men from London to the sheikh's Dalham Hall estate in Newmarket. One of the men who accompanied him was the head of Dubai's Royal Air Wing, which provides aircraft for

the royal family. Mr Shaibani said that he then took a helicopter to Deauville in France with a woman he later identified as Princess Shamsa.

The helicopter pilot agency, security staff at the sheikh's estate and UK Customs all confirmed the arrival and departure of the flight.

Robin Cook, then the Labour foreign secretary, asked to be kept informed of progress in the police investigation, the court was told.

When the detective chief inspector asked to visit Dubai the Crown Prosecution Service refused.

Charles Geekie, QC, representing Princess Haya, told the court there was evidence of interference in the police inquiry. "The Foreign & Commonwealth Office was fully engaged with interest from the foreign secretary [before] permission to pursue the investigation was refused," he said.

The Foreign Office refused to release details about the kidnaping because it would "increase public knowledge about our relations with UAE".

The only evidence about Shamsa's present state is a home video made in 2018 by her sister, Latifa. Both princesses are daughters of the Houria Ahmed Lamara, one of the sheikh's six wives. Princess Latifa said Shamsa was "confined to one room and constantly supervised" while being given medications which Latifa believes are designed "to control her mind".

The sheikh told the family division of the High Court in a statement that he had organised a search for Princess Shamsa as she was more "vulnerable than other young women of her age because her status made her a kidnap risk", and that he felt "overwhelming relief when he learnt she was safe."

He said that he had asked Latifa and Shamsa in August if they wanted to talk to British lawyers but they declined.

A Cambridgeshire police spokeswoman said that the investigation had been dropped because the evidence available "was insufficient to take any further action".

Former UN chief visited daughter for 'proof of life'

David Brown

Princess Haya has described how she arranged for a former UN commissioner on human rights to visit her stepdaughter, who claimed she was being held captive in Dubai.

An international campaign to secure Princess Latifa's freedom began after a video account of her abduction and imprisonment by her father, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, was published on YouTube.

With the help of a former French spy, Hervé Jaubert, she had left Dubai on a yacht in February 2018. A month later Indian special forces boarded and the princess was returned to Dubai.

Princess Haya told the family division of the High Court in London that she initially believed Latifa had been returned after a mental breakdown. She invited her friend Mary Robinson, a former UN high commissioner for



Princess Latifa has not been seen for more than a year

human rights and president of Ireland, to Dubai. She said: "The remit was very clear before Mary Robinson came. That she would meet Latifa and provide proof of life and she would come back and monitor the situation. Then she [Latifa] would be allowed to live wherever she wanted through a trust fund."

Princess Latifa, 34, has not been seen since posing for photographs with Ms Robinson and Princess Haya in December 2018.

The sheikh told the court that there was "reason to believe that Latifa had been manipulated" and "Latifa's return to Dubai was a rescue mission".