

# Italy tries a return to some normalcy after virus closures

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A cleaner sanitizes a wagon on a regional train, at the Garibaldi train station in Milan, Italy, Friday, Feb. 28, 2020. Authorities are taking new measures to sanitize trains and public transportation after the COVID-19 virus outbreak. (AP Photo/Luca Bruno)

Authorities in Italy have decided to re-open schools and museums in

some of the areas less hard-hit by the coronavirus outbreak in which the country has the most cases outside of Asia, as Italians yearn to go back to normal.

In the more heavily affected regions—Lombardy and Veneto in the north—authorities on Friday were leaning toward opening schools there, too.

At least 650 people have tested positive in Italy, almost entirely in the country's productive north.

"The aim is to return to normalcy," Veneto Gov. Luca Zaia told state TV in an interview.

Zaia noted that 79 of the 133 people in Veneto with COVID-19 "have no symptoms and are in perfect health."

While Italy is easing its restrictions, other parts of the world are still closing down activities and venues.

Italy's neighbor, Switzerland, on Friday banned all events involving more than 1,000 people until March 15, putting paid to the Geneva International Motor Show that attracts tens of thousands of visitors every year.

In Japan, Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea will be closed from Saturday to March 15, operator Oriental Land Co., said.

In South Korea, which has the next highest number of cases in the world after China, the popular K-Pop group BTS canceled a concert planned for April in Seoul.



Cleaners with sanitizing equipment wait for people to get off a train before cleaning it, at the Garibaldi train station in Milan, Italy, Friday, Feb. 28, 2020. Authorities are taking new measures to sanitize trains and public transportation after the COVID-19 virus outbreak. (AP Photo/Luca Bruno)

After France saw a sudden jump of 20 new virus cases around the country, authorities were testing a raft of people, limiting some public activities and trying to determine the source of the new cases.

Most are concentrated in the Oise region north of Paris, where a teacher with the virus died this week and where the source of the outbreak is unknown.

So far since Thursday night, new cases with links to Italy have been



reported in Nigeria—the first known case in sub-Saharan Africa—United Arab Emirates, Greece, France, Lithuania and the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, on Thursday, a tribunal in Italy's east central region of Marche suspended a regional ordinance that had shut down schools and museums. With only about a half-dozen cases in Marche, students were expected to return to class there next week. In the western region of Liguria, which has reported about 20 cases, local administrators decided that students could resume school, also next week.



A cleaner sanitizes a wagon on a regional train, at the Garibaldi train station in Milan, Italy, Friday, Feb. 28, 2020. Authorities are taking new measures to sanitize trains and public transportation after the COVID-19 virus outbreak. (AP Photo/Luca Bruno)



A cleaner sanitizes the cockpit of a regional train, at the Garibaldi train station in Milan, Italy, Friday, Feb. 28, 2020. Authorities are taking new measures to sanitize trains and public transportation after the COVID-19 virus outbreak. (AP Photo/Luca Bruno)



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The majority of Italy's cases, which overall total at least 650, have been reported in Lombardy, a populous region that includes Italy's financial hub, Milan.

That city's iconic Gothic cathedral, known as the Duomo and one of Milan's top tourist attractions, is supposed to be fully open again to visitors in a few days. That could give a psychological boost to Milanese, whose usually bustling metropolis has resembled more of a [ghost town](#) lately, as workers stayed home and tourism has dwindled there, and other

parts of Italy.

Ten towns in Lombardy are under quarantine, after nearly all the early cases of COVID-19 were clustered there.

The drop in tourism, one of Italy's biggest industries, is also being keenly felt in Venice, which lives off tourism and is Veneto's most famous city.

"Tourism has been brought to its knees" Veneto's governor said, noting that that sector brings in \$18 billion (\$20 million) in revenues. "It's the biggest industry in Veneto," Zaia said.

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