

# Is Brazil the next big hot spot as other nations ease up?

April 27 2020, by David Biller, Marcelo De Sousa and Adam Geller

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Workers wear masks and are separated by a plastic protection at the Sevel plant of Atessa, Central Italy, Monday, April 27, 2020. Italian factories, construction sites and wholesale supply businesses can resume activity as soon as they put safety measures into place aimed at containing contagion with COVID-19. This concession comes with partial easing of national lockdown restrictions announced Sunday night by Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte. (Cecilia Fabiano/LaPresse via AP)

Brazil is emerging as potentially the next big hot spot for the coronavirus amid President Jair Bolsonaro's insistence that it is just a "little flu" and that there is no need for the sharp restrictions that have slowed the infection's spread in Europe and the U.S.

As some U.S. states and European countries moved gradually Monday to ease their limits on movement and commerce, the intensifying outbreak in Brazil—Latin America's biggest country, with 211 million people—pushed some hospitals to the breaking point, with signs that a growing number of victims are now dying at home.

"We have all the conditions here for the pandemic to become much more serious," said Paulo Brandão, a virologist at the University of Sao Paulo.

Brazil officially reported about 4,500 deaths and almost 67,000 confirmed infections. But the true numbers there, as in many other countries, are believed to be vastly higher given the lack of testing and the many people without severe symptoms who haven't sought hospital care.

Some scientists said over 1 million in Brazil are probably infected. And the crisis could escalate as the country heads into winter, which can worsen respiratory illnesses.

The country's health ministry said that the system for accounting for deaths is "robust" and has captured all but a few cases.



Volunteers from a Christian church serve food to homeless people during a quarantine imposed by the state government to help contain the spread of the new coronavirus in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Monday, April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Andre Penner)

Worldwide, the death toll topped 210,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The number of dead in the U.S. surpassed 55,000—close to the 58,000 U.S. troops killed during the Vietnam War. Italy, Britain, Spain and France accounted for more than 20,000 deaths each.

In other developments:

— In the U.S., the Trump administration worked to draw up [new](#)



[guidelines](#) for how restaurants, schools, churches and businesses can safely reopen. The draft under consideration included suggestions such as closing break rooms at offices, using disposable menus in restaurants and having students eat lunch in their classrooms.

— [British Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#) returned to work after a bout with the virus and warned strongly against easing his own country's lockdown too soon: "I refuse to throw away all the effort and the sacrifice of the British people and to risk a second major outbreak and huge loss of life."



A man wearing a face mask under his chin walks past signs supporting the National Health Service (NHS) during the coronavirus outbreak, displayed on railings after being made and put up there gradually for the last three weeks by artist and local resident Peter Liversidge in a work he calls 'Sign Paintings for the

NHS' in east London, Monday, April 27, 2020. The highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus has impacted on nations around the globe, many imposing self isolation and exercising social distancing when people move from their homes. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

— In an unprecedented move, [New York canceled](#) its Democratic presidential primary, set for June 23, since Bernie Sanders has already conceded the nomination to Joe Biden.

In Brazil, Bolsonaro has disputed the seriousness of the coronavirus and said people need to resume their lives to prevent an economic meltdown. But most state governors in the country have adopted restrictions to slow the spread and pushed people to stay at home.

In mid-April, Bolsonaro fired his popular health minister after a series of disagreements over efforts to contain the virus, replacing him with an advocate for reopening the economy. Residents protested, leaning out their windows to bang pots and pans.

Medical officials in Rio de Janeiro and at least four other major cities have warned that their hospital systems are on the verge of collapse or too overwhelmed to take any more patients.



A man runs on Siesta beach just after sunrise Monday, April 27, 2020, in Siesta Key, Fla. Sarasota county officials opened beaches for essential activities, such as exercising. (AP Photo/Chris O'Meara)

Officials in Sao Paulo—the largest city in South America, in a tightly packed metropolitan area of over 21 million residents, many of them living in poverty—have issued death certificates over the past two weeks for 236 people who succumbed at home, double the number before the outbreak, according to the SAMU paramedic service.

Manaus, an Amazon city of 1.8 million, recorded 142 deaths on Sunday, the most yet, including 41 who died at home. In the main cemetery, workers have been digging mass graves. Brazil's funeral industry warned last week that the city was running out of coffins and "there could soon be corpses left on corners."



In the U.S., the governors of Nevada and Colorado announced that their states will join their three West Coast counterparts in coordinating their reopenings. West Virginia's governor unveiled an aggressive plan to reopen his state's economy based on a loosening of previously announced testing benchmarks.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson makes a statement flanked by children's drawings of rainbows supporting the National Health Service (NHS) displayed in windows, on his first day back at work in Downing Street, London, after recovering from a bout with the coronavirus that put him in intensive care, Monday, April 27, 2020. The highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus has impacted on nations around the globe, many imposing self isolation and exercising social distancing when people move from their homes. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)

In Massachusetts, however, officials reported the state's 3,000th death from the virus. The state is "still in the surge and very much in the fight against COVID-19," Gov. Charlie Baker said.

In Georgia, where Republican Gov. Brian Kemp has moved decisively to let businesses reopen, [restaurants received the go-ahead](#) to resume dine-in service as long as they follow certain restrictions, including keeping tables 6 feet apart.

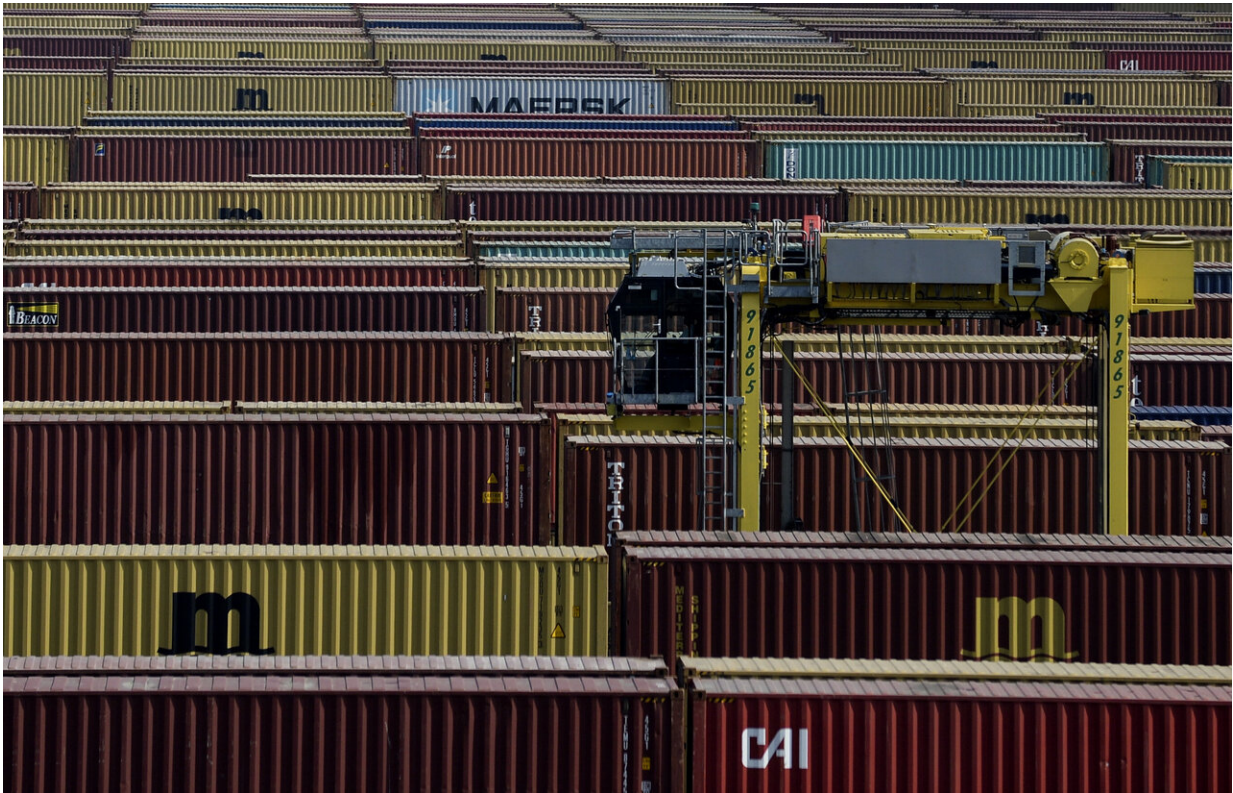
At Plucked Up Chicken & Biscuits in Columbus, Georgia, eight regulars showed up in the morning to have their coffee and breakfast and "chatted at each other across the room," manager Alesha Webster said. But only 10 customers could be inside at a time, well below the capacity of 45.

Alex Brounstein, owner of the Atlanta-based chain Grindhouse Killer Burgers, had no plans to reopen right away. "You're talking about people putting their mouths on things in your restaurant. You now have dirty dishes going back into your kitchen. To me, it's just completely illogical," he said.





Reinier Sijpkens performs classical music on his music boat for elderly people confined to their nursing home because of the coronavirus on King's Day in Heemstede, Netherlands, Monday, April 27, 2020. The Dutch national birthday party was a muted affair, dubbed King's Day at Home because of coronavirus restriction, a far cry usual nationwide celebration with street parties. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong)



Containers are moved at the MSC PSA European Terminal (MPET), the largest container terminal in the Port of Antwerp, during a visit of Belgium's King Philippe in Antwerp, Belgium, Monday, April 27, 2020. (Johanna Geron, Pool Photo via AP)





A woman walks past a vending machine that offers washable face masks in a station of the subway in Berlin, Germany, Monday, April 27, 2020. From today on face masks are mandatory in vehicles of the public transport in Berlin due to the coronavirus outbreak. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)





A health worker wearing a protective suit is disinfected inside a portable tent outside the Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center during an enhanced community quarantine to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in Manila, Philippines, Monday April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



Health workers attend to a colleague who fainted due to exhaustion and long working hours at a COVID-19 testing center in New Delhi, India, Monday, April 27, 2020. Many health workers allege having to work extra hours, often without sufficient facilities provided for their protection and well being. India which has a population of 1.3 billion has less than one medical doctor and three nurses per thousand people, the minimum recommended by the World Health Organization. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)





Women read a book and check their smartphones in a subway train as signs reading ' please do not seat here, respect social distances ' are written on seats in Milan, Italy, Monday, April 27, 2020. Italian factories, construction sites and wholesale supply businesses can resume activity as soon as they put safety measures into place aimed at containing contagion with COVID-19. This concession comes with partial easing of national lockdown restrictions announced Sunday night by Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte. (Claudio Furlan/LaPresse via AP)





Workers wearing protective outfits sanitize a shop in via Monte Napoleone fashion shopping street, in Milan, Italy, Monday, April 27, 2020. Italian factories, construction sites and wholesale supply businesses can resume activity as soon as they put safety measures into place aimed at containing contagion with COVID-19. This concession comes with partial easing of national lockdown restrictions announced Sunday night by Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte. (Claudio Furlan/LaPresse via AP)



Employee arrive for tests and instructions at the Toyota car factory in Onnaing, northern France, Monday, April 27, 2020. Workers are returning a Toyota factory as the country tries to carefully restart an economy deeply damaged by virus confinement measures. First, the workers are being tested for the virus, given protective equipment and taught how to protect themselves from infection in the workplace. Then some of the plant's 4,500 employees will start back to work later this week. (AP Photo/Michel Spingler)



A station passageway is crowded with commuters wearing face mask during a rush hour in Tokyo Monday, April 27, 2020. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expanded a state of emergency to all of Japan from just Tokyo and other urban areas as the virus continues to spread. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)





Residents from the Alexandra township in Johannesburg gather in a stadium to be tested for COVID-19 Monday, April 26, 2020. South Africa will begin a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



People buy fruit and vegetables at a shop in Naples, Monday, April 27, 2020. Region Campania allowed cafes and pizzerias to reopen for delivery Monday, as Italy it is starting to ease its lockdown after a long precautionary closure due to the coronavirus outbreak. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)





A street vendor sells his merchandise in front of shuttered stores on a sidewalk left empty due to a quarantine imposed by the state government to help contain the spread of the new coronavirus in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Monday, April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Andre Penner)





A homeless man eats food given to him by volunteers during a quarantine imposed by the state government to help contain the spread of the new coronavirus in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Monday, April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Andre Penner)

Technology is likely to play an important role in helping countries ease their restrictions. Many countries, including Italy, France, Switzerland and Britain, are working on virus-tracking apps and other means of reducing the labor-intensive task of tracing infected people's contacts.

In Australia, with about 80 COVID-19 deaths, 1.1 million of the country's 26 million people downloaded a new contact-tracing app within 12 hours of its becoming available.

In another encouraging sign amid the gloom, New York state reported 337 deaths for the lowest daily count this month, down from a high of nearly 800 almost three weeks ago.

And Italy registered its lowest day-to-day number of new cases of COVID-19 since practically the first day the country was put under lockdown in early March.

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