

US deaths top 100,000 as countries reimpose distancing measures

May 28 2020, by Michael Mathes, With Afp Bureaus



Virus deaths in the US topped 100,000

The US coronavirus death toll passed 100,000, as some countries reimposed social distancing rules following a resurgence of cases that

raised the spectre of a dreaded second wave of infections.

The economic fallout from the pandemic was again laid bare on Thursday as airlines reported fresh financial hits and staff cuts and car giant Nissan announced mammoth losses.

Deaths and infections continued to climb. Fatalities in Europe topped 175,000, and fresh reports suggested the toll in the continent's hardest-hit country, Britain, might be worse than thought.

But European nations continued—cautiously—on a path toward easing lockdown measures as populations embraced a new, post-pandemic reality.

The picture remained grim in Latin America, now fully in the throes of the pandemic that first emerged in China last year and has claimed more than 355,000 lives and infected at least 5.7 million on its deadly march across the globe.

Brazil now has the second-highest number of infections globally after the United States and deaths topped 25,000 Wednesday, while Peru logged a record 6,154 new cases in 24 hours.

Worried relatives gathered outside the Sabogal Hospital in the capital Lima unable to enter to see loved ones suffering from COVID-19—some begged guards for information.

"I want to talk to a doctor and they don't let me know," said Liset Villanueva, granddaughter of a [coronavirus](#) patient.

"They don't say anything, they don't call, they don't explain anything... What is he suffering from?"

COVID-19

World toll Thursday May 28, at 1100 GMT

Countries & territories affected **196**

Deaths	new deaths	Cases	new cases
355,736	3,214	5,705,898	66,002

New since May 27 at 1900 GMT

Most affected countries

	Deaths	new deaths	Cases
UNITED STATES	100,442	718	1,699,933
BRITAIN	37,460	—	267,240
ITALY	33,072	—	231,139
FRANCE	28,596	—	182,913
SPAIN	27,118	—	236,769
BRAZIL	25,598	1,086	411,821
BELGIUM	9,388	24	57,849
MEXICO	8,597	463	78,023
GERMANY	8,411	62	179,717
IRAN	7,627	63	143,849
CANADA	6,858	29	87,519
NETHERLANDS	5,871	—	45,768

Increases over 24 hours may not tally exactly with previous day's total due to inavailability or late publication of data or corrections made by authorities

Sources: AFP tally based on official tolls

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COVID-19: World toll

'Don't start leapfrogging'

The US marked a dire milestone on Wednesday, passing 100,000 deaths, sparking fresh warnings from [health experts](#) that the country should not rush to reopen its badly bruised economy, with millions of American jobs wiped out in a matter of months.

Though the US has the highest number of deaths, it is not the most affected in terms of fatalities per million inhabitants.

Belgium leads with 808 deaths per million inhabitants, followed by Spain with 580 and Britain's 552—according to official government figures, according to AFP data compiled by official figures. The US has 303 deaths per million inhabitants.

President Donald Trump, eyeing re-election later this year, has repeatedly said he is eager to get back to business and has urged states to lift lockdowns.

But top health adviser Anthony Fauci—whose guidance has often clashed with Trump's—once again called for caution.

"Don't start leapfrogging over the recommendations of some of the guidelines because that's really tempting fate and asking for trouble," Fauci told CNN.

Elsewhere, some countries in Asia grappled with the risks of a second wave.

South Korea reimposed some social distancing rules after a series of new clusters emerged, many in the capital Seoul.



Coronavirus deaths in Brazil topped 25,000

Museums, parks and art galleries will all be closed again from Friday for two weeks, while companies were urged to reintroduce flexible working, among other measures.

The next two weeks are crucial to prevent the spread of the infection in the metropolitan area," health minister Park Neung-hoo said.

And in Sri Lanka, some lockdown measures will be rolled out again after more than 250 returnees from Kuwait were found to be infected with coronavirus.

Safe cinema

But in Europe, governments were experimenting with how to move beyond lockdown to revive hammered economies and allow citizens to resume public life.

France was due to announce the second phase of its lockdown Thursday, when it is expected to let restaurants and cafes open in so-called green zones, those that have not been hit as hard by the virus.

But in red zones—including Paris—bistros and cafes may not be allowed to open their doors until July, though parks and gardens may be permitted to open sooner.

Britain is eyeing its own exit from lockdown and on Thursday launched a test-and-trace programme to halt the spread of the disease.

The country has been one of the hardest hit in the world and the government has come under fire for not responding to the crisis early enough.



Cinemagoers in Spain enjoyed a drive-in, socially-distanced screening of "Grease"

Elsewhere in Europe, Spaniards were revisiting old joys—but with new social distancing measures.

At a drive-in cinema in Madrid, crowds were delighted to finally be able to go to the movies again, while avoiding crowded theatres.

"Everyone has their own private space, there aren't many surfaces where you could pick up infection because during the film, no one gets out of their car and if you want to order food you can do that online," Belen Perez told AFP at a screening of "Grease".

"It's a great way of being entertained safely."

Aviation and auto

Governments around the globe are faced with the precarious task of keeping populations safe while trying to kickstart their economies, with the world facing a global slump not seen in decades.

There was more bad news from the aviation sector on Thursday as British carrier EasyJet said it would axe up to 30 percent of its staff, while Scandinavian airline SAS announced fresh quarterly losses of \$362 million.

On the auto front, Nissan reported an eye-watering \$6.2-billion annual net loss, and said it was closing its Barcelona plant and slashing production.

The news comes after the European Union unveiled a historic, 750-billion-euro (\$825 billion) recovery plan to get the continent back on its feet.



France is expected to further ease lockdown measures

But amid a deluge of dire news, there were some promising developments as well.

Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche joined forces with US biotech firm Gilead to test a mix of drugs to treat severe cases of COVID-19.

Scientists around the world are racing for a vaccine—or effective treatment—for the disease.

France said on Wednesday it was banning the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine as a treatment after the World Health Organization

suspended its testing over fears of dangerous side effects.

And in the animal world, there was coronavirus news too after a Bali zoo named a newborn giraffe after the disease.

"Corona is healthy and is still breastfeeding. We'll keep her under observation for three months," said zoo spokesman Anak Agung Ngurah Alit Sujana.

But visitors will have to wait to meet the young calf, as the zoo remains closed to the public.

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