

As lockdowns ease, some countries report new infection peaks

May 3 2020, by Frances D'emilio, Pablo Gorondi and Danica Kirka



A jogger stops to tie his shoelace next to a recently painted NHS (National Health Service) Superman design mural by street artist Lionel Stanhope during the coronavirus lockdown, in the Waterloo area of London, Sunday, May 3, 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)

While millions of people took advantage of easing coronavirus lockdowns to enjoy spring weather, some of the world's most populous countries reported worrisome new peaks in infections Sunday, including India, which saw its biggest single-day jump yet.

India, second in population only to China, reported more than 2,600 new infections. And in Russia, new coronavirus cases exceeded 10,000 for the first time. The confirmed death toll in Britain climbed near that of Italy, the epicenter of Europe's outbreak, even though the U.K. population is younger than Italy's and Britain had more time to prepare before the pandemic hit.

The United States continues to see tens of thousands of new infections each day, with more than 1,400 new deaths reported Saturday.

Health experts warn that a second wave of infections could hit unless testing is expanded dramatically after lockdowns are eased. But pressure to reopen economies keeps building after the weeks-long shutdown of businesses worldwide plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s and wiped out millions of jobs.

China, which reported only two new cases, has seen a surge in visitors to newly reopened tourist spots after domestic travel restrictions were relaxed ahead of a five-day holiday that runs through Tuesday.



Two families who gave permission to be photographed, maintain social distancing while talking to each other outside a home in Hampstead, north London, Sunday May 3, 2020, as the UK continues in lockdown to help curb the spread of the coronavirus. 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. (Victoria Jones / PA via AP)

Nearly 1.7 million people visited Beijing parks on the first two days of the holiday, and Shanghai's main tourist spots welcomed more than 1 million visitors, according to Chinese media. Many spots limited daily visitors to 30% of capacity.

Meanwhile, Italians counted down the hours until Monday's reopening of

parks and public gardens. With sunshine and warm temperatures across the country, many people went outdoors, walking down streets and chatting on sidewalks. Despite the easing, Italians will still have to stay a meter (3 feet) apart. Picnics are not allowed, and playgrounds will remain closed.

In a sign that the disease still has a firm grip in some places, Rome's infectious diseases hospital admitted 28 confirmed COVID-19 patients from a nursing home.

In Spain, many ventured outside for the first time since the country's lockdown began March 14, but social distancing rules remained in place. Masks are mandatory starting Monday on public transit.



Marina and Andrea enjoy the sun with their daughter Sara at Islands Brygge in Copenhagen on Sunday, May 3, 2020. Marked areas on the grassland help people keep distance from each other, with about 40 m² area marked out for a maximum of 10 people, to limit the spread of coronavirus infection, seen with 24 mm telephoto lens. (Ida Guldbaek Arentsen / Scanpix via AP)

"There is highly probability that we will see new outbreaks," said Spanish health expert Fernando Simón. "That is what we must be prepared for and keep in mind over the following months."

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is under pressure to reveal how the country will lift the lockdown that began March 23. The restrictions are due to last through Thursday, but with hundreds of deaths still being reported daily—twice as many recently as Italy or Spain—it's unclear how the country can safely loosen the restrictions.

The 55-year-old Johnson, who spent three nights in intensive care while being treated for COVID-19, told The Sun newspaper that he knew his doctors were preparing for the worst.

"It was a tough old moment, I won't deny it," he said. "They had a strategy to deal with a 'death of Stalin'-type scenario" if he succumbed to the virus.



A cyclist watches Greylag geese walk past in a sparsely populated Hyde Park area of central London, as the UK continues in lockdown to help curb the spread of the coronavirus, Sunday May 3, 2020. Many Greylag Geese from eastern Sweden, Finland and east central Europe migrate to winter in southern Europe, some in London. 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. (Yui Mok / PA via AP)

Another potentially troubling sign emerged in Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul, where a third of the 500 people selected in random test came up positive for the virus.

In the U.S., New Jersey reopened state parks, though several had to turn people away after reaching a 50% limit in their parking lots. Margie

Roebuck and her husband were among the first on the sand at Island Beach State Park.

"Forty-six days in the house was enough," she said.

Speaking on "Fox News Sunday," White House [coronavirus](#) coordinator Deborah Birx expressed concern about protests by armed and mostly maskless crowds demanding an end to stay-at-home orders and a full reboot of the economy. President Donald Trump has encouraged people to "liberate" their states.

"It's devastatingly worrisome to me personally, because if they go home and infect their grandmother or their grandfather ... they will feel guilty for the rest of our lives," she said. "So we need to protect each other at the same time we're voicing our discontent."



Livia and Lorenza enjoy the sun with their daughter Sara at Islands Brygge in Copenhagen on Sunday, May 3, 2020. Marked areas on the grassland help people keep distance from each other, with about 40 m² area marked out for a maximum of 10 people, to limit the spread of coronavirus infection, seen with 48 mm telephoto lens. (Ida Guldbaek Arentsen / Scanpix via AP)

Meanwhile, the divide in the United States between those who want lockdowns to end and those who want to move more cautiously extended to Congress.

The Republican-majority Senate will reopen Monday in Washington. The Democrat-controlled House of Representatives is staying shuttered. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's decision to convene 100 senators gives President Trump, a Republican, the imagery he wants of America getting back to work, despite the risks.

Russia latest tally of infections was nearly double the new cases reported a week ago. More than half of Russia's new cases were in Moscow, where concern is rising about whether the capital's medical facilities will be overwhelmed.

Russian epidemiologist Alexander Gintsburg told the Interfax news agency that the sharp increase in cases reflected increased testing, which has doubled over the past 10 days, and did not indicate a deepening pandemic.



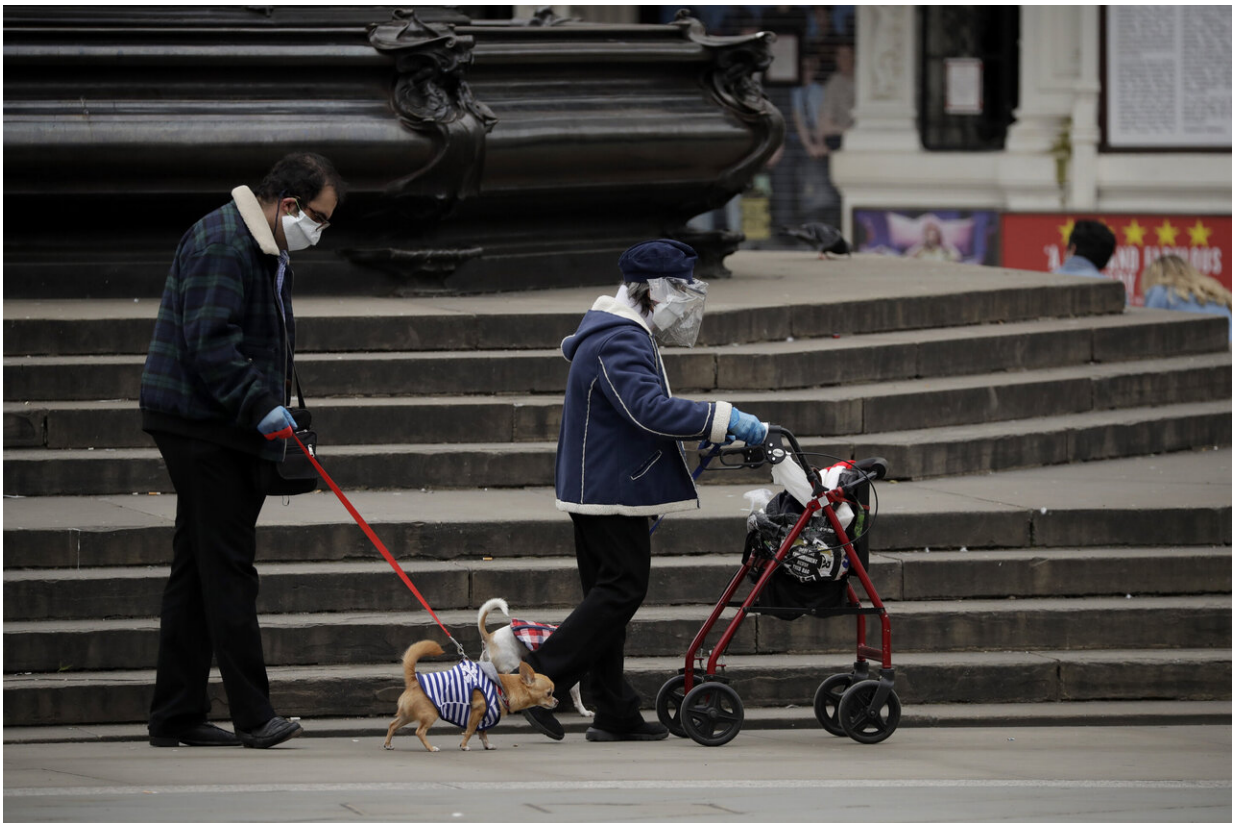
People in a sparsely populated Hyde Park, with the Serpentine lake, in central London, as the UK continues in lockdown to help curb the spread of the coronavirus, Sunday May 3, 2020. The highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus has impacted on nations around the globe, many imposing self isolation and exercising social distancing when people move from their homes. (Yui Mok / PA via AP)

In all, Russia has reported 1,222 virus deaths among 124,000 infections, numbers that health experts widely believe undercount the true toll of its outbreak.

Indian air force helicopters showered flower petals on hospitals in several cities to thank doctors, nurses and police at the forefront of the battle against the pandemic.

The country's number of confirmed cases neared 40,000 as the population of 1.3 billion marked the 40th day of a nationwide lockdown that has upended lives, cost millions of jobs and left millions hungry and desperate. The official death toll reached 1,323.

Pope Francis called Sunday for international collaboration in the search for a vaccine and treatment for COVID-19 and invited faithful of all religions to spiritually unite in prayer, fasting and works of charity on May 14.



A woman wearing a home made face shield and mask walks a dog in Piccadilly Circus, central London, Sunday, May 3, 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)



A woman wearing a home made face shield and mask walks a dog near Piccadilly Circus in central London, Sunday, May 3, 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 this April 17, 2020 file photo, a couple wearing face masks to help protect against the spread of the new coronavirus walks in the rain at the Gyeongbok Palace, the main royal palace during the Joseon Dynasty, in Seoul, South Korea. Nervous travelers, spotty air service, health risks— the battered global tourism industry is facing unprecedented uncertainty in the wake of the new coronavirus. Millions of workers are laid off or furloughed, and it will likely take years for the industry to get back to the strong demand it was seeing just six months ago. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon, File)



A customer has his temperature taken before entering the Loon Fung Chinese supermarket on Gerrard Street in London's Chinatown district, Sunday, May 3, 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 this photo taken on Saturday, May 2, 2020, doctors work inside the intensive care unit for people infected with the new coronavirus, at a hospital in Moscow, Russia. A Russian epidemiologist says the sharp increase in coronavirus infection cases recorded over the past week reflects increased testing. Russia on Sunday reported more than ten thousand new cases, nearly double the new cases reported a week ago and the first time the daily tally went into five digits.(AP Photo/Sophia Sandurskaya)



In this photo taken on Saturday, May 2, 2020, doctors attend to a patient inside the intensive care unit for people infected with the new coronavirus, at a hospital in Moscow, Russia. A Russian epidemiologist says the sharp increase in coronavirus infection cases recorded over the past week reflects increased testing. Russia on Sunday reported more than ten thousand new cases, nearly double the new cases reported a week ago and the first time the daily tally went into five digits.(AP Photo/Sophia Sandurskaya)



In this photo taken on Saturday, May 2, 2020, a doctor looks at a computer screens of a tomography scan machine at a hospital in Moscow, Russia, Saturday, May 2, 2020. A Russian epidemiologist says the sharp increase in coronavirus infection cases recorded over the past week reflects increased testing. Russia on Sunday reported more than ten thousand new cases, nearly double the new cases reported a week ago and the first time the daily tally went into five digits.(AP Photo/Sophia Sandurskaya)



Mounted police patrol on horses as people exercise on a seafront promenade in Barcelona, Spain, Sunday, May 3, 2020. Spaniards have filled the streets of the country to do exercise after seven weeks of confinement to their homes to fight the coronavirus pandemic. People ran, walked, or rode bicycles under a brilliant sunny sky in Barcelona on Saturday, where many flocked to the maritime promenade to get as close as possible to the still off-limits beach. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)

The virus has infected 3.4 million people and killed more than 244,000 worldwide, including more than 66,000 dead in the United States, according to a count by Johns Hopkins University.

Europe has seen more than 139,00 confirmed virus deaths, with more than 28,000 each in Italy and Britain and around 25,000 each in France

and Spain. All the numbers are considered to be undercounts, due to testing issues, the problems of counting deaths in a pandemic and deliberate concealment by some governments.

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