

# Pandemic becomes a patchwork of small successes and setbacks

June 20 2020, by Ken Moritsugu and Jill Lawless

---



Pope Francis addresses doctors and nurses from the coronavirus-ravaged Lombardy region, at the Vatican, Saturday, June 20, 2020. Francis told the delegation on Saturday that their example of professional competence and compassion would help Italy forge a new future of solidarity. The northern region of Lombardy, Italy's financial and industrial capital, was the hardest-hit region in the onetime European epicenter of the pandemic. (Vatican News via AP)

Authorities in China appeared to be winning their battle against an outbreak of coronavirus in Beijing on Saturday, but in parts of the Americas the pandemic raged unabated. Brazil surpassed 1 million confirmed infections, second only to the United States.

Europe, in contrast, continued to emerge warily from lockdown, with hard-hit Britain considering easing social distancing rules to make it easier for restaurants, pubs and schools to reopen. In Italy, once the pandemic's European epicenter, Pope Francis told medics that their heroic efforts during the outbreak would help the country forge a future of hope and solidarity.

The head of the World Health Organization warned Friday that the pandemic is "accelerating" and that more than 150,000 cases were reported the day before—the highest single-day number so far.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva that nearly half of the newly reported cases were from the Americas, with significant numbers from South Asia and the Middle East.

The new [coronavirus](#) has infected more than 8.5 million people worldwide and killed more than 454,000, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The actual number is thought to be much higher because many cases are asymptomatic or go untested.

The global battle against COVID-19 is a patchwork of successes and setbacks at this point in the pandemic, quantified by the trajectory of the coronavirus in different countries.



A girl wearing a face mask walks with a bottle of drinking water and a food packet that she received from a food distribution site in Mumbai, India, Saturday, June 20, 2020. India is the fourth hardest-hit country by the COVID-19 pandemic in the world after the U.S., Russia and Brazil. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

In China, where the virus was first identified and where authorities hoped it had been vanquished, Beijing recorded a further drop in cases amid tightened containment measures. Officials reported 22 new cases in Beijing along with five others elsewhere in China. There were no new deaths and 308 people remained hospitalized for treatment.

South Korea, which has won global praise for its handling of the coronavirus, recorded 67 new cases, the largest 24-hour increase in about

three weeks. Most of them come from the densely populated Seoul area, where about half of the country's 51 million people reside. Many cases have been linked to exposure in nightlife outlets.

Brazil's Health Ministry said the total number of cases had risen by more than 50,000 from the previous day. President Jair Bolsonaro still downplays the risks of the virus after nearly 50,000 fatalities in three months, saying the impact of social isolation on Brazil's economy could be more deadly.



Members of the "Tempero de Criola" band perform amid the new coronavirus pandemic at the Turano favela, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Friday, June 19, 2020. A group of musicians playing Samba offered a small concert to the residents of Turano favela, most of whom remain quarantined to curb the spread of COVID-19. Residents could watch the performance from their windows,

balconies or via internet. (AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)

South Africa continues to loosen lockdown measures under economic pressure, despite reporting nearly 4,000 more COVID-19 cases on Saturday. Casinos, beauty salons and sit-down restaurant service are among the latest permitted activities as the country eases one of the world's strictest lockdowns. South Africa has about 30% of the virus cases on the African continent, or more than 87,000.

South Africa and Ethiopia both said they are recommending the limited use of the commonly available steroid dexamethasone for all COVID-19 patients on ventilators or supplementary oxygen. In a British trial, the drug was shown to significantly improve survival chances for the most seriously ill.

South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said "this breakthrough is excellent news for us and we are especially fortunate that it came as we are preparing for our upcoming surge" in cases.



Animal rights activists protest in front of the Toennies meatpacking plant and slaughterhouse in Rheda-Wiedenbrueck, Germany, Saturday, June 20, 2020. Hundreds of new coronavirus cases are linked to the large meatpacking plant, officials ordered the closure of the slaughterhouse, as well as isolation and tests for everyone else who had worked at the Toennies site—putting about 7,000 people under quarantine. (Friso Gentsch/dpa via AP)

Britain lowered its coronavirus threat level one notch, becoming the latest country to claim it's getting a national outbreak under control.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government said it would announce next week whether it will ease social distancing rules that say people should remain 2 meters (6½ feet) apart. Business groups are lobbying for the distance to be cut to 1 meter (3 feet) to make it easier to restart the U.K.'s economy.

While many stores in Britain have reopened, pubs, hotels and restaurants won't be allowed to resume serving customers until July 4 at the soonest. Proposals to allow them to reopen safely include pubs having people order pints using phone apps rather than going to the bar.

The U.K. has Europe's highest and the world's third-highest official death toll from the pandemic, with more than 42,500 virus-related fatalities reported as of Saturday.



A young girl wearing a protective face shield enjoys a swing ride as physical distancing markings are seen on the seats during the first day of the reopening of Dunia Fantasi Amusement Park after weeks of closure due to the large-scale restrictions imposed to help curb the new coronavirus outbreak, at Ancol Dream Park in Jakarta, Indonesia, Saturday, June 20, 2020. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)

Italy, which for a time this spring had the most coronavirus cases and deaths in the world, continued receiving confirmation that the worst had receded.

Pope Francis welcomed doctors and nurses from the Lombardy region, Italy's financial and industrial capital and the center of its outbreak, to the Vatican on Saturday to thank them for their work and sacrifice.

Francis said Lombardy's medics "gave witness to God's proximity to those who suffer" and became literal "angels," helping the sick recover or accompanying them to their deaths when family members were prevented from visiting.

The northern region counted half of Italy's 34,500 COVID-19 deaths.

Meanwhile, Germany reported the country's highest daily increase in virus cases in a month after managing to contain its outbreak better than comparable large European nations.





A doctor checks the temperature of a man during a free medical camp in Dharavi, one of Asia's largest slums in Mumbai, India, Saturday, June 20, 2020. India is the fourth hardest-hit country by the COVID-19 pandemic in the world after the U.S., Russia and Brazil. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)



Residents watch members of "Tempero de Criola" perform in the Turano favela amid the new coronavirus pandemic, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Friday, June 19, 2020. A group of musicians playing Samba offered a small concert to the residents of Turano favela, most of whom remain quarantined to curb the spread of COVID-19. Residents could watch the performance from their windows, balconies or via internet. (AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)



Visitors wearing face masks to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus walk at a park in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday, June 20, 2020. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)



Russian soldiers march toward Red Square to attend a dress rehearsal for the Victory Day military parade in Moscow, Russia, Saturday, June 20, 2020. The military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the Nazi defeat was postponed from May 9 due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and is now set to take place on June 24. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)



A resident watches the "Tempero de Criola" perform in the Turano favela amid the new coronavirus pandemic, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Friday, June 19, 2020. A group of musicians playing Samba offered a small concert to the residents of Turano favela, most of whom remain quarantined to curb the spread of COVID-19. Residents could watch the performance from their windows, balconies or via internet. (AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)



A protester uses a hand sanitizer as he lies on the ground demanding better handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kathmandu, Nepal, Saturday, June 20, 2020. Hundreds participated demanding increased testing and protesting alleged corruption by government officials while purchasing equipment and testing kits. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha)



A protesters lies on the ground demanding better handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kathmandu, Nepal, Saturday, June 20, 2020. Hundreds participated demanding increased testing and protesting alleged corruption by government officials while purchasing equipment and testing kits. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha)



People take photos as self-propelled artillery vehicles Msta-S travel during a rehearsal for a military parade at Dvortsovaya (Palace) Square in St.Petersburg, Russia, Saturday, June 20, 2020. The military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the Nazi defeat was postponed from May 9 due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and is now set to take place on June 24.(AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky)





Street vendors who came out to sell their products, ignoring lockdown measures to curb the spread of the new coronavirus, returned to their workspaces after being evicted by police in La Victoria district, in Lima, Peru, Friday, June 19, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



A woman holds on to the shirt of a child using a net to look for fish as they wear masks to curb the spread of the coronavirus along a canal in Beijing on Saturday, June 20, 2020. China's capital recorded a further drop in coronavirus cases amid tightened containment measures. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

Many areas of Europe are dealing with new localized outbreaks, with some of the largest centered around meat-processing plants. German officials said Saturday that the number of workers infected at a slaughterhouse in the northwest of the country had risen to 1,029 but there was no evidence of "significant" spread beyond the workforce into the community.

French authorities were keeping a close eye on signs of an accelerating spread of the coronavirus in Normandy, a region that's until now been

spared the worst of the outbreak that has hit Paris and the east of France particularly hard.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Pandemic becomes a patchwork of small successes and setbacks (2020, June 20)  
retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-pandemic-patchwork-small-successes-setbacks.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--