

Coronavirus: latest global developments

July 22 2020

Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

More than 15 million cases

At least 15,007,291 cases of the new coronavirus, including 617,603 deaths, have been detected worldwide since the pandemic emerged late last year, according to an AFP tally at 1600 GMT on Wednesday based on official sources.

The United States is the hardest hit country with 3,915,780 cases and 142,312 deaths. More than half of the recorded cases are in the US and Latin America.

In the last seven days, more than 1.6 million new cases have been detected globally.

Africa, where an acceleration in cases is concerning the World Health Organization, has expressed concern, has passed the 15,000-death mark.

US: \$1.95 billion for potential vaccine

The US government has agreed to pay \$1.95 billion (1.68 billion euros) to secure 100 million doses of a potential coronavirus vaccine being developed by US pharma giant Pfizer and Germany's Biontech, the latter says.

It also has an option to purchase an additional 500 million doses,

Biontech says.

China defends itself

China accuses the United States of "slander" after two Chinese nationals are indicted there for seeking to steal coronavirus vaccine research and hacking hundreds of companies.

"The Chinese government is a staunch defender of cyber security, and has always opposed and cracked down on cyber attacks and cyber crime in all forms," says foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

Record infections in Australia

Australia reports a record 502 new coronavirus infections, with most of the new cases in the southeastern state of Victoria, where authorities have struggled to bring an outbreak in Melbourne under control despite an almost two-week lockdown in Australia's second-biggest city.

Indian Kashmir locks down

Indian-administered Kashmir imposes a strict lockdown until July 29 amid rising cases.

India, the world's second most populous country is also the third most-infected nation. It has significantly eased a months-long shutdown to revive its shattered economy, but numerous states have reimposed restrictions.

'Avalanche' in Belgium feared

Belgium is experiencing a dangerous surge in cases after relaxing many

of its lockdown measures, the Belgian national security council says, urging social distancing to prevent a "snowball effect before it provokes a new avalanche".

Belgium suffered one of Europe's worst per capita tolls of coronavirus earlier this year, but along with its neighbours was able to bring it under control. Now, however, the number of cases is increasing again.

Tokyo under lockdown

Tokyo's governor urges residents of the Japanese capital to stay at home during an upcoming four-day holiday weekend, after it hits a new daily record of 293 cases last week, and the figure has stayed above 200 in recent days.

Japan has had just over 26,300 cases and close to 1,000 deaths, a low figure compared with countries worst hit by the pandemic, but Japanese experts say the number of patients in serious condition is gradually increasing.

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Citation: Coronavirus: latest global developments (2020, July 22) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-coronavirus-latest-global-6.html>

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