

As US grapples with virus, Florida hits record case increase

July 13 2020, by Tamara Lush and Pablo Gorondi



A woman and two children wear masks at a playground, Saturday, July 11, 2020, in Los Angeles. The number of deaths per day from the coronavirus in the U.S. had been falling for months, and even remained down as some states saw explosions in cases. But now a long-expected upturn has begun, driven by fatalities in states in the South and West. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

With the United States grappling with the worst coronavirus outbreak in the world, Florida hit a grim milestone Sunday, shattering the national record for a state's largest single-day increase in positive cases.

Deaths from the virus have also been rising in the U.S., especially in the South and West, though still well below the heights hit in April, according to a recent Associated Press analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University.

"I really do think we could control this, and it's the human element that is so critical. It should be an effort of our country. We should be pulling together when we're in a crisis, and we're definitely not doing it," said University of Florida epidemiologist Dr. Cindy Prins.

Adm. Brett Giroir, a member of the White House coronavirus task force, called mask-wearing in public, which has been met with resistance in some U.S. states, "absolutely essential."

Giroir, the assistant secretary at the Health and Human Services Department, told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday that "if we don't have that, we will not get control of the virus."

President Donald Trump wore a mask in public for the first time Saturday, something Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Sunday showed he has "crossed a bridge."



Guests wear masks as required to attend the official reopening day of the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Saturday, July 11, 2020. Disney reopened two Florida parks, the Magic Kingdom and Animal Kingdom, Saturday, with limited capacity and safety protocols in place in response to the coronavirus pandemic. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel via AP)

Pelosi told CNN's "State of the Union" that she hopes it means the president "will change his attitude, which will be helpful in stopping the spread of the coronavirus."

In hard-hit Houston, Texas, two top Democratic officials called for the nation's fourth-largest city to lock back down as area hospitals strained to accommodate the onslaught of sick patients.

In Florida, where parts of Walt Disney World reopened Saturday, 15,299 people tested positive, for a total of 269,811 cases, and 45 deaths were recorded, according to state Department of Health statistics reported Sunday.

California had the previous record of daily positive cases—11,694, set on Wednesday.

The numbers come at the end of a record-breaking week as Florida reported 514 fatalities—an average of 73 per day. Three weeks ago, the state was averaging 30 deaths per day.



President Donald Trump wears a face mask as he walks down a hallway during a visit to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., Saturday, July 11, 2020. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

Researchers expect deaths to rise in the U.S. for at least some weeks, but some think the count probably will not go up as dramatically as it did in the spring because of several factors, including increased testing.

The World Health Organization, meanwhile, reported another record increase in the number of confirmed coronavirus cases over a 24-hour period, at over 230,000.

The U.N. health agency said the United States again topped the list among countries, with more than 66,000 cases. The figures don't necessarily account for delays in reporting cases, and are believed to far underestimate actual totals.

Countries in Eastern Europe were among those facing rising waves of new infections, leading to riots in Serbia, mandatory face masks in Croatia and travel bans or quarantines imposed by Hungary.



Mourners carry out the remains of loved ones following the blessing of the ashes of Mexicans who died from COVID-19 at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Saturday, July 11, 2020, in New York. The ashes were blessed before they were repatriated to Mexico. (AP Photo/Eduardo Munoz Alvarez)

"We see worrisome signs about an increase in the number of cases in the neighboring countries, Europe and the whole world," said Gergely Gulyas, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's chief of staff. "Now, we have to protect our own security and prevent the virus from being brought in from abroad."

Hungarian authorities said Sunday they have sorted countries into three categories—red, yellow and green—based on their rates of new coronavirus infections, and will impose restrictions, including entry bans

and mandatory quarantines, depending on which country people are arriving from.

Serbia, where health authorities are warning that hospitals are almost full due to the latest surge, reported 287 new infections on Sunday, although there have been increasing doubts about the accuracy of the figures. Officially, the country has over 18,000 confirmed infections and 382 deaths since March. Sunday's report of 11 coronavirus deaths was the country's second-highest daily death toll.



Players observe a minute of silence in memory of Jack Charlton prior to the start of the English Premier League soccer match between Watford and Everton at the Molineux Stadium in Wolverhampton, England, Sunday, July 12, 2020. (Molly Darlington/Pool via AP)

Serbian police clashed with anti-government protesters for four nights last week, demonstrations that forced the Serbian president to withdraw plans to reintroduce a coronavirus lockdown. Many of the increasing infections have been blamed on crowded soccer matches, tennis events and nightclubs.

In Bulgaria, authorities reintroduced restrictions lifted a few weeks ago because of a new surge in cases.

Albania also has seen a significant increase in infections since mid-May, when it eased lockdown measures. The Balkan nation reported 93 new cases, over twice as many as the highest daily figures in March and April, and the health ministry called the situation at the main infectious disease hospital "grave."

Croatia, whose island-dotted Adriatic Sea coast is a major tourist destination, is making wearing masks mandatory in stores beginning Monday.



People ride their bikes amid the new coronavirus pandemic, in the Los Chorros neighborhood of Caracas, Venezuela, Sunday, July 12, 2020. (AP Photo/Matias Delacroix)

Yet the numbers of infections in Eastern Europe pale in comparison to daily coronavirus reports from India, South Africa and Brazil, whose virus-denying president has tested positive.

India, which has the most cases after the United States and Brazil, saw a record surge of 28,637 cases reported in the past 24 hours. Authorities also announced a weeklong lockdown beginning Tuesday in the key southern technology hub of Bangalore, where the offices of top tech companies like Microsoft, Apple and Amazon are located.

South Africa has reported over 10,000 new daily cases for several days in a row, including 13,497 new infections announced Saturday night. Johannesburg's densely populated Soweto township is one of the virus hot spots. With over 264,000 cases and 3,971 deaths, South Africa accounts for over 40% of all the reported coronavirus cases in Africa.



Pedestrians wearing masks to curb the spread of the new coronavirus chat in front of a mural of late President Hugo Chavez, in Caracas, Venezuela, Sunday, July 12, 2020. (AP Photo/Matias Delacroix)



Covid-19 patients are being treated at the Tshwane District Hospital in Pretoria, South Africa, Friday July 10, 2020. Health Minister Zweli Mkhize this week said South Africa could run out of available hospital beds within the month. "The storm that we have consistently warned South Africans about is now arriving," he told lawmakers. The African continent overall has over 523,000 confirmed virus cases after passing the half-million milestone on Wednesday. But shortages in testing materials mean the true number is unknown.(AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



An Indian health worker waits to collect nasal swab samples at a COVID-19 testing center in Gauhati, Assam state, India, Sunday, July 12, 2020. India is the world's third worst-affected country by the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Anupam Nath)



A lab technician works at the Eva Pharma facility in Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, July 12, 2020. Eva Pharma, a leading Egyptian pharmaceutical company is producing two drugs used in the treatment of COVID-19 patients—remdesivir for severe cases in intensive care, and avipiravir indicated for moderate cases. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



Worshippers attend Mass at the Cathedral of Port-au-Prince, marking the reopening of places of worship since the beginning in March of the COVID-19 lockdown, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Sunday, July 12, 2020. By order of President Jovenel Moise and the recommendation of Haiti's health authorities, churches reopened after having been closed for months due to social distancing rules to curb the spread of the pandemic. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)



Inigo Urkullo, Basque Lehendakari or Regional President, right, wears a face mask as protection against the coronavirus while voting in a polling station during Basque regional election in the village of Durango, northern Spain, Sunday, July 12, 2020. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)



A man rides on a tricycle past a civic worker sanitizing a deserted road during a fresh lockdown imposed in Gauhati, Assam state, India, Sunday, July 12, 2020. India is the world's third worst-affected country by the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Anupam Nath)



Priest Matthias Hieber celebrates a confirmation service according to the Corona protection measures in the church in Suesel, Germany, Sunday, July 12, 2020. Distance on the church pews, wearing of mouth and nose masks and silence during the service. Only the pastor is allowed to speak and to pray. (Markus Scholz/dpa/dpa via AP)

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said Sunday the country would return to a ban of alcohol sales to reduce the volume of trauma patients so that hospitals have more beds to treat COVID-19. The country is also reinstating a night curfew to reduce traffic accidents and has made it mandatory for all residents to wear face masks in public.

Meanwhile, in Taiwan, which kept its [coronavirus](#) outbreak to a few hundred cases, an annual film festival wrapped up with an awards ceremony this weekend where actors and others lined up for photo shoots with no social distancing, and participants didn't wear masks.

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