

Restrictions easing in US and Europe amid disaster in India

May 3 2021, by Bobby Caina Calvan and Heather Hollingsworth



People ride an escalator along the Las Vegas Strip, Saturday, April 24, 2021, in Las Vegas. Las Vegas is bustling again after casino capacity limits were raised Saturday, May 1, to 80% and person-to-person distancing dropped to 3 feet (0.9 meters). (AP Photo/John Locher)

Air travel in the U.S. hit its highest mark since COVID-19 took hold

more than 13 months ago, while European Union officials are proposing to ease restrictions on visitors to the continent as the vaccine sends new cases and deaths tumbling in more affluent countries.

The improving picture in many places contrasts with the worsening disaster in India.

In the U.S., the average number of new cases per day fell below 50,000 for the first time since October. And nearly 1.67 million people were screened at U.S. airport checkpoints on Sunday, according to the Transportation Security Administration, the highest number since mid-March of last year.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation giving him sweeping powers to invalidate local emergency measures put in place during the outbreak. While the law doesn't go into effect until July, the Republican governor said he will issue an executive order to more quickly get rid of local mask mandates.

"I think this creates a structure that's going to be a little bit more respectful, I think, of people's businesses, jobs, schools and personal freedom," he said.

Las Vegas is bustling again after casino capacity limits were raised Saturday to 80% and person-to-person distancing was dropped to 3 feet (0.9 meters). New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that New York City's subways will begin running all night again and capacity restrictions on most businesses will end statewide in mid-May. And Los Angeles County reported no coronavirus deaths on Sunday and Monday, some of which may be attributable to a lag in reporting but was nevertheless a hopeful sign that could move the county to allow an increase in capacity at events and venues, and indoor-service at bars.



Relatives of a person who died of COVID-19 mourn outside a field hospital in Mumbai, India, Monday, May 3, 2021. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

EU officials also announced a proposal Monday to relax [restrictions](#) on travel to the 27-nation bloc this summer, though the final decision is up to its member countries.

"Time to revive EU tourism industry and for cross-border friendships to rekindle—safely," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "We propose to welcome again vaccinated visitors and those from countries with a good health situation."

In Greece, restaurants and cafes reopened their terraces on Monday after six months of shutdown, with customers flocking to soak up the sunshine. In France, high schools reopened and a ban on domestic travel was lifted.

The once hard-hit Czech Republic, where cases are now declining, announced it will allow people to remove face coverings at all outdoor spaces starting next Monday if they keep their distance from others.



In this April 30, 2021, file photo, a family member performs the last rites of a COVID-19 victim at a crematorium in Jammu, in Jammu, India. Pandemic-weary travelers are returning to the skies and casinos in the United States and eating out again in Greece as the vaccine rollout is sending news cases and deaths tumbling in more affluent countries, contrasting with a worsening disaster in India. (AP Photo/Channi Anand, File)

But with more-contagious variants taking hold, efforts are underway to boost vaccination efforts, which have begun to lag. The [average](#) number of doses given per day fell 27% from a high of 3.26 million on April 11 to 2.37 million last Tuesday, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In Detroit, teams from the city's health department have knocked on nearly 5,000 doors since the weekend to persuade people to get immunized. And Massachusetts' governor announced plans to close four of seven mass vaccination sites by the end of June in favor of a more targeted approach.

"My plea to everyone: Get vaccinated now, please," President Joe Biden said in Norfolk, Virginia. He stressed that he has worked hard to make sure there are more than 600 million doses of vaccine—enough for all Americans to get both doses.



People sit in on a cafe terrace, in the Monastiraki district of Athens, with the ancient Acropolis hill in the background, Monday, May 3, 2021. Cafes and restaurants have reopened in Greece for sit-down service for the first time in nearly six months, as the country began easing coronavirus-related restrictions with a view to opening to the vital tourism industry in the summer. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)



People walk along the Las Vegas Strip, Saturday, April 24, 2021, in Las Vegas. Las Vegas is bustling again after casino capacity limits were raised Saturday, May 1, to 80% and person-to-person distancing dropped to 3 feet (0.9 meters). (AP Photo/John Locher)



In this May 2, 2021, file photo, Austin Kennedy, left, a Seattle Sounders season ticket holder, gets the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic in a concourse at Lumen Field prior to an MLS soccer match between the Sounders and the Los Angeles Galaxy. Air travel in the U.S. hit its highest mark since COVID-19 took hold more than 13 months ago, while European Union officials are proposing to ease restrictions on visitors to the continent as the vaccine rollout sends new cases and deaths tumbling in more affluent countries. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File)



In this March 20, 2021, file photo, passengers on a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 Max 8 flight line up to exit the aircraft after arriving at Houston's Hobby airport. Air travel in the U.S. hit its highest mark since COVID-19 took hold more than 13 months ago, while European Union officials are proposing to ease restrictions on visitors to the continent as the vaccine rollout sends new cases and deaths tumbling in more affluent countries. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File)



People stream into Maximo Gomez Park, also known as Domino Park, after it reopened after it was closed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Monday, May 3, 2021, in the Little Havana neighborhood of Miami. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



People ride an escalator along the Las Vegas Strip, Saturday, April 24, 2021, in Las Vegas. Las Vegas is bustling again after casino capacity limits were raised Saturday, May 1, to 80% and person-to-person distancing dropped to 3 feet (0.9 meters). (AP Photo/John Locher)



Students arrive at school in Le Chesnay, west of Paris, Monday, May 3, 2021. In France, high schools reopened and a ban on domestic travel was lifted. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



A bartender wearing a protective face mask prepares a drink as people sitting outdoor are reflected on a window of Lola cafe-bar in Petralona, district of Athens, Monday, May 3, 2021. Pandemic-weary travelers are returning to the skies and casinos in the United States and eating out again in Greece as the vaccine rollout is sending news cases and deaths tumbling in more affluent countries, contrasting with a worsening disaster in India. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)



People drink coffee outdoor at Lola cafe-bar in Petralona, district of Athens, Monday, May 3, 2021. Cafes and restaurants have reopened in Greece for sit-down service for the first time in nearly six months, as the country began easing coronavirus-related restrictions with a view to opening to the vital tourism industry in the summer. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)



People walk in the 'Theresienwiese' area where the 'Oktoberfest' beer festival is held, in front of the Bavaria statue, in Munich, Germany, Monday, May 3, 2021. Bavarian officials canceled Oktoberfest for a second year in a row because of the safety risks. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader)



Visitors admire the Sistine Chapel inside the Vatican Museums on the occasion of the museum's reopening, in Rome, Monday, May 3, 2021. The Vatican Museums reopened Monday to visitors after a shutdown following COVID-19 containment measures. (AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino)



In this May 2, 2021, file photo, Inter Milan fans celebrate and shout slogans in Piazza Duomo square in front of the gothic cathedral after Inter Milan won its first Serie A title in more than a decade after second-placed Atalanta drew 1-1 at Sassuolo, in Milan, Italy. (AP Photo/Luca Bruno, File)

"We're going to increase that number across the board as well so we can also be helping other nations once we take care of all Americans," the president said.

Brazil, once the epicenter of the pandemic, has been overtaken by a surge in India that has overrun crematoriums and made it clear the pandemic is far from over.

As the U.S. and other countries rushed in aid, India reported nearly

370,000 new cases and more than 3,400 deaths Monday—numbers that experts believe are vast undercounts because of a widespread lack of testing and incomplete reporting.

In [Germany](#), Bavarian officials canceled Oktoberfest for a second year in a row because of the safety risks. The beer-drinking festivities typically attract about 6 million visitors from around the world.

And in Italy, medical experts and politicians expressed concern about a possible spike in infections after tens of thousands of jubilant soccer fans converged on Milan's main square Sunday to celebrate Inter Milan's league title.

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