

Surge in Latin America as global coronavirus toll pass 400,000

7 June 2020, by Afp Bureaus



A man films with a mobile phone as he helps bury a victim of COVID-19 at a cemetery on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Surging fatalities in Latin America helped push the global coronavirus death toll above 400,000 on Sunday, even as Europe emerged from its virus lockdown with infections increasingly under control there.

Pope Francis, addressing Catholics in Saint Peter's Square on Sunday for the first time since the health emergency began, said the worst was over in Italy and expressed sympathy for those in hard-hit Latin American countries.

"Your presence in the square is a sign that in Italy the acute phase of the epidemic is over," Francis said as the Vatican confirmed it had no more cases of COVID-19 among its employees or within Vatican City.

"Unfortunately in other countries—I am thinking of some of them—the virus continues to claim many victims."

Brazil has the world's third-highest toll—more than

36,000 dead—but President Jair Bolsonaro has criticized stay-at-home measures imposed by local officials and has threatened to leave the World Health Organization.

Tolls are also rising sharply in Mexico, Peru and Ecuador, while in Chile, total deaths have now reached 2,290.

Chilean health minister Jaime Manalich said on Sunday that some miscounting pointed out by the World Health Organization in March and April was corrected, pushing the toll up from 1,541 on Saturday.



Pope Francis said the worst of the coronavirus crisis was over in Italy as he addressed the faithful for the first time in Saint Peter's Square

But in communist Cuba, President Miguel Diaz-Canel declared the pandemic "under control" after the island nation registered an eighth straight day without a death from COVID-19, leaving the toll at 83.

The number of infections has reached almost seven million worldwide since COVID-19 emerged

in China late last year, forcing much of the globe into lockdown and pushing the world economy towards its worst downturn since the Great Depression.

However, fears of a second wave of the deadly disease have given way to grave worries over the economy, encouraging European countries to reopen borders and businesses, and those throughout Asia and Africa to slowly return to normal life.

As of 1900 GMT, a total of 400,581 deaths were recorded worldwide, according to an AFP tally using official figures—a number that has doubled in the past month and a half.

While almost half of the deaths have been recorded in Europe, the United States remains the hardest-hit nation with more than 110,000 deaths, followed by Britain, whose toll exceeds 40,500.

Late Sunday, the US daily death toll, at 691, was the lowest it had been in a week, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

said, after a new surge in infections.

The kingdom has seen infections spike as it eases lockdown measures, with the number of daily cases exceeding 3,000 for the second day in a row on Sunday.

Europe restarting

In Europe, countries are slowly working towards a post-pandemic normal, and trying to revive tourist sectors in time for the summer and return to business.

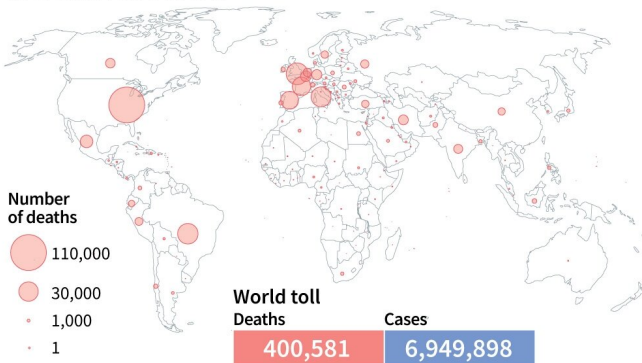
The UK government said Sunday it would reopen places of worship for individual prayer on June 15.

But British Airways and the low-cost carriers EasyJet and Ryanair launched legal action against government plans to force foreigners arriving in Britain to self-isolate for two weeks.

In a joint statement, they said the measures would devastate tourism and destroy even more jobs.

Spread of the coronavirus

As of June 7 at 1900 GMT



Source: AFP toll based on official tolls

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The UK government said it will reopen places of worship for individual prayer on June 15, 2020

World map showing official number of coronavirus cases and deaths per country, as of June 7, 2020 at 1900 GMT

The number of coronavirus cases in Saudi Arabia surpassed 100,000 on Sunday, the health ministry

The European Union said it could reopen borders to travelers from outside the region in early July after some countries within the bloc dropped restrictions on other European visitors.

France marked the anniversary of the 1944 D-Day landings with a fraction of the big crowds seen in previous years, owing to strict social distancing restrictions.

But in South Africa, where President Cyril Ramaphosa gave places of worship approval to reopen from June 1, few were returning to services.

"I am praying at home, God hears me just fine when I pray at home with my family," 57-year-old vegetable seller Gloria Msibi told AFP.

"I love church but it is so dangerous to be in a closed space with so many people."

Oil revival

OPEC agreed on Saturday to extend an April deal to cut production through July, aiming to foster a recovery in oil prices after they were pummeled by slumps in demand.

Factories in India are also struggling to restart because of labor shortages. The country is slowly emerging from a strict lockdown that sent millions of migrant laborers back to their distant home villages.

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Factories in India are struggling to restart because of labor shortages after millions of migrant labourers went home during lockdown

But gloomy data from Asia's two powerhouse economies highlighted the long road to recovery.

China reported a plunge in foreign trade on the back of subdued consumer demand and weakness in key overseas markets.

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