

Coronavirus latest global developments

17 July 2020

Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

Brazil reaches 'plateau'

Brazil, which on Thursday topped two million coronavirus cases, has "plateaued", according to the World Health Organization, which says: "The rise in Brazil is no longer exponential."

India also passes the one-million-cases mark on Friday, meaning it ranks behind the United States and Brazil as the third worst-hit country.

EU rescue summit

Deeply divided European Union leaders hunker down for two days of tortuous negotiations on a planned 750-billion-euro (\$855 billion) post-coronavirus economic rescue plan. Their first face-to-face summit since February is "slow" according to diplomats, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel warns: "The differences are still very, very large."

New restrictions

The regional government in Spain's second city Barcelona urges residents to stay home after a rise in virus cases. It also orders the closure of cinemas, theatres and nightclubs and bans gatherings of more than 10 people.

And Israel's government imposes new restrictions in the hope of avoiding a general lockdown further along the line. They include the closure every weekend of malls, stores and other venues.

Britain normal by Christmas?

Britain could return to normality from the outbreak before Christmas, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says, sketching out a timetable for easing the remaining lockdown measures in England, including lifting homeworking guidance, despite the threat of a second wave.

More than 590,000 deaths

The pandemic has killed at least 590,000 people worldwide since it surfaced in China late last year and more than 13.8 million have been infected, according to an AFP tally at 1200 GMT on Friday based on official sources.

The United States has the most deaths with 138,360. It is followed by Brazil with 76,688, Britain with 45,119, Mexico with 37,574, and Italy with 35,017.

Dexamethasone: benefits and risks

The full results from a UK trial of the steroid dexamethasone confirm its life-saving benefits for COVID-19 patients on ventilators but suggest it may cause harm if given too early.

Biggest risk to US economy

The dominant risk to the US economic recovery is a resurgence of COVID-19 cases that would force renewed business shutdowns, in a country whose economy has already contracted by 37 percent in the second quarter, the International Monetary Fund warns.

Emirates resumes Iran flights

Dubai-based Emirates airlines resumes flights to Tehran after a five-month break due to shutdowns to curb the spread of coronavirus from Iran, the worst-hit country in the Middle East.

Record rise in Melbourne

Australia's second-biggest city of Melbourne reports a record rise of more than 400 new coronavirus cases despite a week-old lockdown of more than five million residents, with Victoria state's chief health officer saying: "We have not turned the corner here, worse than that."

British fundraiser knighted

A 100-year-old World War II veteran, Captain Tom Moore, who raised nearly £33 million (\$41.3 million, 36.1 million euros) for British health charities, is knighted in a special ceremony by Queen Elizabeth II.

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APA citation: Coronavirus latest global developments (2020, July 17) retrieved 20 November 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-coronavirus-latest-global-3.html>

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