

# Coronavirus: latest global developments

20 July 2020

Here are the latest developments in the coronavirus crisis:

## Vaccine breakthrough

Two coronavirus vaccine candidates have proven safe for humans and produced strong immune reactions among patients involved in separate clinical trials, doctors say.

The first trial involved more than 1,000 adults in Britain and the second in China more than 500 people. Published in *The Lancet* medical journal, they constitute a major step on the road towards a COVID-19 vaccine that is effective and safe for widespread use.

Meanwhile, British biotech firm Synairgen says a randomised trial of an aerosol-based treatment shows it could drastically reduce the number of new coronavirus patients dying from the disease or requiring intensive care.

## EU seeks to break summit deadlock

European Union chief Charles Michel puts forward a new proposal for a massive, but scaled down, coronavirus rescue plan for the recession-battered bloc, in hopes of breaking four days of deadlock at a summit in Brussels.

"I think an agreement is possible," Michel says of his proposal aimed at bridging the divide between frugal EU countries like the Netherlands and Austria and the worst pandemic-hit—and most indebted—members such as Italy and Spain.

## 'Acceleration' in Africa

The World Health Organization voices alarm at the spread of COVID-19 in Africa, warning South Africa's surging numbers could be a "precursor" for outbreaks across the continent.

Until recently, Africa had remained relatively unscathed by the pandemic, but the situation has

become increasingly worrying, particularly in South Africa, which has passed the 5,000-death mark.

## More than 606,600 dead

The pandemic has killed at least 606,605 people worldwide since it surfaced in China late last year, according to an AFP tally at 1100 GMT on Monday based on official sources.

The United States has the most deaths with 140,534, followed by Brazil with 79,488, Britain with 45,300, Mexico with 39,184, and Italy with 35,045.

## Improvement in Russia

Russia, the world's fourth hardest-hit country in terms of infections, reports fewer than 6,000 new cases for the first time since the end of April.

"The situation is improving," President Vladimir Putin says during a visit to Crimea, noting other countries are seeing a "flare-up" in cases.

## Cricket T20 World Cup postponed

The cricket T20 World Cup due to take place in Australia from October 18 has been postponed until next year due to the pandemic, the International Cricket Council announces. A new date is being pencilled in from October to November 2021.

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