

# COVID-19 surging in Russia; weekly world deaths drop 10%, cases 5%



COVID-19 cases have surged in Russia, despite a 10% decrease in deaths and 5% decline in cases worldwide. Photo by Sergei Ilnitsky/EPA-EFE

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June 20 (UPI) — As coronavirus subsides through much of the world, the pandemic is surging in Russia with a record daily cases increase last week and the most deaths in three months.

Globally, fatalities dropped 10% and infections were down 5% compared with an 8% rise in deaths and 37% cases in Russia. On Sunday, the death toll was 3,881,920 and cases were at 179,245,918, according to Worldometers.info.

The United States has the most deaths at 601,826 and cases with 33,541,889. Brazil passed 500,000 on Saturday and stood at 501,918 for second place on with

India third with 386,713. India is second in cases with 29,881,965 but its 58,419 increase Sunday was lowest in 81 days. Brazil is third with 17,927,928 cases, including a record 98,135 Friday.

Brazil added the most deaths (14,510) and cases (469,573) in the past week.

Russia, meanwhile in the past week, passed Britain and Italy to sixth place in deaths at 129,361. And Russia is sixth in cases with 5,316,826.

Russia now heads Europe for the most fatalities but is behind France for cases.

Russia set a daily cases record with 17,906 Saturday, followed by 17,611 Sunday. In deaths, the 466 Saturday was the most since 475 March 13 and behind the record 635 Dec. 24. Sunday's increase was 450.

Russia is lagging behind other nations in vaccinating its resident though it has developed its own vaccine, Sputnik 5.

The nation has vaccinated only 12.3% of its population with one dose and 10.2% are fully vaccinated.

"Our common goal is to focus all our efforts and all our resources on protecting citizens against the coronavirus and its effects," Russian President Vladimir Putin said Sunday in his address on the occasion of the Medical Worker Day. "First, it is imperative to step up the vaccination rates. We have all we need to do this."

Along with the one-dose Johnson & Johnson, the other top vaccine makers are Moderna and Pfizer, which require two shots.

Worldwide, a total of 2.59 billion shots have been given in a population of 7.9 billion with a two-dose regimen required for most brands, according to tracking by Bloomberg.

The United States has administered at least one dose to 53.2% of its population with Brazil at 29.6%. Britain, which inoculated the first person in the world in December, is among the best in the world with 63.9%. India is a dominant manufacturer of vaccines worldwide, but the nation has inoculated only 16.5% of its population with at least one dose.

North America leads with 69 doses administered per 100 people, followed by Europe at 60, South America at 36, Asia at 33, Oceania at 18, and Africa at 3.1, according to tracking by The New York Times.

The Leningrad region that surrounds St. Petersburg has ordered mandatory vaccinations for 80% of service workers. The Tula region in central Russia has ordered mandatory vaccination for at-risk groups. In Moscow, service sector workers must now be vaccinated.

Moscow has extended its coronavirus restrictions until June 29, Mayor Sobyanin announced Friday. Remaining closed are outdoor theaters, playgrounds, food courts, children's playrooms in malls, and zoos. Restaurants and bars must close from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Moscow hospitals won't provide routine treatment to unvaccinated patients, officials announced Friday.

Almost 90% of the city's new infections are the more contagious Delta variant that was first detected in India several months ago, the mayor said.

Despite the surge, Russia will resume regular air travel to Turkey on Tuesday and on June 28 with several other countries including United States, China, Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, Jordan, and Ireland, Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova announced Friday.

Overall, deaths have declined 13% and cases 3% in Europe.

Britain was among the only eight European nations in the top 20 for most deaths that increased over the past week. But it was only 74 deaths for a 23% increase compared with 2,637 fatalities in Russia.

Britain also was the only nation in the top 20 for cases to increase: 33% with a gain of 73,764, including 10,321 Saturday. On Thursday, the 11,007 rise was the most in four months. Russia rose by 76,690.

Britain is seventh with 127,976 deaths, Italy eighth with 127,270, France ninth with 110,738, Germany 11th with 90,966, Spain 14th with 80,652, Poland 15th at 74,828, and Ukraine 18th at 52,016.

Of those countries, besides Britain, the only counties to vaccinate at least 50% of

its population are Italy at 51.5% and Germany at 50.6% followed by France at 49.3%, Spain 48.8%, Poland 42.3%, and Ukraine 4.8%.

On Sunday, Britain gained six deaths, Italy 17, France 14, Germany 13, Poland 5, Ukraine 24. Spain doesn't release data on the weekend.

Europe has posted the most deaths of the continents, 1,092,506, and cases are second, 47,461,534.

In Britain, deaths have dropped to only 60 in one week with a daily record 2,396 earlier this year. But cases rose 31% at 66,418, including 8,125 Friday, the highest in three months. Sunday's increase was 9,284.

Amid the Delta variant surging in Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson scrapped plans to lift all restrictions this Monday.

"Now is the time to ease off the accelerator because by being cautious now, we have the chance in the next four weeks to save many thousands of lives by vaccinating millions more people," Johnson said at a news conference in Downing Street.

Vaccines have shown to be effective against the variants.

The British government has placed most nations on a COVID-safe travel list. On an "amber list" are several countries, including the United States, Canada, and most European nations, in which travelers must complete a 10-day quarantine at home.

Starting Monday, Italy will require a mandatory five-day quarantine for visitors from Britain. Also, France, Austria, and Germany already introduced curbs on people arriving from Britain.

Other European nations are opening travel, including launching by July 1 a Digital Covid Certificate, which allows for free movement of travelers between its countries. The app provides digital proof they are vaccinated, recently tested negative for coronavirus or recovered from the illness.

On Friday, the 27-nation European Union added the United States among countries for which travel restrictions should gradually be lifted.

But it's up to each nation to decide on opening its borders.

Canada extended its non-essential travel ban with the United States one month through July 21. It began one year ago in March. The ban between Mexico and the United States is scheduled to end Monday.

Mexico is fourth in the world with 231,151 deaths, including 192 Sunday and 15th in cases at 2,475,705 with 3,649 most recently. Deaths are way down in Mexico from a one-day record of 1,803.

Canada has reported under triple digits for deaths since 142 on Feb. 3 and a record 257 on Dec. 29 for a total of 26,076 in 23rd, including 22 Sunday. Cases reported were 713, down from the record of 11,383 on Jan. 3.

In one week, U.S. deaths dropped 23% to 2,035 and cases were down 23% to 78,107.

North America's totals are 911,800 deaths, down 10% for seven days, and 40,339,840 cases, dropping 5%.

Mexico's vaccination rate is 21.6%, though it was the first Latin American nation to begin vaccinating people. And Canada has risen to 65% and leading the United States by nearly 12% after lagging by several points for months.

In Mexico, those 40 and older can register to get vaccinated.

"The journey to store the vaccines and to transport them has become a huge logistical issue," Dr. Fernando Hernandez Maldonado, San Luis Potosi's director of public health told NBC News. "But we are here, ready and have our personnel ready...we are trying to make it easy for the public to get their vaccine."

In South America, deaths decreased 0.2% and cases rose 1%.

South America has four nations in the top 20 for most deaths. Besides Brazil, Peru is fifth with 190,425, Colombia 10th with 99,934, and Argentina 12th with 89,043.

Overall, South America has 971,120 deaths and 31,643,387 cases.

Brazil's fatalities increased 6%, including 2,247 Saturday and 1,050 Sunday, and infections rose by 81,574 Saturday and 44,178 Sunday.

Chile has the best vaccination rate on the continent at 61.9% and is 21st in deaths with 31,513, with Argentina at 31.5%, Colombia at 19.3%, and Peru at 11.4%.

Chile's deaths rose 7% in the past week and 121 Sunday.

On Saturday, Colombia reported the third-most deaths behind India and Brazil with 589 and Argentina was fourth with 495. And Peru rose by 269.

Despite the high numbers in Brazil, governors and mayors have reduced restrictions. Many don't wear face masks or adhere to social distancing.

"People in Brazil are tired and they normalize death now so I think we still have a long way to go," Dr. Natalia Pasternak Taschner, a microbiologist at the Question of Science Institute, told the BBC. "If we're not successful in changing the behavior of people and if we don't have campaigns for mask-wearing, social distancing and vaccinations coming directly from the central government we're not going to be able to control it."

President Jair Bolsonaro, who contracted the virus last July, won't back social distancing procedures and hasn't made vaccinations a priority.

On Saturday, protests against Bolsonaro took place in cities across the country, including Brasilia with 70,000 and Sao Paulo with 100,000.

In Asia, deaths are down 22% and cases declined 14%. The totals are 767,357 fatalities and 54,479,503 infections.

The bulk of the decline has been in India. The Asian nation's deaths declined 33% to 9,912 and cases dropped 30% to 442,314.

The infections total is not far from the world daily record of 414,188 in May. Deaths increased 1,576 compared with a single-day world record 4,529, also in May. The world daily record was 6,148 one week ago but Bihar revised its total related death toll to 9,429 from 5,424, accounting for people who died at home or in private hospitals.

With India only vaccinating one-sixth of its population, Prime Minister Narendra Modi plans to have vaccines available for everyone starting Monday.

"In the second wave of coronavirus, we saw what kind of challenges the ever-

changing form of this virus can bring before us," Modi said Friday.

And he launched a crash-course program to train 100,000 front-line workers as "COVID warriors."

The pandemic outbreak began in late 2019 in Mainland China, but the nation with the world's largest population of 1.5 billion has reported only a few deaths in the past 12 months and stands in 62nd at 4,636 behind Ireland with 4,941. China added 23 cases Sunday and had administered 1 billion doses, the most in the world and dwarfing second-place United States with around 317 million and India with 277 million, according to tracking by Johns Hopkins.

The United States government has pledged 2.5 million Moderna doses will be sent to Taiwan for arrival Sunday night, tripling its original pledge.

"A big THANK YOU from the people of Taiwan to the USA for life-saving vaccines," Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan's ambassador to the United States, tweeted. "A friend in need is a friend indeed. Together we are stronger in the global fight against #COVID19."

Taiwan has vaccines for 3% of its population of 23.9 million. Its deaths are 549 and cases are 14,005.

Iran has the second-most deaths in Asia in 13th at 82,965 with 111 reported Sunday.

Turkey ranks fifth in the world for cases at 5,370,299 with 5,091 Sunday and 19th in deaths at 49,185, including 63 most recently.

In the Far East, Indonesia has the most deaths, 54,662 in 18th place with 371 reported Sunday compared with the record 476 in late January. And cases numbered 13,737 with the record 14,518, also late January. Vaccinations were 8.6% of the population with at least one dose.

"The spread of this virus variant is very fast," Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said during an online seminar on Sunday. "Because many seaports in Indonesia carry goods and many also come from India, they enter from there"

And Udayana University professor Gusti Ngurah Mahardika, Bali's most senior virologist, told Al Jazeera: "People traveling during Ramadan played a role, no

question about that. But we are a disorganized country, most of the focus is on the economy and the people are experiencing COVID exhaustion and fatigue. In the capital [of Bali] Denpasar where I live, the cafe and restaurants are full every evening.”

Israel, which is considered part of Asia, has fully vaccinated 60.7% of its population, among the best in the world. Its death toll is 6,428, with no change in a week.

Japan is 36th with 14,439 deaths, including 20 Sunday with a record 216 five weeks ago. Cases are 1,308 with a record of 7,882.

Only 16.5% of the population has received at least one dose.

With the Summer Olympics in Japan to start on July 23, the Japanese government lifted its state of emergency everywhere Sunday except Okinawa Prefecture until July. 11. But there are restrictions, including Tokyo and Osaka, where restaurants and pubs which meet certain conditions will be allowed to serve alcohol until 7 p.m.

In a report released last week, Japanese medical experts said spectators at the Tokyo Olympics is the “least risky” option. Another option is that Olympic venues could each hold up to 10,000. Foreign spectators are already banned.

Officials and volunteers for the Games started receiving vaccinations.

South Korea has vaccinated 28.6% of its population, up from 22.0% in one week. The nation has 2,002 deaths, including five more Sunday, and 151,149 cases, with a rise of 429 Sunday.

On July 1, South Korea will relax social distancing rules in the greater Seoul area from the current four starting on Jul 1, the government said Sunday.

Coronavirus remains minimal in Oceania, with only 42.3 million people. There are 1,266 deaths and 71,515 cases.

New Zealand’s deaths remain at 26 with the last one reported on Feb. 16 and Australia’s toll stayed at 910 with one reported April 13.

New Zealand reported four cases Sunday, tallying 10 in one week, for a total of



2,718, and Australia was up nine, which is 83 in a week, for 30,331 total.

Australia has vaccinated 21% of its population. New Zealand has administered first doses to 11.5% of its population.

In Sydney, residents are now required to wear masks indoors in most portions of the city amid a few cases reported in the eastern suburbs.

However, over the past week there have been 1,224 cases of which 926 belong to Fiji.

The archipelago nation added 166 cases on Sunday, by far the most of the region, for a total of 1,964. It also added one death, the only Oceanic death on Sunday, for a total of 7.

Africa reported the biggest increase in cases in the past week at 29% for a cumulative 5,249,418 and deaths at 15% for a total 137,856.

South Africa led the seven-day spike with 937 additional deaths at 18% and cases at 76,237, up 51%. A more contagious variant originated there.

South Africa is No. 1 on the continent with 58,702 deaths, including 112 Sunday and 13,155 cases. Egypt is second with 15,859 fatalities and Tunisia third with 14,038.

South Africa has vaccinated 3.6% of its population with at least one shot.

Around 36 million doses have been administered to the African population of 1.2 billion.

“Africa needs millions more doses here and now,” said Matshidiso Moeti, the World Health Organization’s regional director for Africa, said in a report by The Guardian. “Africa is in the midst of a full-blown third wave ... We’ve seen in India and elsewhere how quickly Covid-19 can rebound and overwhelm health systems.”

The G7 nations have pledged a billion vaccine doses to the developing world.

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