

Italy's toll tops 4,000 with record 627 single-day deaths - latest updates

Globally, there are more than 245,000 cases of which 88,465 people recovered, in 158 countries and territories, according to various trackers. Here's what's happening on March 20:



People stand apart as they line up to enter a supermarket in Milan, Italy, March 20, 2020. (AP)

Friday, March 20, 2020

Italy coronavirus deaths surge by 627 in a day, lifting total death toll to 4,032

The death toll from an outbreak of coronavirus in Italy has leapt by 627 to 4,032, officials said on Friday, an increase of 18.4 percent — by far the largest daily rise in absolute terms since the contagion emerged a month ago.

On Thursday, Italy overtook China as the country to register most deaths from the highly contagious virus.

Until Friday, Italy had never recorded more than 475 deaths in a single day, while China, where the contagion has slowed sharply, has never reported more than 150.

The total number of cases in Italy rose to 47,021 from a previous 41,035, an increase of 14.6 percent, the Civil Protection Agency said.

New York joins California in locking down against the virus

New York state moved to join California on Friday in confining nearly all residents to their homes, as governors undertook their most sweeping efforts yet to contain the coronavirus and fend off the kind of onslaught of patients that has caused southern Europe to buckle.

"We're going to close the valve, because the rate of increase in the number of cases portends a total overwhelming of our hospital system," New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said as cases in the state climbed to more than 7,000 and the death toll reached at least 38.

US and Mexico to curb border travel to control coronavirus

Mexico and the US announced plans to sharply limit travel over their busy shared border as part of efforts to control the spread of the coronavirus.

President Donald Trump and Mexican Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said the two governments agreed to prohibit recreational and tourist travel, similar to the restrictions put in place earlier this week along the US and Canadian border.

Trump said the actions with the country's North American partners "will save countless lives."

There would be no ban on people travelling for work or other essential activities and there would be no halt to commercial traffic, Ebrard said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the restrictions would take effect at midnight Friday.

Cambodia reports new four cases, bringing total to 51

Cambodia reported four new cases of coronavirus on, raising its tally to 51.

Of the 51 cases, 25 had travelled to Malaysia for a ceremony at a mosque, the health ministry said in a statement, adding that the 51 cases in Cambodia included 12 Malaysian nationals.

Tunisia president announces nationwide, round-the-clock self-isolation

Tunisian President Kais Saied declared a nationwide, round-the-clock self-isolation of inhabitants to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus in the country, after an increase in confirmed cases.

The start date and implementation of the self-isolation will be specified by the government later on Friday, the presidency told AFP.

During the day, everyone should stay home and only go out in cases of “extreme necessity”, Saied said in a televised address.

Tunisia has so far reported 54 confirmed cases of the Covid-19 disease and one death.

Coronavirus death toll in England rises to 167

A further 39 people have died in England after testing positive for the coronavirus, bringing the total number of confirmed deaths in the country to 167, the National Health Service said on Friday.

The patients who died were aged between 50 and 99 and had underlying health conditions.

Global coronavirus death toll crosses 10,000

Globally, the death toll from the virus has reached 10,048 with more than 145,000 active cases in 158 countries and territories, according to trackers.

The number of infections and deaths in the rest of the world has surpassed those in China, which appears to have staunched the virus with strict measures including a complete quarantine of Wuhan since January.

Spain virus death toll soars past 1,000 - ministry

The coronavirus toll in Spain rose to 1,002 on Friday following the deaths of 235 people in the past 24 hours, the health ministry said.

The number of cases also soared to 19,980, after another 2,833 infections were confirmed over the same period, the ministry's emergencies coordinator Fernando Simon said.

Iran announces 149 more virus deaths, toll rises to 1,433

Iran has announced 149 more fatalities from the new coronavirus, bringing its death toll to 1,433 amid nearly 20,000 confirmed cases.

Iran is battling the worst outbreak in the Middle East, and has been widely criticised for its slow response.

The country's leaders struck an upbeat tone earlier Friday, issuing messages in honour of the Persian new year in which they vowed to overcome the pandemic.

Belgium passes 2,000 coronavirus cases, deaths mount

The number of coronavirus cases recorded in Belgium surged past 2,000 on Friday and the number of deaths attributed to the disease Covid-19 jumped up by 16 to 37.

According to the country's national crisis centre, 462 new confirmed cases of the virus have been reported, bringing the total to 2,257 in a country of 11.4 million people.

Two-thirds of the new cases overnight were in Dutch-speaking Flanders, in northern Belgium.

In the past 24 hours another 203 people have been admitted to hospital in Belgium, and 164 of them will require intensive care, such as breathing assistance.

Malaysian army to enforce curbs as coronavirus cases rise above 1,000

Malaysia will mobilise the army to help enforce curbs on movement aimed at reining in the coronavirus, the government said on Friday, as it grapples with the highest number of infections in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia reported 130 new infections on Friday, taking its total to 1,030, accounting for nearly 40 percent of those across Southeast Asia.

Since Wednesday, Malaysia has closed its borders, schools and non-essential businesses for two weeks and ordered people to limit going outside, warning of a “tsunami” of cases if the curbs are not followed.

US power industry may ask key employees to live at work if coronavirus worsens

The US electric industry may ask essential staff to live on site at power plants and control centres to keep operations running if the coronavirus outbreak worsens, and has been stockpiling beds, blankets, and food for them, according to industry trade groups and electric cooperatives.

The contingency plans, if enacted, would mark an unprecedented step by power providers to keep their highly-skilled workers healthy as both private industry and governments scramble to minimise the impact of the global pandemic that has infected more than 227,000 people worldwide.

Argentina under lockdown as coronavirus cases surge

Argentina on Friday imposed a countrywide lockdown as part of efforts to stem the spread of the coronavirus in the country.

The country will remain under lockdown until at least March 31, President Alberto Fernande said in a statement posted on Twitter Thursday night.

Transfers will only be allowed for exceptional reasons, in addition to circulation that continue to guarantee essential production, supply, health services and all essential services, according to the statement.

Security forces will patrol streets to ensure no one leaves home unnecessarily.

UK asks retired nurses, doctors to work again

Britain is asking 65,000 retired nurses and doctors to return to work to help fight the coronavirus.

The government is sending letters to 50,000 former nurses and 15,000 retired doctors, and Health Secretary Matt Hancock said he hoped “many, many

thousands will respond” to the appeal. He said volunteers would be given training over the next few weeks before being allocated to hospitals.

Final-year nursing and medical students could also be drafted to bolster health care staff.

The UK has 3,269 confirmed cases of Covid-19, and 144 people have died.

France’s Macron says only at start of coronavirus crisis

France is only at the beginning of the coronavirus crisis and is in a race to curb its progress, President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday.

“We are at the start of this crisis. We have taken exceptional measures to absorb this first wave, but we’ve started a race against the virus,” Macron said at the start of a crisis meeting at the Interior Ministry.

“We must react a great deal and reorganise ourselves at every moment. We need to anticipate.”

France says 130,000 citizens stuck abroad

Some 130,000 French citizens are currently stuck abroad because of measures to contain the coronavirus spread, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said, adding that the government is working to organise their return home.

The foreign ministry announced on Thursday that it was working to obtain authorisation for exceptional commercial flights out of countries that have imposed travel restrictions to contain the virus outbreak.

Le Drian’s comments came as government spokeswoman Sibeth Ndiaye said it was “quite likely” that France’s stay-at-home order would have to be extended into April, beyond the 15 days announced on Monday.

Iran leaders vow to defeat virus in holiday messages

Iran’s supreme leader and president promised Friday that the country would overcome one of the world’s deadliest coronavirus outbreaks just as it had faced down sweeping US sanctions.

In messages marking the Persian New Year holiday Nowruz, Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani both acknowledged that the past year had been difficult.

Khamenei paid tribute to the sacrifices of the country's doctors and nurses in tackling the coronavirus, which has infected 18,407 people in Iran and killed 1,284, according to an official tally.

Sri Lanka to impose national curfew

Mosques in Sri Lanka were shut indefinitely from Friday, and the island is set to impose a countrywide curfew over the weekend, as South Asian countries step up efforts to check the spread of Covid-19 cases.

A police curfew is set to be imposed nationwide in Sri Lanka from 6 pm local time on Friday until 6 am on Monday, as authorities on the island moved to slow the spread of the virus, which has infected 65 people there.

The religious body that oversees mosques in the nation directed all of them to shut indefinitely.

More people dead in Italy of coronavirus than China

Italy has is now ahead of China as the country with the most deaths from the pandemic.

The death toll soared in Europe as Italy announced another 427 fatalities on Thursday, taking its total to 3,405, according to a tally compiled by AFP from official sources.

California governor orders residents to stay at home

All residents of California were ordered to stay at home Thursday in a bid to battle the coronavirus pandemic in the most populous state in the US.

The statewide order, which Governor Gavin Newsom said goes into effect "this evening," is the most dramatic containment measure yet by a US state.

"There is a mutuality, there is a recognition of our interdependence, that requires of this moment that we direct a statewide order for people to stay at home," he said.

No end date was set for the measure because the pandemic is a “dynamic situation,” said Newsom.

California is home to more than 39 million people, and has been among the worst hit by the pandemic.

It has experienced at least 18 deaths from the coronavirus, according to a Johns Hopkins tally.

S Korea, China support holding ‘complete’ Olympics

The foreign ministers of South Korea, China and Japan expressed their support for Tokyo to host “complete” Tokyo Olympics at a video conference held on Friday, South Korea’s foreign ministry said.

The ministers held a video conference to discuss cooperation on the coronavirus pandemic amid growing concerns over the number of infected people arriving in their countries from overseas.

Malaysia to deploy army to help enforce coronavirus curbs

Malaysia will deploy the army from Sunday to help enforce travel and movement curbs aimed at reining in the spread of a coronavirus, the government said, as it grapples with the highest number of infections in Southeast Asia.

Since Wednesday, Malaysia has closed its borders, schools and non-essential businesses, and urged people to stay at home, warning of a “tsunami” of cases if the curbs were not followed.

But people continued to go to restaurants and parks, despite the curbs, Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said on Friday.

Malaysia has 900 infections, with nearly two-thirds linked to an Islamic gathering last month near Kuala Lumpur, the capital, that attracted 16,000 participants. Authorities are scrambling to track all who attended.

Thailand reports 50 new coronavirus infections

Thailand reported 50 new coronavirus infections, taking its tally to 322, a health official said on Friday, with the majority located in Bangkok, the capital.

A group of 41 new cases is linked to earlier infections, while another, of nine, centres on overseas arrivals and contact with foreigners, Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, director-general of the disease control department, told a news conference.

Thailand has had one death in the outbreak, with 43 patients having recovered and gone home, while 278 are still in hospital.

Unity will help Iran overcome coronavirus - Rouhani

Iranians will overcome a coronavirus outbreak with unity, President Hassan Rouhani said in a televised speech on Friday, praising doctors and nurses for their courage in fighting the disease that has killed 1,284 in the Middle East country.

“Our nation has managed to reach its goals, despite difficulties ... Iran will overcome the coronavirus with unity,” Rouhani said in a speech at the start of the Iranian New Year.

Brazil prohibits entry to Europeans, Asians

Brazil will prohibit entry to travelers from Europe and several Asia Pacific countries starting Monday in an effort to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus, the government said.

The restriction is set to last 30 days and includes people coming from the European Union, Britain, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, as well as China, Japan, South Korea Australia and Malaysia who are not Brazilian residents or do not have valid work or family reasons to travel, according to the order.

Saudi Arabia suspends domestic flights and trains

Saudi Arabia suspended on Friday all domestic flights, buses, taxis and trains for 14 days starting Saturday, state news agency reported quoting a source in interior ministry.

The source said the move comes as a precautionary measure to limit the spread of coronavirus which has spread panic in global markets and put several countries on virtual lockdowns.

Saudi Arabia has so far confirmed 274 infections and no deaths, while globally the

pandemic has killed nearly 10,000 and infected over 240,000.

China's Jiangsu to quarantine travelers from 24 countries

The eastern coastal province of Jiangsu will force travelers who visited 24 key coronavirus-infected countries over the last two weeks to undergo 14 days of quarantine and observation in medical facilities, the local government said on Friday.

China reported 39 new cases of coronavirus on Thursday, all of which had arrived from abroad. The total number of confirmed imported infections has reached 228.

The neighboring city of Shanghai implemented similar quarantine restrictions on incoming travelers on Thursday.

South Korea reports 87 new coronavirus cases

South Korea reported 87 new coronavirus cases on Friday, bringing the total national infections to 8,652, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said.

The daily tally for new infections has been trending downward over the past week, despite a slight uptick on Thursday as small-scale outbreaks continued to emerge across the country.

China sees zero local coronavirus cases for second day

Mainland China reported zero locally transmitted cases of the coronavirus for the second straight day, while the daily tally for infections involving travellers arriving in the country surged to a new record.

Mainland China had 39 new confirmed cases on Thursday, the country's National Health Commission said, all of which were imported cases.

Of the new imported infections, 14 were in Guangdong, eight in Shanghai and six in Beijing, the health authority said on Friday.

Wuhan, capital of central Hubei province and epicenter of the outbreak in China, saw zero new cases for the second day.

That brings the total accumulated number of confirmed cases in mainland China

so far to 80,967.

The death toll from the outbreak had reached 3,248 as of the end of Thursday, up by three from the previous day.

New Zealand confirms 11 new cases

New Zealand on Friday confirmed 11 new cases of the Covid-19 disease, raising the total of cases to 39.

None of the 11 new cases were in hospital but were all at home in self-isolation.

Haiti confirms first two cases

Haiti has confirmed its first two cases of the new coronavirus.

President Jovenel Moise said the unidentified patients that tested positive for Covid-19 have been quarantined. He declined to release further details out of fear for their safety.

Moise also said he would close all airports, schools, factories and seaports.

Rio de Janeiro to close beaches, restaurants

Rio de Janeiro state announced on Thursday it would close beaches, restaurants and bars for 15 days from Saturday to try to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Wilson Witzel, the governor of Rio - Brazil's tourism capital thanks to its world-famous beaches such as Copacabana and Ipanema - also said he was also closing air, sea and land links with other states that have reported coronavirus cases, although those measures need to be approved by federal authorities.

Brazil has so far registered 621 cases of the coronavirus, with six deaths.

Two Los Angeles Lakers players have tested positive

Two Los Angeles Lakers players have tested positive for coronavirus, the NBA franchise said on Thursday, and have been quarantined under the care of the basketball team's doctor.

The Lakers did not identify the two infected players but said the team's athletes were tested on the recommendation of public health officials because of a March

10 game against the Brooklyn Nets. Four players on the Nets have since tested positive.

Panama coronavirus cases rise to 137 from 109

Panama had registered 137 cases of coronavirus infection in total, up from 109 a day earlier, Panamanian Health Minister Rosario Turner told a news conference.

Virus-hit Air New Zealand offered \$515M bailout

New Zealand's government is bailing out its national airline by offering more than \$500 million in loans.

Air New Zealand has already stopped most international routes and cut back on domestic flights due to the coronavirus outbreak. Beginning Friday, New Zealand has closed its borders to everyone but citizens and residents, ending most airline travel to the South Pacific nation.

Air New Zealand said it will cut its workforce of 12,500 by 30 percent.

The airline is 52 percent owned by the government, which has offered loans of \$511 million (900 million New Zealand dollars) over two years.

Argentina to announce obligatory quarantine to curb coronavirus

Argentina will announce an obligatory quarantine to curb the spread of coronavirus, provincial government sources said on Thursday.

The quarantine will be in effect from midnight on Friday morning until March 31, the sources said.

Argentina has already closed its borders for a total of 15 days and suspended flights from highly affected countries.

Washington state death toll up to 74

The death toll in Washington state from the new coronavirus has increased to 74, and the number of cases has topped 1,300, according to state health officials.

King County reported four new deaths - bringing its total to 60 - while Snohomish, Benton and Island counties each reported one death.

Source: TRTWorld and agencies

Source:

<https://www.trtworld.com/asia/italy-s-toll-tops-4-000-with-record-627-single-day-deaths-latest-updates-34719>

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