

NEWS / UNITED KINGDOM

UK confirms first two coronavirus cases


Two members of the same family tested positive for coronavirus, Chris Whitty, chief medical officer for England, says.

31 Jan 2020



The virus, called 2019-nCoV, originating from Wuhan, China, has spread globally since late December 2019 [EPA]

Two cases of coronavirus have been confirmed in the United Kingdom, the first such cases

 seen, British health authorities said on Friday.

"We can confirm that two patients in England, who are members of the same family, have tested positive for coronavirus," said Chris Whitty, chief medical officer for England.

More:

- **[Timeline: How China's new coronavirus spread](#)**
- **[What we know so far about coronavirus](#)**
- **[Coronavirus: All you need to know about symptoms and risks](#)**

"The patients are receiving specialist NHS care, and we are using tried-and-tested infection control procedures to prevent further spread of the virus," he said.

He also said the UK has been prepared and robust infection control measures are in place.

"We are continuing to work closely with the World Health Organization and the international community as the outbreak in China develops to ensure we are ready for all eventualities," Whitty said.

On Friday, the UK is bringing back from China about 150 British and EU citizens to the UK, according to officials.

The evacuated people will have to remain in quarantine for about two weeks.

A Health Ministry spokesperson said by phone that the two infected people were not on board the plane that transported the evacuees from Wuhan, the Chinese city at the centre of the coronavirus outbreak.

The spokesperson declined to give the infected pair's age, gender or other details.

The new coronavirus has killed at least 213 people in China, with nearly 10,000 infected. More than 80,000 people have come under medical observation.

Since its outbreak late last year, China has put Wuhan under lockdown in a bid to contain



the virus and is building a 1,000-bed hospital in the city to treat those affected by the outbreak.

Beyond China, the virus has spread to several other countries such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the United States, Singapore, France, Vietnam and Canada.

Travellers from China are being screened for the virus at airports worldwide. Several airlines, including British Airways and Turkish Airlines, have suspended flights to Wuhan and other parts of China.

At an emergency meeting on Thursday, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak an international emergency.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

NEWS / HEALTH

Africa's coronavirus caseload climbs past 600,000: Live updates

Africa now has more than 610,000 confirmed cases, with South Africa having most cases on the continent at 287,000.

by **Kate Mayberry, Ramy Allahoum & Linah Alsaafin**

14 Jul 2020 13:59 GMT

- Africa's coronavirus caseload has climbed above 600,000 as the pandemic on the 54-



...nation continent continues to pick up speed.

- Hong Kong is set to impose its toughest curbs yet to control the coronavirus, after authorities warned the risk of a large-scale outbreak was extremely high.
- The WHO has warned the pandemic could get far worse if countries around the world do not follow basic healthcare precautions. "The virus remains public enemy number one," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual briefing from WHO headquarters in Geneva.
- More than 13 million people around the world have been diagnosed with COVID-19, 7.3 million have recovered, and more than 573,000 have died, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University. The US, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Italy have recorded the most deaths.

Here are the latest updates.

Tuesday, July 14

14:00 GMT - Global vaccine plan may allow rich countries to buy more

Politicians and public health leaders have publicly committed to equitably sharing any coronavirus vaccine that works, but the top global initiative to make that happen may allow rich countries to reinforce their own stockpiles while making fewer doses available for poor ones.

While no country can afford to buy doses of every potential vaccine candidate, many poor ones can't afford to place such speculative bets at all.

Activists warn that without stronger attempts to hold political, pharmaceutical and health leaders accountable, vaccines will be hoarded by rich countries in an unseemly race to inoculate their populations first.

After the recent uproar over the United States purchasing a large amount of a new COVID-19 drug, some predict an even more disturbing scenario if a successful vaccine is

Hello, this is [Linah Alsaafin](#) taking over from [Ramy Allahoum](#) in Doha.

12:45 GMT - Philippines to use police in house-to-house searches for COVID-19 cases

Philippine authorities and police will carry out house-to-house searches for COVID-19 patients to prevent wider transmission, a minister has said, amid soaring death and infection numbers and some areas returning to a stricter lockdown.

Interior Minister Eduardo Ano urged the public to report cases in their neighbourhoods, warning that anyone infected who refused to cooperate faced imprisonment.

12:30 GMT - Oman to start allowing citizens to travel abroad: state TV

Oman will start allowing its citizens to fly outside the country, but they must apply with authorities to do so and quarantine upon their return, state television has reported.

Oman TV also said on its Twitter account that the Gulf Arab state had decided to maintain a lockdown on two regions, Dhofar and Masirah, without specifying for how long.

The sultanate has been gradually easing coronavirus restrictions that were imposed in March. Oman TV did not specify when Omani citizens would be able to travel abroad.

12:15 GMT - Catalan authorities order home confinement in Lleida

Spain's Catalonia has approved a resolution to place the residents of the city of Lleida and seven nearby towns under home confinement to stem a surge in coronavirus infections, after a judge earlier ruled that such a measure was unlawful.

The confinement will come into force on Wednesday and last for 15 days, Catalan regional government spokeswoman Meritxell Budo told reporters.

12:00 GMT - France to require masks at indoor public spaces

French President Emmanuel Macron has said that he favours making face masks mandatory in public indoor spaces to curtail the coronavirus pandemic, possibly starting on August 1.

"I would like to make masks mandatory in all enclosed public spaces," he said in a televised interview, adding: "We have indications that (the outbreak) is accelerating a bit."

11:45 GMT - Iran reports 179 new virus deaths

Iran has reported 179 new deaths from the novel coronavirus as authorities announced a decision to once more shutter some businesses in the capital to contain the virus' resurgence.

The reimposition of restrictive measures comes after the government had progressively lifted them from April to reopen its sanctions-hit economy.

The one-week measure in Tehran includes the closure of gyms, pools, zoos and cafes, ISNA news agency quoted deputy Tehran governor Hamidreza Goudarzi as saying.

11:30 GMT - Africa's virus caseload climbs past 600,000

Africa's coronavirus caseload has climbed above 600,000 as the pandemic on the 54-nation continent continues to pick up speed.

Africa surpassed the half-million case mark less than a week ago. The continent now has more than 610,000 confirmed cases. South Africa has the most cases on the continent, with more than 287,000.

11:15 GMT - Israel confirms record-high 1,681 new cases



Israel's Health Ministry said the country confirmed 1,681 new coronavirus cases, a record high.

Israel was widely praised for taking swift action early in the pandemic by closing its borders and imposing other restrictions to contain the virus's spread. But since reopening the economy and schools in May following a more than month-long lockdown, the number of new cases has steadily increased.

11:05 GMT - Thai authorities seek to fix errors that allowed infected foreigners in

Authorities in Thailand have urged almost 1,900 people to quarantine themselves and get tested for the virus after a breakdown in screening allowed two foreigners with the disease to pose a risk to public health.

The agency coordinating Thailand's coronavirus response also announced it is rolling back regulations for admitting foreign visitors in order to tighten up procedures.

10:50 GMT - Singapore enters recession with 41 percent contraction

Singapore's economy slipped into recession in the second quarter, contracting by a record 41.2 percent from the previous three months, and is facing its biggest slump ever this year as measures to contain the coronavirus hammered the trade-reliant country.

Economists polled by the Reuters news agency had expected a 37.4-percent slump, but the pandemic took a heavy toll on the construction sector, which plunged 95.6 percent.

Read more [here](#).

10:35 GMT - Virgin Atlantic to clinch \$1.5bn rescue deal

British airline Virgin Atlantic is close to securing a 1.2 billion pound (\$1.5 billion) rescue



deal, Sky News reported, removing the medium-term chance of administration as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

The deal, which will involve backing from Richard Branson's Virgin Group and hedge fund Davidson Kempner, could be confirmed later on Tuesday, Sky News said. A spokeswoman for Virgin Atlantic declined to comment on the report.

10:15 GMT - UK demands the public wear face coverings in shops

Britain's government will demand people wear face coverings in shops as it seeks to clarify its message after weeks of prevarication amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock is expected to tell the House of Commons on Tuesday that anyone failing to comply with the order could face a fine of up to 100 pounds (\$125). The order comes into effect on July 24, giving shops and the police time to prepare.

Many European nations, including Germany, Spain, Italy and Greece, already require masks to be worn in enclosed spaces. Britain, which has reported one of the world's highest numbers of coronavirus cases and deaths, had taken a more relaxed attitude, recommending masks but not requiring them - at least until now.

10:00 GMT - Transparency concerns raised over India COVID-19 fund

Bejon Misra responded quickly to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal in March for donations to a new fund to strengthen the country's fight against the coronavirus.

The next day, the 69-year-old retired management professor made a donation. "It was a generous contribution because Modi is the face of it," Misra said.

Such trust in Modi is common in India, the prime minister enjoying a very high approval rating, despite coronavirus infections spiking in recent weeks.

 [Read more here.](#)

09:15 GMT - Philippines confirms six new coronavirus deaths, 634 cases

The Philippines' health ministry has reported six new coronavirus deaths and 634 additional infections, the lowest daily increase in cases in nearly two weeks.

In a bulletin, the ministry said total deaths had increased to 1,603, while confirmed cases had reached 57,545.

09:05 GMT - Hong Kong reports 48 new coronavirus cases

Hong Kong has reported 48 new coronavirus cases, including 40 that officials said were transmitted locally, ahead of new social distancing measures due to come into force at midnight.

Tuesday's toll was slightly lower than Monday's 52 new cases but remained broadly in line with a recent sharp increase in the city.

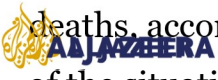
Since late January, the global financial hub has reported more than 1,500 cases and eight deaths

08:55 GMT - Indian IT hub Bangalore locks down again

India's IT hub Bangalore will go back into lockdown Tuesday as the number of coronavirus cases in the country surged towards a million with about 500 people dying daily.

After imposing one of the world's strictest lockdowns in late March, India has been steadily easing rules to lessen the huge economic impact.

But infections have continued to soar, passing 900,000 on Monday with almost 24,000

 deaths, according to health ministry figures that many experts say underplay the severity of the situation.

08:40 GMT - Turkmenistan halts passengers trains amid virus reports

Turkmenistan has ordered passenger trains halted from July 16 amid reports of coronavirus in the isolated Central Asian country that has yet to declare any cases.

A statement on the state-run railway's website this week said that local passenger train travel would be suspended for a week from July 16 to July 23, but gave no reason for the stoppage.

Turkmenistan - a tightly-controlled, oil-rich ex-Soviet state - is one of the few countries in the world yet to declare any coronavirus cases.

07:45 GMT - Russia coronavirus deaths reach 11,614, total cases 739,947

Russia has reported 6,248 new cases of the novel coronavirus, pushing its confirmed national tally to 739,947, the fourth largest in the world.

Officials said 175 people had died in the last 24 hours, bringing the official death toll to 11,614.

07:30 GMT - India reports more than 28,000 new coronavirus infections

India has reported 28,498 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, taking its total number of infections to 906,752. Cases have jumped by 100,000 in four days.

The Health Ministry also reported another 553 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities up to 23,727.

India has largely lifted its nationwide lockdown, but the spread of the virus has prompted

 several big cities to reimpose partial lockdowns.

07:25 GMT - Yemen's Houthis announce easing of coronavirus lockdown

Yemen's Houthi rebels are easing a variety of coronavirus restrictions amid a news blackout on the virus' toll in their territory.

The Houthi Cabinet announced late Monday it was allowing restaurants, wedding halls, public baths, parks and playgrounds to reopen. The statement encouraged people to sanitize regularly and practice social distancing.

Over the past months, the Houthis, who control Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and much of the war-torn country's north, have suppressed all information about the virus. They've severely punished doctors and journalists who speak out, imposed only loose restrictions and promoted conspiracy theories.

06:55 GMT - Study predicts surge in HIV, TB and malaria deaths amid COVID-19 pandemic

Deaths from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria could surge in poor and middle-income countries as already weak health systems grapple with severe disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a predictive study published on Monday.

Over the next five years, deaths from the three diseases could rise by as much as 10, 20 and 36 percent respectively - putting the mortality impact on a scale similar to the direct impact of the coronavirus pandemic itself, the modelling study found.

"In countries with a high malaria burden and large HIV and TB epidemics, even short-term disruptions could have devastating consequences for the millions of people who depend on programmes to control and treat these diseases," said Timothy Hallett, a professor at Imperial College London who co-led the work.



He said the knock-on impact of COVID-19 could undo some of the significant progress against these diseases made over the past two decades, "compounding the burden caused by the pandemic directly".

06:40 GMT - Germany's confirmed coronavirus cases rise by 412 to 199,375

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Germany increased by 412 to 199,375, data from the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for infectious diseases showed.

The reported death toll rose by four to 9,068, the tally showed.

06:30 GMT - Mexico reports 485 new coronavirus deaths, 4,685 infections

Mexico's Health Ministry reported 4,685 new confirmed coronavirus infections and 485 additional fatalities, bringing the country's totals to 304,435 cases and 35,491 deaths.


The government has said the real number of infected people is likely significantly higher than the confirmed cases.

05:15 GMT - Debt-relief measures failing to help Cambodian poor

Human Rights Watch says debt relief measures by micro-loan providers in Cambodia are failing to help families struggling with the impact of the pandemic, who may be forced to sell land and homes to survive.

The rights group says the National Bank of Cambodia and the government should suspend debt collection and interest accruals for borrowers who can no longer meet their payments because of the pandemic.

"Many Cambodians fear losing their lands more than catching the coronavirus ... and the

 government has done little to help them," HRW's Asia Director Phil Robertson said in a statement. HRW says Cambodians have the world's highest average amount of micro-loans at \$3,804 per capita.

Strong statement from Human Rights Watch detailing how MFIs in Cambodia threaten land tenure security and human rights, especially during COVID-19. European development banks and IFC still investing in sector without any enhanced borrower protection. <https://t.co/KIIsMmK6gO>

*— Brendan O'Byrne
(@BrendanOByrne) July 14, 2020*

05:00 GMT - Worse than dismal: Singapore Q2 GDP plunges 41.2 percent

Singapore's economy suffered a coronavirus-induced record contraction in the second



quarter, putting it on course for its worst-ever slump this year.

Gross domestic product (GDP) plunged by a record 41.2 percent in the three months ended June, on a quarter-on-quarter annualised basis, preliminary data from the Ministry of Trade and Industry showed on Tuesday. Economists polled by Reuters were expecting a 37.4-percent decline.

"We were expecting these numbers to look quite dismal, although this is worse than what we had expected," Steve Cochrane, economist at Moody's Analytics, told the news agency.

04:45 GMT - Tokyo theatregoers asked to come forward for testing

Some 800 Tokyo theatregoers are being asked to come forward for testing after at least 20 coronavirus cases were traced back to a production involving a Japanese boy band.

Health officials are focusing on the Theatre Moliere, a 190-seat theatre in the Shinjuku area of the capital, which put on the show 'Werewolf' for six days earlier this month.

The first case was reported on July 6 and involved a cast member.

04:30 GMT - DRC facing new Ebola outbreak as tries to control COVID, measles

Ebola is spreading in the western Democratic Republic of the Congo, with nearly 50 known cases across a region bordering the Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mike Ryan, the WHO's top emergencies expert, says the outbreak, first detected on June 1, remains "very active" and of great concern.

The DRC is also dealing with a measles epidemic that has killed more than 6,000 people and COVID-19, which has infected more than 3,000 and killed 188.

 You can read more on that story [here](#).

03:45 GMT - Malaysia and Singapore ease some border restrictions

Border restrictions between Malaysia and Singapore will be eased to support essential business and official traffic, as well as the movement of residents who have long-term work permits for either country.

This will include a Reciprocal Green Lane for essential business and official purposes where all travellers have to undergo a PCR swab test before travel and submit a detailed itinerary for the duration of the visit.

The new measures are expected to come into force on August 10, the two countries' governments said in a joint statement on Tuesday. The details of the arrangements - including health protocols and the application process - will be announced 10 days before that.



*Joint Press Statement by FM
Dato' Seri @HishammuddinH2O
and Singapore FM Dr.
@VivianBala on the
implementation of the MYSG
reciprocal green lane & periodic
commuting agreement.
pic.twitter.com/vjQoF3sSIY*

*— Wisma Putra (@MalaysiaMFA)
July 14, 2020*

03:30 GMT - Hong Kong prepares for toughest-ever coronavirus curbs

People in Hong Kong are preparing for the toughest curbs yet to control the coronavirus as authorities warn that the risk of a large-scale outbreak in the territory is "extremely high".

The new measures come into force at midnight (16:00 GMT). They include mandatory face masks on public transport and a limit on the size of gatherings to just four people.

You can read more on that story [here](#).

02:30 GMT - Mystery of Argentine sailors who caught virus while at sea



Argentina is trying to solve the mystery of how 57 sailors managed to come down with COVID-19 while they were at sea even though all had tested negative and spent 14 days in quarantine in a hotel before the voyage began.

The health ministry for the southern province of Tierra del Fuego says the fishing trawler is now back in port after 35 days at sea, with 57 of the 61 crew diagnosed with the virus after a new test. Two are now in hospital.

A team is trying to establish the "chronology of contagion" among the crew. "An incubation period this long has not been described anywhere," said Leandro Ballatore, head of the infectious diseases department at Ushuaia Regional Hospital.

01:25 GMT - No new cases confirmed in Beijing for eighth day

The wave of coronavirus cases connected with Beijing's wholesale market that began in June appears to have been brought under control with no new cases of the disease reported in the Chinese capital for eight successive days.

China's National Health Commission reported five new cases on the mainland on Tuesday, all among people returning from overseas.



#Beijing sees zero locally transmitted #COVID19 cases for the eighth consecutive day. On Monday, 21 people recovered and were discharged from hospitals, lowering the number of active cases in Beijing to 205.
pic.twitter.com/W5fNQkEsWe
— CGTN (@CGTNOfficial) July 14, 2020

01:00 GMT - Nearly 1,000 staff at US immigration detention centres have COVID-19

More than 930 people working for four private companies that run detention centres for US immigration services have tested positive for coronavirus, according to executives speaking at a congressional hearing.

The four firms are CoreCivic (554 cases), the GEO Group (167 cases), Management & Training Corp (73 cases) and LaSalle Corrections (144 cases). The US immigration department has reported 45 cases among its own staff.

Lawmakers are concerned about the spread of the virus across the US's nearly 70 detention centres. More than 3,000 detainees have tested positive for the disease, and two



have died. There are currently about 22,580 people in immigration custody.

00:00 GMT - UK to make masks mandatory in shops

The British government will announce on Tuesday that people will have to wear masks when they go into a shop from July 24.

"There is growing evidence that wearing a face covering in an enclosed space helps protect individuals and those around them from coronavirus," a statement from the prime minister's office said.

Masks have been required on public transport since June 15.

23:45 GMT (Monday) - Worldwide cases surpass 13 million

More than 13 million people around the world have now been confirmed to have had the coronavirus, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Below are the five most-affected countries.

- United States - 3,361,042
- Brazil - 1,884,967
- India - 878,254
- Russia - 732,547
- Peru - 330,123

Hello and welcome to Al Jazeera's continuing coverage of the coronavirus pandemic. I'm Kate Mayberry in Kuala Lumpur.

Read all the updates from yesterday (July 13) [here](#).

SOURCE: **AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES**

