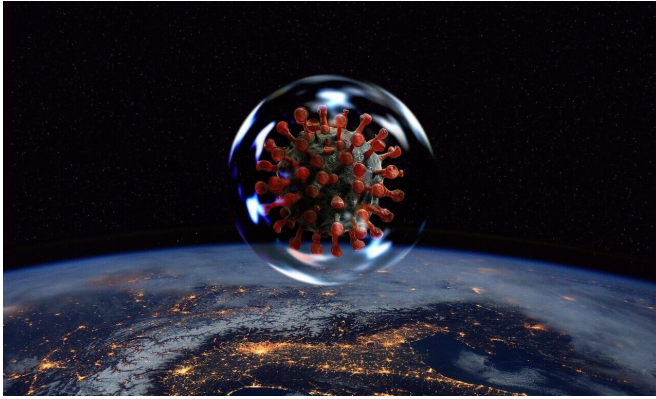


Brazil surpasses 100,000 new COVID cases in a day

26 March 2021



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Brazil surpassed 100,000 new COVID-19 cases in one day on Thursday, adding another grim record in country where the pandemic has killed more than 300,000 people, the health ministry said.

With the new cases, at least 12.3 million people are now known to have been infected with the [coronavirus](#) in Brazil. After the United States, it is the hardest-hit country anywhere in the world.

The toll has risen steadily since February, due to factors including people's abandoning social distancing norms and a new virus variant that emerged here and is believed to be more contagious than the original strain.

Another big problem is that the country's vaccination drive is moving slowly.

The average of new daily infections over the past seven days is 77,050—twice what it was in January.

On Tuesday the daily death toll surpassed 3,000 for the first time. Brazil's daily number of fatalities is now the highest in the world.

President Jair Bolsonaro announced Wednesday he was launching a crisis committee to deal with the pandemic, a change of course amid mounting pressure over a situation he has repeatedly minimized.

The announcements appeared to do little to tame criticism of Bolsonaro, who has flouted expert advice on lockdowns and [face masks](#), pushed a drug regimen he calls the "early treatment" package that scientists say does not work, and spoken out against vaccines.

The newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo accused the president of lying when he said his government had worked ceaselessly to fight the virus.

"For 12 months, Bolsonaro minimized the pandemic, promoted crowds, spoke out against mask use and halted talks to secure vaccines," it said.

Despite his apparent change of heart, on Thursday Bolsonaro again criticized lockdown measures as being bad for Latin America's largest economy.

"If the policy of closing everything in a radical way continues, who knows what will happen to Brazil?" Bolsonaro said in his daily talk show carried out on [social media](#).

"But I want to make one thing clear: we want to fight the virus," he added.

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