

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

23rd Jul 2020

News Highlights

Historic pilgrimage cancelled in India as states go back under lockdown

[The Amarnath Yatra, an annual Hindu pilgrimage in the mountains of Kashmir, was cancelled for the first time in over two centuries](#) as Covid-19 cases continued to mount in India. Several Indian regions, including Kashmir and Manipur, [have opted to reimpose lockdowns in the face of rising cases, with 37,724 cases reported on Wednesday alone.](#)

Abattoirs new reservoirs of Covid-19 as Victoria reports hundreds of cases

[Despite a new lockdown in the state of Victoria, Australia saw a record 501 new cases of Covid-19](#), months after the pandemic was thought to have peaked in the country. [Enclosed environments such as cruise ships and abattoirs have proved to be hotbeds for the coronavirus](#) from Germany to the UK and the U.S. and Australian meat processors have also reported multiple outbreaks in abattoirs across the country.

Sweden: Strategy working says epidemiologist boss, but deaths still set to rise

Sweden, which chose a contentious strategy of not imposing a hard lockdown in contrast to its Nordic neighbours, has ended up with one of the highest per capita death tolls in the world, with health officials predicting at least another 5,800 coronavirus deaths. [However, Anders Tegnell, Sweden's top epidemiologist, has said that slowing death rates and a rapid slowdown in the spread of the virus indicates that the strategy was actually working.](#)

Scientists say new antibody mix effective for Covid-19 treatment

Scientists at Columbia University have identified 61 types of antibodies, drawn from a sample of five coronavirus-positive individuals, out of which they say nine display an 'exquisite potency' to neutralise Covid-19. [Experiments with hamsters seemed to indicate that the most potent antibodies protected the animals from disease.](#)

Lockdown Exit

Coronavirus cases surge among factory workers in post-lockdown India

When Bajirao Thengde voiced his fears about going to work after dozens of colleagues fell sick with coronavirus, his boss at a motorbike factory in western India said he should "learn to live with the virus". As India's coronavirus cases exceeded one million last week, unions say similar spikes in infections in reopened factories are putting workers at risk - accusing companies of skimping on health and safety as they rush to get business back on track. It was only after several workers died and district authorities ordered a seven-day lockdown that Thengde's plant in Maharashtra state finally closed on July 10, weeks after calls for it to shut when the first cases appeared. "We were demanding that the factory be temporarily closed but work carried on," said Thengde, a union leader who has worked for more than 30 years for Bajaj Auto Ltd - India's biggest motorbike exporter.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-india-workers/coronavirus-cases-surge-among-factory-workers-in-po>

[st-lockdown-india-idUKL3N2EO2GU](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-56822222)

Egypt extends operating hours of cafes, restaurants until midnight from July 26 - statement

Egypt has extended the operating hours of cafes and restaurants from 10:00 PM to midnight while allowing them to operate at 50 percent capacity starting July 26, the cabinet said in a statement. The operating hours of stores, including malls, were also extended until 10:00 PM, the statement said. Egypt had reduced operating hours in its initial reopening phase to limit public gatherings and curb the spread of the coronavirus.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1708511/middle-east>

Covid vaccine could be rolled out for vulnerable Britons before it is approved by regulators

A Covid-19 vaccine could be rolled out for vulnerable Britons within months of one being found to work, according to the UK's vaccine tsar. Normally, it takes up to two years before a medication is given the green light by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the UK's drugs watchdog. But Kate Bingham, chair of the UK's vaccine taskforce, says a coronavirus jab could be fast-tracked through the process.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8547825/Covid-vaccine-rolled-vulnerable-Britons-approved-regulators.html>

DC mayor orders mandatory masks as infections rise again

With coronavirus cases rising, Mayor Muriel Bowser issued an executive order Wednesday making face masks mandatory outside homes — an unprecedented step in the nation's capital. Bowser said the order would include “enforcement language” detailing possible fines for violations. After saying they had successfully blunted the infection curve in the city earlier this summer, health officials say the infection numbers have slowly crept upward, reaching triple digits on Wednesday for the first time in weeks. Limited exceptions to the order, according to material distributed by Bowser's office, include children under age 3, people “actively eating or drinking” and people “vigorously exercising outdoors” while not close to anyone else.

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/DC-mayor-to-order-mandatory-masks-as-infections-15426272.php>

Female leaders doing 'better job' in virus crisis, says Lagarde

Female leaders are doing a better job handling the coronavirus crisis, European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde said in an online interview with The Washington Post, praising them for their honest communication and for showing they cared. The differences in policies and communication were “quite stunning” in countries led by women, she said. The female leaders of Germany Taiwan, Belgium and New Zealand had also “carried the water of bad news as well as the water of clear explanation and strong recommendations”, she added.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/female-leaders-doing-better-job-in-virus-crisis-says-lagarde-1.5034635>

DR Congo ends virus health emergency, borders to reopen

DR Congo President Felix Tshisekedi has lifted a health emergency over the coronavirus outbreak and ordered a reopening in three stages of business activities, schools and borders. He said that from Wednesday all shops, banks, restaurants and bars would be allowed to reopen, public transport could resume and large gatherings would be permitted. Schools and universities can reopen on August 3, and airports, ports, borders and places of worship on August 15. The vast country of more than 80 million people has recorded 8,534 infections including 196 deaths since March 10.

<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/wires/afp/article-8548981/DR-Congo-ends-virus-health-emergency-borders-reopen.html>

Switzerland expands COVID-19 quarantine watchlist

Switzerland has expanded to 42 the number of territories on its watchlist of coronavirus hot spots,

new arrivals from which must enter a 10-day quarantine, health authorities said. New entries as of Thursday include Bosnia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eswatini, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mexico, Montenegro, the Palestinian territories, Suriname and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-swiss-quarantine/switzerland-expands-covid-19-quarantine-watch-list-idUKKCN24N1LN>

As Barcelona faces lockdown, it's likely that the UK, too, will experience a second wave

There is absolutely no reason whatsoever why we could not see the same phenomenon playing out in London or other UK cities in the weeks to come, especially as restrictions continue to be eased. It may sound like a broken record but it really is crucial that we have a foolproof test-and-trace system, or else an outbreak will emerge and we will not be able to control its spread.

<https://inews.co.uk/opinion/barcelona-lockdown-uk-faces-second-wave-559110>

Russia's corona euphoria

Reports of massive electoral fraud haven't stirred public anger, and there have been no protests on the scale of last summer's demonstrations. (There's ongoing unrest in the far east of the country over the arrest of a popular, anti-Kremlin governor but they've stayed local for now. Instead, Putin is being thanked by Muscovites for having forced the mayor of Moscow to lift the lockdown earlier than planned, and his popularity has spiked. Russians are mostly just relieved to be free again, even though the country is still recording more than 6,000 new cases daily. International borders may still be closed, but most Russians have thrown caution to the wind and already embraced a post-corona future.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/21/putin-russia-coronavirus-377564>

Coronavirus: Nineteen cases linked to test and trace call centre

A total of 19 positive cases of coronavirus have been linked to an outbreak that started at a Motherwell call centre, NHS Lanarkshire has said. A statement released on Tuesday evening said 14 cases associated with the premises had been identified. There have been a further five cases involving other people linked to those at the call centre. Earlier on Tuesday, Nicola Sturgeon said 22 new cases had been detected in Scotland, with 14 in Lanarkshire. The first minister said "at least some of them" were linked to the call centre. She added that a Scottish government resilience meeting would consider the situation in Lanarkshire and whether any further action was required.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-53485411>

Exit Strategies

Care home visits to resume in England after months of lockdown

Care home visits are set to resume in England as the Government issues long-awaited guidance on how loved ones can see residents. Visitors will be allowed in specific care homes in England once local directors of public health and local authorities decide it is safe to do so, the Department of Health said. Despite the falling rate of community transmission of coronavirus, the Government says visits should be limited to a "single constant visitor" per resident where possible to limit the risk of infection spread and keep footfall in and out of the home down.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/care-home-visits-resume-england-coronavirus-a4505721.html>

Germany cracks down on slaughterhouse sub-contracting to fight coronavirus

Germany is introducing a new law compelling meatpackers to employ staff directly in industrial abattoirs rather than sub-contracting to avert further coronavirus outbreaks exacerbated by poor working conditions, a draft law showed on Wednesday. German slaughterhouses have faced criticism for the widespread use of sub-contracted migrant workers from eastern Europe, with cramped accommodation and poor oversight suspected of accelerating local coronavirus outbreaks

in abattoirs. Labour Minister Hubertus Heil has condemned the system of “sub-sub-sub-contracting” in abattoirs, where subcontractors rely on other subcontractors to get staff. The draft law, introduced by Heil and seen by Reuters, bans sub-contracting in the industry’s core business areas of animal slaughtering and meat processing. Firms are only allowed to outsource work in non-core business areas such as cleaning.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-meat/germany-cracks-down-on-slaughterhouse-sub-contracting-to-fight-coronavirus-idUKKCN24N1BF>

Coronavirus UK: Spain may be taken off government's 'safe' travel list

Spain is reportedly on the verge of being taken off the government’s ‘safe’ travel list after a surge of coronavirus cases. It means Brits who have booked a holiday could face quarantine for two-weeks on their return under the government’s ‘traffic light’ system. Spain has been hit with at least 200 coronavirus outbreaks since it lifted its lockdown a month ago. On Monday, it saw a huge jump of 4,581 new virus cases, which experts warned was a ‘massive test’ for the government’s travel corridor policy. Whitehall sources reportedly told The Sun the situation is being closely monitored and that a decision to potentially remove some or all of Spain from the list could be made in a matter of days.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/07/22/brits-may-have-quarantine-return-spain-sure-coronavirus-cases-13020943/>

Nepal no longer under lockdown: Here's what will run now and what still won't

As some changes in the present modality of lockdown was being expected with fall in official number of coronavirus-infection cases, the government on Tuesday made a surprise move to lift the lockdown altogether. To begin with, the Cabinet on Monday announced resumption of all flights from August 17, which was aided by the decision to resume tourist activities and long-haul transport services on Tuesday. Government Spokesperson, Minister Yubaraj Khatiwada then informed the media that the lockdown will see an end starting midnight Tuesday. However, despite the end of the lockdown, the government has decided that a few activities will still face temporary ban while a few more activities will be added to the ‘functional’ list.

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/nepal-no-longer-under-lockdown-heres-what-will-run-now-and-what-still-won-t/>

Austria re-introduces face mask requirements

Austria will again make face masks mandatory at supermarkets, banks and post offices on Friday due to a resurgence of coronavirus infections. The country began requiring the use of masks in April, but eased the rules in mid-June, except on public transport, in hospitals and pharmacies, and at hairdressers, as infections dropped. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz announced the return of tighter rules on Tuesday as the number of cases in Austria began rising in July, with the daily toll surpassing 160. Austria was among the first countries in Europe to ease lockdown measures to fully reopen its economy.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20200722_14/

Coronavirus: No new COVID-19 cases in New Zealand's managed isolation facilities

There are no new cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand's managed isolation facilities, the Ministry of Health confirmed on Wednesday. It has now been 82 days since the last case of COVID-19 was acquired locally from an unknown source, indicating there is no evidence of community transmission. The total number of active cases in New Zealand remains at 27. All positive results were obtained due to routine testing of new arrivals in managed isolation or quarantine facilities.

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2020/07/coronavirus-no-new-covid-19-cases-in-new-zealand-s-managed-isolation-facilities.html>

Philippines to ramp up coronavirus testing as Duterte warns of arrests

The Philippines said on Tuesday it would ramp up testing for the novel coronavirus amid a sharp rise

in infections and deaths since a lockdown was eased in June, while President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to arrest anyone not wearing a mask.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-philippines/philippines-to-ramp-up-coronavirus-testing-as-duterte-warns-of-arrests-idUSKCN24M0ET>

Face-Mask Mandates Expand as U.S. Coronavirus Death Toll Tops 142,000

The U.S. death toll from the coronavirus pandemic topped 142,000, as hospitals in some parts of the country where the virus is spreading rapidly face increasing numbers of patients. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat, and Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican, announced statewide mandates Wednesday requiring the wearing of face masks in stores, public buildings and other indoor spaces where people gather. Mr. DeWine said the state recommends that individuals traveling from states with a 15% or above positivity rate self-quarantine for 14 days. “We’ve got to get this virus under control—wearing masks is going to make a difference,” he said at a press conference Wednesday. More than half the states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia, have mandates for face coverings, according to the National Governors Association and an order issued Wednesday by Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-latest-news-07-22-2020-11595406312>

Thailand to extend emergency decree until end of August

Thailand will extend a state of emergency until the end of August, a senior official said on Wednesday, maintaining the security measure put in place to contain its coronavirus outbreak. The announcement comes after nearly two months without local transmission and with many people in Thailand questioning the need for an emergency decree. The decree, first introduced in late March, will be subject to cabinet approval next week.

<https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2020/07/22/thailand-to-extend-emergency-decree-until-end-of-august.html>

Fans will have to wear masks at NFL games this season — if there is a season with a live audience

NFL fans attending games — assuming there's a 2020 season and spectators are allowed inside stadiums — will have to wear facial coverings, the league said Wednesday.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/fans-will-have-wear-masks-nfl-games-season-if-there-n1234620>

Partisan Exits

Trump admits pandemic will 'get worse' at first Covid-19 briefing in months

Donald Trump has admitted that the coronavirus pandemic is likely to “get worse before it gets better” at his first press briefing devoted to the issue since April. Facing dire poll numbers, surging cases and sharp criticism for lack of leadership, the US president returned to the White House podium attempting to show more discipline in both style and substance. In several notable reversals, he urged people to wear face masks, promised his administration was working on a “strategy” and wrapped up in less than half an hour, avoiding his digressions in past briefings that culminated in a proposal to inject disinfectant in Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/21/donald-trump-coronavirus-briefing-covid-19-masks>

Edelstein: Knesset is leading us to coronavirus lockdown

The country is heading toward a complete lockdown, Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said Tuesday. Hospital services could break down within the next three weeks, senior health experts predicted. Nevertheless, the Knesset voted to overturn the government’s restrictions on restaurants.

<https://www.jpost.com/health-science/knessets-conduct-will-put-israel-under-lockdown-635797>

Doubts over Nicola Sturgeon’s Spain quarantine U-turn

Nicola Sturgeon has been told to clear up “confusing” guidance on quarantine after lifting strict rules for Scottish holiday makers looking for some Spanish sun. The popular tourist country was kept off

Scotland's first list "air bridge" destinations because of concerns with the rate of Covid-19 infections. But the Scottish Government went on to remove the requirement earlier this week, despite the infection rate tripling. Today, Sturgeon defended the decision but also urged Scots to holiday at home unless it's "essential".

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/doubts-over-nicola-sturgeons-spain-22396469>

Catalonia rules out compulsory lockdown as Spain calls to keep borders open

The Catalan health secretary has said young people should drink at home instead of gathering in town squares at night and the government ruled out a compulsory lockdown - for now

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/22/catalonia-rules-compulsory-lockdown-spain-calls-keep-borders/>

Continued Lockdown

British pupils 'struggled to continue learning at home'

A majority of British children struggled to continue learning at home during the lockdown, a report says. The Office for National Statistics research found that of the 52% who struggled, three-quarters of parents gave a lack of motivation as a reason. The research, based on weekly household surveys between April and June, also found women's well-being was being more adversely affected than that of men. It also showed wide disparities in what families were able to do. The ONS researchers carried out nationally representative surveys of more than 12,000 people in Great Britain between 3 April and 7 June about their experiences of home-schooling during the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-53498523>

Bogota mayor extends virus lockdown after govt refuses

The mayor of Bogota said she would expand a coronavirus lockdown from Thursday to cover five million residents of the Colombian capital after the government refused to authorize a total shutdown. Since July 13, with the health crisis worsening, the city of eight million has been under a series of rotating lockdowns by groups of neighborhoods, covering 2.5 million of the population at a time. Bogota mayor Claudia Lopez on Tuesday said she would extend the measure so the lockdowns overlap to cover more of the population from July 23 to August 14.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200722-bogota-mayor-extends-virus-lockdown-after-govt-refuses>

Rich Russians fuel private jet demand to skirt virus lockdown

For high-flying Russians used to spending summer holidays at Mediterranean resorts or in London penthouses, coronavirus restrictions that closed borders and grounded flights have made international travel a distant dream. Yet many of Russia's super-rich who hold second passports or residence permits abroad have discovered an elegant way of bypassing anti-virus measures to reach second homes in London, Cyprus, Monaco or Nice: private jets. Privately-operated flights from Moscow's airports more than doubled between April and mid-June, the RBK business news portal reported in late June citing sources at two of Moscow's airports.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200722-rich-russians-fuel-private-jet-demand-to-skirt-virus-lockdown>

COVID-19 deaths are rising once again. What's driving the increase?

"What we saw after about two weeks was the older population starting to catch up again," McDeavitt said, though he pointed out that there is no scientific data yet to link younger parties with older patients. "Presumably, younger people were going out and getting infected, and then bringing that back to parents and grandparents," he said. "Young people are generally fine," said Dr. Michael Wasserman, a geriatrician and president of the California Association of Long Term Care Medicine. "They're not always, but if they give it to grandma, that's a problem." Indeed, McDeavitt said, more severe outcomes still tend to be among older people and people with underlying conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/covid-19-deaths-are-rising-once-again-what-s-driving-n1234577>

Scientific Viewpoint

New antibody mix could form 'very potent' Covid-19 treatment, say scientists

Scientists at Columbia University in New York screened antibodies from 40 Covid-19 patients and identified 61 types from five individuals that effectively wiped out coronavirus. Among them were nine that displayed “exquisite potency” for neutralising the pathogen. Tests on cells showed that the antibodies killed off the virus, while experiments with hamsters revealed that an infusion of one of the more potent antibodies protected the animals from disease. “It shut off infectious virus completely in the lung tissue of the hamsters we treated,” said David Ho, a professor of medicine at Columbia who led the research.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/jul/22/antibody-mix-trialled-as-potential-coronavirus-treatment>

U.S. to pay Pfizer, BioNTech \$1.95 bln for millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses

The U.S. government will pay nearly \$2 billion to buy enough of a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Pfizer Inc and German biotech BioNTech SE to inoculate 50 million people if it proves to be safe and effective, the companies said on Wednesday. The contract for 100 million doses of the vaccine amounts to a \$39 price tag for what is likely to be a two-dose course of treatment. The contract is the most the United States has agreed to spend on a vaccine, although previous deals with other vaccine makers were intended to also help pay for development costs.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-pfizer-idUSKCN24N119>

Coronavirus: COVID-19 vaccine has 'above 50%' chance of success but 'won't be ready until mid-2021'

The boss of a drugs company that has agreed to deliver up to 100 million doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccine to the UK has told Sky News there is a more than 50% chance of it reaching patients. Thomas Lingelbach, chief executive of France-based Valneva, also told Sky's Ian King Live that he did not believe the drug would be widely available before the middle of next year. Valneva, which has a manufacturing base at Livingston in Scotland, is behind one of two coronavirus vaccine partnerships announced by the UK government earlier this week.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-potential-covid-19-vaccine-has-above-50-chance-of-success-12033797>

EU plan to tackle COVID-19 drug shortages hit by health budget cuts

A decision to focus its fiscal firepower on economic recovery has forced the EU to sharply scale back plans to address chronic shortages of drugs, including COVID-19 treatments, by bringing back manufacturing capacity from Asia. As part of a budget deal to relaunch the economy that they agreed early on Tuesday after a marathon summit, European Union leaders cut planned healthcare expenditure to 2027 by 80%. The bloc has for years faced shortages of critical drugs, including vaccines and antibiotics, and now is struggling to buy medicines needed by COVID-19 patients in intensive care units.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-eu-budget/eu-plan-to-tackle-covid-19-drug-shortages-hit-by-health-budget-cuts-idUKKCN24N1TP>

Face shields worn by hairdressers DON'T protect against Covid-19, health officials say

An outbreak of 'several' coronavirus cases was discovered at Swiss hotel Those who only wore plastic visors were infected, but masks were protective Clear visors are recommended by the UK Government for many workers

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8548305/Face-shields-worn-hairdressers-DONT-protect-against-Covid-19-health-officials-say.html>

Covid-19: test all health and care workers weekly, says UK scientist

“My colleagues in the Crick contacted Downing Street in March, wrote to minister [Matt] Hancock in April, emphasising two main things: the importance of regular systematic testing of all healthcare

workers, including not only frontline doctors and nurses but support staff, ambulance drivers and other healthcare providers, such as the care homes, GP surgeries, community nurses and the like. These all need to be tested. "At the height of the pandemic, our own research – and of course that only backs up what's been done elsewhere – is that up to 45% of healthcare workers were infected. And they were infecting their colleagues ... reinfecting patients, yet they weren't being tested systematically."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/21/covid-19-test-all-health-and-care-workers-once-or-twice-a-week-says-top-uk-scientist>

COVID-19 patients admitted from more deprived regions are at higher risk of intensive care admission, new study finds

Black, Asian minority ethnic patients with COVID-19 are more likely to be admitted to hospital from regions with higher levels of air pollution, lower quality housing and overcrowded living conditions and are more likely to be admitted to intensive care, a new UK study has found.

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2020/07/higher-risk-for-covid-patients-from-more-deprived-regions.aspx>

Flu and Covid-19 vaccines will need to be given separately, says deputy CMO

GPs will not be able to co-administer Covid-19 and flu jabs due to safety concerns, the deputy chief medical officer for England has said.

<http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/clinical/immunisation/flu-and-covid-19-vaccines-will-need-to-be-given-separately-says-deputy-cmo/20041195.article>

Coronavirus will be with us for 'decades to come', top scientists warn

Prof Sir Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust, told the Commons health and social care committee on Tuesday: "Things will not be done by Christmas. This infection is not going away, it's now a human endemic infection." The top scientist, a member of the Government's Sage advisory committee, added: "Even, actually, if we have a vaccine or very good treatments, humanity will still be living with this virus for very many, many years.... decades to come." The stark forecast is a blow for Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said last week that he hoped for a "significant return to normality" by Christmas.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-vaccine-cases-lockdown-jeremy-farrar-a4504696.html>

Germany's coronavirus response is a master class in science communication

Germany showed how scientific communication can be vital in fighting pandemics. Its health minister's status rose; its chancellor, Angela Merkel, (herself a scientist) broke down complex scientific topics to the public; and its top virologist, Christian Drosten, built a podcast following in the millions. But Germany's response to Covid-19 wasn't perfect. We spoke to a dozen locals to find out what went well, and what could have gone better.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/21/germanys-coronavirus-response-masterful-science-communication.html>

Italy trials coronavirus test which gives accurate result in minutes

Italy is testing a coronavirus swab which gives a result in 12 minutes and costs only £11. The swab, manufactured in South Korea, has been tested 1,000 times in the northern region of Veneto and may soon be used in Italian airports to screen tourists for the infection, The Times reports. "It looks reliable and we hope to get it into use in Veneto by the autumn," Francesca Russo, who runs the region's Covid-19 response team, told the newspaper. Officials have recorded only two false results while trialling the test, which is called Standard Q Covid-19.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/italy-coronavirus-test-minutes-accurate-result-a4504821.html>

Coronavirus cases in Spain: 40% under the age of 40 and more than half asymptomatic

Spain is detecting an increasing number of young people with Covid-19, according to a new report by the Carlos III Health Institute. The study, published Monday night, showed that most new cases

fall in the 15-to-29 age bracket. Two out of every 10 infections recorded since May 10, when Spain began to roll back its lockdown rules, were adolescents or young adults. Indeed, of the 25,600 cases analyzed in the report, 40% were under the age of 40. The average age of coronavirus patients has fallen from around 60 in April to 48, according to the epidemiological survey Covid-19 Situation in Spain, which is based on the information provided by regional authorities when a new case is detected.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-07-22/coronavirus-cases-in-spain-40-under-the-age-of-40-and-more-than-half-asymptomatic.html>

'Wuhan Diary,' tale of virus lockdown, banned in China amid pressure

A book that recounts life in the central Chinese city of Wuhan while under a strict coronavirus lockdown has been effectively banned in China, its author said in a recent written interview with Kyodo News. Chinese critics have been trying to thwart publication of the book titled "Wuhan Diary," whose English version has received international recognition, although the country's authorities have not officially prohibited it, said the 65-year-old local novelist known as Fang Fang. The book is a collection of 60 posts from her account on Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, regarding daily life during the so-called world's harshest coronavirus lockdown between Jan. 23 and April 7 in Wuhan, as well as, what she described as, the dark side of the authorities. In her posts, she expressed distrust in the Chinese authorities, lambasting them for having concealed information about the human-to-human transmission of the virus in the early stages of the city's outbreak.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200722/p2g/00m/0in/031000c>

Coronavirus Australia: Is COVID-19 elimination possible?

Australia's politicians and top scientists are split over whether we should go all in on a hard elimination plan while Melbourne shuts down. If it works, life could (almost) go back to normal. But what are the risks?

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/could-we-eliminate-covid-19-in-australia-and-how-would-it-work-20200721-p55e0k.html>

Ecuador's Amazon tribes turn to tech to track COVID-19 cases

Ecuador's indigenous groups in the Amazon have launched an information dashboard to monitor the coronavirus and identify contagion hotspots as the disease spreads through the rainforest and threatens ancient cultures, a leading rights group said on Tuesday. The dashboard, a collection of charts that aggregates coronavirus data, shows COVID-19 infection and death rates and suspected and recovered cases by area and tribe since early May, said The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), which gathered the information. About 250,000 indigenous people live in Ecuador's Amazon region where they are facing a high risk of infection and death from the coronavirus due to malnutrition and a lack of drinking water, health services and COVID-19 tests. According to data on the dashboard, COVID-19 cases among the 10 indigenous nations tracked have increased to 1,733 from 47 since May 15.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-ecuador-indigenous/ecuadors-amazon-tribes-turn-to-tech-to-track-covid-19-cases-idUSKCN24M30Y>

Swedish epidemiology boss says questioned COVID-19 strategy seems to be working

Sweden's top epidemiologist said on Tuesday a rapid decline in new critical COVID-19 cases alongside slowing death rates indicated that Sweden's strategy for slowing the epidemic, which has been widely questioned abroad, was working. Sweden has foregone a hard lockdown throughout the outbreak, a strategy that set it apart from most of Europe. Chief epidemiologist Anders Tegnell of the public health agency said a rapid slowdown in the spread of the virus indicated very strongly that Sweden had reached relatively widespread immunity. "The epidemic is now being slowed down, in a way that I think few of us would have believed a week or so ago," he told a news conference.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-sweden-strategy/swedish-epidemiology-boss-says-questioned-covid-19-strategy-seems-to-be-working-idUSKCN24M25L>

Research shows that Covid antibodies fade rapidly, raising risk of lost immunity

Recovering from Covid-19 may not offer much lasting protection from future infections for those with only mild cases, according to a report that suggests caution regarding so-called herd immunity as well as the durability of vaccines. The correspondence in the New England Journal of Medicine outlined research on antibodies taken from the blood of 34 patients who had recovered after suffering mainly mild symptoms that didn't require intensive care. Just two needed supplemental oxygen and received an HIV medication, and none were on a ventilator or getting Gilead Sciences Inc.'s remdesivir. The first analysis was done on antibodies taken an average of 37 days after symptoms began, with a second after about 86 days, or less than three months. The researchers found that antibody levels fell quickly, with a half-life of about 73 days between the two time frames. The loss of antibodies occurred more quickly than with SARS, an earlier type of coronavirus infection.

<https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/research-shows-that-covid-antibodies-fade-rapidly-raising-risk-of-lost-immunity/77104905>

Don't expect first COVID-19 vaccinations until early 2021 - WHO's Ryan

WHO is working to ensure fair vaccine distribution, but in the meantime it is key to suppress the virus's spread, said Mike Ryan, head of WHO's emergencies programme, as daily new cases around the globe are at near-record levels. "We're making good progress," Ryan said, noting that several vaccines were now in phase 3 trials and none had failed, so far, in terms of safety or ability to generate an immune response. "Realistically it is going to be the first part of next year before we start seeing people getting vaccinated," he told a public event on social media

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-who/dont-expect-first-covid-19-vaccinations-until-early-2021-who-s-ryan-idUKKCN24N2GB>

New COVID-19 vaccine trials under way in Brazil

Nearly two dozen potential vaccines for the novel coronavirus are under various stages of human testing worldwide, and at least two are being conducted in Brazil - the country with the world's second-worst outbreak. One is a Chinese-made drug that is being tested on 9,000 volunteers, the other is developed by Oxford University. Testing is now under way and is expected to last for about three months.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/covid-19-vaccine-trials-underway-brazil-200722095525345.html>

Lockdown-free Sweden could see up to 5,800 more coronavirus deaths - double its current toll - with 3,000 more fatalities likely, health agency warns

Sweden has one of the highest per capita death tolls in the world (but less than the UK), and has recorded 5,646 fatalities and 78,166 cases of coronavirus. Health officials today said they could see 5,800 more deaths in a worst case. But they believe it more likely they will see clusters and then a general subsiding.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8545963/Lockdown-free-Sweden-5-800-coronavirus-deaths-health-agency-warns.html>

Mental Health Disparities Widen in U.K. During Covid Lockdown

Mental health deteriorated substantially in the U.K. population during the Covid-19 lockdown, particularly among women and young people, a survey suggests. More than a quarter of participants reported a level of mental distress that was potentially clinically significant after the first month of lockdown, compared with one in five people before the pandemic, according to the survey of 17,452 people in late April, published in The Lancet Psychiatry. The responses reveal that inequalities present before the crisis have widened, the authors wrote. Low-income households experienced a

higher level of mental distress, and women are suffering more than men, according to the survey. Levels were also higher among younger age groups and those living with preschool children.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-21/mental-health-disparities-widen-in-u-k-during-covid-lockdown>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Why Melbourne isn't moving to stage four restrictions, despite coronavirus case spike

Victorian health authorities say they won't advise moving to a stricter lockdown despite another daily spike in cases - because it might not make any difference. A stage four lockdown, like seen in New Zealand and Italy earlier in the pandemic, would limit people's movements even more. But Victoria's Chief Health officer Professor Brett Sutton, said there could be little benefit in Melbourne, because most cases appear to be coming from people spreading the illness before they get tested or while waiting for results.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/coronavirus-victoria-melbourne-why-stage-four-restrictions-not-announced-dan-andrews/2cdbca5e-7829-4dd9-b828-fed70e195aca>

Spain's coronavirus rate triples in three weeks after lockdown easing

The prevalence of the novel coronavirus in Spain has risen three-fold over the last three weeks as authorities struggle to contain a rash of fresh clusters, mainly in the Catalonia and Aragon regions, Health Ministry data showed on Monday. After registering thousands of cases and hundreds of deaths per day during an early April peak, Spain succeeded in slowing the number of new infections to a trickle. But since restrictions on movement were lifted and Spaniards relaxed back into daily life, some 201 new clusters have appeared, with heavy concentrations in and around the Catalan cities of Barcelona and Lleida. The occurrence of the novel coronavirus has jumped from eight cases per 100,000 inhabitants at the end of June, when the country's state of emergency ended, to 27 per 100,000, deputy health emergency chief Maria Sierra told a news conference on Monday. Over the weekend 4,581 new cases were recorded, bringing the total to 264,836, she added. More than 28,000 people have died. "Where measures have been relaxed is where these clusters appear," Health Minister Salvador Illa said. "We're talking about gatherings of extended family and spaces associated with nightlife."

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/spains-coronavirus-rate-triples-three-175131731.html>

Spain hopes no need to close French border over coronavirus

Spanish Tourism Minister Reyes Maroto said on Wednesday a resurgence in coronavirus cases in Catalonia was coming under control and she hoped there would be no need for France to close the border. With the pandemic wreaking havoc on Spain's tourism industry, which accounts for about 12% of economic output, Madrid has voiced concern after French Prime Minister Jean Castex on Sunday did not rule out closing the border. But Maroto told an event organised by Europa Press news agency she was optimistic after data showed infections in Catalonia had fallen over the past three days. "Let's hope that with this better data we don't have to close a border that for us is very important for mobility with our European partners."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-spain/spain-hopes-no-need-to-close-french-border-over-coronavirus-idUKKCN24NOSR>

French health ministry says Covid-19 spread is 'increasing' as people head on holidays

The French health ministry said Tuesday that coronavirus transmission is increasing during the summer holiday season, with the total number of Covid-19 deaths now standing at 30,165. The ministry's DGS (Direction générale de la santé) health directorate said it had registered "an increase in the number of emergency doctor calls, emergency room visits, the number of virus clusters and new hospitalisations" for suspected cases across the country. The directorate said a total of 547 virus clusters had emerged since May 9, just before France began lifting the strict stay-at-home orders and business closures imposed in March to limit the virus's spread.

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20200722-french-health-ministry-says-covid-19-spread-is-increasing-as-people-head-on-holidays>

Today: After touting virus drop, S. Korea sees rise

Just days after South Korean officials hopefully declared the country's COVID-19 epidemic was coming under control, health authorities reported 63 new cases following a dual rise in local transmissions and imported infections. South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Wednesday said at least 36 of the new cases came from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where about half of the country's 51 million people live. The KCDC didn't immediately confirm whether the numbers included a new cluster of infections discovered at a front-line army unit in Pocheon, north of Seoul, where at least 13 troops have reportedly tested positive. The KCDC said 29 of the new cases were local transmissions and tied the other 34 to international arrivals as the virus continues to spread in Asia, the United States and beyond. The government also plans to send to send two military planes to Iraq on Wednesday to evacuate around 300 South Korean construction workers amid the spread of the virus there.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13568236>

Coronavirus clusters: why meatworks are at the frontline of Australia's 'second wave'

Around the world, certain environments have repeatedly proved to be hotbeds for Covid-19 infection. Chief among these are aged care homes, cruise ships, prisons and abattoirs. As Victoria enters a "second wave" of Covid-19 infections, Australian meat processors have found themselves at the frontline of exposure and infection, with multiple outbreaks in abattoirs across the state. In the US more than 16,000 meat workers contracted the virus during April and May, with up to 9% of the workforce infected in some states, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While conditions in Australia are different in many respects, the situation in Victoria still points to the potential for rapid spread.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jul/22/coronavirus-clusters-why-meatworks-are-at-the-frontline-of-australias-second-wave>

Australia sees record number of new coronavirus cases - 501 - four months after pandemic initially peaked as country struggles to cope with outbreak in Melbourne

Most new cases were reported in Victoria despite the lockdown in Melbourne New South Wales is also on 'high alert' because of community spread of the virus Infections previously peaked in March before lockdown restrictions were eased

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8547661/Australia-sees-record-number-new-coronavirus-cases-501.html>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Australian PM issues stark warning as cases climb again

As lockdown looms over New South Wales and Victoria struggles to contain new outbreaks, the Prime Minister of Australia warned nothing will change anytime soon. Speaking to the ABC on Tuesday night, Scott Morrison said Australians should get used to life as it is right now - restrictions included. He said the future under efforts to suppress the coronavirus means "keeping the discipline". "It means keeping health system support in place ... maintaining the testing regime. It will mean ... the wearing of masks. It means it hasn't gone anywhere and we can't live like it has."

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=12349896

Victoria considering tough New Zealand-style STAGE FOUR lockdown

Victoria reportedly recorded 484 new cases of coronavirus, biggest total yet That number would eclipse the state's previous record of 428 on Friday Melbourne has been on lockdown since 8 July with residents told to stay at home New South Wales recorded 16 new cases on Wednesday as outbreak grew

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8547297/Victoria-considering-tough-New-Zealand-style-STAGE-FOUR-lockdown.html>

India cancels historic Hindu pilgrimage as coronavirus cases mount

India has cancelled a historic Hindu pilgrimage to a holy cave high in the snow-capped mountains of contested Kashmir for the first time, as cases of the novel coronavirus continued to rise on Wednesday. There were 37,724 new cases reported in the past 24 hours, according to federal health data released on Wednesday. India has reported almost 1.2 million cases overall, behind only the United States and Brazil. Organisers of the Amarnath Yatra, where saffron-clad Hindu ascetics walk 46 km (28 miles) to the cave across glaciers and waterlogged trails, said a “very sharp” spike in coronavirus cases had forced the cancellation.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india/india-cancels-historic-hindu-pilgrimage-as-coronavirus-cases-mount-idUSKCN24N14P>

New Lockdown

Coronavirus: Oman to impose 'total lockdown' over Eid due to spike in cases

Gulf state will impose night curfew and ban travel between all its governorates from 25 July to 8 August to slow spread of Covid-19

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/coronavirus-oman-impose-curfew-over-eid-period-due-spike-cases>

Delhi virus cases dip but more Indian states lock down

New Delhi recorded fewer than 1,000 coronavirus cases for the first time in seven weeks on Tuesday, even as more Indian states imposed restrictions to halt the spread of the pandemic. India last week became the third country after the United States and Brazil to hit one million cases but many experts say that with testing rates low, the true number could be much higher. More than 28,000 people have died, with the western state of Maharashtra, home to Mumbai and its teeming slums, suffering the highest death toll followed by the national capital Delhi and Tamil Nadu in the south.

<https://guardian.ng/news/world/delhi-virus-cases-dip-but-more-indian-states-lock-down/>

Coronavirus: Six-day lockdown imposed in Kashmir Valley to contain spread of virus

Several states in India on Wednesday extended lockdowns in an effort to control the increasing spread of coronavirus cases as India's tally neared the 12-lakh mark. India on Wednesday recorded 37,724 new cases, taking the country's tally to 11,92,915. The toll increased to 28,732. In Manipur, a complete lockdown would be imposed for 14 days from July 23. The Jammu and Kashmir administration has announced a six-day shutdown in the Valley, except for Bandipora district, from July 22 to July 27. Bhopal will also be under lockdown from July 24 to August 3. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization praised India for responding to the coronavirus pandemic with “utmost urgency”.

[https://scroll.in/latest/968204/coronavirus-bengaluru-unlocks-from-today-even-as-karnatakas-tally-crosses-70000-mar
k](https://scroll.in/latest/968204/coronavirus-bengaluru-unlocks-from-today-even-as-karnatakas-tally-crosses-70000-mark)

Two weeks into Melbourne's lockdown, why aren't COVID-19 case numbers going down?

Fourteen days after Melbourne was put back into lockdown, the latest daily tally of 484 new cases in Victoria makes for dispiriting reading. Why have the numbers stubbornly refused to go down, despite Melburnians being confined to their homes for all but non-essential trips?

[https://theconversation.com/two-weeks-into-melbournes-lockdown-why-arent-covid-19-case-numbers-going-down-14
2990](https://theconversation.com/two-weeks-into-melbournes-lockdown-why-arent-covid-19-case-numbers-going-down-142990)