

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Lockdown Exit

Over-75s urged to get Covid booster jab as cases rise

Over-75s and people at high risk have been urged to get a Covid booster vaccine, amid warnings of a new wave of infections in Scotland. The spring booster jab is available until 30 June to everyone in the older age group and people over 12 if they have a weakened immune system. About a third of Scots in the immunosuppressed group have not yet come forward for an additional vaccine. Latest data estimates that around one in 30 people in Scotland has Covid. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 176,900 people have the virus - about 3.36% of the population.

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-61857789?at_custom2=twitter&at_custom4=F06B0E2C-EFC7-11EC-BABD-5BF64744363C&at_medium=custom7&at_custom1=%5Bpost+type%5D&at_campaign=64

CDC Recommends Covid-19 Vaccines for Young Children

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that children as young as 6 months receive newly authorized Covid-19 shots, the final step to making the vaccines available. The CDC said Saturday that the young children should receive either the two-dose series from Moderna Inc. or the three-dose series made by Pfizer Inc. and partner BioNTech SE. As soon as Monday, children under 5 years, who haven't been able to get vaccinated during the pandemic, could start getting inoculated. "Together, with science leading the charge, we have taken another important step forward in our nation's fight against Covid-19. We know millions of parents and care givers are eager to get their young children vaccinated, and with today's decision, they can," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/cdc-advisers-recommend-covid-19-vaccines-for-young-children-11655573423>

WTO Approves Vaccine-Patent Waiver to Help Combat Covid Pandemic

Article reports that the World Trade Organization approved a politically important deal Friday to water down intellectual property restrictions for the manufacture of Covid-19 vaccines after an almost two-year effort involving scores of high-level meetings and much political arm twisting. During the early morning hours in Geneva, WTO ministers approved a package of agreements that included the vaccine patent waiver, which Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala previously said was necessary to end the "morally unacceptable" inequity of access to Covid-19 vaccines. The WTO's last-minute deal -- secured after an all-night negotiating session in Geneva -- is an important victory for Okonjo-Iweala, the former head of Gavi - the vaccine alliance, who actively stumped for the accord during her first year as the WTO's top trade official.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-17/wto-approves-vaccine-patent-waiver-to-help-combat-covid-pandemic>

WTO agrees partial patent waiver for Covid-19 vaccines

The World Trade Organization has struck deals on a partial patent waiver for Covid-19 vaccines, and made agreements in several other fields of global contention, after a tense six-day ministerial meeting that has renewed some faith in the battered multilateral trading system.

<https://www.ft.com/content/9cfa15b6-dab8-4cc6-9ab4-c192c6ad0e0b>

BioNTech chief calls for speedy ruling on Covid vaccines that target latest strains

Health regulators should decide by the end of the month whether to approve Covid-19 vaccines targeting the most recent virus strains without first requiring clinical data, BioNTech's chief

executive has said, as studies suggest jabs developed earlier in the pandemic are less effective against the latest variants. Uğur Şahin warned that a sub-variant of Omicron that fully escapes vaccines' protection might emerge as countries prepare to launch autumn booster campaigns. The debate over whether to allow a more rapid switch to an updated vaccine is becoming more "urgent", he said

<https://www.ft.com/content/1c1bcc16-afe6-4a13-8278-b2ee925f7f75>

How Japan achieved one of the worlds lowest Covid-19 death rates

Article reports that Japan's Covid-19 death rate is the lowest among the world's wealthiest nations, with health experts pointing to continued mask wearing, extensive vaccination and an already healthy population as the core factors behind its success. The population has continued to adhere to basic infection control measures, including avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated venues, as other parts of the world grapple with pandemic fatigue. And Japan's measures have been bolstered by a robust vaccination program and free medical care

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/how-is-japan-s-covid-death-rate-lowest-among-wealthiest-nations-in-world-122061800170_1.html

Covid hospital admissions rise in Europe as sub-variants fuel new wave

European countries are experiencing a surge in Covid-19 hospital admissions driven by sub-variants of the highly infectious Omicron strain, threatening a fresh global wave of the disease as immunity levels wane and pandemic restrictions are lifted. Admissions have risen in several countries including France and England, according to data analysed by the Financial Times. The BA.5 sub-variant of Omicron now accounts for more than 80 per cent of new infections in Portugal. In Germany, where admissions have been rising for over a week, the share of Covid-19 infections ascribed to BA.5 doubled at the end of last month.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8c871596-d3c0-438c-b54c-f47b26aa4b7a>

China's Zero-Covid Policy Will Stretch Into 2023, US Envoy Says

China's stringent "zero Covid" policy of travel restrictions and city-wide lockdowns is likely to stretch into next year, and is actively discouraging American and European investment in China, the US ambassador to the country said. "My honest assumption is that we'll see the continuation of 'zero Covid' probably into the beginning months of 2023 -- that's what the Chinese government is signaling," Nicholas Burns, the American envoy in Beijing, said during an online event on Thursday. The harsh lockdown in the commercial center and financial hub of Shanghai -- where many US companies have operations and base executives -- has prompted many American businesspeople to leave the country, Burns said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-16/china-s-zero-covid-policy-will-stretch-into-2023-us-envoy-says>

EU drugs watchdog begins review of Moderna's variant COVID vaccine

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) started a rolling review on Friday of a variant-adapted COVID-19 vaccine from Moderna (MRNA.O), as coronavirus cases linked to Omicron sub-variants see an uptick in the region. U.S.-based Moderna's so-called bivalent vaccine targets two strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus behind COVID, the original strain first identified in China, and the Omicron variant. Last week, Moderna said its bivalent vaccine produced a better immune response against Omicron than the original shot.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-drugs-watchdog-kicks-off-rolling-review-modernas-variant-vaccine-2022-06-17/>

Swiss COVID-19 vaccine purchase plan fails to pass parliament

The Swiss parliament failed to finance the government's plan to buy COVID-19 vaccines in 2023, forcing the cabinet to try to renegotiate contracts with Moderna and Pfizer/Biontech, for millions of doses. With the two houses of parliament split over the funding request, budget rules required the

adoption of the cheaper version of draft legislation, the SDA news agency said in a report posted on parliament's website.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/swiss-covid-19-vaccine-purchase-plan-fails-pass-parliament-2022-06-16/>

Exit Strategies

Biden adviser Jake Sullivan tests positive for COVID-19

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan tested positive on Saturday for COVID-19, according to the White House. Sullivan typically has frequent contact with President Joe Biden but last was in contact with the president early in the week, according to a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Sullivan had been keeping his distance from Biden after “a couple” of people he had been in close contact with had tested positive for the virus, the official said. Adrienne Watson, a National Security Council spokeswoman, said Sullivan “is asymptomatic and he has not been in close contact with the president.”

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-jake-sullivan-national-security-b23be58299f54988ed60707816ba80b8>

Can China revive its COVID-hit economy?

The Chinese government has announced a 33-point stimulus plan to put the economy back on track. China has been the biggest source of global economic growth for the past 20 years. And it has long defied predictions it would soon hit a wall. But, strict COVID lockdowns, a crackdown on tech companies and a real estate slump are challenging the world's second-largest economy's expansion. Many financial institutions predict growth will fall well short of Beijing's target of about 5.5 percent this year, for the first time in decades. Elsewhere, the United Kingdom plans to scrap parts of the post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union. But, can it do so? And how will businesses be affected?

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/counting-the-cost/2022/6/18/can-china-revive-its-covid-hit-economy>

West Australian aged care visitor limits expected to remain for some time, despite COVID-19 restrictions easing

Aged care visitor limits are among the last remaining COVID restrictions. Visitors are capped at two people each day, impacting larger families. A major aged care provider expects the limits will be in place for a while longer

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-18/aged-care-covid-visitor-limits-in-wa-cause-heartbreak/101155994>

China turns Winter Olympics villages into quarantine camps to stamp out new COVID-19 outbreaks, report says

Villages that housed athletes at the Beijing Winter Games being used as COVID-19 quarantine camps. Hundreds have been sent to Olympic villages after an outbreak in Beijing's entertainment district. Olympic villages offer ideal infrastructure for quarantine, the Financial Times reported.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-turns-winter-olympics-villages-into-quarantine-camps-to-stamp-out-new-covid-19-outbreaks-report-says/ar-AAyCgMq>

U.S. envoy to China expects 'zero COVID' policy to persist into 2023

The United States' ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, said on Thursday he expects Beijing's "zero COVID" policy to persist into early 2023, and that U.S. businesses were reluctant to invest in the country until restrictions ease. The re-emergence of infections in China's capital Beijing has raised new concerns about the outlook for the world's second largest economy, which had recently emerged from a long lockdown that shook global supply chains in its most populous city and commercial hub, Shanghai.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us-envoy-china-expects-zero-covid-policy-persist-into-2023-2022-06-16/>

German health minister pushes fourth COVID shot ahead of autumn wave

There will not be another attempt to make COVID-19 vaccinations compulsory, said German Health

Minister Karl Lauterbach, while making the case for more people to get a second booster shot. Anyone who is often in contact with others and wants to protect themselves and others should consider a fourth shot, regardless of age, said Lauterbach. Some 80% of Germany's over-60s have not had their fourth COVID-19 shot, he added.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-health-minister-pushes-fourth-covid-shot-ahead-autumn-wave-2022-06-17/>

FDA Authorizes First Covid-19 Vaccines for Young Children

U.S. health regulators cleared for use Covid-19 vaccines from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE and from Moderna Inc. in children as young as 6 months. Some 1½ years after first authorizing the shots for people of older ages, the Food and Drug Administration on Friday expanded use of the vaccines to the nearly 20 million children in the U.S. from 6 months to under 5 years. A national campaign to vaccinate the young children is expected to kick off as soon as Monday, after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention signs off in the coming days.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/fda-authorizes-first-covid-19-vaccines-for-young-children-11655471242>

White House clams up on Biden COVID-19 testing regimen

In an abrupt change of course, the White House is now declining to comment on the frequency of President Joe Biden's COVID-19 testing regimen, even as it maintains that it would inform the public if he were to ever test positive for the coronavirus. Since Inauguration Day, the White House had frequently answered questions from reporters about when Biden, 79, last tested negative for the virus. Now, the White House says its policy is not to answer those questions. "I'm telling you he has a regular cadence," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Thursday, refusing to say what day he last tested negative. "I just don't have a date to share with you, but he does have a regular weekly cadence."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/white-house-ap-joe-biden-karine-jeanpierre-washington-b2103123.html>

FDA authorizes coronavirus vaccine for young kids with shots likely next week

More than a year and a half after the oldest Americans gained access to coronavirus vaccines, the nation's youngest citizens are poised to start getting shots next week, a move made possible when federal regulators Friday authorized vaccines for children as young as 6 months. For many parents and pediatricians, the Food and Drug Administration clearing of two vaccines — one by Moderna and the other by Pfizer and its German partner, BioNTech — comes as a huge relief. Friday's emergency-use authorizations arrived two days after a panel of external advisers unanimously recommended that the agency greenlight vaccines for the last age group eligible for a shot of protection against the virus. "Many parents, caregivers and clinicians have been waiting for a vaccine for younger children and this action will help protect those down to 6 months of age," FDA Commissioner Robert M. Califf said in a statement. "

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/06/17/young-children-coronavirus-vaccine-fda-authorizes/>

U.S. FDA opens way to COVID vaccines for kids under 5, CDC up next

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday authorized two COVID-19 vaccines for children under 5, opening the door to vaccinating millions of the country's youngest children once the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agrees. The FDA authorized Pfizer-BioNTech's, COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 6 months to 4 years and Moderna Inc's shot for those 6 months to 17 years. Pfizer's is already authorized for those over the age of 5.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-fda-authorizes-covid-vaccines-youngest-children-2022-06-17/>

Partisan Exits

Boris Johnson breaks promise to deliver 100 million Covid vaccines to poor countries

The government has broken its promise to deliver 100 million surplus Covid vaccines to poor countries, after sharply cutting international aid spending. At a G7 meeting in June last year, Boris Johnson pledged to send the vaccines to developing countries within a year to help close the global vaccine gap and “vaccinate the world”. But a year later the government has delivered barely a third of the number of promised jabs, with just 36.5 million deployed as of the end of May – a deficit of 63.5 million doses. Figures published by the government also show that ministers have effectively charged developing countries for the leftover jabs by deducting them from existing aid, and even added a mark-up on the UK’s original purchase price.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-covid-vaccines-aid-donations-b2103478.html>

COVID vaccine injury plaintiffs face long odds in U.S. compensation program

“I thought it would be impossible to deny me.” That’s what Cody Flint, who used to work as a crop duster in Mississippi, said he expected when he filed a claim with an obscure government tribunal that provides compensation for COVID-19 vaccine-related injuries. Flint, 34, told me that he submitted hundreds of pages of supporting material, including reports from four doctors who attributed his episodes of vertigo, headaches, and partial loss of hearing and eyesight -- afflictions that have ended his career as a pilot, at least for now -- to a rare side-effect of the Pfizer vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/covid-vaccine-injury-plaintiffs-face-long-odds-us-compensation-program-2022-06-16/>

Continued Lockdown

Shanghai surprise: How I survived 70 days confinement in the world's strictest Covid lockdown

When I left a Covid-ravaged Hong Kong, I was in search of a sanctuary. It was early March and the city was in the throes of the biggest coronavirus outbreak per capita in the world. Little could I have known as I boarded the plane that my cunning escape plan would take me from the frying pan into the fire; that as I landed in Shanghai I would be swapping the world's biggest outbreak for the "world's strictest lockdown" -- and 70 days of enforced confinement. Still less could I have foreseen that, after serving three weeks of government-mandated quarantine on arrival, my housing compound would be hermetically sealed for a further 49 days straight, or that my mom and I would catch Covid, or that I would be carted off for a further spell of isolation at one of the government's notorious "fangcang" camps.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/17/asia/shanghai-covid-quarantine-lockdown-experience-dst-intl-hnk/index.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

Covid-19: Long covid risk is lower with omicron than delta, researchers find

The risk of developing long covid is lower among people with the omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 than with delta, shows an analysis of self reported data to the UK ZOE covid app. Researchers from King’s College London looked at data logged by 56 003 adults who tested positive between 20 December 2021 and 9 March 2022, when the omicron variant was dominant. They compared these with 41 361 who tested positive between 1 June 2021 and 27 November 2021, when the delta variant was most common. Among the cases in the omicron period, 2501 people (4.5%) reported they had experienced long covid, defined as having new or ongoing symptoms four weeks or more after they had tested positive. This compared with 4469 (10.8%) of people in the delta period, according to the analysis, published as a letter in the Lancet.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj.o1500>

Can We Develop a Covid-19 Vaccine That Lasts?

Though most vaccines take years to develop, the Covid shots now in use were created in record time—in a matter of months. For health authorities and a public desperate for tools to deal with the pandemic, their speedy arrival provided a huge lift, preventing hospitalizations and deaths while

helping people to escape lockdowns and return to work, school and many other aspects of pre-Covid life. But the Covid vaccines don't last nearly as long as shots given for other viral illnesses such as polio, mumps and hepatitis, which remain effective for years or decades. Even more worrisome to some scientists and public health officials, the current vaccines don't fully protect against infections, which hurts their overall effectiveness and gives the virus an opportunity to mutate into more contagious and lethal strains.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-we-develop-a-covid-19-vaccine-that-lasts-11655478373>

Monkeypox Cases Could Spread Unseen in US If 'Testing Bottlenecks' Don't Improve

US testing for monkeypox is insufficient to determine how widespread the virus is and where new cases are cropping up, according to infectious disease experts and advocates concerned about a sluggish response to the outbreak that's already hit 32 countries. While government labs have the capacity to test as many as 8,000 samples a week, they're only using 2% of that capability, suggesting that about 23 monkeypox tests are being performed a day, said James Krellenstein, the cofounder of PrEP4All, an HIV advocacy group that widened its focus during the pandemic. Much more testing is needed to find out where the pathogen is and how fast it's moving, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-16/monkeypox-cases-could-spread-unseen-in-us-if-testing-bottlenecks-don-t-improve>

Omicron less likely to cause long COVID, UK study says

The Omicron variant of coronavirus is less likely to cause long COVID than previous variants, according to the first peer-reviewed study of its kind from the United Kingdom. Researchers at King's College London, using data from the ZOE COVID Symptom study app, found the odds of developing long COVID after infection were 20% to 50% lower during the Omicron wave in the UK compared to Delta. The figure varied depending on the patient's age and the timing of their last vaccination.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/omicron-less-likely-cause-long-covid-uk-study-2022-06-16/>

WHO panel backs use of Omicron-adapted vaccine as booster dose

A modified coronavirus vaccine that targets the Omicron variant can be administered as a booster dose to broaden immunity, a technical advisory group set up the World Health Organization said on Friday. Such a variant-adapted vaccine may benefit those who have already received the primary series of shots, the agency's panel on COVID-19 Vaccine Composition said, citing available data. The vaccines could be considered for use globally by the agency once they get emergency use authorization or an approval by a stringent national regulatory authority.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-panel-backs-use-omicron-adapted-vaccine-boosted-dose-2022-06-17/>

Early Omicron infection unlikely to protect against current variants

People infected with the earliest version of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, first identified in South Africa in November, may be vulnerable to reinfection with later versions of Omicron even if they have been vaccinated and boosted, new findings suggest. Vaccinated patients with Omicron BA.1 breakthrough infections developed antibodies that could neutralize that virus plus the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, but the Omicron sublineages circulating now have mutations that allow them to evade those antibodies, researchers from China reported on Friday in Nature.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/early-omicron-infection-unlikely-protect-against-current-variants-2022-06-17/>

COVID vaccine rollout for U.S. children close after CDC panel vote

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Saturday recommended COVID-19 vaccines for children as young as six months, allowing a nationwide rollout to start next week. The CDC's move came after a panel of advisers to the institution voted earlier on Saturday to recommend

COVID-19 vaccines for those children. "We know millions of parents and caregivers are eager to get their young children vaccinated, and with today's decision, they can," said Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/covid-vaccine-rollout-us-tots-close-after-cdc-panel-endorsement-2022-06-18/>

EU drugs watchdog begins review of Moderna's variant COVID vaccine

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) started a rolling review on Friday of a variant-adapted COVID-19 vaccine from Moderna (MRNA.O), as coronavirus cases linked to Omicron sub-variants see an uptick in the region. U.S.-based Moderna's so-called bivalent vaccine targets two strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus behind COVID, the original strain first identified in China, and the Omicron variant. Last week, Moderna said its bivalent vaccine produced a better immune response against Omicron than the original shot.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-drugs-watchdog-kicks-off-rolling-review-modernas-variant-vaccine-2022-06-17/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19: Rise in infections in Wales according to ONS

Covid-19 infections in Wales have risen to their highest levels in a month. One in 45 people had Covid in the week ending 11 June, according to estimates by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). That is 64,800 people - or 2.13% of the population. It's up from last week, when only one in 75 people were estimated to have Covid. The findings are based on a weekly swab survey, which took samples from more than 4,800 people in Wales.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-61842354>

Covid-19: 4404 new community cases, 356 in hospital, and 11 deaths

The Ministry of Health is reporting 4404 new community cases of Covid-19 on Saturday, 356 hospitalisations, and 11 deaths. The seven-day rolling average of community case numbers today is 5154 - last Saturday it was 5914. Of the deaths reported on Saturday, one was a person in their 40s, one was in their 50s, five were in their 70s, one was in their 80s, and three were aged over 90. Four were women and seven were men.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/129010931/covid19-4404-new-community-cases-356-in-hospital-and-11-deaths>

Canada seeing rise in COVID-19 subvariants. Could this lead to a summer surge?

Canada is seeing an increase in several fast-spreading COVID-19 variants that have been fuelling new outbreaks in the United States and Europe, Canada's top doctors said Friday. The BA.4 and BA.5 strains of the virus, which are subvariants of Omicron, have been detected in Canada since May, and the BA.2.12 subvariant has been showing growth in the country since March. On Friday, Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, made note of the rise in the number of these cases in the country and said that these subvariants have "demonstrated a growth advantage and additional immune escape" over Omicron and other strains of the virus. "COVID-19 has shown us over the past few years that there may be more surprises ahead," Tam said during the briefing.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8928883/covid-subvariants-summer-surge-phac/>

Another three deaths recorded in Northern Ireland's latest weekly Covid-19 update

Three deaths linked to Covid-19 have been recorded in Northern Ireland in the latest weekly update. The fatalities, in the week ending June 10, take the total number of coronavirus-linked deaths recorded by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (Nisra) to 4,643. The figure is drawn from different data sources and is always higher than the Department of Health's total as it provides a broader picture of the impact of Covid-19. The department's statistics focus primarily on hospital deaths and include only people who have tested positive for the virus.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/another-three-deaths-recorded-in-latest-weekly-covid-19-update-41762669.html>

The covid waves continue to come

We are just over five months into 2022 and have already seen two record highs of coronavirus infection in England, with population prevalence peaking at 7% in early January (omicron BA.1) and 8% in late March (omicron BA.2).¹ After eight weeks of declining prevalence, infections have started to increase again with the rise of yet another set of omicron variants. Instead of just one new variant, we currently have four: BA.2.12.1 (dominant in the US), BA.4 and BA.5 (dominant in South Africa), and BA.5.1 (dominant in Portugal). Together, these four variants became dominant in England in early June,² and it looks as if BA.5 and BA.5.1 will likely win out to become the overall dominant variants.³ So what does this mean for the shorter and longer term? In the short term, we will see another wave of infections here, likely peaking at the end of June/early July. South Africa's BA.4/5 wave has now passed, with fewer hospital admissions and deaths than in their BA.1 wave in December.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj.o1504>

UAE records 1,464 new Covid-19 cases and two deaths

The UAE recorded 1,464 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday, taking the overall tally of infections to 925,898. Another 1,401 people overcame the virus as the number of recoveries climbed to 906,577. Two coronavirus-related deaths were announced, raising the toll to 2,308. The number of active cases stands at 17,013. The latest cases were identified as a result of 324,877 additional PCR tests. More than 166.8 million tests have been conducted to date as part of the country's mass screening strategy.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/health/2022/06/18/uae-records-1464-new-covid-19-cases-and-two-deaths/>

Beijing declares initial COVID victory as bar-linked surge eases

The city of Beijing on Thursday declared an initial victory in its latest battle with COVID-19 after testing millions of people and quarantining thousands in the past week to stem an outbreak prolonged by a sudden wave of cases linked to a bar. The flare-up at the popular Heaven Supermarket Bar known for its cheap liquor and rowdy nights emerged just days after the Chinese capital started to lift widespread curbs. Restrictions had been in place for around a month in Beijing to tackle a broader outbreak that began in late April.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-bar-linked-covid-outbreak-is-easing-measures-take-effect-official-says-2022-06-16/>

COVID-19: Infections rise by nearly half a million in a week

COVID-19 cases have surged by nearly half in a week, official figures show. Last week, an estimated 1,415,600 people had coronavirus in the UK, up 425,800 or 43%. This is the highest estimate for infections since the start of May, but is still well below the record high of 4.9 million at the end of March. Cases rose in all four nations of the UK - and increased across all age groups. In England, around one in 50 people had the virus, according to the coronavirus infection survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-infections-rise-by-nearly-half-a-million-in-a-week-12635566>