

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

15th May 2020

News Highlights

Cases spike in Brazil and Mexico

Brazil and Mexico saw record daily increases in new coronavirus cases, even as their contrasting leaders, both of whom have swum frequently against the tide of prevailing scientific opinion, made intensive efforts to reopen their economies.

A tale of two vaccines

A potential coronavirus vaccine, being developed by scientists at Oxford University, has shown promising signs in a small study of six monkeys. Novartis CEO, Vas Narasimhan, though, said a vaccine for Covid-19 may only become available in the second half of next year.

Japan lifts emergency and New Zealand plans for future

Japan lifted the lockdown across most of the country, as coronavirus infections subsided, vindicating its strategy of voluntary social distancing, whilst New Zealand, eased restrictions and announced a huge \$50bn plan to try and return jobs to pre-Covid-19 levels.

Africa's coronavirus challenge

The WHO predicts nearly a quarter of a billion people across the whole of Africa will be infected with the coronavirus over the next year, but the total number of serious cases and deaths could end up being lower, in percentage terms, to Europe and North America, due to factors like the continent's younger age profile and lower obesity levels.

Lockdown Exit

Coronavirus: Some return to work as lockdown eases slightly in England

The government urged people to avoid public transport if possible. But some commuters said Tube trains and buses were still too busy to observe social distancing rules. Meanwhile, new guidance issued by the College of Policing said officers had "no powers to enforce two-metre distancing" in England. Under the new rules in England, people can now spend more time outside and move house. Garden centres can reopen and sports that are physically distanced - such as golf - are now permitted. Two people from different households can meet in outdoor settings, such as parks, as long as they stay more than 2m apart.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52642222>

Coronavirus lockdown: Am I allowed to move house?

The first property viewing will not be in person, but online. Virtual viewings have become more common recently and will continue, while open house viewings will not return for a while. When prospective buyers and tenants want to inspect a property in real life, government guidance states only one household should be shown around at a time. Internal doors should stay open, or door handles wiped down along with other surfaces after each visit. Washing facilities should be offered, towels washed, and visitors could bring their own hand sanitiser.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-52648507>

The big restart: how businesses in England are coming out of lockdown

With just 16 of its 90-strong workforce back at its factory in Atherstone in the West Midlands, boss John Nollett was cautious as he digested the deluge of government guidance about how to reopen safely during the pandemic. "Staff were fully briefed for 30 minutes at the start of their shift with a Q&A session to ensure they were all happy to proceed," said Mr Nollett of the company's new workplace safety rules. "We believe we've done the right thing, but we're not medics, just engineers."

<https://www.ft.com/content/341b9c4c-b171-42ca-9cc6-912859bcf640>

Marks & Spencer reopening cafes across the UK as coronavirus lockdown rules begin to ease

Marks & Spencer is to reopen 49 of its cafés across the UK tomorrow. The high street retailer said it had taken the decision to reopen the sites to takeaway customers after operating social distancing and extra hygiene measures in its stores. The retailer said its cafés would be opening for takeaway hot drinks only and the sites selected were located next to M&S Foodhall stores which have remained open through the lockdown.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/consumer/marks-and-spencer-cafes-reopening-uk-coronavirus-lockdown-rules-2853035>

Italy's German-speaking majority region eases lockdown ahead of rest of country

Italy's German-speaking region has defied Rome by easing lockdown restrictions quicker than in the rest of the country. Residents of South Tyrol have once again heard words like Freiheit and Los Von Rom – German for Freedom and Away From Rome – in echoes of historic calls of resistance. In decades past, the words ignited on a mountainside demanded independence from Rome's rule for the province's German-language majority. Now, they vent discontent in South Tyrol, which was once part of Austria, with the uncompromising and indiscriminate lockdown imposed by the Italian government to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/italys-german-speaking-majority-region-eases-lockdown-ahead-of-rest-of-country-39204764.html>

Dentists re-open in France after two-month lockdown

Anyone who suffered through France's two-month lockdown with a toothache or other oral affliction of a non-emergency nature has a hope of licking the pain. Dental practices around the country are cautiously reopening and accepting appointments after the French government eased restrictions on some businesses, services and public activity. Yet getting back to work in the age of coronavirus requires caution, especially for over 40,000 dentists in France who are among the health professionals at highest risk of becoming infected.

<https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Dentists-re-open-in-France-after-two-month-15269080.php>

Emerging from lockdown, France's cherished bookshops battle to avoid shutdown

France's bookstores were allowed to reopen on Monday for the first time since March 17 as the country began easing lockdown measures put in place to slow the spread of Covid-19. After almost two months of confinement, the French government is trying to balance the need to resuscitate a crashing economy with the risk that the spread of the deadly virus accelerates once more.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200513-emerging-from-lockdown-france-s-cherished-bookshops-battle-to-avoid-shutdown>

From France to China, nations worry about low rates of coronavirus infection

In a worrying sign that coronavirus may not be done sweeping through nations that are beginning to emerge from lockdown, recent studies in Spain, France and England indicate that only a small fraction of these countries' populations had been infected with the virus. In France, where 16,642

people have died from coronavirus so far, according to an NBC News tally, a study led by the Pasteur Institute found only 4.4 percent of the population — or 2.8 million people — had been infected by the virus. This rose to between 9 and 10 percent in hard-hit regions such as Paris, according to the study released Wednesday.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/france-china-nations-worry-about-low-rates-coronavirus-infection-n1206821>

When will UK lockdown end? What restrictions have been eased as UK passes peak of infections

The UK has outlined plans for its route out of lockdown after passing the peak of infections, meaning the NHS is able to cope with the number of cases.

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/when-will-uk-lockdown-end-what-restrictions-have-been-eased-uk-passes-peak-infections-2658530>

China comes out of lockdown

China was once the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, but now the country is coming out of lockdown. Gideon Rachman talks to FT correspondents Yuan Yang and James Kynge about how quickly China can find a new normal.

<https://www.ft.com/content/270421a6-86e1-4992-a9f4-4272a0b30207>

Lockdown restrictions eased worldwide as countries adapt to 'new normal'

Flat dwellers in Rio de Janeiro were getting some much needed entertainment from children's movies projected onto screens set up outside their buildings, similar to a drive-in theatre. Cesar Miranda Ribeiro, president of the city-owned RioFilme company, said the effort called "Cinema In The Windows" is aimed at "trying to take care of the mental health of the people". Chinese looking for some stay-at-home retail therapy have tuned into livestream shopping. Others seeking spiritual support and human connections are worshipping remotely via online religious services from the Vatican to village churches, to mosques and temples.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/lockdown-restrictions-eased-worldwide-countries-073915379.html>

French tennis players taking things slow in return to court as lockdown ends in France

"What's different is that this isn't even like an injury. Everyone's had an injury, and been away from the circuit for five, six months. But this was a different feeling," he said. "We weren't on holiday — far from it for all the people who were confined — and we weren't injured. It was a really complex situation to deal with." What also felt strange was the many new obligatory measures aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 — such as not sitting down on a chair, using different balls than your opponent, and sliding on gloves to wipe down the net cord with disinfectant after the session. "Hopefully we can quickly have some normal training conditions again," Mahut said. "But you have to respect the rules ... We're already lucky enough to be back playing."

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/sports/2020/05/14/tennis/french-tennis-players-taking-things-slow-return-court-lockdown-ends-france/>

Beer today, gone tomorrow: Australian brewers tip 7.8m pints down the drain

One of Australia's largest brewers is tipping 90,000 kegs of beer down the drain. Lion, which manufactures Tooheys, James Boag, XXXX and other well-known Australian beers, collected the untapped kegs from pubs and clubs in March, after the Australian government declared pubs and restaurants had to shut to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The beer has now passed its shelf life and will be tipped into the wastewater treatment plants at the Tooheys and XXXX breweries, which will produce biogas to offset the breweries' natural gas use and be used to brew fresh beer.

<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2020/may/14/australian-brewers-tip-78m-pints-of-beer-down-the-drain>

How public transport usage is creeping back after coronavirus lockdown

It's the next big challenge for governments as coronavirus lockdowns ease. For those of us who are lucky enough to have a workplace to go back to, doing so safely is presenting major challenges. Millions of people would normally commute by public transport, but how can you stick to social distancing while cramming onto a packed train or bus? If buses were to enforce a four-square-metres per person rule, there would only be room for six passengers and the driver on board. It would require 10 times as many buses to cope with an ordinary peak hour.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-14/public-transport-usage-during-pandemic/12246518>

Coronavirus: New Zealand eases lockdown restrictions and moves into level two

During the pandemic, New Zealand has created a numerical system which details the specific measures that are being taken to protect people and prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is known as the "Alert System" and ranges from levels one to four, with four being the most restrictive. Level two allows for businesses to reopen safely, travel between regions and socialise with friends and family in groups of up to 10.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-new-zealand-eases-lockdown-restrictions-and-moves-into-level-two-11987987>

'We're back!' - Playgrounds, barbers and schools reopen in New Zealand as country eases lockdown

New Zealand eases lockdown, with barbers, playgrounds and some tourist attractions reopening.

<https://www.independent.ie/videos/were-back-playgrounds-barbers-and-schools-reopen-in-new-zealand-as-country-eases-lockdown-39205685.html>

New Zealand barbers opens at midnight as coronavirus lockdown restrictions eased

A New Zealand barber shop opened its doors as the clock passed midnight on Thursday to mark the moment most lockdown restrictions were eased across the country. Shopping centres, retail stores and restaurants were allowed to open their doors as of 12.01am, with many employees returning to their workplaces. Mass gatherings will still be limited to 10 people and social distancing guidelines remains in place under the country's Level Two restrictions.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-05-14/lockdown-locks-tamed-as-new-zealand-barber-holds-midnight-cuts/>

New Zealand sheds lockdown restrictions, reopens shops, restaurants, malls

Malls, retail stores and restaurants are all reopening Thursday in the South Pacific nation of 5 million, and many people are returning to their workplaces. But most gatherings will be limited to 10 people and social distancing guidelines will remain in place. The reopening reflects the success New Zealand has experienced in its bold goal of eliminating the virus. The country reported no new cases of the virus on Tuesday and Wednesday. More than 1400 of the nearly 1500 people who contracted COVID-19 have recovered, while 21 have died.

<https://www.9news.com.au/world/new-zealand-coronavirus-updates-new-zealand-drops-lockdown-restrictions-reopens-shops-restaurants-malls/284e2e4e-603e-4a35-aa5b-a88012e378f3>

'Stay out of my moist breath zone': Covid-19 anthem takes the drool out of school

Shirley Şerban of Lake Brunner school in the South Island penned the song Moist Breath Zone as a health and safety message for students returning to school after the Covid-19 lockdown. A three-and-a-half-minute music video posted on YouTube features two dogs, two hugging chimps, a yawning llama, a coughing kitten and a sleepy Staffordshire terrier among others. "We're back at school, it's really cool, to all be here together. We made it through and I missed you, the country's getting better," the song begins. "I'll share my news, but my food's for me alone. If I smell your breath, I will go sit on my own. Always wash your hands - make them soapy, full of foam." "And stay out of my moist breath zone!" A moist breath zone is the area in which you can feel or smell someone else's breath. The song has been welcomed by New Zealand's Ministry of Education, which called Şerban's effort "fantastic".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/14/moist-breath-zone-covid-19-new-zealand-song-takes-drool-out-of-school>

Coronavirus: First flight, post Covid-19 lockdown, lands at Hamilton Airport

Hamilton Airport Chief Executive Mark Morgan stood at the arrival gate to welcome passengers from the Wellington flight. It was good to see domestic flights gradually return over the next six or seven weeks, he said. Return flights to Wellington started this week and flights to Christchurch start on May 18, with flights to Palmerston North a possibility later on. "Air New Zealand has said they may reschedule flights quickly, to respond to demand, but we should start to see three or four flights a day." Morgan said the airport had retained all staff and seeing flights resume would boost morale.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/121511866/coronavirus-first-flight-post-covid19-lockdown-lands-at-hamilton-airport>

California hospitals brace for fresh coronavirus wave as Mexico comes hotspot

Over past few weeks, cases have increased in California counties near the border with Mexico, which is failing to tackle growing crisis

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/14/california-hospitals-brace-fresh-coronavirus-wave-mexico-comes/>

Tracking apps and thermal scanners: Life in post-lockdown South Korea

Thermal scanners at theme parks, shopping for makeup while wearing masks and constant tracking of people's whereabouts through apps and credit card data are markers of the new post-pandemic world in the country leading the way in its response to the virus. "Everyday distancing does not mean returning to life before COVID-19," Kim Kang Lip, vice minister of health and welfare, said Tuesday at a news briefing. "It means building new social norms and a culture based on exercising social distancing."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/tracking-apps-thermal-scanners-life-post-lockdown-south-korea-n1201016>

Exit Strategies

Coronavirus vaccine could be ready by this time next year, says EU drugs agency

A coronavirus vaccine could be ready for approval in a year's time in an "optimistic" scenario, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has said. The head of vaccines for the EMA – the body which approves medicines for the European Union – said he had doubts over claims one could be available by September. Dr Marco Cavaleri said: "For vaccines, since the development has to start from scratch ... we might look from an optimistic side in a year from now, so beginning of 2021."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-vaccine-cure-treatment-european-medicines-agency-a9513636.html>

The United Kingdom's four countries take a divided approach to coronavirus crisis

The UK's coronavirus crisis has reignited one of the country's most bitter political debates: Can the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland survive as a union of four nations? On Sunday night, Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressed the country from 10 Downing Street in a recorded message, announcing his plan for the UK to emerge from lockdown. He called on millions of people to return to work, and gave a rough outline of when schools and shops might reopen over the coming months. He also shifted his government's core message from the simple "Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives" to the more ambiguous "Stay Alert, Control the Virus, Save Lives."

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/14/uk/united-kingdom-divided-approach-coronavirus-intl-gbr/index.html>

Chinese newspaper brands UK's coronavirus response a 'mess' that needs 'miracle' to correct

A state-run Chinese newspaper has lashed out at Boris Johnson's coronavirus response as a "mess" that needs "a miracle" to fix. Global Times, a tabloid managed by the Chinese Communist Party, also accused the UK Government of being "flippant" and "ill-prepared" and putting the economy before controlling the virus.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/china-coronavirus-boris-johnson-lockdown-a4441131.html>

Gordon Brown: coronavirus must be 'eradicated in every continent'

Gordon Brown has warned that a second or third wave of coronavirus infection could emanate from poor countries with undeveloped health systems, saying the risks can be controlled only by coordinated international action. The global crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic will not end until it is "eradicated in every continent", the former prime minister said. "It is in all our interests to prevent a second or third wave starting in the poorest, least protected countries with the most underdeveloped health systems. So a threat to others is a threat to us, and we help ourselves by helping others. Protecting ourselves locally means we need to act globally," Brown wrote in the foreword to a report by the international development charity Christian Aid.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/may/14/gordon-brown-coronavirus-must-be-eradicated-in-every-continent>

Are lockdowns being relaxed in my state? Here's how America is reopening amid the coronavirus pandemic.

At the height of stay-at-home restrictions in late March and early April, more than 310 million Americans were under various directives – some called shelter-in-place orders, others labeled stay-at-home orders. The mandates generally required people to avoid all nonessential outings and stay inside as much as possible. Here is how all 50 states – plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. – are making moves to roll back social distancing regulations. We will keep this file updated as measures are announced:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/04/19/coronavirus-lockdown-reopening-states-us-texas-florida/5155269002/>

Coronavirus in Scotland: FM 'not ruling out' easing rural lockdown first

Scottish ministers are "not ruling out" easing lockdown in some areas ahead of others, Nicola Sturgeon has said. Some parts of Scotland are less badly affected by coronavirus, with few cases currently in hospitals in Orkney, Shetland or Dumfries and Galloway. The first minister said she had "never ruled out" taking a "regionally varied approach" across Scotland. But she stressed that the government was not proposing that approach "at this stage". And she said if it was to happen, it would need to be done in a "practical and clearly understandable way".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-52662970>

When will hairdressers reopen? Date salons could open after UK Government reveals plan for easing lockdown rules

Hairdressers and barber shops remain temporarily closed, with many across the UK getting creative with cutting their own hair at home - with some very interesting results. When will hairdressers open? Date salons could reopen in UK as government issues new lockdown guidelines. But when are hairdressers due to open? Here's what you need to know.

<https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/hairdressers-when-reopen-uk-coronavirus-lockdown-salons-closed-closures-2549105>

Will summer holidays go ahead in 2020? When tourism in the UK and abroad might start after lockdown

Health Secretary Matt Hancock recently indicated that the summer season for holidays abroad is very likely to be cancelled

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/will-summer-holidays-go-ahead-2020-when-tourism-uk-and-abroad-might-start-after-lockdown-2853458>

Ending Coronavirus Lockdowns Without a How-To Guide

Only by gently easing the stringent measures that reduced the spread of the virus can we improve

our understanding of what works and what doesn't, they say. "There's so much uncertainty," said Mike Tildesley, an associate professor in life sciences at the University of Warwick in England, who models infectious diseases. "As we start to relax, we will get more information. But that's a really hard sell to the public."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ending-coronavirus-lockdowns-without-a-how-to-guide-11589456778>

South Africa Set to Move Toward Easing Lockdown Restrictions

During a televised address Wednesday evening, Ramaphosa announced officials will immediately begin work on a proposal so that by the end of May, most of the country be placed on Alert Level 3 and certain businesses will partially reopen. South Africa's approach to slowing the spread of the coronavirus is measured on a tier system, with 5 being the most restrictive. The country began Level 4 on May 1 by allowing residents to exercise outdoors and some businesses to reopen. Ramaphosa said parts of the country with high infection rates would remain under Alert Level 4, and travel to areas with lower rates of infection will be restricted. Ramaphosa also defended his handling of the COVID-19 outbreak, saying some citizens have questioned whether the nation's approach in dealing with the coronavirus has been at the expense of the livelihood of its people. He said his administration's strategic approach has been based on saving lives and preserving livelihoods.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/south-africa-set-move-toward-easing-lockdown-restrictions>

S. Africa to further ease COVID-19 lockdown

South Africa is preparing to further ease a nationwide COVID-19 lockdown later this month, President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Wednesday. "We are now preparing for a further easing of the lockdown and a gradual opening of the economy," Ramaphosa said in an address to the nation. Consultations with relevant stakeholders have begun on a proposal to place most of the country on alert level three of a five-level system by the end of May, said the president. However, hotspot places with the most infections would likely remain into June on level 4. "It is important that we maintain stringent restrictions in these areas and restrict travel out of these areas to parts of the country with lower rates of infection," he said.

http://www.china.org.cn/world/2020-05/14/content_76044187.htm

The way forward is graded opening up, not an indefinite lockdown

My understanding of public health tells me that, unlike private healthcare, public health strives for the greatest good to the largest numbers. Lockdown may have inconvenienced the largest numbers, but mass quarantine should be the last step in our armamentarium. A total lockdown is like a nuclear weapon unleashed on society — with short-term and long-term collateral damage across the board. In low-income countries, it could mean starvation for people. Why would someone sentence so many people to death if there is another path that is known? The virus exploits the weakness in health and healthcare. The result? Poor people walking on the highways with their bags and baggage. A sea of humanity walking on the roads. Mass migration. While every death diminishes us as a society, I am more worried about all those marginalised for whom existence is now no more than being on the edge of extinction.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/coronavirus-india-health-system-lockdown-pandemic6408631/>

Japan lifts state of emergency in most prefectures as Covid-19 cases fall

Japan has lifted a state of emergency across most of the country, marking a big step towards rebooting the world's fourth-largest economy as coronavirus infections subside. The move also provides some vindication for Japan's strategy of voluntary social distancing, which has brought about a reduction in infections without a compulsory lockdown. The decision, announced by prime minister Shinzo Abe in a press conference on Thursday evening, meant restrictions were immediately rescinded in 39 prefectures but maintained in Tokyo and other big cities.

<https://www.ft.com/content/0075415e-1f0e-4600-ba2b-9413d7b7fa0c>

Coronavirus lockdown | Japan lifts state of emergency in most regions

Japan's prime minister has announced the end of the state of emergency for most regions of the country, but restrictions are being kept in place in Tokyo and seven other high-risk areas, including Osaka, Kyoto and Hokkaido. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday lifted the measure ahead of schedule in 39 of the country's 47 prefectures, effective immediately.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/coronavirus-lockdown-japan-lifts-state-of-emergency-in-most-regions/article31582897.ece>

New Zealand budget: \$1bn for 'nature jobs' but dismay at lack of climate action

On Thursday the finance minister Grant Robertson unveiled more than NZ\$50bn in recovery funding to get the economy back on track following a seven-week lockdown. Tens of thousands of people have lost work during the crisis, with further lay-offs expected. Some 11,000 new jobs will be created in environmental work in the regions, conservation minister Eugenie Sage said, with people employed in pest and weed control operations, biodiversity projects and Department of Conservation nature ambassador roles. "This investment in nature will not only support thousands of people with jobs but pay dividends for generations to come by giving nature a helping hand," Sage said in a statement.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/14/new-zealand-budget-1bn-for-nature-jobs-but-dismay-at-lack-of-climate-action>

New Zealand budget: Robertson lays out \$50bn plan to return jobs to pre-Covid-19 levels

The huge figure, announced alongside the annual Budget on Thursday, equates to about 17% of the nation's GDP and 17 times more than what a New Zealand government usually allocates to new spending in its budgets. Underscoring the massive challenges facing the economy as it emerges from lockdown, Robertson said the fund was "the most significant financial commitment in modern history". The spending, which includes an eight week extension to the government's Covid-19 wage subsidy as well as spending on training and apprenticeships, public housing and infrastructure, will be funded by steep long-term borrowing, and could save 138,000 jobs according to Treasury models provided by the government. But a large tranche of the new funds were left unallocated as yet, with little detail on some of the government's spending plans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/14/new-zealand-budget-robertson-lays-out-50bn-plan-to-return-jobs-to-pre-covid-19-levels>

Oxford coronavirus vaccine found protective in small study on monkeys

A potential coronavirus vaccine being developed by scientists at Oxford University has showed promising signs in a small study of six monkeys. According to a report, some of the monkeys given a single shot of the vaccine developed antibodies against the virus within 14 days. All of them developed protective antibodies within 28 days, before being exposed to high doses of the virus, experts said.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/oxford-coronavirus-vaccine-found-protective-in-small-study-on-monkeys-a4441116.html>

Novartis CEO Says Covid-19 Vaccine May Take Until End of 2021

Novartis AG Chief Executive Officer Vas Narasimhan said a vaccine for Covid-19 may only become available in the second half of next year, echoing the consensus view in much of the pharmaceutical industry. "The ultimate way to deal with this pandemic is likely to be a vaccine against Covid-19," the CEO wrote in an opinion piece published in Switzerland's Handelszeitung Thursday. "That will take more time -- my guess is about one and a half to two years."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-14/novartis-ceo-says-covid-19-vaccine-may-take-until-end-of-2021>

FDA warns on rapid coronavirus test used by White House

The US drug regulator has warned the coronavirus test being used by the White House could be missing significant numbers of patients, after a study found it could be giving false negative results in almost half of cases. The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday night warned the test provided by Abbott Laboratories could be returning inaccurate results, just days after members of Donald Trump's inner circle tested positive for Covid-19. The FDA said "early data" had shown Abbott's ID Now test might be returning false negative results, adding that officials were investigating why that might be the case.

<https://www.ft.com/content/9b9ea834-feb4-4eaf-ba06-992b80a3f853>

Coronavirus lockdown: Allowing family gatherings in England 'complicated'

Allowing family gatherings is an "important public health issue", England's deputy chief medical officer has said - but it is "complicated" to make the rules fair. Dr Jenny Harries said such a move could provide a "mental health boost". But she said if two large families wanted to meet "you end up effectively with quite a large gathering". Some lockdown measures have been eased in England but restrictions on how many people you can meet remain in place. Two people from different households can meet in outdoor settings, such as parks - as long as they stay more than two metres apart. But any larger meetings between different households at the same time are currently banned. The UK government has said this means someone cannot see both parents at the same time.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52655431>

Partisan Exits

Michigan officials prepare for anti-lockdown protesters to descend on the capital today

Anti-lockdown protesters turned on each other Thursday when a fight erupted on the steps of the capitol. One protester was removed when he was seen waving an American flag with a doll hanging from a noose. Demonstrators descended on capitol building in Lansing demanding an end to the stay-at-home order. The rally has been dubbed 'Judgement Day' by organizers Michigan United for Liberty. Law enforcement has warned demonstrators they may face arrest if they brandish firearms. Gov. Whitmer slammed the protesters this week saying their actions could lead to extension of the lockdown. Whitmer has extended the stay-at-home order until at least May 28.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8319463/Michigan-officials-prepare-anti-lockdown-protesters-descend-capital-today.html>

Police Visit to Tesla Shows U.S. Confusion on Lockdown Loosening

Police visited Tesla Inc.'s sole U.S. car plant Wednesday to assess whether the electric-car maker was adhering to safety protocols agreed to with the county that Elon Musk publicly said he would defy earlier in the week. A lieutenant with the Fremont, California, police department went to the factory late in the afternoon to view employee screening and physical distancing measures, as well as to confirm universal use of face coverings. Findings from the visit -- which Tesla was notified of in advance -- will be presented to the public health officer for Alameda County, which will determine compliance, according to a police spokeswoman.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-14/tesla-plant-gets-police-visit-to-confirm-health-order-compliance>

When will UK lockdown end? Why we don't know yet - but the new Government coronavirus plan gave us some idea

The UK Government issued a 50-page document detailing how coronavirus lockdown restrictions could be eased - but the dates are not confirmed.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/lockdown-uk-when-end-coronavirus-date-government-new-plan-50-page-document-2850931>

Britain Starts Easing Lockdown as Pressure Builds on Boris Johnson

Britain took its first steps to ease its lockdown Wednesday as new figures showed the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on its economy, while Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced growing political pressure over his government's handling of the crisis. The tentative moves are the latest in a cautious European push to bring the region's economy out of hibernation. The U.K. economy shrank an annualized 7.7% in the first quarter, official data showed Wednesday, its worst quarterly performance for more than a decade.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/britain-starts-easing-lockdown-as-pressure-builds-on-boris-johnson-11589384804>

Anti-lockdown protests in Germany infiltrated by far-right extremists

The protesters are typically a mixed bunch: anti-vaxxers, conspiracy theorists, left-wing extremists, neo-Nazis and hooligans, and others with no particular political affiliation. But what's worrying officials in Berlin is that protesters have long ceased to merely appeal on the government to respect fundamental rights. "What unites people is the hatred of the political elite and public broadcasting," said Matthias Quent, right-wing extremism researcher and director of the Institute for Democracy and Civil Society (IDZ) in Jena.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/coronavirus/news/anti-lockdown-protests-in-germany-infiltrated-by-far-right-extremists/>

Coronavirus Lockdowns: Businesses Turn to Armed Defiance

Armed militia-style protesters have helped businesses across Texas defy coronavirus lockdowns and reopen. Protesters say they are enforcing the Constitution.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/us/coronavirus-businesses-lockdown-guns.html>

Continued Lockdown

Washington mayor extends US capital's lockdown

Washington's mayor extended the US capital's lockdown on Wednesday (May 13) amid a stream of new COVID-19 cases, even as many parts of the country gradually reopen in a push to prevent further economic damage. The orders extend the city's home sheltering regime, which was set to expire Friday, to Jun 8, and came as similar measures were granted for the city's suburbs in the states of Maryland and Virginia. The two states are gradually reopening their economies, but have permitted communities near the capital - population: 700,000 - to open under different timelines, due to heightened levels of COVID-19. "The number of new daily cases of COVID-19 diagnoses has yet to fall and the number of daily deaths has failed to decline," Mayor Muriel Bowser said in her proclamation. "Community transmission of COVID-19 remains widespread throughout the district," she said, as well as "in the Maryland and Virginia areas near Washington."

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/washington-mayor-extends-us-capital-s-covid-19-lockdown-12730958>

Coronavirus: US Supreme Court overrules Wisconsin lockdown

The US State of Wisconsin will be re-opened, effective immediately, after the state's Supreme Court ruled its restrictions over-stepped the mark.

<https://www.9news.com.au/videos/health/coronavirus-us-supreme-court-overrules-wisconsin-lockdown/cka6jyrc3001e0imdelr2tian>

Russians Struggling to Survive Add Pressure to End Lockdown

Grigory Sverdlin has been doling out free meals from a night bus in Russia's second-biggest city for the best part of the past two decades, with Russians running out of money after six weeks of lockdown

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-14/russians-running-out-of-money-add-pressure-to-end-virus-lockdown>

Strains in hard-hit Mumbai complicate India's coronavirus recovery

India's lockdown, imposed March 25, is set to at least partially end May 18. Some restrictions on

manufacturing, agriculture and self-employment were lifted May 4 to ease the burden on the poor and informal sector workers who comprise the majority of India's workforce. Indian Railways also partially reopened to run special trains carrying migrant workers stranded in the lockdown who fled India's big cities, including Mumbai, for their village homes. At least some of the passengers carried coronavirus with them, infection spikes in the states of Bihar and Orisha corresponding with their arrivals show.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/05/14/asia-pacific/india-virus-recovery/>

Japan suicides decline as Covid-19 lockdown causes shift in stress factors

The suicide rate in Japan fell by 20% in April compared with the same time last year, the biggest drop in five years, despite fears the coronavirus pandemic would cause increased stress and many prevention helplines were either not operating or short-staffed. People spending more time at home with their families, fewer people were commuting to work and delays to the start of the school year are seen as factors in the fall. In April, 1,455 people took their lives in Japan, 359 fewer than in April 2019. Suicide has been on a downward trend in Japan since peaking at more than 34,000 cases annually in 2003. Last year saw just over 20,000, and the large drop last month came at a time when there were fears of a fresh spike.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/14/japan-suicides-fall-sharply-as-covid-19-lockdown-causes-shift-in-stress-factors>

Cape Town becomes the centre of South Africa's virus pandemic

Cape Town has half of South Africa's coronavirus cases, making it the center of infection in the country

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-14/novartis-ceo-says-covid-19-vaccine-may-take-until-end-of-2021?utm_medium=social&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business

Africa facing a quarter of a billion coronavirus cases, WHO predicts

Nearly a quarter of a billion people across 47 African countries will catch coronavirus over the next year, but the result will be fewer severe cases and deaths than in the US and Europe, new research predicts. A model by the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional office for Africa, published in the BMJ Global Health, predicts a lower rate of transmission and viral spread across the continent than elsewhere, resulting in up to 190,000 deaths. But the authors warn the associated rise in hospital admissions, care needs and "huge impact" on services such as immunisation and maternity, will overwhelm already stretched health services.

https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/may/15/africa-facing-a-quarter-of-a-billion-coronavirus-cases-who-predicts?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw_t_gu&utm_medium&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1589518712

Why is Russia's coronavirus death rate so low?

Russia has the world's second-highest number of coronavirus cases but has registered 10 times fewer deaths than Britain, France, Italy and Spain. So many are wondering: why is the country's mortality rate so low?. How they go about counting recorded cases....

<https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/why-is-russias-coronavirus-death-rate-so-low/75748618>

Scientific Viewpoint

France slams pharma giant Sanofi for saying US will get first access to coronavirus vaccine

The French government warned Thursday that it would be "unacceptable" for pharmaceutical giant Sanofi to give any COVID-19 vaccine for the United States first, after the firm's chief said he would give preference to the American market. "To us, it would be unacceptable for there to be privileged access for such and such country for financial reasons," deputy finance minister Agnes Pannier-

Runacher told Sud Radio. The French government official reacted to Sanofi's British CEO Paul Hudson statement on Wednesday that if its efforts to find a vaccine pan out, he would supply the US government first because "it's invested in taking the risk," after it expanded a partnership with his company earlier this year. "That's how it will be because they've invested to try and protect their population, to restart their economy," he told Bloomberg News.

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20200514/france-slams-pharma-giant-for-promising-coronavirus-vaccine-to-the-us>

Coronavirus: A quarter of COVID-19 patients who died in England had diabetes

NHS England said of the 22,332 people who died since 31 March, 5,873 (26%) of them had diabetes as an underlying health condition.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-a-quarter-of-covid-19-patients-who-died-in-england-had-diabetes-11988326>

When will UK lockdown end? Why we don't know yet - but the new Government coronavirus plan gave us some idea

The UK Government issued a 50-page document detailing how coronavirus lockdown restrictions could be eased - but the dates are not confirmed

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/lockdown-uk-when-end-coronavirus-date-government-new-plan-50-page-document-2850931>

University research claims a quarter of UK already infected with COVID-19

A team of researchers from The University of Manchester, Salford Royal and Res Consortium, have shown that a significant proportion of people in the UK- more than 25% - is likely to have been infected already by the COVID-19 virus.

<https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/northwest/news/2059964-university-research-claims-a-quarter-of-uk-already-infected-by-covid-19>

Coronavirus antibody test with 100% accuracy approved for use in UK

The blood test checks for antibodies to help determine if a patient has been exposed to the virus, even if they never developed symptoms. Their detection could help experts gauge how far the infection has spread and indicate how many may have gained immunity against the disease. Prime Minister Boris Johnson previously called antibody testing a 'game-changer' as any reliable test may help speed up measures to ease the lockdown because people could return to work confident they are not likely to get it again.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/05/14/game-changing-coronavirus-antibody-test-key-lifting-lockdown-12700608/>

Record drop in A&E attendance in England 'a ticking timebomb', say doctors

The number of people waiting for hospital care in England could double to more than 8 million within a few months as a result of the coronavirus crisis, a leading health expert has warned. Measures that hospitals will have to put in place to tackle the infection as they seek to get back to normal after the pandemic would limit the number of patients who could have a planned operation, said Nigel Edwards, chief executive of the Nuffield Trust thinktank.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/14/a-and-e-attendance-england-record-low-covid-19-lockdown>

What is the R number? Why the UK's coronavirus reproduction rate is so important to plans to end lockdown

The higher the R value, the more infectious the virus. R3 means one person can pass Covid-19 to three people while R10 means it can be transmitted to 10. Dr Yuliya Kyrychko, a reader in mathematics at the University of Sussex, tells i: "The higher this number is, the more likely it is that an epidemic will develop, and as soon as it goes over one, that's a clear sign that there will be an outbreak.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/r-number-coronavirus-uk-rate-reproduction-meaning-lockdown-end-plans-2598452>

Coronavirus: Scientists only have 'low confidence' school children will spread virus less than adults as lockdown eased

This government is playing Russian roulette with the lives of our school support staff and children in England,' union official says. The government's scientific advisory group only has a "low degree of confidence" that children may spread coronavirus less effectively than adults, MPs have been told, as ministers move to reopen schools as part of easing lockdown. Osama Rahman, chief scientific adviser at the Department for Education (DfE), went on to say that the decision to reopen schools to reception-age children as well as years one and six was not made by his branch of the government.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/coronavirus-latest-school-reopening-lockdown-easing-uk-education-gavin-williamson-a9513281.html>

Coronavirus Resurgence

China's Wuhan kicks off mass testing campaign for new coronavirus

Authorities in the Chinese city where the novel coronavirus emerged launched an ambitious campaign on Wednesday to test all of its 11 million residents, after a cluster of new cases raised fears of a second wave of infections. At least two of the city's main districts have delivered notices of the campaign door-to-door and sent out online questionnaires through community workers seeking information about tests people have had, and if they belong to what are deemed high-risk groups, residents said. "To better make use of nucleic acid tests as a monitoring tool and in accordance of the state cabinet's requirements to expand testing, we've decided after consideration to conduct testing for all residents," according to a questionnaire sent to residents of the city's Wuchang district, which has a population of about 1.2 million.

<http://morungexpress.com/index.php/chinas-wuhan-kicks-mass-testing-campaign-new-coronavirus>

Coronavirus: We are right to fear a 'second wave' right now - seven weeks into lockdown Wuhan's R number was already less than 0.2

Anyone who has ever seen a graph of the Spanish flu pandemic knows it came in three waves – and the second was the deadliest. The virus which first emerged around March 1918 seemed much like a seasonal flu, albeit a highly contagious and virulent strain. But when the second wave hit in autumn of that year, it was capable of killing previously healthy young men and women within 24 hours of the first signs of infection: the virus had mutated. That goes a long way to explaining why the second wave was worse than the first, but a failure to impose civilian lockdowns in Britain amid a war effort that encouraged citizens to "carry on" and prioritised keeping workers in weapons factories helped to accelerate its spread.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18447150.coronavirus-right-fear-second-wave---seven-weeks-lockdown-wuhans-r-number-less-0-2/>

Exclusive: Second more deadly wave of coronavirus 'to hit Europe this winter'

Europe's top WHO official warns that second spike could coincide with outbreaks of other infectious diseases

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/14/second-deadly-wave-coronavirus-hit-europe-winter/>

New coronavirus clusters in France test government's strategy to exit lockdown

As France takes the first steps on the slow return to normal, reports of new coronavirus clusters around the country have sparked concern. "We need to remember that the virus is here, circulating, ready for an ambush," virologist Anne-Claude Crémieux told France Info. The new clusters were discovered just before May 11th, the day France began to ease its strict, nationwide lockdown. Eliminating these clusters has proved an important first test of France's main strategy - testing, tracing and isolating - to safely reopen society. Local authorities in the cluster areas have had their hands full to successfully track and test those at risk of having been contaminated. All the clusters were found in so-called green zones.

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20200513/new-coronavirus-clusters-puts-frances-strategy-to-exit-lockdown-at-test>

Coronavirus cases surge in Brazil, Mexico

Record rises in daily coronavirus cases have been recorded in Brazil and Mexico, where leaders are intensifying attempts to reopen their economies.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/coronavirus-cases-surge-in-brazil-mexico>

New Lockdown

Coronavirus China, South Korea, Germany: Cities back in lockdown

Everyone who hasn't had COVID-19 is tinder for a fresh pandemic eruption. And doubts persist that those who have had it remain immune for long. Which means herd immunity – the level of resistance within a community necessary to stifle any outbreak – remains an intangible dream. “Herd immunity is not this magical number where once you reach that point nobody else gets infected,” La Jolla Institute for Immunology in California immunologist Shane Crotty told Popular Science. “It would no longer be a full-blown epidemic once you get to herd immunity, [but] the virus would still spread, it would still infect people, it would still kill people. It would just be a less common event.”

<https://www.news.com.au/world/coronavirus/global/coronavirus-cities-struck-down-as-lockdowns-lift/news-story/84ecdbf172a6cc4c522e8bfd1a488799>

China's Jilin city goes into partial lockdown to contain virus cluster

Train and long-distance bus services halted, schools closed and gatherings banned as vice-mayor warns of ‘major risk of further spread’ - Six new community cases have been confirmed, bringing total to 21 – all linked to a laundry worker in nearby Shulan

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3084203/chinas-jilin-city-goes-partial-lockdown-contain-coronavirus>