COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

11th Aug 2020

News Highlights

Boris Johnson urges vigilance againt virus: insists UK schools must reopen soon

Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged Britons to continue to 'be vigilant' against the coronavirus, following a recent surge in cases in Spain that led the UK government to announce a 14 day quarantine for all travellers returning from the country. However, Johnson is also pushing for schools to reopen in the UK, writing in the Mail on Sunday that it was 'socially intolerable, economically unsustainable and morally indefensible' to keep schools closed longer than necessary.

No new lockdown in Poland despite rising coronavirus cases

Polish Deputy Prime Minister, Jacek Sasin, ruled out another national lockdown despite health authorities reporting more than 800 new coronavirus cases on Friday, the sixth record daily rise in a fortnight. Most cases were reported in and around big cities such as Warsaw and Krakow, with 259 cases reported from the coal mining region in Silesia.

Covid-19 after-effects include lasting heart damage, loss of smell

A new study from the University Hospital Frankfurt suggests that 78% of recovered Covid-19 patients suffer permanent heart damage, with the disease leaving structural changes to their hearts. Scientists are also investigating if one of the tell tale coronavirus symptoms, the loss of the sense of smell, is a permanent after-effect or it is temporary.

Record coronavirus deaths in India amidst rising cases

India reported more than 1,000 new coronavirus cases on Monday, a new daily high, as the death count reached 44,386, behind only the U.S., Brazil, Mexico and Britain. The country also reported 62,000 cases on Monday and has been leading the world in daily confirmed cases for the last 6 days.

Lockdown Exit

New Zealand records 100 days without domestic virus case but warns against complacency

New Zealand marked 100 days without a domestic transmission of the coronavirus on Sunday, but warned against complacency as countries like Vietnam and Australia which once had the virus under control now battle a resurgence in infections.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-newzealand-appleve/new-zealand-records-100-days-without-domestic-virus-case-but-warns-against-complacency-idUSKCN2550NY

Will Cars Rule the Roads in Post-Pandemic New York?

When New York went into lockdown five months ago to contain the virus, traffic virtually disappeared, and the mostly deserted streets suddenly became a vast trove of open space in one of the world’s most crowded cities. But now as New York slowly recovers and cars have started to return, a battle for the 6,000 miles of city streets is just beginning.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/10/nyregion/nyc-streets-parking-dining-busways.html

Reporting on Covid-19 in Spain: 'The limits of our new normality are being tested'

Many of the unhealed socioeconomic wounds of the 2008 financial crisis have begun to seep once again. Here, as elsewhere, the poorest have been hit disproportionately hard by the virus and its attendant effects, while the health and care systems in regions such as Madrid are crying out for proper management and investment. But, as a glance at the number of people wearing face masks on the street will tell you, Spaniards have also shown a remarkable degree of forbearance and a willingness to put their lives on hold for the common good. If only the same could be said for all of the country's elected representatives. While some have called for unity and cooperation in the face of a common and global enemy, others are only too happy to exploit the pandemic and carry on puffing out clouds of rhetoric that are as mephitic as they are empty. My life as a reporter is slowly drifting back towards something approaching its former normality. On Tuesday I drove out of Madrid for the first time in months to report on a story which, also for the first time in months, had nothing to do with Covid-19. And apart from the mask, the hand gel and the distancing, it didn't feel all that different.

https://www.theguardian.com/membership/2020/aug/09/reporting-on-covid-19-in-spain-we-may-be-in-a-second-wave-it-depends-who-you-ask

Coronavirus: New Zealand marks 100 days without community spread

New Zealand has gone 100 days without recording a locally transmitted Covid-19 case, a milestone that has both been welcomed and brought warnings against complacency. The last case of community transmission was detected on 1 May, days after the country started easing its lockdown. Sunday was the fourth day in a row that no new cases of Covid-19 were reported. The total number of active cases in the country remained at 23, all in managed isolation. New Zealand has fared better than other countries, recording 1,219 confirmed cases and 22 deaths since the virus arrived in late February.

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53715084

'Broken America': Grim US coronavirus milestone leaves Europe aghast

That the most powerful nation on Earth could be found wanting has led to complete bewilderment on the other side of the Atlantic. Much of the incredulity in Europe stems from the fact that America had the benefit of time, European experience and medical know-how to treat the virus that the continent itself didn't have when the first COVID-19 patients started filling intensive care units. Yet more than four months into a sustained outbreak, the US has reached 5 million cases, according to the running count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

https://www.smh.com.au/world/north-america/broken-america-grim-us-coronavirus-milestone-leaves-europe-aghast-20200810-p55k3g.html

US tops 5 million confirmed virus cases, to Europe's alarm

With confirmed coronavirus cases in the U.S. hitting 5 million Sunday, by far the highest of any country, the failure of the most powerful nation in the world to contain the scourge has been met with astonishment and alarm in Europe. Perhaps nowhere outside the U.S. is America's bungled virus response viewed with more consternation than in Italy, which was ground zero of Europe's epidemic. Italians were unprepared when the outbreak exploded in February, and the country still has one of the world's highest official death tolls at over 35,000. But after a strict nationwide, 10-week lockdown, vigilant tracing of new clusters and general acceptance of mask mandates and social distancing, Italy has become a model of virus containment.

https://apnews.com/2a03a4e685316eb7d5a6e7181000fbfe

England could see drive-thru flu vaccination centres

Drive-thru flu jabs are reportedly planned in a bid to get people vaccinated without having to mix

with others. The plan echoes the drive-thru coronavirus testing stations, which were set up in the UK during the pandemic. Now, similar centres could pop up for people to get their flu jabs as part of NHS England plans, according to The Times.
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-flu-jab-drive-thru-centre-a9664061.html

Exit Strategies

Coronavirus: Contact tracers to be reduced by 6,000 in England

The NHS test and trace system in England is cutting 6,000 staff by the end of August, the government has announced. The remaining contact tracers will work alongside local public health teams to reach more infected people and their contacts in communities. It comes after criticism that the national system was not tapping into local knowledge. The approach has been used in virus hotspots like Blackburn and Luton. And it's now being offered to all councils that are responsible for public health in their area. Test and trace is staffed by NHS clinicians and people who were trained to become contact tracers during the pandemic. NHS staff who offer advice to people who have tested positive for coronavirus will not be laid off.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-53723398

England COVID test and trace scheme changes tack after mixed results

Launched in late May, the scheme jointly operated by the National Health Service (NHS) and private contractors Serco and Sitel has had setbacks ranging from scrapping a promised homegrown mobile app to reports of contact tracers with nothing to do. The scheme will lose 6,000 people on Aug. 24, out of a total of 18,000 currently employed by Serco and Sitel to call people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and trace anyone with whom they have been in recent contact. “As the approach becomes more locally targeted the national service will adjust. NHS Test and Trace will reduce current extra capacity and reduce the number of non-NHS call handlers,” the health ministry said in a statement. The new approach will give more responsibility to local authorities and public health teams to track people down, with back-up from teams from the national scheme who will be allocated specific local areas to work on.
https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-trace/england-covid-test-and-trace-scheme-changes-tack-after-mixed-results-idUKKCN2561LG

‘Door knocks’ a possibility for Covid-19 contacts

People who have been in contact with confirmed coronavirus cases may get a knock on their door if tracers are unable to reach them over the phone. Health officials have announced plans to strengthen regional test and trace powers in England, while 6,000 national contract tracers will be cut in a fortnight. In pilot schemes, local authorities have been able to visit people at home where national contact tracers have been unable to reach them. The changes come after criticism that the national system was not tapping into local knowledge. Labour said the new plans showed that the system was nowhere near “world-beating” as the Government claims.
https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/door-knocks-a-possibility-for-covid-19-contacts-39437484.html

Federal government had no Covid-19 aged care plan, royal commission hears

A parliamentary inquiry was told last week that 97 Victorian aged care facilities had been affected in the second wave, with 657 residents and 594 staff infected with Covid-19. A further 25 home care services for the elderly were also affected. Seventeen recipients of these services were infected, as were 24 staff working in-home care. There had been 108 fatalities. The royal commission will later this week examine evidence of a “stand-off” between commonwealth and state health authorities over how to best handle an outbreak at Sydney’s Newmarch House, where the medical recommendation to send infected residents to hospital was discouraged out of an “intolerable” fear of setting a precedent. Health professionals on Monday gave evidence that attempts to replicate a “hospital in the home” were futile, due to issues including poor building airflow and staff

undertrained in infection control. The commission heard that when outbreaks occurred, a facility's workforce could be almost entirely replaced with surge staffing, who needed to be "oriented" to that particular aged care home.
https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/aug/10/government-had-no-covid-19-aged-care-plan-inquiry-told-as-catastrophic-failure-alleged-over-st-basils

Cuba reports record number of COVID-19 cases
Cuba reported a record 93 cases of the new coronavirus on Monday as a surge of the disease in the Havana area threatened to stall the re-opening of the country after a partial lockdown beginning in March. Most of the cases were in Havana, where a partial lockdown was re-imposed on Monday, and in neighboring Artemisa province. The area has been isolated from the rest of the country where with but few exceptions no cases have been reported in more than two months. In Havana, restaurants, bars and pools are once more closed, public transportation suspended and access to the beach banned.
https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-cuba/cuba-reports-record-number-of-covid-19-cases-idUKKCN2561TK

Will the UK have a second lockdown? Boris Johnson warns UK to "be vigilant" amid fears of coronavirus second wave
Prime Minister Boris Johnson was warned that the UK must "be vigilant" amid the threat of a second wave of coronavirus. Mr Johnson is reportedly "extremely concerned" that there could be a spike in infections here in the UK, following the recent surge in cases in Spain. The recent outbreak of new coronavirus infections in Spain prompted the UK government to advise against all but essential travel to the country on 26 July, with travellers now facing a 14 day quarantine restriction on their return.
https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/will-uk-have-second-lockdown-boris-johnson-warns-uk-be-vigilant-amid-fears-coronavirus-second-wave-2927287

Europe's biggest countries are seeing Covid surges -- but not this one
A horrifying moment in the Covid-19 pandemic hit Italy on March 27, 2020, when the civil protection authorities announced that 969 people had died in just 24 hours. In the weeks before that, images of coffins stacked up in church parlors and being driven down the streets of the northern Italian town of Bergamo in a caravan of military trucks poured into the homes of Italians, by then locked down for nearly three weeks. Now, just four months later, life in Italy, the country Vice President Mike Pence once said "no one wanted to be like," is nearly back to normal, despite occasional spikes in cases that have been attributed to migrants arriving in the country or living in close quarters.
https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/09/europe/italy-coronavirus-return-normal-intl/index.html

WHO praises Boris Johnson for 'strong and precise' northern England lockdown
Boris Johnson has been praised by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the "strong and precise" coronavirus lockdown measures imposed in northern England. WHO director-general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the UK government's restrictions in Greater Manchester, Lancashire and west Yorkshire are helping wider society reopen safely. His words were far more positive than some of those Johnson has received at home, where the lockdown announcement was denounced in some quarters as an "absolute shambles". Dr Tedros said at a WHO press conference on Monday: "Many countries globally are now using all the tools at their disposal to tackle any new spikes.
https://uk.news.yahoo.com/who-praises-boris-johnson-coronavirus-125253590.html

France may be added to UK Covid quarantine list this week and Netherlands and Malta could be next
Fears are growing today that France will be added to the UK's quarantine travel list within days, leaving thousands of Britons facing weeks in isolation upon their return. Ministers are believed to be

planning new measures for a swathe of countries that also includes Switzerland, Poland and the Netherlands amid a surge in European coronavirus cases. They could join Spain and its islands on the list of countries where returnees will face 14 days of self-isolation, possibly putting their jobs at risk.
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8611669/France-just-days-added-Britains-quarantine-list-surge-coronavirus-cases.html

Coronavirus: WHO boss sees 'green shoots of hope' in coronavirus fight - and praises one of UK's measures

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he also expects the global death count to get to around 750,000 this week; however, he said many countries were providing reasons for optimism in their response to the pandemic. He said in a briefing on Monday: "I know many of you are grieving and that this is a difficult moment for the world. "But I want to be clear, there are green shoots of hope and no matter where a country, a region, a city or a town is - it's never too late to turn the COVID-19 outbreak around."
https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-who-chief-sees-green-shoots-of-hope-in-pandemic-fight-12046578

Thailand to allow in Chinese fruit traders, sports spectators amid lockdown ease

Thailand's Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced on Monday that its panel had decided to allow fans to attend sports events, as well as allow Chinese traders to enter Thailand for fruit export. The CCSA said that as Thailand inches toward 80 days free of COVID-19 local transmission, it is believed to be safe for spectators to attend large sports events, however, measures will tighten should the sports event be held indoor. CCSA spokesman Dr. Taweesin Visanuyothin also said that the CCSA panel has also agreed to allow Chinese traders to return to Thailand, to buy Thai fruits for export, in order to help Thai farmers. "However, the Chinese travelers will be subject to strict COVID-19 screening upon arrival and will have to go through 14 days mandatory quarantine at their own expenses," said Taweesin. Taweesin also said the CCSA panel had also decided to grant full resumption of class attendance in schools, adding that if a school prefers online learning, it can use that option.
http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2020-08/10/content_76583096.htm

Lockdown management lifted in medium-risk areas of NE China's Dalian

Northeast China's Dalian city lifted the neighborhood lockdown policy in another medium-risk area from Monday after no new domestically-transmitted COVID-19 cases had been reported in the city for several days, local authorities said. The city government told a press conference that lockdown management in all four medium-risk areas of Dalian, Liaoning Province, had been lifted after the adjustment. The coastal city now has one high-risk zone. As of Sunday, Dalian reported zero newly confirmed locally-transmitted COVID-19 cases as well as zero asymptomatic cases for four consecutive days. At present, 72 cases of domestic transmission are being treated in a hospital, and all patients are in stable condition. Zhao Lian, deputy director of the municipal health commission, said Dalian would further strengthen the epidemic prevention and control measures, resolutely prevent its spreading and resurgence, and restore normalcy as soon as possible
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-08/10/c_139279701.htm

Government research indicates secondary school pupils pose greater coronavirus risk than primary students, reports suggest

Government research used by ministers to insist that it is safe for pupils to return to school suggests that some secondary school pupils may spread coronavirus at a similar rate to adults, according to reports. Public Health England (PHE) researchers are rumoured to be disconcerted with the way the findings – which are yet to be fully analysed or published – have been construed by top politicians, who have thus far not mentioned the alleged discovery of the supposedly growing risk posed by

pupils as they increase in age. With Boris Johnson declaring the return of all pupils to be the "national priority" and describing continued closures as "morally indefensible" on Sunday, education secretary Gavin Williamson touted the latest PHE research as making it "clear there is little evidence that the virus is transmitted at school".
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/coronavirus-schools-primary-secondary-pupils-risk-phe-latest-a9664086.html

The Conversation: A new community case of Covid-19 in New Zealand is a matter of when, not if. Is the country prepared for it?
New Zealand has now gone for 100 days with no community transmission of Covid-19. One way to measure the effectiveness of public health measures such as contact tracing is the virus reproduction number: the number of secondary infections for each new positive case. If this number can be kept below one, then one missed case at the border won't lead to an outbreak.
https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12355375

Boris Johnson's back-to-class promise faces setback over Covid-19 risk of after-school clubs
Headteachers are planning to defy government guidance saying they should provide extra-curricular provision due to safety fears
https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/boris-johnson-coronavirus-schools-promise-setback-575049

Partisan Exits

Philippines' Duterte Accepts Russia's Covid-19 Vaccine Offer
Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has accepted Russia's offer of its coronavirus vaccine, volunteering to take the first shot as a gesture of trust and gratitude. "When the vaccine arrives, I will have myself injected in public. Experiment on me first, that's fine with me," he said in a briefing Monday night. Duterte -- who has called President Vladimir Putin as his "idol" and who's seeking to boost ties with Russia -- added that Manila can assist Moscow in clinical trials and local production
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-11/philippines-duterte-accepts-russia-s-covid-19-vaccine-offer

In the next lockdown, schools should close last
For young people, coronavirus lockdowns have been a bewildering experience. Children have been plucked from classrooms and forced — at best — to make do with learning-by-Zoom. Some have been barred from taking exams they worked towards for years. From Tuesday, schools in Scotland will start to reopen; prime minister Boris Johnson is right to say there is a "moral duty" to ensure schools in England follow suit next month. Many other countries are doing the same, or locked in debates over how to do so. The return to school should be prioritised and safeguarded, even if virus cases start to rebound more broadly.
https://www.ft.com/content/737c1257-9b0e-48ee-b224-635716121eaf

Coronavirus: Ministers seek to reassure over schools and lockdown eases in Wales
Ministers are pushing ahead with plans to have all school children in England back in classrooms next month, as Education Secretary Gavin Williamson seeks to reassure parents and teachers over the safety of such a move. Mr Williamson says research from a large global study suggests there is little evidence coronavirus is transmitted in schools. But one teaching union says pupils may have to be taught in class on a week-on, week-off basis in the event of local lockdowns.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53716410

Royal Commission: Australia's COVID-19 aged care death rate one of the highest in the world
The rate of coronavirus deaths in Australia's aged care homes is among the highest in the world, a royal commission has heard. From inside her Glen Waverley aged care facility, Merle Mitchell told

the royal commission of life in lockdown. "From the time I wake up to the time I go to sleep I'm sitting in my own room in my one chair," she said. "I know I'm here until I die so every time I wake up I think damn, I'm still alive. "I'm sure if you really ask most people here, they would all say they would rather be dead rather than be living here." The months of isolation are meant to protect residents.
https://www.9news.com.au/national/royal-commission-australia-covid19-aged-care-death-rate-one-of-highest-in-world/d18e93c4-835f-4742-a4a6-44254c4d739c

Melbourne lockdown 'the worst-ever violation of Australia's civil liberties'
Victoria's state of disaster, from 2 August, gives huge power to the government. The Police Minister can seize private property and officers can enter homes. Research group IPA says Melbourne's stage-four restrictions have gone too far Up to 400,000 are set to lose their jobs due to forced closure of businesses
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8610263/Melbourne-lockdown-worst-violation-Australias-civil-liberties.html

UK prime minister says schools must open in September
Writing in the Mail on Sunday, Johnson said restarting schools was a national priority. Schools would be the last places to close in future local lockdowns, he was quoted by another newspaper as telling a meeting on Thursday. Schools in England closed in March during a national lockdown, except for the children of key workers, and reopened in June for a small number of pupils. The government wants all pupils to return to school by early September. “Keeping our schools closed a moment longer than absolutely necessary is socially intolerable, economically unsustainable and morally indefensible,” Johnson wrote.
https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-education/pm-says-schools-must-open-in-september-idUKKCN2550D3

England can’t ease lockdown any more, expert warns as Covid testing calls grow
One of the government’s most influential scientific advisers is warning that the loosening of lockdown may have already gone too far and that an urgent increase in coronavirus testing and faster contact tracing is essential to prepare for a resurgence in cases. Writing in the Observer , Sir Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust and a member of the government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), warns against complacency in the wake of local outbreaks that have forced lockdown measures to be reintroduced in some areas, most recently in Preston. With growing concerns about the reluctance of Covid-19 sufferers to disclose their close contacts and warnings over continued gaps in testing, Farrar states there are signs that England is in danger of “heading in the wrong direction”.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/09/we-cant-ease-lockdown-any-more-expert-warns-as-testing-calls-grow

Continued Lockdown

Coronavirus: Australia records deadliest day but fewer new infections
Australia has recorded its deadliest day of the coronavirus pandemic amid a second wave of infections in Melbourne. Victoria state - of which Melbourne is the capital - reported 19 deaths on Monday. Victoria has now seen about two-thirds of Australia's total 314 deaths and approximately 21,400 cases. But the number of daily infections - though still in the hundreds - has dropped in recent days, prompting hope that a strict lockdown is working. Melbourne's second lockdown began over a month ago, but residents have been subject to a night-time curfew and stricter requirements since 3 August.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-53718184

Scientific Viewpoint

Antarctica is the last continent without COVID-19. Scientists want to keep it that way.
The busy summer season in Antarctica begins in October and runs through February, when thousands of scientists from dozens of countries usually pack into the continent's remote research stations. Forty permanent bases dot the desolate landscape, a number that nearly doubles when summer-only facilities resume operations. This year, however, getting to this icy scientific realm comes with a serious concern: Antarctica is the only continent without a single reported case of COVID-19. Medical care at the research stations is limited, and dorm-like living makes it easy for disease to spread even in the best of years. During a pandemic, reducing the number of scientists on the continent will mitigate the risk of an outbreak, but it also disrupts urgent research.
https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/environment-and-conservation/2020/08/antarctica-is-the-last-continent-without-covid-19-scientists

America's window of opportunity to beat back Covid-19 is closing
The good news: The United States has a window of opportunity to beat back Covid-19 before things get much, much worse. The bad news: That window is rapidly closing. And the country seems unwilling or unable to seize the moment. Winter is coming. Winter means cold and flu season, which is all but sure to complicate the task of figuring out who is sick with Covid-19 and who is suffering from a less threatening respiratory tract infection. It also means that cherished outdoor freedoms that link us to pre-Covid life — pop-up restaurant patios, picnics in parks, trips to the beach — will soon be out of reach, at least in northern parts of the country.
https://www.statnews.com/2020/08/10/winter-is-coming-as-flu-season-nears-americas-window-of-opportunity-to-beat-back-covid-19-is-narrowing/

Covid-19 poses a new challenge for point-of-care manufacturing
The spread of covid-19 outbreaks has led facilities in medical device manufacturing to rigorously anticipate, plan, and innovate. By Ali Burns, managing director of Siemens Healthineers Sudbury, UK manufacturing facility. In its Sudbury facility, the work Siemens Healthineers does is intrinsically linked to the preservation of life; supply chains and distribution networks are constantly monitored and reinforced for the critical work the company undertakes.
https://www.hsj.co.uk/innovation/covid-19-poses-a-new-challenge-for-point-of-care-manufacturing/7028143.article

Number of Covid-19 patients needing hospital treatment has plummeted by 96% since April, data shows
The number of people needing hospital treatment for coronavirus infections has plummeted since the peak of the outbreak in the UK. In the seven days leading up to August 5, 375 people were hospitalised with Covid-19 in England, compared to 18,638 between March 28 and April 3. While the number of patients in hospitals would be expected to drop as cases decline and the virus fades out, data suggests fewer people are getting severely ill.
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8611359/Number-Covid-19-patients-needing-hospital-treatment-plummeted-96-April-data-shows.html

China's military takes centre stage in Covid-19 vaccine race
While governments around the world are planning to give the first doses of a proven Covid-19 vaccine to healthcare workers who are most exposed to the virus, China is prioritising people on a different frontline: the military. CanSino Biologics, a Chinese vaccine maker that has announced several sets of positive trial results, is already providing a vaccine to People's Liberation Army soldiers, even though safety testing for commercial sale of the product is not yet complete. The decision has set the country apart in the frantic global race for a vaccine — and highlighted the central part played by the PLA in broader attempts to vanquish Covid-19.
https://www.ft.com/content/2c3ae017-6c09-4f7e-93b8-f8039fe79a6c

US health secretary praises Taiwan's Covid-19 response during rare high-level visit

The US health secretary, Alex Azar, has met Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, in the highest-level US visit in more than four decades, as China flew fighter jets into the Taiwan strait. The meeting in Taipei on Monday threatened to escalate worsening tensions between Washington and Beijing. China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and takes issue with any acknowledgement of Taiwan's status as a sovereign state. Azar, a US cabinet member, is the most senior US official to visit Taiwan since Washington broke off official ties in 1979 to grant diplomatic recognition to Beijing.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/10/us-health-secretary-praises-taiwans-covid-19-response-during-rare-high-level-visit

UK heading into full lockdown next month if Boris Johnson doesn't fix 'disastrous' test and trace, says ex-government scientist

Britain could be heading into another full lockdown if Boris Johnson doesn't to sort out the "disastrous" test and trace programme, a former government adviser has said. Sir David King told the Sunday Mirror the the UK is "nowhere near" the safe reopening of schools, adding: "We need a proper test and trace system by September. Otherwise full school opening will put us right back." Sir David, 80, the former chief scientific advisor to Tony Blair who now heads the Independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies shadowing the PM's scientific team, called on Mr Johnson to "get it right
https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uk-lockdown-test-and-trace-boris-johnson-coronavirus-a4520156.html

COVID-19 in the EU Member States

Italy confirmed its first cases of COVID-19 on 31 January, whereupon the government immediately suspended all flights to and from China and declared a national state of emergency. In the early stages of the pandemic, the country saw intense localised clusters in the Northern regions of Lombardy – which had 984 confirmed cases of COVID-19 by 1 March – and Veneto. Lockdown measures were implemented in the North in early March, followed shortly by a comprehensive national quarantine strategy: funerals and cultural events were prohibited; scheduled sporting events were cancelled; and non-essential businesses were closed. As of 3 August, Italy had 246,488 confirmed cases and 35,123 deaths from COVID-19. Legal sanctions were introduced for Italians who breached the lockdown rules – under Italian law, the negligent spread of an epidemic is punishable by a prison sentence of up to 12 years – and in July Italian Minister of Health Roberto Speranza proposed involuntary trattamento sanitario obbligatorio (mandatory medical treatment) be applied to patients who refuse hospital treatment for COVID-19, saying: "I am evaluating with my legal department the hypothesis of compulsory health treatment in cases where a person must be treated but [refuses] to be. At the same time, my thoughts on how Italians have behaved during this crisis are positive, as without this fundamental harmony we would not have bent the curve."
https://www.healtheuropa.eu/covid-19-in-the-eu-member-states/102019/

WHO chief says there are 'green shoots of hope' in fight against coronavirus

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was 'never too late' to contain an outbreak He gave the North of England lockdown as an example of 'strong measures' WHO chief hailed New Zealand for reaching 100 days with no domestic spread
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8611789/WHO-chief-says-green-shoots-hope-fight-against-coronavirus.html

Reopening after COVID-19 lockdown and impact on disease

In the absence of any effective vaccine or antiviral preventive or therapeutic drug, the only possible response to an extraordinarily contagious and unknown disease was in the form of multiple non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs). China implemented what some describe as a 'Draconian' lockdown, with total closure of public transport, and all residents ordered to stay at home. Similar measures restricting travel, quarantining people with suspected or confirmed disease, and tracing contacts, were put in place in other Asia countries, and a month later, in Europe. The latter was also

characterized by school and non-essential closures, limits on the number of people who could gather, bans on international travel, and shelter-in-place mandates. The response in the US was quite different in many ways. For one thing, both state and local authorities decided on the measures to be taken. Overall, in most affected areas, stay-at-home orders were passed by March 21, 2020. In the early part of the pandemic, there was a significant reduction in the number of people moving around places like retail, grocery, workplace locations, pharmacies, and parks. Research focused on this time showed that combinations of NPIs had significant success in lowering viral transmission. The greatest impact was observed with an intensive reduction in contacts, such as lockdowns.
https://www.news-medical.net/news/20200810/Reopening-after-COVID-19-lockdown-and-impact-on-disease.aspx

USA the source of most of New Zealand's coronavirus cases
The study also shows that most of the transmission lineages in NZ were from viral strains brought in from North America, which is probably a reflection of the high prevalence of the virus in that continent during the period when these cases occurred. However, the researchers did not find any sign of the virus in NZ before February 26. The study also shows that case detection is most efficient in the second half of the epidemic than in the earlier part, because the detection lag dipped as the age of transmission lineages went down. In other words, fewer cases went undetected as the time from the first inferred transmission event in each cluster to the first detected case dropped.
https://www.news-medical.net/news/20200809/USA-the-source-of-most-of-New-Zealands-coronavirus-cases.aspx

Lockdown reduces cases of flu, colds and bronchitis in England
Lockdown and physical distancing measures have helped reduce the incidence of flu, colds, bronchitis and a host of viruses other than Covid-19 in England, monitoring suggests. The low incidence of these and other viral infections, including laryngitis and tonsillitis, has helped relieve pressure on the NHS when resources have been dedicated to fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The flipside, however, is that as lockdown eases it is not just cases of Covid-19 that may increase. Prof Martin Marshall, the chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: “We would expect to see a drop in influenza-like illness during the warmer months but the latest figures from our research and surveillance centre (RSC), which collects data from more than 500 GP practices in England, shows that it’s lower than the five-year average for this time of year.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/10/lockdown-england-reduced-flu-colds-bronchitis-coronavirus

How China Controlled the Coronavirus
A few days before my return to classroom teaching at Sichuan University, I was biking across a deserted stretch of campus when I encountered a robot. The blocky machine stood about chest-high, on four wheels, not quite as long as a golf cart. In front was a T-shaped device that appeared to be some kind of sensor. The robot rolled past me, its electric motor humming. I turned around and tailed the thing at a distance of fifteen feet.
https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/08/17/how-china-controlled-the-coronavirus

How Did New Zealand Control COVID-19?
New Zealand, a modern small island nation, has become an emblematic champion of proper prevention and response to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Leading into this weekend, the country of approximately 5 million has just 2 dozen active COVID-19 cases—a full month after having reported absolutely none, on the backbone of strict initial travel policies, science-based government action, and strategies responsive to testing limitations. What else went into New Zealand’s pandemic response—and what could serve as guidance for other countries?
https://www.contagionlive.com/news/how-did-new-zealand-control-covid19

UK could go back into lockdown next month, former government adviser warns
Ex-government advisor Sir David King warns country may return to lockdown He said a proper test

and trace system is needed for school restart in September UK saw another 55 deaths and 758 confirmed coronavirus cases since yesterday
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8608157/UK-lockdown-month-former-government-adviser-warns.html

'We failed': one scientist's despair as Brazil Covid-19 deaths hit 100,000
For months Natalia Pasternak has implored Brazilians to take science and coronavirus seriously, in a marathon of TV appearances, newspaper columns, live streams and podcasts. “I’ve given interviews at 2am,” said the microbiologist and broadcaster who runs a civil society group called the Question of Science Institute. As the epidemic has raged, Pasternak has condemned President Jair Bolsonaro’s chaotic, anti-scientific response; denounced fake news and unproven treatments such as chloroquine and ozone therapy; and urged her country’s 210 million citizens to respect quarantine measures aimed at controlling coronavirus. “Reopening ... is a recipe for disaster,” the 43-year-old scientist warned on a recent talkshow, as lockdown efforts withered despite the soaring number of infections and deaths.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/09/brazil-covid-19-deaths-natalia-pasternak-bolsonaro

Coronavirus Resurgence

Virus cases in Ireland per 100,000 now higher than UK
Ireland's incidence of Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people over the past 14 days is now higher than in the UK, according to figures released by the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC). Ireland's rate stands at 16.9 cases while the UK's rate stands at 16.5. The increase reflects the spike in cases over the past week. Ireland used the ECDC figures as a basis for its selection of which countries went on its travel Green List. At the time, Ireland's cases per 100,000 people was around 5. Germany also has a lower incidence of Covid-19 than Ireland according to the figures. Its 14-day cumulative number is 12.9.
https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/0810/1158251-coronavirus-masks-mandatory/

COVID-19 update to reveal whether B.C.'s case count remains on upward trajectory
B.C. has announced 131 new cases of COVID-19 since Friday, with health officials warning that the province must urgently work to re-flatten its upwardly trending curve. The province has now seen six straight days of more than 35 new cases for the first time in the outbreak. Active cases are at 445, the highest number since May 11 and triple what they were July 1. "We need to do better collectively to stop these exposures from happening," said Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry as she delivered the new case numbers. But she declined to endorse further measures to enforce regulations, saying "we always start with the carrot and not the stick." B.C. was previously lauded for its early efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19, but has slipped in recent weeks, with several outbreaks linked to large private gatherings. Henry said there were 50 new cases recorded from Friday to Saturday, 37 between Saturday and Sunday, and 44 between Sunday and Monday.
https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/covid-19-update-to-reveal-whether-b-c-s-case-count-remains-on-upward-trajectory-1.5680318

Which places in England have the highest rates of coronavirus and risk going into lockdown?
A total of 29 local authorities are now on the government’s coronavirus watchlist, after seeing a rise in reported cases. According to the data compiled by Public Health England, Blackburn sits at the top of the list, where 80.6 people per 100,000 have displayed symptoms of the virus between July 27 and August 2. The report, which was published on August 7 also shows high infection rates in Bradford, Calderdale, Pendle, Trafford, and Manchester. So, which other towns and cities are on the list – and what is their infection rate?
https://metro.co.uk/2020/08/10/which-towns-cities-have-highest-rates-coronavirus-risk-going-local-lockdown-uk-blackburn-13107851/

Italy sounds alarm over spike in imported virus cases

Italy sounded the alarm over the rise in coronavirus cases in fellow European countries after a spike in the number of infections discovered among returning Italian holidaymakers. "Not to worry (about new cases from abroad) would be unconscionable," Health Minister Roberto Speranza told the Corriere della Sera daily, which noted: "France, Spain and the Balkans... Italy is surrounded by contagions". Fear over new outbreaks imported by returning holidaymakers has been fuelled by the much-publicised case of 30 young Italians from the Veneto region who visited in Croatia and returned with coronavirus at the start of August.

https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2020/0810/1158266-coronavirus-global/

Spain will NOT see a second coronavirus lockdown, believes WHO expert

Director of WHO's Public Health and Environment department Maria Neira told Efe yesterday that a new confinement of the population would have to be justified by a 'very alarming' epidemiological scenario/ And while there has been an increase in cases, Neira said the circumstances for another lockdown simply do not exist

https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/08/09/spain-will-not-see-a-second-coronavirus-lockdown-believes-who-expert/

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Europe’s ‘Second Wave’ Coronavirus Spike Saps Optimism

Fresh fears over coronavirus spikes in Spain are sapping sentiment in Europe, and could be a harbinger of things to come in the U.S. this fall as the northeast becomes a hub to returning students from around the country. No one wants to see second waves. People are done with this virus. But the virus is not done with us. “The upsurge of infections in some euro area countries severely clouds confidence and the outlook, as restrictions are progressively being re-introduced,” says Ludovico Sapio, a Barclays economist in London.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/08/10/europes-second-wave-coronavirus-spike-saps-optimism/

Indian temple reports huge COVID-19 outbreak as cases surge

A well-known Hindu temple in India has seen more than 700 cases of COVID-19 among its staff in the past two months, a temple official said on Monday (Aug 10), as cases in the country surged past 2.2 million. India reported a near-record 62,064 new cases of the virus in the past 24 hours, according to federal health data released on Monday, taking its total number of cases to more than 2.2 million. India has fewer cases than only the United States and Brazil, though it has reported a relatively low number of deaths, at fewer than 45,000, although epidemiologists say the peak of its outbreak could be months away. Cases in India have been spreading from urban areas to smaller towns and the countryside, where health infrastructure is already over-burdened.

https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/covid-19-coronavirus-india-hindu-temple-outbreak-13007698

Japan coronavirus infections top 50,000

Japan's total coronavirus cases topped 50,000 Monday with 836 new cases reported, increasing by 10,000 in just one week, as urban centers including Tokyo and Osaka continue to see high levels of infections since the central government fully lifted the nationwide state of emergency in late May. The pace of the virus spread has picked up since the figure reached 20,000 in early July, eclipsing the 30,000 mark in late July and 40,000 on Aug. 3. The nationwide tally includes about 700 from the

Diamond Princess cruise ship that was quarantined in Yokohama in February. The Tokyo metropolitan government reported 197 new cases of the novel coronavirus, down from the 331 infections the previous day, while Osaka Prefecture confirmed 123 cases compared to 195 Sunday.
https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/08/3e0e04f62d34-tokyo-reports-197-new-virus-infections-nationwide-total-nears-50000.html

India Reports Record Coronavirus Deaths
India on Monday reported more than 1,000 new coronavirus deaths, the most the country has recorded in a single day since the pandemic began. The new toll put India's total at 44,386 deaths, trailing only the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Britain. The country has also reported more confirmed new cases than any other in the world for six consecutive days, including 62,000 on Monday. Australia reported its own deadliest day with 19 new deaths, while the center of the country's outbreak, the state of Victoria, saw some decline in its number of new cases.
https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/india-reports-record-coronavirus-deaths

Coronavirus: Australia records deadliest day but fewer new infections
Australia has recorded its deadliest day of the coronavirus pandemic amid a second wave of infections in Melbourne. Victoria state - of which Melbourne is the capital - reported 19 deaths on Monday. Victoria has now seen about two-thirds of Australia's total 314 deaths and approximately 21,400 cases. But the number of daily infections - though still in the hundreds - has dropped in recent days, prompting hope that a strict lockdown is working. Melbourne's second lockdown began over a month ago, but residents have been subject to a night-time curfew and stricter requirements since 3 August.
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-53718184

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https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india/indian-temple-reports-huge-coronavirus-outbreak-as-cases-surge-idUSKCN25612T

Australia's Victoria reports deadliest day of COVID-19 pandemic
Australia's second-most populous state, Victoria, reported its deadliest day of the COVID-19 outbreak on Sunday, with 17 people dying, as police thwarted a planned anti-mask rally in the capital of Melbourne. Victoria, at the centre of a second wave of infections in Australia, reported 394 cases of the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours, compared with a daily average of 400-500 over the past week. The new deaths bring the state's total to 210. The southeastern state, with infections concentrated in Melbourne, accounts for a lion's share of the national tally of more than 21,000 and 295 deaths. In an effort to slow the spread of coronavirus, Victoria has imposed a night curfew, tightened restrictions on people's daily movements and ordered large parts of the economy to close.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australias-victoria-reports-deadliest-day-of-covid-19-pandemic-idUSKCN255034

New national lockdown ruled out in Poland despite rising COVID-19 cases
Poland reported 809 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, the sixth record daily rise in two weeks, but Deputy Prime Minister Jacek Sasin ruled out a new nationwide lockdown. According to the Health

Ministry's Twitter account, most of the cases were in and around big cities including the capital Warsaw, Katowice and Krakow. It said 259 of the new infections were in the Silesia coal mining region, where the main city is Katowice. As of Friday 1,279 coal miners were now infected, mostly in state-run coal producer PGG, data cited by state news agency PAP showed. The increase in new infections was faster and higher than predicted by Health Minister Lukasz Szumowski on Thursday, when he saw the daily tally rising to up to 700 during and after the weekend.
https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-poland/new-national-lockdown-ruled-out-in-poland-despite-rising-covid-19-cases-idUKKCN2531CH

Australia says COVID-19 outbreak shows signs of peaking
Australia recorded its biggest one-day rise in COVID-19 deaths on Monday although a slowdown in new cases gave hope that a second wave of new infections in the state of Victoria may have peaked. Nineteen people had died from the virus, all in Victoria, in the past 24 hours, a national daily record. However only 337 people had been diagnosed with COVID-19 across the country, the lowest one-day rise since July 29, officials said. "This is an agonising day for the members for the 19 families who have lost a loved one to COVID-19 today," Michael Kidd, Australia's deputy chief medical officer, told reporters. "We are now seeing the first promising signs of a significant decline in the number of cases."
https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australia-says-covid-19-outbreak-shows-signs-of-peaking-idUKKCN25510C

New Lockdown

Half of coronavirus cases in UK city on lockdown are young people under 30
The Lancashire city of 140,000 was placed under localised restrictions last week with officials issuing a "don't kill granny" plea to young people in the area. A ban on separate households gathering in each other's homes and gardens coming into effect on midnight Friday August 7. In the week up to August 5, Preston saw a doubling of the infection rate from the previous week from about 21 cases per 100,000 to more than 42 per 100,000.
https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/half-coronavirus-cases-uk-city-22496014

Australia borders to stay shut as COVID-19 daily deaths reach record
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https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australia-borders-to-stay-shut-as-covid-19-daily-deaths-reach-record-idUKKCN25510C

Victorians flee Melbourne's stage 4 lockdown using sneaky loophole
Thousands of Victorians are reportedly looking to flee the state for good, heading north to Queensland to escape stage 4 restrictions. And people are so keen to escape to the Sunshine State, they're snapping up million-dollar properties without even seeing them first. According to online removalist platform Muval, 20,000 Victorians have looked at relocating since stage 4 lockdown was announced a week ago.
https://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/health-safety/victorians-flee-melbournes-stage-4-lockdown-using-sneaky-loophole/news-story/8e25870f5998eca9b18ec90115c521f3

Havana back on lockdown as coronavirus rebounds

Cuba placed Havana back on a strict lockdown on Saturday following a rebound in coronavirus cases, ordering restaurants, bars and pools once more to close, suspending public transportation and banning access to the beach. Cuba, which has been hailed as a rare success story in Latin America for its textbook handling and containment of its coronavirus outbreak, had eased lockdown restrictions last month after cases dwindled to but a handful per day. But they have risen back to April levels over the past two weeks, with the health ministry reporting 59 cases on Saturday and saying the situation could become “uncontrollable” if authorities did not act fast.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-cuba/havana-back-on-lockdown-as-coronavirus-rebounds-idUKKCN2540VQ

Coronavirus Greece: Curfew in top island bars and eateries

Greece has announced a night curfew for restaurants and bars in certain areas Venues will be forced to close from midnight until 7pm from Tuesday Officials have also put in place new entry restrictions from several EU countries British holidaymakers are turning to Greece after Spanish quarantine enforced

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8612343/Curfew-Greek-island-bars-eateries-limit-virus.html