

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Overnight NewsRoundup

White House turns its attention to COVID-19 variants

- The U.S. government announced a new initiative in the next phase of fighting the pandemic: investing \$1.7bn in genomic sequencing efforts that will help identify COVID-19 variants.
- ['Our ability to spot variants as they emerge and spread is vital, particularly as we aim to get ahead of dangerous variants before they emerge, as they are in the U.S. Midwest right now.'](#) Andy Slavitt, a senior White House pandemic adviser, said during a COVID-19 briefing.
- Slavitt said vaccination is still the main tool to end the pandemic, and [he encouraged all Americans to get the vaccine, starting this coming week, when more states will make those 16 and older eligible.](#)
- But genomic sequencing will enable the country to quickly identify new variants of the virus, more accurately locate hot spots of variant activity, and aid in the development of booster vaccines, which will target circulating variants.
- 'Despite having world-class researchers and dedicated state and local public health leaders, when we arrived, the USA was sequencing only a small fragment of what other countries were,' Slavitt said, 'This has hampered our ability to find and react to those new variants.'
- Laboratories will receive \$1bn to strengthen sequencing programmes, \$400m will go to the Centers of Excellence in Genomic Epidemiology, and \$300m will go to developing a national bioinformatics infrastructure. All the money is coming from the American Rescue Plan, Slavitt said.

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Today, the US government announced a new initiative in the next phase of fighting the pandemic: investing \$1.7 billion in genomic sequencing efforts that will help identify COVID-19 variants. "Our ability to spot variants as they emerge and spread is vital, particularly as we aim to get ahead of dangerous variants before they emerge, as they are in the Midwest right now," Andy Slavitt, a senior White House pandemic adviser, said today during a COVID-19 briefing. Slavitt said vaccination is still the main tool to end the pandemic, and he encouraged all Americans to get the vaccine beginning Monday, when more states will make those 16 and older eligible.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/04/white-house-turns-its-attention-covid-19-variants>

Biden administration to invest \$1.7bn to fight COVID-19 variants

The United States will invest \$1.7bn to help states and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fight COVID-19 variants that are spreading rapidly across the US. The investment is part of President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion "American Rescue Plan" and will improve detection, monitoring and mitigation of these variants by scaling up genomic sequencing efforts, the White House said on Friday. "The original strain of COVID-19 comprises only about half of all cases in America today. New and potentially dangerous strains of the virus make up the other half," the White House said in a statement. In early February, US laboratories were sequencing about 8,000 COVID-19 strains per week. Since then the administration has invested nearly \$200m to increase genomic sequencing to 29,000 samples per week – an effort that will get a boost with the new funding.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/16/biden-administration-to-invest-1-7bn-to-fight-covid-19-variants>

'We did need to throw a lot of spaghetti against the Covid window': a biotech analyst on pandemic drug development

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The pandemic has shined a spotlight on the biopharmaceutical industry, proving its value through the speed of vaccine development to a society that ranked it even lower in its esteem than the federal government. But when it comes to drugs for Covid-19, how has the industry performed? Josh Schimmer has been analyzing the industry for decades now with the firm Evercore ISI, and he was early to flag the risks of this new virus in the beginning of 2020. He wrote in a research note "very mixed feelings about how the biotech industry delivered during the pandemic." We were intrigued by that, so we invited Schimmer to "The Readout LOUD" to have a conversation.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/04/16/we-did-need-to-throw-a-lot-of-spaghetti-against-the-covid-window-a-biotech-analyst-on-pandemic-drug-development/>

Positive Vaccination News

Half of US adults have received at least one COVID-19 shot

Half of all adults in the U.S. have received at least one COVID-19 shot, the government announced Sunday, marking another milestone in the nation's largest-ever vaccination campaign but leaving more work to do to convince skeptical Americans to roll up their sleeves. Almost 130 million people 18 or older have received at least one dose of a vaccine, or 50.4% of the total adult population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported. Almost 84 million adults, or about 32.5% of the population, have been fully vaccinated. The U.S. cleared the 50% mark just a day after the reported global death toll from the coronavirus topped a staggering 3 million, according to totals compiled by Johns Hopkins University, though the actual number is believed to be significantly higher.

<https://apnews.com/article/politics-anthony-fauci-coronavirus-pandemic-infectious-diseases-coronavirus-vaccine-6e3b18b44a05d1e49ed35337ec7ce969>

Alaska to offer tourists COVID-19 vaccines starting June 1

Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy said Friday that COVID-19 vaccines would be made available at key airports in the state starting June 1, in unveiling plans aimed at bolstering the state's pandemic-battered tourist industry. Dunleavy, a Republican, outlined plans for a national marketing campaign aimed at luring tourists using federal aid money and said the vaccine offering is "probably another good reason to come to the state of Alaska in the summer." Dunleavy and other state leaders have been pushing to allow large cruise ships to return to Alaska after COVID-19 restrictions kept them away last year, hitting hard businesses and communities, particularly in southeast Alaska, that rely heavily on summer tourism.

<https://apnews.com/article/alaska-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-504eb7541894d24203586a28817ff99b>

UK delivers more than 600,000 vaccines in 24 hours

More than 600,000 first and second doses of coronavirus vaccine were administered in Britain in the space of 24 hours, according to data released on Saturday. Official figures showed that 119,306 first doses were given on Friday, and 485,421 second doses. The data also showed a further 35 people had died from the virus within 28 days of a positive test, and 2,206 people had tested positive. In the last seven days, daily deaths were down 29% from the previous week, while cases were down 6.5%.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-delivers-more-than-600000-vaccines-24-hours-2021-04-17/>

US administers 205.9 mln doses of COVID-19 vaccines

The United States has administered 205,871,913 doses of COVID-19 vaccines in the country as of

Saturday morning and distributed 264,499,715 doses, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Saturday. Those figures are up from the 202,282,923 vaccine doses the CDC said had gone into arms by April 16 out of 258,502,815 doses delivered. The agency said 129,494,179 people had received at least one dose while 82,471,151 people are fully vaccinated as of Saturday.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-administers-2059-mln-doses-covid-19-vaccines-2021-04-17/>

Qatar Seeks Covid-19 Vaccinations for All World Cup Visitors

Qatar said it's in talks with coronavirus vaccine makers to ensure all 2022 soccer World Cup visitors are vaccinated. "Right now there are programs under development to provide vaccination to all the attendees of the World Cup," Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said Friday during a virtual conference. "We will be able, hopefully, to host a Covid-free event." The Gulf state has seen a resurgence in Covid-19 cases despite pushing ahead with its inoculation program, forcing a lockdown to be reimposed. Qatar has administered 1.2 million jabs - enough for 21.6% of its people, according to Bloomberg's vaccine tracker. Qatar, one of the richest countries on the planet per capita, is spending hundreds of billions of dollars on infrastructure construction ahead of the FIFA event, fueling an oversupply in property.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-17/qatar-seeks-covid-19-vaccinations-for-all-world-cup-visitors>

Pfizer chief Bourla raises 'likely' need for annual COVID shots, teeing up vaccine sales for years to come

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Pfizer was first to market in the U.S. with its BioNTech-partnered COVID-19 vaccine, and by and large, it's avoided the safety and supply concerns plaguing some of its pandemic peers. Now, to hear CEO Albert Bourla tell it, it's increasingly likely the 2021 revenue boon will continue for years to come. Patients will "likely" need a third dose of Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine as the shot's protection wanes, CEO Albert Bourla said in a recent interview with CVS Health Live. And after receiving a third shot, people should expect re-vaccination every year, he said. That could spell extra sales for Pfizer in the short term, and turn its mRNA-based vaccine Comirnaty into a revenue spring for years to come.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-chief-bourla-raises-likely-need-for-annual-covid-vaccinations-teeing-up-comirnaty>

Next-generation Covid-19 vaccines are supposed to be better. Some experts worry they could be worse

Next-generation Covid-19 vaccines are supposed to be better. Some experts worry they could be worse

With Covid-19 vaccines, the world hopes to beat back the virus that causes the disease. But some scientists are increasingly concerned that, because of a quirk of our own biology, future iterations of the vaccines might not always be quite as effective as they are today. The concerns stem from a phenomenon that is known as imprinting, sometimes called original antigenic sin, which is believed to affect how we respond to some pathogens. In short, when your body is introduced to a particular threat for the first time — either through infection or a vaccine — that encounter sets your immune system's definition of that virus and what immune weapons it needs to detect and protect against it in the future.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/04/16/next-generation-covid-19-vaccines-are-supposed-to-be-better-some-experts-worry-they-could-be-worse/>

South African variant may 'break through' Pfizer vaccine protection, but vaccine highly effective, Israeli study says

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effective, Israeli study says

The coronavirus variant discovered in South Africa can break through the protection provided by Pfizer Inc and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine to some extent, a real-world data study in Israel found. However, the variant's prevalence in Israel is very low and the vaccine remains highly effective. The study was released on the medRxiv pre-print site on April 9 and has not been peer reviewed. It compared almost 400 people who had tested positive for COVID-19, after they received one or two doses of the vaccine, against the same number of unvaccinated patients with the disease. It matched age and gender, among other characteristics.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/south-african-variant-may-break-through-pfizer-vaccine-protection-vaccine-highly-2021-04-18/>

Britain is investigating variant originating in India

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LONDON (Reuters) - British health officials are investigating a COVID-19 variant originating in India but as yet they do not have enough evidence to classify it as a variant of concern, Susan Hopkins of Public Health England (PHE) said on Sunday.

<https://kelo.com/2021/04/18/britain-is-investigating-variant-originating-in-india/>

COVID-19: Indian variant could 'scupper' easing of UK coronavirus lockdown rules, warns expert

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The Indian coronavirus mutation could "scupper" the UK's march to freedom, a leading scientist has warned. It comes despite the lockdown and vaccine programme leading to cases falling to a seven-month low. COVID-19 infections across the UK dropped to the lowest level since the autumn, according to the latest figures.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-indian-variant-could-scupper-easing-of-uk-coronavirus-lockdown-rules-warns-expert-12277830>

Fresh concerns over imported Covid-19 cases in London

Concerns grew today over imported Covid-19 cases as seven out of nine new infections announced yesterday in one London borough were international travellers from "amber-type" list countries, The Standard reveals. The finding in Kensington and Chelsea came as a senior MP called for Britain to have the "tightest possible border restrictions" to stop another wave of coronavirus cases. Ministers are considering how to relax restrictions to allow foreign travel from late spring and summer.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/concerns-imported-covid19-cases-london-borough-international-travellers-b930077.html>

Vaccine immunity 'won't just disappear' in face of Covid variants - JCVI expert

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Imported coronavirus variants are unlikely to set lockdown easing back to "square one" because immunity from vaccines "won't just disappear", according to a key figure on the UK's immunisation committee. Professor Adam Finn, a member of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), said he expected a "gradual erosion" of vaccine protection as the virus evolves but not enough to "scupper" the Prime Minister's road map, as one leading scientist had predicted. On Friday, Imperial College's Danny Altmann said "we should be terribly concerned" after 77 cases of a potentially vaccine-busting Covid-19 mutation first discovered in India were identified in Britain.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/india-england-brazil-downing-street-asian-b930189.html>

The New India COVID-19 Surge

Weekend shutdown in Delhi as fears of 'double mutant' strain grips India

New Delhi went into a weekend lockdown Saturday as India faces a ferocious new coronavirus wave, with more than 200,000 fresh daily cases and families clamouring for drugs and hospital beds. Hopes that South Asian countries might have beaten the pandemic have been dashed with India seeing over two million new cases this month alone and Bangladesh and Pakistan imposing shutdowns. India's per-capita rates remain low by international comparison, raising the prospect that infection numbers – fuelled possibly by a virulent new “double mutant” – may explode further. A national lockdown a year ago led to hundreds of deaths and one of the worst slumps of any major economy, the Indian government is desperate to avoid a second stoppage.

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/world/2021/04/17/weekend-shutdown-in-delhi-as-fears-of-double-mutant-strain-grips-india/>

India Reports Another Record Daily Rise in COVID-19 Infections

India reported a record daily increase of 234,692 COVID-19 infections over the last 24 hours, health ministry data showed on Saturday. It was the eighth record daily increase in the last nine days. Total cases reached nearly 14.5 million, second only to the United States which has reported more than 32 million infections. India's deaths from COVID-19 rose by 1,341 to reach a total of 175,649, the data showed.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-04-17/india-reports-another-record-daily-rise-in-covid-19-infections>

India: Oxygen shortage in Maharashtra as COVID cases soar

As Maharashtra, India's richest state, grapples with ferociously rising COVID-19 cases, patients such as Pawar are struggling to find hospital beds and oxygen support. The state's daily oxygen usage has touched 1,500 metric tonnes, according to Health Minister Rajesh Tope. This is much more than its daily production of 1,250 tonnes. While other states are contributing to plug the shortfall, transportation by road takes time. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has now requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to deploy the National Disaster Management Authority to airlift oxygen for rapid movement.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/17/india-maharashtra-grapples-with-oxygen-shortage-as-covid-cases>

'Frightening': Weekend shutdown in Delhi as COVID grips India

New Delhi went into a weekend lockdown on Saturday as India faces a ferocious new coronavirus wave, with daily cases hitting another record increase of 234,692 nationwide and families clamouring for drugs and hospital beds. The health ministry said the latest number is the eighth record high in the last nine days. Total cases have gone past 14.5 million, second only to the United States which has reported more than 32 million infections. India's deaths from COVID-19 rose by 1,341 to reach a total of 175,649, the data showed. Hopes that South Asian countries might have beaten the pandemic have been dashed with India seeing more than two million new cases this month alone and Bangladesh and Pakistan imposing shutdowns.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/17/frightening-weekend-shutdown-in-delhi-as-covid-grips-india>

Telangana's second Covid-19 wave sees cases spike in older populations

Telangana recorded a new highest-ever spike in the daily average of fresh coronavirus infections on Thursday when 3,840 active patients were added to the cumulative caseload. At the peak of the pandemic last year, the state had reported 3,018 new cases on August 25. Even as the number of daily infections has already breached the 3000-mark three times this month, the health department has warned of a rapid rise in the caseload for the next four to six weeks in the state.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/hyderabad/telanganas-second-covid-19-wave-sees-cases-spike-in-older-populations-7277270/>

Delhi COVID-19 cemetery running low on space as deaths mount

Beating the earth with his fists, a young man wails as the body of his father, who died after

contracting COVID-19, is taken from an ambulance and lowered into a hastily-dug grave in India's capital New Delhi. "You told me not to go outside but I didn't listen," he cries. "It's my fault," he shouts over and over. "I'm sorry." The city's main Muslim graveyard for victims of COVID-19 is running out of space, according to authorities, as cases in Delhi and across the country run out of control following the relaxation of almost all curbs on movement last year

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/delhi-covid-19-cemetery-running-low-space-deaths-mount-2021-04-16/>

'Dire need of beds, oxygen': India's capital under siege from COVID-19

India's capital New Delhi recorded 25,500 coronavirus cases in a 24-hour period, with about one in three people tested returning a positive result, its chief minister said, urging the federal government to provide more hospital beds to tackle the crisis.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/world/2021/04/18/india-reports-another-record-daily-rise-in-coronavirus-infections>

India coronavirus: Desperate Covid-19 patients turn to black market for drugs

Akhilesh Mishra started getting a fever and a cough last Thursday but he initially thought it was just the flu. Akhilesh began to worry the next day, when his father Yogendra developed similar symptoms. The two men decided to get Covid RT-PCR tests done and tried to book a slot online but the next available appointment was three days later. They finally managed to get a slot on Sunday. In the meantime, Yogendra was running a very high fever and his doctor advised him to look for a hospital bed, which turned out to be another daunting task. They were turned away by many private hospitals in the city of Noida and also in the capital, Delhi. The family finally managed to get a bed for him in a private hospital in Delhi and he is now recovering.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-56757405>

India: migrant workers leave cities as COVID measures bite

Migrant workers are piling into rail stations in India's financial capital Mumbai to head back to their home villages now that coronavirus-control measures have dried up work in the hard-hit region. "What do I do now?" asked Ramzan Ali, who'd been earning up to 500 rupees (\$7) per day as a labourer but has been out of work for two weeks. He arrived at Kurla railroad station on Friday morning and joined a long line to buy a ticket to board a train for Balrampur, his village in northern Uttar Pradesh state. Ali, 47, hopes to find some work in the village to feed his wife and four children. Similar scenes were also starting in New Delhi, where some migrant workers were worried they might get stuck if a lockdown was declared. The government of Maharashtra state, home to Mumbai, imposed lockdown-like curbs on Wednesday for 15 days to check the spread of the virus. It closed most industries, businesses and public places and limited the movement of people, but didn't stop bus, train and air services.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/4/16/india-migrant-workers-leave-cities-as-covid-measures-bite>

India: Vaccine exclusion fears over digital ID, face recognition

Millions of vulnerable people are at risk of missing out on COVID-19 vaccines as India uses its national digital identity for registration and pilots facial recognition technology at inoculation centres, rights groups and experts said. Amid a surge in coronavirus cases, authorities are testing a facial recognition system based on the Aadhaar ID for authentication in the eastern state of Jharkhand, and plan to roll it out nationwide, a senior official said last week.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/16/india-vaccine-exclusion-fears-over-digital-id-face-recognition>

Vaccine Manufacture and Supply

Pfizer halts corona vaccine shipments to Israel after failure to pay

Pfizer has halted shipments of coronavirus vaccines to Israel in outrage over the country failing to transfer payment for the last 2.5 million doses it supplied to the country, The Jerusalem Post has learned. Senior officials at Pfizer have said they are concerned that the government-in-transition will

not pay up and the company does not want to be taken advantage of. They said that they do not understand how such a situation can occur in an organized country.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/banana-republic-pfizer-outraged-israel-failed-to-pay-for-covid-vaccines-664140>

Japanese leader asks Pfizer for additional vaccine supply

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga asked the U.S. drug maker Pfizer Inc. for additional supplies of the COVID-19 vaccine to speed up the inoculation drive that lags behind many other countries. Suga, after holding talks with President Joe Biden at the White House wrapped up his Washington visit on Saturday with a phone call to Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla. Suga requested Burla for additional supplies of the vaccine that would cover all eligible recipients by September, as well as to ensure the stable and prompt delivery of the ongoing vaccine shipments, Japanese officials said Sunday. No details were released.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/japanese-leader-asks-pfizer-for-additional-vaccine-supply-pfizer-japanese-tokyo-covid-joe-biden-b1833283.html>

India pledges massive boost in vaccine output as COVID-19 cases surge

India pledged on Friday to raise monthly production of its own COVID-19 vaccine about tenfold to nearly 100 million doses by September, as immunisations have slowed in the country despite a surge in new infections. After donating and selling tens of millions vaccine doses abroad, India has suddenly found itself short of Covaxin, its only domestically made shot. The government is now trying to raise production at manufacturer Bharat Biotech, and fast-track imports of other vaccines.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-vaccinations-fall-peak-infections-hit-record-2021-04-16/>

Moderna cuts COVID-19 vaccine deliveries to Canada, U.K. amid European supply struggles

The global COVID-19 vaccine supply is about to take another hit, but this time from Moderna. The mRNA drugmaker warned Friday that supply problems are forcing it to cut back deliveries to “a number of countries,” including the U.K. and Canada. Moderna, which has partnered with Switzerland’s Lonza to manufacture its vaccine known as mRNA-1273, pinned the reduction on deficits in its European supply chain, specifically to “human and material resources” needed to meet its production goals. “The trajectory of vaccine manufacturing ramp-up is not linear, and despite best efforts, there is a shortfall in previously estimated doses,” a Moderna spokesperson told Fierce Pharma in an email, adding that it is maintaining close contact with national governments to plan deliveries

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/moderna-cuts-covid-19-vaccine-deliveries-to-canada-u-k-amid-european-supply-struggles>

India’s COVID vaccine maker urges Biden to lift exports embargo

The Serum Institute of India (SII), the world’s biggest vaccine maker, has urged President Joe Biden to lift an embargo by the United States on the exports of raw materials that is hurting its production of COVID-19 shots. “Respected @POTUS, if we are to truly unite in beating this virus, on behalf of the vaccine industry outside the U.S., I humbly request you to lift the embargo of raw material exports out of the US so that vaccine production can ramp up,” SII Chief Executive Adar Poonawalla said in a tweet on Friday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/16/indias-covid-vaccine-maker-urges-biden-to-lift-exports-embargo>

As mask mandates end, Oregon bucks trend with permanent rule

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As states around the country lift COVID-19 restrictions, Oregon is poised to go the opposite direction — and many residents are fuming about it. A top health official is considering indefinitely extending rules requiring masks and social distancing in all businesses in the state. The proposal would keep

the rules in place until they are “no longer necessary to address the effects of the pandemic in the workplace.” Michael Wood, administrator of the state’s department of Occupational Safety and Health, said the move is necessary to address a technicality in state law that requires a “permanent” rule to keep current restrictions from expiring.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-oregon-6f7f919d27644d02c330da5a8648af95>

Reopening Plans

Denmark speeds up reopening of economy as new virus cases ease

Denmark said on Friday it would reopen the economy sooner than expected as COVID-19 infections decrease, allowing indoor service at restaurants and cafes and football fans to cheer from the stands from April 21, weeks earlier than originally planned. Denmark has avoided a third wave of the COVID-19 epidemic after imposing wide lockdown measures in December, which slowed the epidemic considerably to between 500-700 daily infections from several thousands in December. Most of the planned reopening schemes are contingent on the use of a so-called "corona-passport", which shows whether the holder has been vaccinated, has previously been infected or has taken a test within the last 72 hours.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/denmark-speeds-up-reopening-epidemic-stabilises-2021-04-16/>

England's COVID-19 epidemic estimated to be shrinking more quickly - health ministry

The COVID-19 epidemic in England is estimated to be shrinking more quickly compared to last week, the health ministry said on Friday, adding that the closely watch reproduction "R" number might also be lower. The daily growth rate of COVID-19 infections was estimated between -6% and -1%, down from -4% and 0% last week. The estimated range for the R number was 0.7 to 1.0, meaning on average, every 10 people infected will infect between 7 and 10 other people. Last week it was estimated at 0.8 to 1.0

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/englands-covid-19-epidemic-estimated-be-shrinking-more-quickly-health-ministry-2021-04-16/>

Pandemic destroyed fewer US businesses than feared, Fed study shows

Fewer than 200,000 businesses in the United States may have failed during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lighter toll than initially feared and one that may have had relatively little impact on unemployment, according to Federal Reserve research. The figure contrasts with the early forecasts that the pandemic would leave America's "Main Street" desolate as well as with polls that continue to show large percentages of U.S. small business owners are worried about their survival.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/pandemic-destroyed-fewer-us-firms-than-feared-fed-study-shows-2021-04-16/>

Northern Ireland accelerates lockdown exit plans

Northern Ireland will open outdoor dining from the end of April and hotels from late May, the British region's government said, in an acceleration of its lockdown exit plans that will see it reopen its economy far faster than neighbouring Ireland. All retail, outdoor restaurant and bar services and gyms will open on April 30, the Northern Ireland Executive said after earlier indicating they would open later in May. Indoor dining and hotels will follow suit on May 24, subject to COVID-19 infection rates, the executive said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/northern-ireland-accelerates-lockdown-exit-plans-2021-04-15/>