COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

10th Aug 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

The world is nowhere near the end of the COVID pandemic, says famed epidemiologist Larry Brilliant

- The pandemic is not coming to an end soon - given that only a small proportion of the world population has been vaccinated against Covid-19, a well-known epidemiologist told CNBC.
- Larry Brilliant, an epidemiologist who was part of the World Health Organization's team that helped eradicate smallpox, said the delta variant of the coronavirus is 'maybe the most contagious virus ever.'
- In recent months, the USA, India and China, as well as other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia have been grappling with a highly transmissable delta variant of the virus.
- WHO declared Covid-19 a global pandemic in March 2020 - after the disease, which first emerged in China in late 2019, spread throughout the world.
- The good news is that vaccines - particularly those using messenger RNA technology and the one by Johnson & Johnson - are holding up against the delta variant, Brilliant told CNBC's 'Street Signs' on Friday.
- Still, only 15% of the world's population has been vaccinated and more than 100 countries have inoculated less than 5% of their people, Brilliant noted.
- 'I think we're closer to the beginning than we are to the end of the pandemic, and that's not because the variant that we're looking at right now is going to last that long,' Brilliant said, who is now the founder and CEO of a pandemic response consultancy, Pandefense Advisory.
- 'Unless we vaccinate everyone in 200 plus countries, there will still be new variants,' he said, predicting that the coronavirus will eventually become a 'forever virus' like influenza.

Probability of a 'super variant'

- Brilliant said his models in the Covid outbreak in San Francisco and New York predict an 'inverted V-shape epidemic curve.' That implies that infections increase very quickly, but would also decline very rapidly, he explained.
- If the prediction turns out to be true, it means that the delta variant spreads so quickly that 'it basically runs out of candidates' to infect, explained Brilliant.
- There appears to be a similar pattern in the UK and India, where the spread of the delta variant has receded from recent highs.
- Daily reported cases in the UK - on a seven day moving average basis - fell from a peak of around 47,700 cases on July 21 to around 26,000 cases on Thursday, according to statistics compiled by online database Our World in Data.
- In India, the seven day moving average of daily reported cases has stayed below 50,000 since June - far below the peak of more than 390,000 a day in May, the data showed.
- 'The may mean that this is a six-month phenomenon in a country, rather than a two-year phenomenon. But I do caution people that this is the delta variant and we have not yet run out of Greek letters so there may be more to come,' he said.
- The epidemiologist said there is a low probability that a 'super variant' may emerge and vaccines don't work against it. While it is hard to predict these things, he added it's a non-zero probability, which means it cannot be ruled out.
- 'It's such a catastrophic event should it occur, we have to do everything possible to prevent

it,' said Brilliant. 'And that means get everyone vaccinated - not just in your neighbourhood, not just in your family, not just in your country but all the world over.

COVID-19 vaccine boosters

- Some countries with relatively high vaccination rates such as the USA and Israel are planning booster shots for their population. Others, such as Haiti, only recently secured their first batch of vaccine doses.
- WHO has called on wealthy countries to hold off on Covid vaccine boosters to give low income countries a chance to vaccinate their people.
- But in addition to boosting vaccination in countries with a low inoculation rate, Brilliant said one group of people needs a booster shot 'right away' - those who are 65 years and above, and were fully vaccinated more than six months ago but have a weakened immune system.
- 'It is in this category of people that we've seen the creation of multiple mutations when the virus goes through their bodies,' said the epidemiologist.
- 'So those people, I would say, should be given a third dose, a booster right away - as quickly as moving the vaccines to those countries that haven't had the chance to buy them or have access to them. I consider those two things about equal,' he said.

CNBC 8 August

The world is nowhere near the end of the Covid pandemic, says famed epidemiologist Larry Brilliant

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The Covid-19 pandemic is not coming to an end soon, said Larry Brilliant, a top epidemiologist. Brilliant, part of the World Health Organization team that helped eradicate smallpox, said the delta variant of coronavirus is “maybe the most contagious virus” ever. Only 15% of the world’s population has gotten a Covid vaccine.

https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/09/covid-epidemiologist-larry-brilliant-on-delta-variant-vaccinations.html

Covid 19 coronavirus: Vaccine passports on their way for Kiwis

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Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says that the Government will be issuing Covid-19 vaccine passports to allow Kiwis to travel around the world. "Yes," she replied when asked by TVNZ Breakfast as to whether New Zealanders will have a Covid vaccine passport. "Other countries say you can't even go to events unless you're vaccinated. "That's not what we're doing. We want high rates of vaccination but that's not the way we want to try and encourage it.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-vaccine-passports-on-their-way-for-kiwis/DYUCLLBEI573KHFZOWXSCJKIHI/

France’s virus pass now required in restaurants, trains

France took a big step Monday into a post-pandemic future by requiring people to show a QR code proving they have a special virus pass before they can enjoy restaurants and cafes or travel by plane, train or bus across the country. The measure is part of a government plan to encourage more people to get a COVID-19 vaccine shot and slow down a surge in infections, as the highly contagious delta variant now accounts for most cases in France. Over 36 million people in France, or more than 54% of the population, are fully vaccinated. The special pass is issued to people who are vaccinated against COVID-19, or have proof of a recent recovery from the virus or who have a recent negative test. The measure also applies to tourists visiting the country.

https://apnews.com/article/europe-business-health-france-coronavirus-pandemic-655d8451d7494f8663ce2072e64cf7a6

BioNTech says vaccine repeats beat devising new one for now

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BioNTech said that repeat shots of its COVID-19 vaccine, of which more than a billion doses have now been supplied worldwide, was a better strategy than tailoring the product it developed with Pfizer to new variants. The German biotech firm said that offering a third dose of its established two-shot vaccine remained the best response to concerns over waning immune protection in the face of the highly contagious Delta variant, as worse strains may emerge.

https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/biontech-says-has-supplied-more-than-1-bln-covid-19-vaccine-doses-so-far-2021-08-09/

Covid patients in critical care are decade younger than in previous waves, data shows

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Hundreds of critically ill Covid patients have had to be moved between hospitals to relieve pressure on beds in recent months, according to new data which also shows those sick with the virus are a decade younger then in previous waves. The latest assessment of admissions to hospital critical care units showed 176 patients in intensive care had been moved to different hospitals 198 times since the start of May this year. The Intensive Care National Audit & Research Centre (ICNARC) has been analysing Covid admissions to NHS ICUs throughout the pandemic and in its latest report, published on Friday, it compared the patients admitted to ICU since May with those admitted since September.

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/covid-hospital-intensive-care-young-pregnant-b1899509.html

Indonesia’s Aceh medics offer COVID lifeline for the isolated

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Aceh doctors hope monitoring through WhatsApp can help reduce the risk of people dying from coronavirus when quarantining at home.

https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/9/as-home-deaths-rise-aceh-doctors-offer-help-to-covid-isolated

Virus-free New Zealand plans border reopening amid labour shortage

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Under pressure from businesses and public sectors facing a worker shortage that policymakers fear will fuel inflation, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is due to unveil plans this week to reopen the country's borders.

https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/virus-free-new-zealand-plans-border-reopening-amid-labour-shortage-2021-08-09/

FOMO in the U.K., sausages in Germany, Dracula's castle in Romania: Countries dangle coronavirus vaccine incentives

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Desperate to get young adults vaccinated against the coronavirus and reinvigorate a slowing inoculation campaign, British authorities are trying a new strategy: FOMO. “Don’t miss out,” warns the government’s latest message, promoted with help from DJs and nightclubs. In other words, get your jab or risk getting left behind while your friends flock to bars and music shows. The London nightclub Heaven is also being transformed into a pop-up clinic on Sunday, offering about 1,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/covid-vaccine-incentives/2021/08/08/f586d3c6-f5ec-11eb-a636-18cac59a98dc_story.html

NHS still not recognising British citizens' overseas Covid jabs, says peer

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Britons vaccinated abroad are still struggling to get their jabs registered with the NHS, a Lib Dem peer has warned, despite government promises that measures would be in place by the end of last month. Brian Paddick, a former London mayoral candidate and a member of the House of Lords, said the government was "yet again, promising things that they fail to deliver" after his GP was unable to register vaccinations he had in Norway, where he has been staying.

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/08/nhs-still-not-recognising-british-citizens-overseas-covid-jabs-says-peer

More than 400 universities are requiring Covid-19 vaccines. But the murky threat of fake vaccination cards worries some students and experts

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Students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill can voluntarily share their Covid-19 vaccine status with administration, but those who show up on campus unvaccinated or choose not to disclose their vaccination status will have to get tested for coronavirus weekly.

https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/08/us/university-vaccine-mandates-fake-vaccine-cards-trnd/index.html

Fauci Says Covid Boosters Should Go 'Soon' to the Vulnerable

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Anthony Fauci, the U.S.'s top infectious-disease doctor, said he's "strongly in favor" of speeding booster shots to people with weakened immune systems, a further sign of how the delta variant continues to shift the strategies for curbing the pandemic. "We need to look at them in a different light," Fauci said on CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS" on Sunday. "We will almost certainly be boosting those people before we boost the general population that's been vaccinated, and we should be doing that reasonably soon."

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-08/fauci-says-covid-booster-shots-may-go-soon-to-most-vulnerable

Pentagon to require COVID vaccine for all troops by Sept. 15

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Members of the U.S. military will be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine beginning next month under a plan laid out by the Pentagon Monday and endorsed by President Joe Biden. In memos distributed to all troops, top Pentagon leaders said the vaccine is a necessary step to maintain military readiness. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the mid-September deadline could be accelerated if the vaccine receives final FDA approval or infection rates continue to rise.

https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-vaccine-us-military-requirement-pentagon-3975940c732352f72e41f6e34a3a2669

A WHO expert explains why she believes the rush for Covid-19 boosters is premature

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When the World Health Organization last week called for a moratorium on giving Covid-19 booster shots, except in rare circumstances, it said it was concerned wealthy countries would start giving their populations a third dose before the people at highest risk from the disease — health workers and older adults — in many countries get their first. But Kate O'Brien, the WHO's director of immunization, vaccination, and biologics, recently insisted on an additional reason: Providing booster shots without strong evidence that the shots are needed is ill-advised. "If we're not really grounded in that clarity, we're going to be in a place where we have forever uncertainty about what actually should be done," she cautioned.

https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/09/who-expert-rush-covid-19-booster-shots-premature/

Malaysia to ease COVID curbs for fully vaccinated in eight states

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Malaysia will relax some COVID-19 restrictions for fully vaccinated people in eight states that have met criteria such as reduced case numbers and higher vaccination rates, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said on Sunday. The measures, which will allow dining in at restaurants, outdoor individual sports and interstate tourism, will take effect on Tuesday, Muhyiddin said in a televised address.

https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/malaysia-ease-covid-curbs-fully-vaccinated-eight-states-2021-08-08/

UK set to 'hoard' up to 210m doses of Covid vaccine, research suggests

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The UK is on course to "hoard" up to 210m spare coronavirus vaccines by the end of the year, research suggests, as ministers were accused of leaving poorer countries "fighting for scraps". Pressure is growing on the government to do more to help nations where tiny proportions of their population have had a first jab given that the UK is opposing a temporary waiver to intellectual property rights for Covid-19 vaccines that would allow more companies abroad to manufacture the doses themselves.

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/09/uk-set-to-hoard-up-to-210m-doses-of-covid-vaccine-research-suggests

Nearly 1,500 health systems across the United States mandate Covid-19 vaccination

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Hospitals coast to coast are demanding their employees get vaccinated against covid as the highly contagious delta variant tears through populations with low vaccination rates. Nearly 1,500 hospitals — roughly a quarter of all hospitals in the U.S. —now require staffers to get a covid vaccine, said Colin Milligan, a spokesperson for the American Hospital Association. More follow suit every day as hospital leaders aim to head off staff shortages like those experienced last year and to keep employees from becoming vectors of the disease.

https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/09/health/us-hospitals-demand-workers-vaccinated-partner/index.html

Norwegian Cruise Line can require proof of Covid-19 vaccination in Florida, federal judge rules

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Norwegian Cruise Line can require proof of Covid-19 vaccination for passengers and crew members, a federal judge ruled Sunday, after the cruise line operator had challenged Florida's ban on vaccine passports.

https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/florida-cruise-covid-19-vaccination-proof/index.html

Gilead to require U.S. workers receive COVID-19 vaccine

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Gilead Sciences Inc said on Monday it will require all its employees and contractors in the United States to become vaccinated against COVID-19. The biotech company's move comes less than a week after U.S. drugmaker Pfizer said all its U.S. workers would need to get vaccinated or undergo regular COVID-19 testing. All Gilead U.S. employees will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of Oct. 1, where allowed by law and where the vaccine supply is readily available, the company said in a statement.

https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/companies/gilead-to-require-us-workers-receive-covid-19-vaccine/ar-AAN7jdM

COVID-19: Coronavirus vaccine hesitancy among younger people decreases, ONS figures show

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Hesitancy among younger age groups to receive a COVID-19 vaccine has fallen, according to new figures. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey looked at attitudes during the period from 23 June to 18 July - a day before most coronavirus restrictions were lifted in England. For 16 and 17-year-olds - who are now able to get a jab following last week's announcement to extend the rollout to that age group - hesitancy has decreased from 14% to 11%.

https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-coronavirus-vaccine-hesitancy-among-younger-people-decreases-ons-figures-show-12377158

Some May Be Getting Covid-19 Vaccines In Disguise To Hide Vaccination Status

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There haven’t been any high school genre movies entitled The Fully Vaccinated Breakfast Club or Mean Antivaxxers just yet. But apparently some people who want to get vaccinated against Covid-19 may be facing high school-type peer pressure or even bullying. In the following video, Priscilla Frase, MD, the chief medical information officer for Ozarks Healthcare, described how her patients said they actually had to don disguises while getting vaccinated so that their family members and peers wouldn’t find out

https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2021/08/09/some-may-be-getting-covid-19-vaccines-in-disguise-to-hide-vaccination-status/

Anti-vaxxers try to storm the BBC in protest over vaccine passports and jabs for children

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A group of anti-lockdown and anti-vaccination protesters clashed with police as they tried to gain access to BBC studios in west London. Protesters were seen confronting officers with scuffles breaking out as they attempted to enter the site in White City. A line of police officers were filmed pushing back protesters to stop them entering. It is understood the group arrived to protest plans for vaccine passports and the vaccination of children.

https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/anti-vaxxers-try-to-storm-bbc-protest/

Italian police break up network selling fake COVID ‘green passes’

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The Italian police have shut down several groups on the mobile messaging app Telegram where users were selling fake COVID-19 health passes required to access services and leisure activities. Italy introduced the so-called green pass on Friday.

https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/9/italian-police-break-up-network-selling-fake-covid-green-passes

Indonesia extends COVID-19 curbs as infections spread in regions

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Indonesia extended its COVID-19 curbs on populous Java and Bali islands until Aug. 16, but will ease them in 26 areas, as official data showed infections have plunged in the capital Jakarta but are increasing elsewhere.

https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-president-review-virus-curbs-regional-cases-surge-2021-08-09/

Australia expands COVID lockdown over concern virus has spread from Sydney

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Australia expanded a COVID-19 lockdown to a rural town and the coastal region of Byron Bay on Monday, as fears grew that the virus has spread from Sydney to the northern tip of the country's most populous state.

https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-victoria-reports-11-locally-acquired-covid-19-cases-2021-08-08/

BioNTech says has supplied more than 1 bln COVID-19 vaccine doses so far

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BioNTech and partner Pfizer (PFE.N) have supplied more than one billion doses of their COVID-19 vaccine as per July 21, a bigger number than delivered by competitor AstraZeneca (AZN.L), the German biotech group said on Monday.

https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/companies/biontech-says-has-supplied-more-than-1-bln-covid-19-vaccine-doses-so-far/ar-AAN6w9l

Fauci hopeful COVID vaccines get full OK by FDA within weeks

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The U.S. government's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, said Sunday that he was hopeful the Food and Drug Administration will give full approval to the coronavirus vaccine by month's end and predicted the potential move will spur a wave of vaccine mandates in the private sector as well as schools and universities. The FDA has only granted emergency-use approval of the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, but the agency is expected to soon give full approval to Pfizer.

https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-8905fc1d3be22b7b83110f04e909753e

Depression and anxiety doubled in children, pandemic study says

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Around the world, children's depression and anxiety rates may have doubled since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the results of a meta-literature review published in JAMA Pediatrics today. The researchers looked at 29 general-population studies, one of which was not peer reviewed, and found pooled depression and anxiety rates at 25.2% and 20.5%, respectively. Both depression and anxiety rates were associated with later stages in the pandemic and with girls, and higher depression was also associated with older children.

https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/depression-and-anxiety-doubled-children-pandemic-study-says

Moderna COVID-19 vaccine gets Swiss approval for 12- to 17-year-olds

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Swissmedic has approved the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for 12- to 17-year-olds, the Swiss agency said on Monday.

https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-covid-19-vaccine-gets-swiss-approval-12-17-year-olds-2021-08-09/

Moderna considers including Australian children in Covid-19 vaccine trial

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The vaccine manufacturer Moderna is considering Australia as part of a clinical trial to test its Covid-19 vaccine in children. In its latest quarterly report filed in the United States to the federal financial regulatory agency, Moderna indicated it would test the safety and efficacy of its Covid vaccine in 6,000 healthy children aged between six months and 12 years. The pharmaceutical company reported it would enrol participants "in the US and up to two ex-US countries (eg. Canada and/or Australia)"

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/09/moderna-considers-including-australian-children-in-covid-19-vaccine-trial

S.Korea apologises as Moderna halves August COVID-19 vaccine shipments

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South Korea's health minister apologised for COVID-19 vaccine shortages on Monday, saying U.S.

drugmaker Moderna Inc would deliver less than half its planned shipment this month due to production issues.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-opens-covid-19-vaccine-reservations-all-adults-2021-08-09/

Less than 10% of newborns contracted COVID-19 from their infected mothers during or just after birth

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Only 18.5% of newborns contracted COVID-19 after their mothers tested positive, a new study finds. Less than 4% of babies born in Ontario during the pandemic tested positive for the virus. Researchers say that mother-to-child transmission is rare as long as guidelines are followed. Pregnant women are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, though the CDC says the long-term effects of the vaccine are unknown
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9876727/Less-10-newborns-contracted-COVID-19-infected-mothers-just-birth.html

U.S. City With 2.4 Million Population Has Just Six ICU Beds Left

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With ICU beds down to a single digit, Austin sounded the alarm Saturday, using its emergency alert system to let residents in the Texas capital city know that the local state of the pandemic is “dire.” The Austin area -- with a population of almost 2.4 million people -- has just six intensive-care unit beds left, state health data show. A total of 313 ventilators are available.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-08/austin-with-just-six-icu-beds-left-warns-of-dire-covid-state

Hundreds of Philippine hospitals near full capacity as virus cases surge

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Nearly a fifth of hospitals in the Philippines are close to full capacity as a surge in COVID-19 infections, driven by the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus, spreads across the Southeast Asian country, the health ministry said on Monday.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hundreds-philippine-hospitals-near-full-capacity-virus-cases-surge-2021-08-09/

Southern states see record-setting COVID-19 activity

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The southern United States is entering the fifth week of its fourth COVID-19 surge, this one fueled by the highly transmissible Delta (B1617.2) variant, which is spreading quickly through America's unvaccinated citizens. On Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tracked 23,903 new coronavirus cases in Florida, the state's highest single-day total since the start of the pandemic, according to NPR. On Sunday, approximately one in four hospital beds in the state had a COVID-19 patient in it.
https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/southern-states-see-record-setting-covid-19-activity

China reports more COVID-19 cases; some cities kick off new tests

China reports more COVID-19 cases; some cities kick off new tests
China reported on Monday more COVID-19 infections in its latest outbreak of the disease, while some cities added rounds of mass testing in the bid to stamp out locally-transmitted infections.
https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-reports-more-covid-19-cases-while-some-cities-kick-off-new-tests-2021-08-09/

Big drop in Covid-19 patients thanks to vaccine – chief scientific adviser

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There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of being people admitted to hospital with Covid-19 thanks to the vaccination programme, Northern Ireland's chief scientific adviser has said. Professor Ian Young said there are 22 hospitalisations for every 1,000 cases of the virus, down from 80 per 1,000 last December. He was speaking during another surge of the virus in Northern Ireland on Monday when there were 245 Covid positive patients in hospital, with 41 in intensive care.
https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/big-drop-in-covid-19-patients-thanks-to-vaccine-chief-scientific-adviser-40733242.html

Covid-19 cases are rising in countries praised for stopping outbreaks. Do they need to change their strategies?

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A year and a half since the first Covid-19 cases were identified, many countries in Asia-Pacific feel right back where they started. While Britons hit the nightclubs after a long winter of coronavirus restrictions, millions of people in Australia and China are back in lockdown. Health systems in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia are overwhelmed. And countries like the Pacific island nation of Fiji, which last year had only reported a handful of cases, are now battling major outbreaks. To some, it's hard to understand why Asia-Pacific is being hit so hard. The fresh outbreaks are throwing the zero Covid strategy favored by China and Australia into question, and prompting a larger debate about just how sustainable the approach is.
https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/08/asia/delta-covid-zero-china-australia-intl-dst-hnk/index.html

US averaging 100,000 COVID-19 cases per day for first time since Feb with 240% rise in infections

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Even as coronavirus cases continue to rise across the United States, deaths remain far below their previous highs thanks to COVID-19 vaccines. On Sunday, officials recorded 24,234 new cases of the virus with a seven-day rolling average of 108,624, marking the third consecutive day that the average has surpassed 100,000. This is a 240 percent increase from the average of 31,919 reported three weeks ago, according to a DailyMail.com analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University. The figures are a testament to the efficacy of the vaccines and show that even if cases and hospitalization continue increasing, the number of deaths will stay quite low
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9876791/US-averaging-100-000-COVID-19-cases-day-time-Feb-240-rise-infections.html

Canada loosens travel restrictions for vaccinated US tourists

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American tourists who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus are now allowed to enter Canada after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government lifted months-long restrictions on non-essential travel into the country. As of Monday, citizens and permanent residents of the United States who received their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to arrival in Canada will be exempt from quarantine requirements.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/9/canada-loosens-travel-restrictions-for-vaccinated-us-tourists