COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis
12th Jun 2020

News Highlights

Mexico City set to relauch economy amidst aggressive testing campaign

The Mayor of Mexico City, Claudia Sheinbaum, announced that officials are launching an aggressive information campaign and will conduct 100,000 tests a month by July as the city prepares to open up its economy. This strategy runs contrary to that of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who had dismissed mass testing as a waste of money.

Yemen's future at stake as educated elite fall prey to the virus

Yemen, already hit hard by war and famine, is reeling further with the Covid-19 pandemic killing hundreds of educated doctors, engineers, lawyers and business leaders. This is a huge blow to the future of the country that has already suffered six years of civil war, with the loss of prominent members of society sapping public morale further.

Student mental health takes centre stage as suicides rise in China

A spate of suicides by young people in China has highlighted the post-lockdown anxiety that is being felt by millions in the country and around the world. Chinese schools and local governments are taking unprecedented measures to focus on student mental health - a topic that, like suicide itself, is usually taboo in Chinese society.

Malnutrition in focus as a high number of Indonesian children succumb to the virus

All over the world, the coronavirus pandemic is killing the elderly and immunocompromised adults with particular severity, but sparing children. However, in Indonesia, an unusually high number of child deaths from Covid-19 has put the focus on the country's inadequate health facilities and the problems of malnutrition and anaemia, which according to a senior health ministry official, has left Indonesian children more vulnerable to the virus.

Lockdown Exit

Brexit: UK backtracks on full EU border checks amid coronavirus crisis
The government is expected to apply much less rigorous EU border checks on imports than it initially had planned, after the Brexit transition period finishes at the end of this year. The Financial Times reports ministers have abandoned plans to introduce full checks after pressure from businesses. A government source told the BBC it would take a "pragmatic and flexible approach" due to coronavirus. The UK had committed to introduce import controls on EU goods in January. But the source said ministers recognised the impact the virus was having on businesses, and so pragmatism and flexibility on imports made sense - "to help business adjust to the changes" that were now imminent.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53018020

In post-lockdown China, student mental health in focus amid reported jump in suicides

The heightened post-lockdown anxiety has become a matter of central government concern as domestic media report a spate of suicides by young people. It has also led to unprecedented measures by schools and local governments to focus on student mental health - a topic that like suicide has often been taboo in Chinese society. "There have been some heartbreaking incidents as schools reopened," Yan Wu, vice mayor of the southern city of Zhuhai, said at China's annual parliamentary meeting last month. "This highlights the importance and urgency of promoting mental health development in young students," he said. At the parliamentary meeting, at least four delegates put forward proposals for more attention to be paid to students' psychological needs.
https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/06/11/in-post-lockdown-china-student-mental-health-in-focus-amid-reported-jump-in-suicides.html

Mexico City to increase COVID-19 testing in break from feds

Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said Wednesday the capital will embark on a large-scale COVID-19 testing effort as the centerpiece of its plan to reopen its economy, diverging from the federal government's strategy, which has shunned widespread testing as a waste of resources. The goal will be performing some 100,000 tests per month by July and with those results trying to detect and isolate new infections as quickly as possible, Sheinbaum said in a news conference. It will be paired with an intensive information campaign. The sprawling city of 9 million — with an equal number or more in the suburbs — has confirmed more than 32,000 infections and more than 3,200 deaths, both considered to be undercounts because of limited testing.
https://uk.news.yahoo.com/mexico-city-increase-covid-19-213115370.html

Most UK coronavirus cases traced to France and Spain after airports were not locked down

Just 0.08 per cent of the UK's cases came directly from China where Covid-19 originated - with the majority coming from the likes of Spain, France and Italy - all holiday destinations favoured by Brits, a study shows
https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/most-uk-coronavirus-cases-traced-22173229

Quarantined surfers return to Peru's famous waves

Peruvian surfers are returning to their nation's world-famous waves after three months spent in lockdown due to the coronavirus. Wearing masks and carrying their boards, the surfers this week descended onto Lima's rocky beaches for the first time since the pandemic shutdown. "It was about time, no?" said a smiling Alessandro Currarino, sporting a black wetsuit and matching face mask after hitting the waves. "Peru has some of the best waves in the world and we need to take advantage of them."
https://uk.news.yahoo.com/quarantined-surfers-return-perus-famous-202136211.html

Mexico City to Launch Aggressive Coronavirus-Testing Campaign

Mexico City is launching a massive COVID-19 testing program as it aims to begin reopening the capital city's economy. Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum announced Wednesday that officials intend to conduct 100,000 tests a month by July, with the help of an aggressive information campaign. Mexico City's approach is counter to that of President Andres Manuel López Obrador's administration, which dismissed mass testing as a waste of money. Mexico federal Assistant Health Secretary Hugo López-Gatell praised Mexico City's effort, but he made no mention of expanding federal coronavirus testing.
https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/mexico-city-launch-aggressive-coronavirus-testing-campaign

Norway allows airlines to fly full planes again- minister

Norway will no longer require airlines to leave middle seats on planes empty, a measure previously introduced to reduce the risk of contamination with the novel coronavirus, the country's transport minister said on Thursday. The Nordic country, which advised its citizens in March not to travel

abroad, is to open its borders for tourists coming from Denmark, and plans to update travel advice for other countries by June 15.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-norway-airlines/norway-allows-airlines-to-fly-full-planes-again-minister-idUSKBN23I25U

Exit Strategies

Oxford vaccine testers chase coronavirus to Brazil where it is rampant
The Oxford team has already recruited about 10,000 volunteers in the UK, who were split into two groups. One got the vaccine, the other a placebo. The scientists are now looking for evidence that the vaccinated cohort has been protected. An ideal result would see none of the vaccinated individuals becoming infected. But to prove that the jab works it is also necessary for unvaccinated volunteers — the number will be set by regulators and depend, in part, on the size of the cohort — to develop Covid-19. The likelihood of people becoming infected determines how long it takes to get a result. “If it’s low, it’s going to take you ages,” Trudie Lang, director of the Global Health Network at Oxford University’s Nuffield Department of Medicine, said. If there is little virus circulating your trial may run aground, leaving you without answers.
https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/oxford-vaccine-testers-chase-coronavirus-to-brazil-where-it-is-rampant-bld67t262

England’s Contact Tracers Fail to Reach a Third of New Cases
Britain’s coronavirus contact tracers failed to track down a third of the cases referred to them in England in the first week of an operation aimed at stemming the pandemic. Among 8,117 people who tested positive for the virus, 5,407 were reached and asked to provide details about their contacts with others, the Department of Health and Social Care said in a statement on its website on Thursday. Contact tracers then reached some 85% of people identified as having been exposed to the infection and advised them to self-isolate. “For the first week of a scale citizen service, this is good performance,” Dido Harding, the chair of NHS Improvement who is overseeing the Test and Trace Service, told reporters Thursday. “Clearly it can and needs to and will get better.”
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-11/england-s-contact-tracers-fail-to-reach-a-third-of-new-cases

Brazil’s favelas, neglected by the government, organize their own coronavirus fight
Favelas have long been cradles of activism. Many have been overrun by violent criminal gangs that - impose restrictions on who can enter and leave. Cut off from government services, informal communities have often created parallel institutions — including mail, Internet and sanitation systems — and supplemented weak health and education systems. That tradition of creative problem-solving has spread during the outbreak. When the people of Rio de Janeiro’s Complexo do Alemão favela saw that the city’s coronavirus statistics were leaving out cases from slums, they created their own database to track the disease. The residents’ association in Rio’s Cantagalo community joined with a local nongovernmental organization to spray disinfectant.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/coronavirus-brazil-favela-sao-paulo-rio-janeiro-bolsonaro/2020/06/09/8b03eee0-aa74-11ea-9063-e69bd6520940_story.html

Coronavirus: BAME safety plan not published
A report containing measures to protect ethnic minority groups from coronavirus has been drawn up for government, BBC News has learned. Public Health England (PHE) published a review last week confirming coronavirus kills people from ethnic minorities at disproportionately high rates. But a senior academic told BBC News a second report, containing safeguarding proposals to tackle this, also existed. And PHE now says this report will be published next week. Labour described the decision not to immediately publish the second report as "scandalous and a tragedy".
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-53002968

Rwanda: COVID-19 - Mass Testing for Rwandan Peacekeepers in South Sudan

Rwanda has started mass testing and sampling for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) targeting its peacekeepers serving under the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The testing spearheaded by the Ministry of Health started on Tuesday in Malakal where Rwanda Formed Police Unit-One (FPU-1) hybrid contingent of 239 officers, is deployed. Rwanda FPU-1 lost one of its members-Police Constable (PC) Enid Mbabazi-who succumbed to Covid-19 on June 2, at the King Faisal Hospital after she was evacuated back home for further treatment. Rwanda National Police (RNP) spokesperson, Commissioner of Police (CP) John Bosco Kabera said that the testing which started in Malakal was inline with the prevention measures against the spread of coronavirus/Covid-19 and the exercise will continue to all Rwandan peacekeepers serving in South Sudan.
https://allafrica.com/stories/202006110123.html

Toronto to make face coverings mandatory on public transit, will hand out 1M masks to riders

Toronto plans to make face coverings mandatory on its public transit system, a rule that could go into effect starting July 2. Mayor John Tory announced the updated regulations for the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) on Thursday. "This will help to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our city," Tory said. "As the restart and reopening begins, we know that more people will be back on the TTC… at the same time, physical distancing will become a greater and greater challenge." The TTC board will need to approve the recommendation at its meeting next week, though TTC CEO Rick Leary has already said he supports the plan. "I want to make sure people know our system is safe for both customers and employees," Leary said.
https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/covid-19-in-toronto-june-11-1.5607504

Egypt to reopen tourist destinations less hard-hit by virus

Egypt will reopen select tourist destinations to international charter flights starting July 1, its cabinet said Thursday, allowing travelers from around the world to return to parts of the country less hard-hit by the coronavirus. The government hopes to draw tourists to popular yet remote attractions that have been spared the ravages of the virus. Those include the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula, home to the major resort and beach destination of Sharm el Sheikh, the Red Sea resort areas of Hurghada and Marsa Alam, as well as Marsa Matrouh, on the Mediterranean coast.
https://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-to-reopen-tourist-destinations-less-hard-hit-by-virus/

'Ticking time bomb:' Lack of beds slows Delhi's virus fight

In New Delhi, a sprawling capital region of 46 million and home to some of India’s highest concentration of hospitals, a pregnant woman’s death after a frantic hunt for a sickbed was a worrying sign about the country’s ability to cope with a wave of new coronavirus cases. “She kept begging us to save her life, but we couldn’t do anything,” Shailendra Kumar said, after driving his sister-in-law, Neelam, and her husband for hours, only to be turned away at eight public and private hospitals. Two and a half months of nationwide lockdown kept numbers of infections relatively low in India. But with restrictions easing in recent weeks, cases have shot up, rising by a record of nearly 10,000 on Thursday, raising questions about whether authorities have done enough to avert catastrophe.
https://apnews.com/5796860d5384b0903d30d03b580f968d

Houston Weighs New Lockdown, Sees ‘Precipice of Disaster’

Houston-area officials are “getting close” to reimposing stay-at-home orders and are prepared to reopen a Covid-19 hospital established but never used at a football stadium as virus cases expand in the fourth-largest U.S. city. The announcement by Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner on Thursday came a day after the Lone Star state recorded its highest one-day tally of new cases since the pandemic emerged.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-11/houston-may-reopen-virus-hospital-at-stadium-as-cases-expand

Germany in close contact with Turkey over travel warning - minister

Germany is in close contact with countries outside Europe, including Turkey, over whether travel warnings in place due to the coronavirus pandemic can be lifted, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Thursday. Lifting the warnings would depend on factors like the number of infections and capacity levels at local health systems, Maas said after talks with ministers from several popular holiday destinations for Germans.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-maas/germany-in-close-contact-with-turkey-over-travel-warning-minister-idUKKBN23I1ZT

Britain's test and trace system reaches 26,985 in first week

Britain's Department of Health said its coronavirus tracing system contacted 31,794 people between 28 May and 3 Jun and of those it was able to reach 26,985, or 85 per cent, and advise them to self-isolate. The government's test and trace system is seen as key to helping to ease lockdown measures. The 31,794 people were contacts of a group of 5,407 people who had tested positive for coronavirus and provided details of those they had met to the system, said the Department of Health on Thursday (Jun 11). However only two-thirds of the 8,117 people who tested positive for the virus during the period provided details of recent contacts to the system, with the remaining number not able to be reached.

https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/britain-s-test-and-trace-system-reaches-26-985-in-first-week-12827150

Kremlin defends Russia's coronavirus death data after WHO questions its exceptionally precise Covid-19 data

The Kremlin denied on Thursday there was anything untoward with Russia's official coronavirus death data after the World Health Organisation said this week that Russia's low death rate was "difficult to understand". Russia has reported more than half a million cases of the new coronavirus, the third largest caseload in the world, and 6,532 deaths, a number that is many times lower than other countries with serious outbreaks. Asked if the Kremlin thought the data was strange, spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "no", but that Russia's consumer health regulator would be ready to explain the data to the World Health Organisation.

https://news.trust.org/item/20200611090426-zu2ea/

Internal document reveals federal plan to ask nurses to reuse masks

Internal Federal Emergency Management Agency data show that the government’s supply of surgical gowns has not meaningfully increased since photos first emerged in March of nurses wearing trash bags for protection. “The demand for gowns outpaces current U.S. manufacturing capabilities,” a document released Tuesday says. The document confirms the fears of nurses and other health care providers. After months of pressure on federal officials to use wartime powers to mobilize U.S. plants, the document's slides show that domestic manufacturing of gowns and surgical masks has ticked up by a few thousand per month since the pandemic hit, falling far short of need. The United States still does not manufacture any nitrile rubber gloves.

https://www.rollcall.com/2020/06/09/internal-document-reveals-federal-plan-to-ask-nurses-to-reuse-masks/

Partisan Exits

Swedes round on Sweden's coronavirus approach - POLITICO

The Swedish government’s decision to go its own way on coronavirus just got political. In the first party leaders’ debate in parliament since the pandemic began, opposition politicians went after Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Wednesday, saying Sweden’s spiking death rate from COVID-19 and

inability to protect residents of elderly care homes represented serious failures.
https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/11/sweden-coronavirus-312838

British health minister urges protesters not to attend rallies
British health minister Matt Hancock said on Thursday people should not attend large demonstrations for public health reasons after protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement attracted tens of thousands over the last week. “I understand that people want to show their passion for a cause that they care deeply about but this is a virus that thrives on social contact, regardless of what your cause may be,” he said at a daily news conference.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-hancock/british-health-minister-urges-protesters-not-to-attend-rallies-idUSKBN23I2OD

Bolsonaro supporter desecrates Brazil beach memorial for 40,000 coronavirus victims
A supporter of Brazil’s far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, has desecrated a beachside memorial to Covid-19 victims as the country’s coronavirus death toll rose above 40,000. Activists from civil society group Rio de Paz dug 100 symbolic shallow graves on Copacabana beach before dawn on Thursday to represent the Brazilian lives lost.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/11/bolsonaro-supporter-destroys-brazil-beach-memorial-40000-coronavirus-victims

Continued Lockdown

Indonesia coronavirus cases could double to 60k in two weeks
Indonesia's coronavirus case count could double to more than 60,000 infections in the next two weeks as testing becomes more widespread, according to Professor Amin Soebandrio, the director of Jakarta's Eijkman Institute of Microbiology. Australia's near neighbour recorded more than 1000 cases for two days in a row, a new record, a little more than two weeks after the major religious holiday of Idul Fitri. The spike in cases has prompted epidemiologists to call on the national government to rethink the easing of social restrictions.
https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/indonesia-coronavirus-cases-could-double-to-60k-in-two-weeks-20200611-p551ke.html

170 police officers die of coronavirus in Peru: minister
At least 170 police officers in Peru have died after contracting the coronavirus while enforcing the South American nation's pandemic lockdown, the interior minister said Thursday. Almost 10,000 officers have been infected with the disease as they enforced social distancing measures during Peru's 12 weeks of stay-at-home orders. "We have 9,900 infected personnel and 170 deceased personnel. That is the figure that we currently have despite the efforts being made," Interior Minister General Gaston Rodriguez told reporters. A further 4,000 police personnel, deemed vulnerable for reasons of age and health, were complying with mandatory quarantine, he said
https://www.france24.com/en/20200611-170-police-officers-die-of-coronavirus-in-peru-minister

Peru's cases of coronavirus surpass 200,000
Peru's Health Ministry has confirmed coronavirus cases have surpassed 200,000, with 5,738 deaths. A spokesman for the ministry said there were now a total of 203,736 coronavirus cases. The country registered its first case on March 6 and has seen a surge amid a rigorous testing regime, but also high levels of poverty and informal labor complicating self-isolation efforts. Some Peruvian hospitals have run out of oxygen to treat COVID-19 patients.
http://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/225345-peru's-cases-of-coronavirus-surpass-200000

Inside a Mexican intensive care unit battling COVID-19
Mexico has reported a record daily rise of more than 4,800 cases of the coronavirus and more than 15,300 people there have died. Doctors and nurses on the front lines have been protesting over a

lack of training and protective equipment as they treat patients. Al Jazeera's John Holman reports from an intensive care unit in Mexico City.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/mexican-intensive-care-unit-battling-covid-19-200611105052107.html

'We're forgotten.' Mexico City paramedics say government failing to support them amid the pandemic

In response to CNN's request for comment regarding allegations of improper PPE gear, the federal agencies that manage the paramedics said proper equipment is provided. They declined to provide numbers on how many staff have contracted Covid-19 or have died from it. CNN interviewed seven paramedics and one doctor who work in Mexico City public ambulances, belonging to two different sections of the country's Health Ministry. All eight said they feel a sense of betrayal because they argue the government has not helped to keep them safe.
https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/11/americas/mexico-coronavirus-paramedics-intl/index.html

IMF approves additional $111.06 mln to Rwanda to address COVID-19 pandemic

The International Monetary Fund said on Thursday it had approved an additional $111.06 million disbursement to Rwanda to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's economy. "Rwanda's economic outlook has worsened since the approval of the first (Rapid Credit Facility) request on April 2, 2020, leading to a further downward revision in the 2020 GDP growth forecast from 5.1 to 2.0 percent due to deepening of the COVID-19 impact," the IMF said in a statement. The funding brings total IMF COVID-19 support to Rwanda to $220.46 million, it said, and will help finance the country's urgent balance of payments and budget needs. The central African country implemented one of Africa's strictest lockdowns to try to stem the spread of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus, including shuttering some businesses, closing borders and schools. Authorities have since begun to gradually open up the economy, although some restrictions remain.
https://uk.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-rwanda-economy/update-1-imf-approves-additional-111-06-mln-to-rwanda-to-address-covid-19-pandemic-idUKL8N2DO5XW

In Yemen, coronavirus is killing off the educated elite

Already ravaged by war and famine, Yemen is suffering another blow to its future as the coronavirus kills off dozens of the country's top public servants, academics and the most educated. While a lack of widespread testing is masking the true scale of the crisis, scores of doctors, academics, engineers, politicians, judges, lawyers and business leaders, as well as high-ranking members of the Houthi militia, are thought to be among the dead as the virus spreads. It is a devastating blow for a county that has already suffered six years of civil war, further scuppering hopes for recovery as the government and institutions will struggle to fill the skills gap. The loss of leading members of society has also taken a toll on public morale.
https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/in-yemen-coronavirus-is-killing-off-the-educated-elite-1.1032368

Coronavirus COVID-19 has made Yemen's health system collapse complete | MSF

"At first, there were many volunteer doctors and nurses around," remembers Dr Nizar Jahlan, "but when they knew that cases were coming to the hospital, they all disappeared." This is how the story of COVID-19 began in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, where Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is supporting the Ministry of Health to run the city's principal centre to treat the new coronavirus and is planning to expand that support in the coming weeks. "At the beginning we faced many difficulties; the hospital lacked almost everything that it needed, but we brought in what we could in terms of drugs, and personal protective equipment to start activities," said Dr Jahlan, who is MSF's Medical Activity Manager for the project. "But then we faced problems in finding enough doctors and nurses willing to work in the hospital."
https://www.msf.org/covid-19-has-made-yemen-health-system-collapse-complete

WHO warns pandemic accelerating in Africa

The speed the new coronavirus jumped from 100,000 to 200,000 confirmed cases in Africa shows just how quickly the pandemic is accelerating on the continent, the World Health Organization said Thursday. According to an AFP tally, Africa topped the 200,000 mark on Tuesday. "It took 98 days to reach the first 100,000 cases, and only 18 days to move to 200,000 cases," Doctor Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO's regional director for Africa, told a video briefing hosted by the UN press association in Geneva.

https://www.france24.com/en/20200611-who-warns-pandemic-accelerating-in-africa

Africa's Coronavirus 'Hotspots' in South Africa, Algeria, Cameroon: WHO

Africa will have a "steady increase" in COVID-19 cases until a vaccine is developed and strong public health measures are needed in current "hotspots" in South Africa, Algeria and Cameroon, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday. "Until such time as we have access to an effective vaccine, I'm afraid we'll probably have to live with a steady increase in the region, with some hotspots having to be managed in a number of countries, as is happening now in South Africa, Algeria, Cameroon for example, which require very strong public health measures, social distancing measures to take place," Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's Africa regional director, told a Geneva briefing.

https://www.news18.com/news/world/africas-coronavirus-hotspots-in-south-africa-algeria-cameroon-who-2664501.html

Scientific Viewpoint

Searching for coronavirus clues in single cells

Why it matters: Pinpointing the cells in the body's immune response would help speed the development of treatments and vaccines. It also offers insights into inflammation, which underlies diseases ranging from cancer to arthritis to heart disease. How it works: Different molecules (cytokines and antibodies, for example) and cells (white blood cells, T cells, macrophages and others) in different pathways control the inflammation response that kicks in when the body is injured or infected. But inflammation can also persist due to disease and turn the body's immune system against itself, as in the case of autoimmune conditions like lupus and diabetes, causing damage. "Inflammation is a double-edged sword," says Yuan Tian, a computational immunologist at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

https://www.axios.com/coronavirus-symptoms-cells-inflammation-dc249065-4641-4663-83c1-778c173c686d.html

No 'patient zero' as Covid-19 came into UK at least 1,300 times

There was no “patient zero” in the UK’s Covid-19 epidemic, according to research showing that the infection was introduced on at least 1,300 occasions. The findings, from the Covid-19 Genomics UK consortium, have prompted further criticism that opportunities to suppress the spread of infection in February and March were missed. The study by the consortium – which was set up to sequence the virus’s genetic code – shows that introduction of the virus into the UK peaked in mid-March at a time when infection rates were surging in European countries, but before the government clamped down on non-essential travel. Had travel restrictions and quarantine requirements been introduced a week earlier, overall case numbers in the UK may have been far lower, critics say. The analysis, which has yet to be peer reviewed, also suggests that very few cases were introduced from China, where the pandemic started, with the vast majority coming from Spain, France and Italy.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/11/british-clampdown-on-non-essential-travel-came-a-week-too-late

Coronavirus: England test and trace system identifies 31,000 contacts

More than 31,000 close contacts of people with coronavirus were identified during the first week of the test and trace system in England, figures show. Of those, 85% were reached and asked to self-isolate for 14 days. This was from 8,000 people testing positive for the virus. Two thirds of them gave details of close contacts. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said it was the public's "civic duty" to

follow instructions given by contact tracers. Speaking at the daily coronavirus briefing, he added he was not ruling out enforcement measures to make people self-isolate for 14 days if asked to do so. About 25,000 contact tracers were recruited in England and started work at the end of May.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-53006938

Moderna Set to Test COVID-19 Vaccine in 30000 People Starting in July

Moderna announced it had finalized the Phase III clinical trial structure for its COVID-19 vaccine, mRNA-1273. The company's messenger RNA vaccine has been generally the furthest ahead in clinical development. It dosed the first patient in its Phase I trial with the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases (NIAID) on March 16, with a second dose—the vaccine requires two doses—on April 23. mRNA-1273 is an mRNA vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 that encodes for a prefusion stabilized form of the Spike (S) protein. The mRNA vaccine is a new type of technology, where the vaccine contains a section of messenger RNA that codes for a protein associated with the virus. The vaccine is injected into a person and the mRNA moves into the test subject's cells, where the cells then churn out the protein. The body's immune system should then treat the protein like the virus and attack it, developing an immune response that it will then use if it comes into contact with the actual virus.
https://www.biospace.com/article/moderna-finalizes-phase-iii-trial-for-covid-19-vaccine-to-begin-in-july/

Regeneron to begin trials for COVID-19 antibody cocktail

Regeneron will conduct placebo-controlled trials of REGN-COV2 at multiple sites in four different populations: hospitalized COVID-19 patients, non-hospitalized patients with COVID-19 symptoms, uninfected people in high-risk groups such as healthcare workers, and uninfected people in close contact with infected patients. The first two trials will focus on virologic, safety, and clinical end points in hospitalized and non-hospitalized patients.
https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/06/regeneron-begin-trials-covid-19-antibody-cocktail

Indonesia's hundreds of suspected child virus deaths highlight danger

Paediatricians and health officials in the world's fourth most populous country said the high number of child deaths from a disease that mostly kills the elderly was due to underlying factors, in particular malnutrition, anaemia and inadequate child health facilities. "COVID-19 proves that we have to fight against malnutrition," Achmad Yurianto, a senior health ministry official, told Reuters. He said Indonesian children were caught in a "devil's circle", a cycle of malnutrition and anaemia that increased their vulnerability to the coronavirus. He compared malnourished children to weak structures that "crumble after an earthquake". It also recorded more than 380 deaths among 7,152 children classified as "patients under monitoring", meaning people with severe coronavirus symptoms for which there is no other explanation but whose tests have not confirmed the infection.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-indonesia-children/indonesias-hundreds-of-suspected-child-virus-deaths-highlight-danger-idUSKBN23I1D7

EU Plans Advance Purchase of Up to Six Promising COVID-19 Vaccines: Sources

The European Commission is seeking a mandate from EU countries to buy promising COVID-19 vaccine candidates in advance from pharmaceutical firms, as long as they are not produced solely in the United States, officials said. The EU executive wants to pay for up to six potential vaccines in deals where the makers would commit to providing doses when and if they become available. It will ask EU health ministers at a video conference meeting on Friday to back the plan, which has been swiftly devised as the bloc fears it may not have access to enough shots should a vaccine be developed. All vaccines in clinical trial this year are in principle eligible for advance purchases, but not those which are produced exclusively in the United States, because Washington has signalled it will not allow sales abroad before its own needs are met, the EU officials told a news conference.
https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/06/11/us/11reuters-health-coronavirus-eu-vaccine.html

Pandemic 'Accelerating' in Africa, Test Kits Needed, WHO Says

The coronavirus pandemic is accelerating in Africa, spreading to rural areas after international travellers brought it to capital cities, the World Health Organization said on Thursday. But the WHO said there was no indication that large numbers of severe cases and deaths were being missed, nor has the virus caused significant infections in refugee camps across the continent. Ten countries are driving Africa's epidemic, accounting for 75% of the some 207,600 cases on the continent, said Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's Africa regional director. About 5,000 deaths have been reported. South Africa, which last month began a phased easing of the lockdown, is the hardest-hit, accounting for a quarter of all cases, she said.

https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/06/11/world/africa/11reuters-health-coronavirus-africa.html

Moderna Plans To Start Phase 3 Testing of its COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate in July

On June 11, biotech company Moderna announced it had finalized plans for phase 3 testing of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The late-stage trial will include 30,000 participants and is expected to begin in July.

https://time.com/5852032/moderna-vaccine-phase-3/

Coronavirus Resurgence

Resurgence of virus threatens South Korea's success story

Just weeks ago, South Korea was celebrating its hard-won gains against the coronavirus, easing social distancing, reopening schools and promoting a tech-driven anti-virus campaign President Moon Jae-in has called “K-quarantine.” But a resurgence of infections in the Seoul region where half of South Korea’s 51 million people live is threatening the country’s success story and prompting health authorities to warn that action must be taken now to stop a second wave. South Korea’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday reported 45 new cases, a daily rise that has been fairly consistent since late May. Most have been in the Seoul metropolitan area, where health authorities have struggled to trace transmissions.

https://apnews.com/830d27c967bf4fb0e3c32e4e490bb211

Alarming rise in US virus cases seen as states roll back lockdowns

There is no single reason for the surges. In some cases, more testing has revealed more cases. In others, local outbreaks are big enough to push statewide tallies higher. But experts think at least some are due to lifting stay-at-home orders, school and business closures, and other restrictions put in place during the spring to stem the virus’s spread. The virus is also gradually fanning out. “It is a disaster that spreads,” said Dr. Jay Butler, who oversees coronavirus response work at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “It’s not like there’s an entire continental seismic shift and everyone feels the shaking all at once.” That is also happening globally. Places that suffered early on such as China, Italy and Spain have calmed down but Brazil, India and other countries that were spared initially are seeing large increases. The world is seeing more than 100,000 newly-confirmed cases every day, according to data from Johns Hopkins University,

https://www.postandcourier.com/ap/alarming-rise-in-us-virus-cases-seen-as-states-roll-back-lockdowns/article_a789960e-ac05-11ea-9e98-07db710e9337.html

PM’s aide downplays dire WHO warning

Referring to the WHO letter, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Zafar Mirza said Pakistan had been making appropriate policy choices from the beginning keeping in view its national context. “We started early and took preventive measures with regard to entry of virus from outside through stringent screening at our airports. Our first case was confirmed on Feb 26 while the epidemic was in full swing among our two immediate neighbours many weeks before i.e. China and Iran. While we had 26 cases our prime minister called a meeting of National Security Committee and announced major lockdowns many of which are still enforced e.g. ban on mass gatherings, closure

of educational institutions, marriage halls, sports events, etc," he said in a statement issued here on Wednesday.
https://www.dawn.com/news/1562761/pms-aide-downplays-dire-who-warning

Nashville mayor delays next stage of reopening after coronavirus cases rise
Nashville Mayor John Cooper said he intends to curb the city's next reopening phase after reporting a "slightly elevated" average in Covid-19 cases over the last two weeks. Phase three reopening would allow for restaurants and retail stores to operate at full capacity and bars, clubs, karaoke bars, tours, live entertainment and "transportainment" businesses to operate at 50% capacity. Nashville's local health department reported 6,627 total confirmed Covid-19 cases on Thursday, an increase of 56 cases since Wednesday.
https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/11/nashville-mayor-delays-next-stage-of-reopening-after-coronavirus-cases-rise.html

Kazakhstan locks down several towns after spike in COVID-19 cases
Kazakhstan has locked down several towns and villages and tightened restrictions in one of its provinces following a spike in fresh COVID-19 cases, authorities said on Thursday, a month after ending a nationwide state of emergency. In the central Karaganda region, retailers and public transit will work shorter hours and private cars will be banned from moving at night from June 13, the government said in a statement. Several towns and villages will be locked down again and 70% of public sector employees in the province will work from home, it said, adding that many local residents and businesses were disregarding social distancing rules.
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-kazakhstan/kazakhstan-locks-down-several-towns-after-spike-in-covid-19-cases-idUSKBN23I2A9

Malaysia bars its citizens from Hajj over coronavirus fears
Malaysia follows Indonesia in not allowing its citizens to visit Mecca and Medina for the annual pilgrimage.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/malaysia-bars-citizens-hajj-coronavirus-fears-200611102426334.html