

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

15th Jun 2020

News Highlights

Coronavirus returns to Beijing as 57 new cases confirmed

After almost 2 months of no new coronavirus infections in the Chinese capital, [Beijing saw several new cases in recent days, raising concerns of a resurgence of the disease](#). All cases were linked to a major wholesale food market and authorities are taking steps to stop the outbreak with increased testing and home quarantine for employees of the market.

Normal healthcare services to resume in Hungary from today

[Restrictions imposed on Hungary's healthcare system due to the coronavirus pandemic will be lifted today](#), said the country's Minister of Human Capacities, Miklos Kasler. While anti-epidemic preparedness remains, 80% of beds previously set aside for coronavirus patients can be reused for other treatments.

New study suggests coronavirus could push global poverty past a billion

[The coronavirus pandemic has led to millions losing their jobs and economies grinding to a halt all over the world](#). A new study published by researchers at King's College London and the Australian National University has suggested that the pandemic may push the total number of people living in absolute poverty to over a billion people worldwide.

Vietnam boosts its business profile amidst pandemic

[Vietnam has emerged as a Covid-19 success story, with only 333 cases and zero deaths from the disease](#), despite a long border with China and a substantial population. Besides that, Vietnam has also managed to attract huge interest from multinational corporations looking to relocate out of China, ahead of even India, which is now in fourth spot globally for its total number of coronavirus cases.

Lockdown Exit

France to reopen for business as Emmanuel Macron declares 'first victory' over Covid-19

France will reopen for business on Monday after President Emmanuel Macron announced a 'first victory' against coronavirus. In an upbeat live TV address on Sunday night, the head of state said virtually all lockdown restrictions for bars, restaurants and cafes would end at the start of this coming week. Schools, colleges and nurseries will then be back with all their pupils in a week's time.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8419943/France-reopen-business-Emmanuel-Macron-declares-victory-Covid-19.html>

COVID-19 social media vigilantes: A valid or harmful way of dealing with rule breakers?

What would you do if you saw someone not wearing a mask in public? Mind your own business, or perhaps advise the person to wear a mask because it is now required by law and helps reduce the spread of COVID-19? Another option might be to report the infringement to the authorities. However, some people have decided on a different approach: Snap a photo and post it on social media. With numerous Facebook groups and Telegram chats providing a platform for this in Singapore and elsewhere, experts CNA interviewed have explained why online vigilantism has appeared to become

more prevalent during the pandemic. They said some see it as a social responsibility borne out of genuine concern for public health, while others cannot stand seeing others get away with breaking the rules as they themselves are compliant.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/covid-19-online-social-media-vigilante-expose-viral-covidiot-12814476>

Coronavirus could push global poverty past one billion mark, new study suggests

The number of people in extreme poverty around the world could rise beyond 1 billion as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, new analysis has suggested. Figures from the World Bank suggest that 736 million people currently live in destitution, surviving on less than \$1.90 a day (£1.53). But in a study published on Friday, researchers at King's College London and Australian National University have warned that the pandemic could trigger "substantial" poverty increases and reverse decades' worth of progress.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/coronavirus-poverty-pandemic-study-world-bank-covid-19-a9561081.html>

Mexico City to begin gradual exit from lockdown on Monday

"We think next week the city can begin a process of very orderly transition," said Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, noting there had been a slight drop in hospital occupancy rates and that the city's contagion alert level was close to coming down a notch. Curbs on vehicle traffic and public transport are due to be eased on Monday and factories will start opening on Tuesday under strict sanitary protections, the city government said. On Thursday, small shops will have permission to reopen, while professional services and scientific workers linked to "industry" can go back as of Friday, it added. If conditions are deemed suitable, street markets and the historic center of the city will reopen the week of June 22-28.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-mexico-city/mexico-city-to-begin-gradual-exit-from-lockdown-on-monday-idUSKBN23K00R>

Confusion reigns as countries loosen coronavirus lockdowns and cases rise

There is a wide discrepancy in approaches to the coronavirus by the world's political leaders, some countries are lifting lockdowns as Covid-19 deaths continue to rise, and global health agencies are backtracking on their guidance. It's hardly surprising that the situation might seem unclear.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/13/world/coronavirus-confusion-lockdowns-lifting-gbr-intl/index.html>

Medical workers resort to parking-lot deals and DIY projects to get safety gear

Medical shortages in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, have left many healthcare workers in a desperate hunt for medical supplies. Community clinics, nursing homes and independent doctors, in particular, find themselves on the fringe of the supply chain for masks, gowns, gloves and ventilators. Desperate administrators wire money to offshore banks to acquire supplies. Most medical supplies - from isolation gowns to the filtration components of N95 masks - originate in China in factories that manufacture so-called spunbond polypropylene out of toxic chemicals. Decades of honing has turned the supply chain into an efficient

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/12/medical-supplies-coronavirus-outbreak-us>

Hungary's health care services to restart on June 15: minister

All restrictions on Hungary's health care services will be lifted next Monday, while the measures on anti-epidemic preparedness remain in force, the country's Minister of Human Capacities Miklos Kasler announced here on Friday. "Practically this means that in hospitals, 80 percent of the beds previously set aside for the care of coronavirus-infected people can be re-used for other treatments, but 20 percent should still be reserved for the care of COVID-19 patients," Kasler said at a press conference. Appointments to seek the help of specialist doctors will still have to be requested by phone, patients will be triaged for their appointments, and suspected COVID-19 patients will be monitored, according to the minister. Kasler said that Hungary's health care system will need about

two months to catch up on surgeries that had to be postponed during the state of emergency. According to official figures, the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Hungary stood at 4,053 on Friday, with 2,447 recoveries and 555 fatalities

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-06/12/c_139134778.htm

Spain's Galicia to be first region to exit coronavirus lockdown

Spain's northern region of Galicia will be the first to exit the country's coronavirus lockdown from Monday, Health Minister Salvador Illa said on Friday, part of a gradual opening up that Spain hopes can save its summer tourism season. A state of emergency, declared country-wide in mid-March, will be effectively lifted in Galicia, while it remains in force in all the other 16 of Spain's regions. The government will lift some restrictions in other regions, which have been following a four-phase plan to gradually exit from lockdown as the epidemic ebbs. "From Monday, as many as 34 million citizens will be in the last phase, that's three out of four Spaniards," Illa told a news conference.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-spain/spains-galicia-to-be-first-region-to-exit-coronavirus-lockdown-idUKKBN23J2A5>

Norway snubs COVID-19 hotspot Sweden in lifting travel curbs

Norway will allow travel to and from Finland, Iceland and the Swedish island of Gotland from Monday, but maintain travel restrictions on mainland Sweden due to its higher level of COVID-19 cases, amid concerns of a second wave of infections. Denmark, Finland and Norway have lifted some of the controls on leisure travel they imposed to slow the coronavirus pandemic, but have kept most of those imposed on Sweden, the richest and most populous of the Nordic countries.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-nordics-travel/norway-snubs-covid-19-hotspot-sweden-in-lifting-travel-curbs-idUKKBN23J249>

Canada to mandate temperature checks for airline passengers, Trudeau says

Canada will take airline passengers' temperatures before they fly and anyone with a fever will not be allowed to travel, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Friday. "Temperature checks will not be detecting people with COVID-19," Trudeau said in a news conference. "It's an extra layer of safety to encourage people who might feel sick to stay home and not put others at risk." The screening will be phased in, with those arriving in Canada being screened by the end of June, and then for those leaving the country as well as for domestic travelers at the country's four biggest airports by the end of July. If a traveler is found to have a fever after two separate measurements 10 minutes apart, they will be asked to rebook after 14 days have passed, the transport minister said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-canada/canada-to-mandate-temperature-checks-for-airline-passengers-trudeau-says-idUKKBN23J2Q2>

France unveils plan to reopen non-Schengen borders

France will gradually reopen its borders to countries outside the Schengen zone from July 1, the interior and foreign ministers said in a joint statement on Friday. The borders were shut in mid-March to stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, but the European Union recommended on Thursday that the bloc reopen to some countries in the Balkans from July 1. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said in their statement that France's reopening would be in harmony with the rest of the EU. "This opening will be gradual and will vary according to the health situation in each of the third countries, and in accordance with the arrangements that will have been agreed at European level by then," the ministers said.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/france-unveils-plan-to-reopen-non-schengen-borders/article/573130>

Rising Star: How Vietnam's organisational skills during Covid have pumped up its economic profile

Vietnam has only had 333 Covid cases and zero deaths from the disease. But what is even more interesting is that today the world is bullish on Vietnam from an economic point of view. As

multinational firms look to relocate out of China in the wake of Covid, Vietnam is fast emerging as the preferred destination of choice. True, India too is eyeing these relocating firms. But given that the Covid situation here isn't quite under control — India is now in the fourth spot globally in total number of Covid cases — firms aren't exactly queuing up to set up bases.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/talkingturkey/rising-star-how-vietnams-organisational-skills-during-covid-have-pumped-up-its-economic-profile/>

Somalia's Islamist group al Shabaab says sets up COVID-19 treatment centre

Somalia's Islamist group al Shabaab said on Friday they had set up a COVID-19 treatment centre in the country, and said the disease posed a grave threat, citing international health authorities. "Al Shabaab's corona(virus) prevention and treatment committee has opened a COVID-19 centre," the group said in a broadcast on their radio Andalus, adding the centre had been set up in Jilib, about 380 kilometres (236 miles) south of the capital Mogadishu. "International health organisations said COVID-19 is terribly spreading in countries of Africa continent." For more than a decade the group has been fighting to topple the Horn of Africa's Western-backed central government and establish its own government based on its own strict interpretation of Islamic sharia law.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-somalia/somalias-islamist-group-al-shabaab-says-sets-up-covid-19-treatment-centre-idUSKBN23J32C>

Brazil overtakes UK with world's second-highest Covid-19 death toll

Brazil has overtaken Britain as the country with the world's second-highest Covid-19 death toll after a further 843 deaths pushed its total to 41,901. The tally was published on Friday night by a coalition of news outlets which has been compiling independent statistics since Brazil's health ministry was accused of seeking to conceal the full figures last week. According to the British government 41,481 lives have been lost in the UK since late January although the number rises to more than 50,000 when suspected cases are included. Brazil's death toll is also considered an underestimate. Only in the US, where the official death toll stands at more than 116,000, have more died. Medical experts have voiced despair at what they call Jair Bolsonaro's calamitous response to the pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/12/brazil-coronavirus-death-toll-second-highest>

Exit Strategies

Coronavirus: Lockdown shouldn't be eased more until 'effective' contact tracing in place, says WHO official

England's lockdown restrictions should not be eased further until the government's contact tracing system is "robust and effective", a World Health Organisation (WHO) official has said. WHO's regional European director Hans Kluge said the UK remains in a "very active phase of the pandemic" and should be cautious in lifting any restrictions. "Contact tracing is key especially as the UK starts to relax the social and physical distancing measures," he told The Guardian. "There has to be a robust track-and-trace system in place of operation."

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-lockdown-shouldnt-be-eased-more-until-effective-contact-tracing-in-place-says-who-official-12007005>

WHO cautions against further lifting of lockdown in England

England's coronavirus lockdown should not be further lifted until the government's contact-tracing system has proven to be "robust and effective", the World Health Organization has said after widespread criticism of the first results of the new tracking operation. As shops across England prepared to reopen, and people were encouraged by the government to come out of their homes and on to the high street, Dr Hans Kluge, the WHO's director for Europe, cautioned that the UK remained in a "very active phase of the pandemic". His remarks came as ministers confirmed a review of the 2-metre distancing rule, with the government coming under pressure from business

leaders, Tory backbenchers and rightwing media to further ease the lockdown. Boris Johnson said on Sunday that the falling numbers of coronavirus cases has given the government “more margin for manoeuvre” in easing the 2-metre physical distancing rule.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/14/who-cautions-against-further-lifting-lockdown-england>

Agenda: We should follow Estonia's lead in the digital revolution

BEFORE Covid-19, the Scottish Government was active in fostering existing and new relationships with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. Now that the world has been turned upside down by the horror of this pandemic, connections with these smaller northern nations seem all the more important in terms of what we can learn from their individual responses to the crisis. Estonia is a case in point, a small nation state with a population of 1.3million, with one of the fastest-growing economies in the EU and one of the highest standards of living in the world. This success is in no small part due to its digitisation and e-governance revolution since becoming independent in the 1990s, adding leading digital nation status to its many accolades.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/18515370.agenda-follow-estonias-lead-digital-revolution/>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Thailand eyes travel bubble with New Zealand

Thailand is considering forming travel bubbles with countries that have comparably low Covid-19 rates of infection, government officials said this week. The country closed borders at the beginning of April, which devastated the tourism industry and led to millions of job losses. The tourism industry alone accounts for 20 per cent of the country's GDP. Now, in an attempt to revive the economy, the country is looking at establishing travel bubbles with countries with low rates of coronavirus, including China, South Korea, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/news/article.cfm?c_id=7&objectid=12339595

U.S. government to send nearly 100 million face coverings for transit passengers

The U.S. Department of Transportation unveiled plans on Friday to send nearly 100 million face coverings to airports, transit agencies and U.S. passenger railroad service Amtrak over the coming weeks, in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The cloth coverings will be provided as a supplement for passengers, DOT said in a statement. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing face coverings in enclosed public spaces, which are reopening after months-long shutdowns aimed at stemming the spread of the highly infectious coronavirus. Nearly 87 million of the masks, procured by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), will go to airports, DOT said. The allotment is in addition to some 15 million committed to critical infrastructure workers in the transportation sector.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-usa-coronavirus-masks-transit/us-government-to-send-nearly-100-million-face-coverings-for-transit-passengers-idUKKBN23J2RP>

Coronavirus bubble bursts for China's low-end mask makers

Tens of thousands of opportunist manufacturers entered China's mask-making industry to capitalise of the boom during the coronavirus pandemic. But the gravy train has ground to a halt for some producers of meltblown and nonwoven fabric, who have been forced to shut their factories.

<https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3088810/coronavirus-wheels-come-chinas-mask-making-gravy-train-low>

Japan aims to launch coronavirus contact tracking app next week

Japan aims to launch a smartphone app based on technology from Apple Inc (AAPL.O) and Alphabet Inc's (GOOGL.O) Google next week to help curb the spread of coronavirus by tracking close contact with those infected, the health ministry said on Friday. Smartphones with the app installed can detect each other via Bluetooth short-range wireless and log those who have come in close contact. If a phone user is found to be infected, people who spent more than 15 minutes within a radius of one meter (3.3 feet) of that individual sometime over the previous 14 days will be notified that they

were in close contact with a coronavirus-infected person, and be prompted to seek medical consultation. Such a message will be sent only if the infected individual gives consent, and the person with a positive diagnosis will remain anonymous to the receivers of the notification.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan-tech/japan-aims-to-launch-coronavirus-contact-tracking-app-next-week-idUKKBN23J2A0>

Thermal imaging and e-forms: How Spain will screen for Covid-19 when the travel ban is lifted

Now that the coronavirus epidemic is considered to be under control in Spain, the next big danger will be the imported cases, warn health officials. If everything goes according to plan, the first tourists will arrive this coming Monday as part of a pilot project in the Balearic Islands. Then, on July 1, Spain will officially lift travel restrictions at the border, including the quarantine requirement. Despite the travel ban, a total of 33,500 people entered Spain during the month of May through air and maritime borders, thanks to exceptions made for specific workers, residents returning to their homes, and certain emergency situations. But this number is expected to soar as soon as the country reopens, and authorities are scrambling to get health teams ready in time to detect all incoming cases.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-06-12/thermal-imaging-and-e-forms-how-spain-will-screen-for-covid-19-when-the-travel-ban-is-lifted.html>

Coronavirus: What does a working 'test and trace' system look like?

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has expressed "renewed confidence" NHS Test and Trace will become the "world-class system" promised by the prime minister - although Mr Hancock acknowledged the system needed to get "better and better" as it developed. But what does an already world-beating test and trace programme look like? There is no need to look as far as Singapore, South Korea or even Germany for one; an extremely successful example can be found much closer to home. Guernsey has not recorded a new coronavirus case in 43 days and there are no active Covid-19 patients in the island. This has led to significant easing of its lockdown rules and the Channel Island's 63,000 residents can go shopping, get a haircut and meet up with friends and family.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-52904982>

Coronavirus contact tracing apps were tech's chance to step up. They haven't.

Most states are giving the cold shoulder to smartphone apps, though some developers think there's still a chance for them to catch on.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/coronavirus-contact-tracing-apps-were-tech-s-chance-step-they-n1230211>

Formula One cancels Singapore, Japan races due to coronavirus

Singapore GP organisers said 'prohibitions imposed on access and construction of the event venue' had forced the cancellation of the night race. Formula One had already cancelled four other races, including the showcase Monaco Grand Prix in May.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3088806/coronavirus-formula-one-cancels-singapore-japan-and>

Two hairstylists who had coronavirus saw 140 clients. No new infections have been linked to the salon, officials say

No cases of coronavirus have been linked to two Missouri hairstylists who saw 140 clients last month while symptomatic, county health officials said. Both stylists worked at the same Great Clips location in Springfield. The clients and the stylists all wore face coverings, and the salon had set up other measures such as social distancing of chairs and staggered appointments, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department said this week. Of the 140 clients and seven co-workers potentially exposed, 46 took tests that came back negative. All the others were quarantined for the duration of

the coronavirus incubation period. The 14-day incubation period has now passed with no coronavirus cases linked to the salon beyond the two stylists, county health officials said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/11/us/missouri-hairstylists-coronavirus-clients-trnd/index.html>

Partisan Exits

Coronavirus: Boris Johnson orders review of two-metre social distancing rule in UK

Boris Johnson has ordered a comprehensive review of the two-metre social-distancing rule amid calls it should be scrapped. Easing the restriction is seen as vital if businesses such as restaurants and pubs are to be able to re-open sustainably. The Mail on Sunday reported the review would effectively take control of social-distancing guidelines out of the hands of the British Government's scientific advisers, who have been deeply reluctant to countenance relaxation. The move comes as thousands of non-essential shops in England are set to re-open on Monday for the first time since the coronavirus lockdown was imposed in March.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/world/coronavirus-boris-johnson-orders-review-of-two-metre-social-distancing-rule-in-uk-1005146.html>

Public health workers fighting COVID-19 are threatened with violence, forced out of jobs

In the battle against COVID-19, public health workers make up an invisible army on the front lines. But that army is under assault when it's needed most.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/public-health-workers-fighting-covid-19-are-threatened-violence-forced-n1230501>

Few N95 masks, reused gowns: Dire PPE shortages reveal COVID-19's racial divide

Health care workers are still facing major shortages of N95 respirators, gowns and other safety gear, especially at hospitals in minority communities. Nearly 100 days after the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic, health care workers across the country are still facing major shortages of personal protective equipment, or PPE, including crucial equipment such as masks, gowns, gloves and N95 respirators. Amid an alarming rise in coronavirus cases across the United States, the situation is especially dire at hospitals serving communities of color or patients on Medicaid, NBC News has found. "The issue of PPE for health workers has not gone away," Dr. Mike Ryan, head of the WHO's Health Emergencies Program, said Wednesday at a news briefing. A new study out of Wuhan, China, is finding that health care workers who were appropriately protected with PPE did not get infected, despite being exposed to the virus.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-care/few-n95-masks-reused-gowns-dire-ppe-shortages-reveal-covid-n1229546>

Continued Lockdown

Ecuador struggles to secure enough virus test supplies

Fears of a second wave of coronavirus have sparked a global scramble for influenza shots from countries that hope to vaccinate great swathes of the population to reduce pressure on their health services. Health officials in the UK are considering whether to offer flu shots to everyone as part of planning for a resurgence of coronavirus in the autumn, but with other countries hitting on the same strategy, demand for flu vaccines has soared. Mass immunisation would aim to slash the number of people hospitalised with the flu this winter, giving the NHS a better chance of coping with any surge in Covid-19 patients that follows the easing of lockdown restrictions. The flu vaccine does not protect against coronavirus infection. One flu vaccine manufacturer, Sanofi, said it had been approached by the UK and other countries about boosting their orders of flu shots for winter 2020-21 but warned that it would struggle to ramp up production in time.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/14/countries-scramble-for-flu-vaccines-to-ease-pressure-of-second-coronavirus-19-wave>

Caring for coronavirus COVID-19 patients in Tegucigalpa | MSF

As numbers of COVID-19 cases rise in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, a team from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has started caring for patients with severe symptoms of the disease in an annex of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH). Working in coordination with Honduran health and emergency authorities, MSF teams aim to prevent the capital's hospitals from becoming overcrowded. In the hospital annex, which has been adapted into a specialist 20-bed coronavirus ward, the MSF medical team is caring for patients who need oxygen support. Patients are transferred there from local hospitals and from two other coronavirus wards set up within the university, where mild and asymptomatic patients are being cared for by staff from the Ministry of Health and the National Emergency Department. The MSF team is also providing patients and their families with psychological support over the telephone. As of 11 June, a total of 7,360 COVID-19 cases have been officially confirmed in the country; 23 per cent of them in the Francisco Morazan department, where Tegucigalpa is located.

<https://www.msf.org/caring-covid-19-patients-tegucigalpa-honduras>

Coronavirus patients 'treated worse than animals': India court

Supreme Court also expresses concern over handling of bodies as cemeteries and crematoriums hold hurried last rites.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/coronavirus-dead-treated-worse-animals-india-court-200612081132683.html>

Ukraine leader cancels meetings, trips after wife tests positive for coronavirus

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy cancelled face-to-face meetings and visits and will limit his contacts to a close circle after his wife tested positive for coronavirus, the presidential press service said on Friday. "Face-to-face meetings... are excluded in the coming days. Participation in mass events is also excluded, working trips outside the capital of Ukraine are cancelled," the press service said in a statement. Earlier on Friday, Olena Zelenska said she had tested positive for coronavirus but her husband and their two children had tested negative. "Today I received a positive test for coronavirus. Unexpected news. Especially considering that I and my family continue to follow all the rules - masks, gloves, a minimum of contacts," Zelenska wrote on Facebook.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-ukraine-president/ukraine-leader-cancels-meetings-trips-after-wife-tests-positive-for-coronavirus-idUSKBN23J1UJ>

US Embassy Riga donates approximately \$200,000 in tests and lab equipment to Latvian Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Health

U.S. Ambassador John Carwile presented the Latvian Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Health with two tranches of COVID-19 test-kits and associated lab equipment, supporting 4,000 tests. The United States' contribution (approximately \$200,000) to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) solidarity fund financed the tests, which will bolster Latvia's capability to detect, isolate, and limit the spread of the coronavirus. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense Artis Pabriks and Minister of Health Ilze Vinkele accepted the donation on behalf of the Latvian government. Upon presenting the donation, Ambassador Carwile said, "By taking early action, Latvia has done an excellent job reducing COVID-19 cases and protecting its residents. We are pleased to support the government's continuing work by funding these important test kits and to show our continued commitment to our good friend and ally, Latvia."

https://www.leta.lv/eng/home/press_release/7F54E56C-2D56-497C-8154-E2B72575C765/

Volkswagen, Audi on hold as Mexico's Puebla state not ready to reopen

Mexico's Puebla state, where German automaker Volkswagen and its luxury brand unit Audi have major plants, said it is not ready to reopen its automotive sector due to ongoing concerns about the spread of the coronavirus. Puebla's Governor Miguel Barbosa signed a decree on Friday stating that

the conditions for return of the automotive and construction sectors are not favourable, according to a statement published on the state's Twitter account. Barbosa, an ally of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, has said he wants to reopen the state's economy but not if that means people's lives will be at stake. The Mexican unit of Volkswagen AG had previously said it was ready to resume operations in Puebla and the state of Guanajuato on June 15.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-mexico-puebla/volkswagen-audi-on-hold-as-mexicos-puebla-state-not-ready-to-reopen-idUKKBN23J2WY>

Brazil President Embraces Unproven 'Cure' as Pandemic Surges

President Jair Bolsonaro hailed hydroxychloroquine as a godsend while he railed against quarantine measures and other best practices, undermining the country's coronavirus response.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/13/world/americas/virus-brazil-bolsonaro-chloroquine.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytimesworld>

Poland and Sweden are the only EU countries who have not passed COVID-19 peak: ECDC

Poland and Sweden are the only EU countries to have not yet passed their COVID-19 peak, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) flagged on Thursday. "The initial wave of transmission has passed its peak in all countries apart from Poland and Sweden," the ECDC wrote in its latest rapid risk assessment.

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/06/12/poland-and-sweden-are-the-only-eu-countries-who-have-not-passed-covid-19-peak-ecdc>

Scientific Viewpoint

Repurposing drugs for treatment of Covid-19, Singapore News & Top Stories

As scientists worldwide race to develop vaccines and drugs to prevent and treat Covid-19, some members of the public have resorted to remedies they see on social media which have no basis in science. Accidental injuries have been reported in some countries, where people consumed methanol or snorted disinfectants in the belief that this could prevent infection. There is an urgent need to develop effective and safe drugs against this virus which has wrought havoc around the world. Several existing drugs are now being repurposed and investigated for their antiviral effects. Doing so significantly shortens the notoriously prolonged drug development process. A number of drugs have recently been authorised by health regulatory agencies for the emergency or compassionate treatment of severely ill Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/repurposing-drugs-for-treatment-of-covid-19>

The Latest: WHO says Brazil's health system still is coping

South Korea — South Korea has reported 49 new coronavirus cases. Most of them are in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where health authorities have been struggling to slow transmissions linked to entertainment and leisure activities, church gatherings and low-income workers who can't afford to stay home. The figures released Saturday brought national totals to 12,051 cases and 277 deaths.

<https://www.boston25news.com/news/world/latest-maldives/3VFDSM4B4BB6SJCYU3PWNRRFRE/>

Facemasks slow spread of coronavirus by 40 per cent, study shows

The research was able to use the staggered introduction of masks in shops and public transport across Germany as a natural experiment to test how effective they were. By looking at new cases in the days that followed, the researchers concluded that there is "strong and convincing statistical support" that the masks "strongly reduced the number of incidences". However, other scientists cautioned that the findings were still not robust enough to support the widespread use of masks, arguing that too many other factors could explain the results. The study, published as a discussion paper for the Institute of Labour Economics, addresses one of the most controversial areas of

science during the pandemic — one that has led to a split in opinion among researchers.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/facemasks-shown-to-cut-spread-of-covid-19-9r92zfpb8>

Several Coronavirus Treatments Besides Remdesivir Show Promise : Shots - Health News

Right now, there is only one drug shown by rigorous scientific testing to be helpful for treating COVID-19. That drug is the antiviral medication called remdesivir, made by Gilead Sciences. But remdesivir's proven benefits are modest: reducing hospital stays from 15 to 11 days. So there's an urgent need for better therapies. The good news is that there are some on the horizon. Some are being tested now, some will begin testing soon, and others are in the beginning of the pipeline.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/06/11/873399184/five-coronavirus-treatments-in-development>

EU sets out plans for advance orders of coronavirus vaccines

The European Union has laid out plans to place advance orders for coronavirus vaccines currently under development to ensure supplies for member states. The bloc's executive body has proposed that its 27 member states negotiate as a united bloc with pharmaceutical companies, and offer upfront financing to speed development and ensure priority access to any successful vaccine. "We pay up front a significant part of the investment needed in exchange for a commitment from the pharmaceutical manufacturer to give us a vaccine when it is available," an EU official explained.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/eu-sets-out-plans-for-advance-orders-of-coronavirus-vaccines-1.4276885#.XuMjKq3V1gw.twitter>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Arkansas' COVID Problem Is Just Getting Started: 'All of a Sudden It Blows Up'

Arizona, North Carolina, California, Florida, and Texas hit record daily highs of COVID-19 infections this week, as state public health leaders pleaded with their communities to take the ongoing crisis seriously. But there are few states whose experience of the coronavirus pandemic has shifted more radically in recent weeks than Arkansas. On Friday, the state reported that there were 731 new cases, a record increase. Those numbers brought the cumulative total there to 11,547, of which 3,764 were active. At last count, 176 people had died from the virus. Even if Arkansas saw its first COVID-19 case in March—and has had its share of "super-spreader" events—experts painted a picture of communities there facing the pandemic's full fury for the first time.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/arkansas-covid-problem-is-just-getting-started-all-of-a-sudden-it-blows-up>

China reports 57 new confirmed, 9 asymptomatic COVID-19 cases for June 13

After weeks with almost no new coronavirus infections, Beijing has recorded dozens of new cases in recent days, all linked to a major wholesale food market, raising concerns about a resurgence of the disease. The capital is taking steps to try to halt the outbreak including ramping up testing. On Sunday night Beijing ordered all companies to supervise 14-day home quarantine for employees who have visited the Xinfadi market or been in contact with anyone who has done so. A restaurant chain selling traditional Beijing noodles shut down a few outlets after two employees tested positive. There had been almost no new coronavirus cases in the city for almost two months until an infection was reported on June 12, and since then the total number has climbed to 51, including eight reported in the first seven hours of Sunday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-cases/china-reports-57-new-confirmed-9-asymptomatic-covid-19-cases-for-june-13-idUSKBN23L011>

Brazil President Embraces Unproven 'Cure' as Pandemic Surges

President Jair Bolsonaro hailed hydroxychloroquine as a godsend while he railed against quarantine measures and other best practices, undermining the country's coronavirus response.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/13/world/americas/virus-brazil-bolsonaro-chloroquine.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nytimesworld>

Virus mine closures stir unease in Poland's rust belt

A spike in reported coronavirus cases in Poland's coal mines has put the country on edge but residents worried about jobs are playing down the health crisis. The issue is particularly sensitive ahead of a hard-fought presidential election on June 28 in Poland, where miners are still a powerful voting bloc. Dominik Kolorz, head of the Solidarity trade union for the Silesian coal basin, told AFP he was concerned the increase in virus cases could serve as a pretext for the definitive closure of some mines.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200613-virus-mine-closures-stir-unease-in-poland-s-rust-belt>

Coronavirus, new cases in China: Beijing's largest market in lockdown

New cases of coronavirus have triggered the lockdown in several neighborhoods today. The Xinfadi market and shops have been closed. There is general alarm after seven new cases have tested positive

https://www.corriere.it/esteri/20_giugno_13/coronavirusnuovi-casi-cina-quartieri-pechino-lockdown-20e6d728-ad2d-11ea-84a7-c6d5b5b928b0.shtml?cmpid=tbd_224606fcCR&refresh_ce-cp

Botswana Reinstates Strict Coronavirus Lockdown in Capital City

Botswana brought back a strict coronavirus lockdown in its capital city, Gaborone, and surrounding areas after the southern African country recorded 12 new cases of the virus, a senior health official said late on Friday. Diamond-rich Botswana ended a 48-day national coronavirus lockdown late last month, allowing businesses and schools to reopen under controls, but its borders are still closed apart from for returning citizens and imports of essential goods. But Malaki Tshipayagae, the country's director of health services, said in a televised announcement that officials had recorded four new imported cases at its borders and eight at a private hospital in Gaborone, bringing cumulative cases to 60.

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/06/12/world/africa/12reuters-health-coronavirus-botswana.html>

Health Minister Stepanov: Ukraine may backtrack as COVID-19 cases grow in number

Health Minister Maksym Stepanov predicts Ukraine may return to previous stages of the coronavirus-related quarantine as the country has lately seen a surge in COVID-19 cases per day, which means the return of the respective restrictions. "Main criteria include an incidence and the growth that we see along with the number of confirmed cases with symptoms, as well as hospital bed occupancy, adequate systemic response, and medical assistance," he told the TV news service TSN. "I will give you an example: bed occupancy in Kyiv's hospitals designated for COVID-19 treatment was 35% as of June 1, but it's 46% today. Eleven percentage points in 11 days is a lot."

<https://www.unian.info/society/coronavirus-crisis-ukraine-may-backtrack-as-cases-grow-in-number-11034620.html>

Spain: Coronavirus Outbreak in Girona being Investigated by Catalan Authorities

According to the Catalan Public Health Agency, there is a suspected outbreak of coronavirus in the La Garrotxa region in Girona. Reports suggest that as many 31 people in the area have been infected. 20 of those suspected of having the virus work together in a company local to the area. The remaining 11 are their further contacts. It is believed that the outbreak has been caught early and those affected are observing self-isolation in their respective homes.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/06/12/spain-coronavirus-outbreak-in-girona-being-investigated-by-catalan-authorities/>

Outbreaks halt economic reactivation in parts of Costa Rica

Costa Rica's efforts to revitalize its economy through domestic tourism have been hampered as the National Emergency Commission (CNE) declares orange alerts for parts of the country. The alert was issued last week for the cantons of Pococí and Upala, and the districts of Peñas Blancas, Cañas, Bebedero, Las Juntas, Los Chiles and La Fortuna. Wednesday, the district of Paquera was added to the ever-growing list. Even as the Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT) begins to promote domestic

vacations, the orange alerts have effectively shut down that sector in several tourism-heavy towns. Commercial businesses can't open on weekends, evening driving is banned, and — in perhaps the most impactful change affecting domestic tourism — hotels largely cannot operate in locations under orange alerts. “We are in a phase in which, if we stray, we could have widespread community transmission, but we can still have control of the situation,” Claudia Rosales, a regional director of the Health Ministry, explained to San Carlos Digital.

<https://ticotimes.net/2020/06/12/outbreaks-halt-economic-reactivation-in-parts-of-costa-rica>

Egypt registers highest daily rise in coronavirus cases in ...

Egypt on Friday confirmed 1,577 new coronavirus cases, the health ministry said, the highest daily increase in almost two weeks. In total, the Arab world's most populous country has registered 41,303 cases including 1,422 deaths, the ministry said in a statement.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20200612212331-thvv9/>