

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

18th Aug 2020

News Highlights

India limping back to normalcy despite high caseload and deaths

Thousands of migrant workers who left India's big cities in droves made their way back in the hope of getting their jobs back after lockdown restrictions were eased, [despite the country's Covid-19 death tally topping 50,000 on Monday](#). India's skies have also opened up partially with an air travel bubble created with Germany, and a [Lufthansa spokesperson said that demand for flights to India remained very high despite the Covid-19 disruption](#).

Lebanon sees sharp rise in cases, contemplates lockdown

Two weeks after the deadly Beirut port blast that killed 178 people and turned much of the city to rubble, [Lebanon registered a daily count of 456 new infections with two deaths](#). The caretaker health minister declared a state of general alert and said that the country must shut down for two weeks to battle the surge in infections, which has so far claimed 105 lives there.

Rise on Covid-19 cases in South Korea linked to churches

After having won global acclaim for controlling the pandemic within its borders, South Korea reported 197 new cases of the coronavirus on Monday, most of them linked to a conservative church in Seoul. [This marked the fourth day in a row of triple-digit cases](#), the most numbers Seoul has seen since March, with most of the infections concentrated in the capital city, Seoul, and neighbouring Gyeonggi Province.

Despite no lockdown, Japan's economy shrinks at a record rate

[Economies around the world have suffered because of the lockdowns and restrictions imposed by governments due to the ongoing pandemic](#). Japan, which never imposed a full lockdown and relied on its disciplined population following rules to control the pandemic, saw output drop 7.8% in the second quarter, its worst ever fall recorded. However, the UK reported even more grim numbers, with GDP shrinking 20.4% in the second quarter.

Lockdown Exit

Migrants return to Delhi as India's COVID-19 deaths top 50,000

India's COVID-19 deaths topped 50,000 on Monday, five months after the country reported its first such fatality, as migrant workers poured back into major cities in hopes of regaining work after the easing of anti-virus restrictions. Hundreds of migrant workers from the countryside who had left the capital New Delhi in droves after losing their jobs in a nationwide lockdown in March returned in buses on Monday and were made to wait in lines for rapid COVID-19 tests. Those who tested positive were sent to quarantine centres while the rest were allowed to leave the city's busy inter-state bus terminus with their luggage. Almost all of them wore masks or covered their nose and mouth with scarves or handkerchiefs, though in the countryside such virus-fighting measures have become tough to enforce and the infection rate has surged.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-india-cases/migrants-return-to-delhi-as-indias-covid-19-deaths-to>

Nicola Sturgeon announces 26 new Covid-19 cases but no deaths recorded

There were 26 new cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours in Scotland, the First Minister has announced today. But there have now been zero deaths related to the killer virus since July. The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases across the country now stands at 19,358. Patients currently being treated in hospital with the deadly virus stands at 248 with three currently in intensive care. The total number of Covid-19 deaths in Scotland remains at 2,491. Early estimates show 13 of the new cases are from the Grampian area, with a new cluster emerging in Coupar Angus.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-announces-26-new-22533442>

Fears overcrowding in Wetherspoon pubs may lead to Covid spike

Fears that relaxed summer socialising will lead to a surge in Covid-19 cases around the UK have been heightened after concerns that JD Wetherspoon is failing to prevent overcrowding in pubs in its 900-strong chain. Concerns about poor social distancing by customers in Wetherspoon pubs followed a surge in visitors during recent hot weather and after the publication of A-level results last Thursday. Customers in a south London pub run by the company said they had not been asked to provide personal details, including mobile phone numbers that can be used in the government's track and trace system. The Guardian found that in one of south London's most popular pubs with young people, customers were allowed to buy drinks directly from the bar and stood within 1 metre of others without any intervention by the staff

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/aug/16/fears-overcrowding-in-wetherspoon-pubs-may-lead-to-covid-19-spike>

India travel demand high, says Lufthansa as air bubble flights to Germany resume

The Lufthansa Group on Monday expressed confidence that air travel demand to and from India remains high despite the COVID-19 lockdown disruption, as it welcomed the bilateral air bubble agreement which allowed Germany's largest airline to resume flights from India last week. George Ettiyil, Lufthansa Group's Senior Director for South Asia Sales, said the airline is offering more than 40 flights from Frankfurt and Munich to Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore until the end of August, beyond which it hopes to formally apply for inbound flights to India in consultation with Indian authorities.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/travel-tourism/india-travel-demand-high-says-lufthansa-as-air-bubble-flights-to-germany-resume/2057913/>

Italy's businesses enjoy 'better than expected' virus rebound

In the southern Italian town of Avellino, Salvatore Amitrano has been rushing to dispatch a backlog of deliveries since the country emerged from its strict coronavirus lockdown. Mr Amitrano and his two brothers run a multinational business producing components for household appliances with annual revenues of about €25m. His company Pasell Group, which has plants in Italy, Turkey, Slovakia and Poland, registered year-on-year sales drops of up to 50 per cent in March, April and May as Rome imposed some of the most stringent antivirus measures so far seen in a western democracy.

<https://www.ft.com/content/73a36f20-bbd4-4d99-a1e9-685788cb9cd9>

Japan's GDP drop less severe than US and Europe

Japan's economy shrank by a record 7.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 as it outperformed the US and Europe but lagged behind neighbouring South Korea and Taiwan in its response to coronavirus. The figure, which equates to a 27.8 per cent decline at an annualised pace, exposes the consequences of a nationwide state of emergency over Covid-19 in April and May, which put much of the economy into a voluntary lockdown. Japan's performance relative to other advanced countries

highlights how the effectiveness of a country's coronavirus response affects the economy, with Japan forced to close schools but able to avoid the strict lockdowns used in Europe.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f15f8722-77a8-4497-b29b-e508a9b5694b>

Japan's economy shrinks at fastest pace on record, despite no coronavirus lockdown

Japan's economy shrank at its fastest pace on record between April and June as trade and consumer spending dropped off sharply in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The world's third largest economy saw output drop 7.8 per cent in the second quarter, official data released on Monday showed. At an annualised rate, the fall was 27.8 per cent, the worst ever recorded in Japan. However, it is not as severe as the economic hit taken in a number of other countries. Last week the UK reported its own record slump, with gross domestic product (GDP) shrinking 20.4 per cent in the second quarter alone.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/japan-economy-latest-shrink-news-coronavirus-trade-a9673641.html>

Thousands, Without Masks, Party At Wuhan Water Park In China

Thousands of partygoers packed out a water park over the weekend in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus first emerged late last year, keen to party as the city edges back to normal life. The popular Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park was filled with people frolicking in swimsuits and goggles for an electronic music festival, many perched on rubber dinghies or wading up to their chest in water. The water park reopened in June after Wuhan gradually opened up after a 76-day lockdown and strict restrictions to try and control the spread of the virus. The park -- which local media says has capped attendance at 50 percent of normal capacity -- is offering half price discounts for female visitors.

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/china-coronavirus-thousands-without-masks-party-at-wuhan-water-park-in-china-280793>

China partygoers cram into Wuhan water park

Thousands of partygoers packed out a water park over the weekend in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus first emerged late last year, keen to party as the city edges back to normal life. The popular Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park was filled with people frolicking in swimsuits and goggles for an electronic music festival, many perched on rubber dinghies or wading up to their chest in water. The water park reopened in June after Wuhan gradually opened up after a 76-day lockdown and strict restrictions to try and control the spread of the virus. The park -- which local media says has capped attendance at 50 percent of normal capacity -- is offering half price discounts for female visitors.

<https://news.yahoo.com/china-partygoers-cram-wuhan-water-104413274.html>

Exit Strategies

Ryanair to cancel number of flights following Covid-19 travel restrictions

Ryanair is to cut a fifth of its flights for the next two months after bookings plummeted following new coronavirus travel restrictions. The budget airline said it will reduce its flight capacity by 20 per cent in September and October after forward bookings "notably weakened" in recent days. It reported a drop-off in flight bookings over the past 10 days driven by "uncertainty over recent Covid case rates in some EU countries". The cuts will reduce the frequency of flights from countries such as Spain, France and Sweden.

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/18656389.ryanair-cancel-number-flights-following-covid-19-travel-restrictions/>

Scottish Government publishes testing strategy for Covid-19

The strategy focuses on a number of key areas of testing: whole population testing of anyone with

symptoms (Test & Protect) - proactive case finding by testing contacts and testing in outbreaks - protecting the vulnerable and preventing outbreaks in high risk settings by routine testing - testing for direct patient care, to diagnose and to treat, and to support safe patient care as NHS services restart surveillance to understand the disease, track prevalence, understand transmission and monitor key sectors

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2020/08/scottish-government-publishes-testing-strategy-for-covid-19/>

Coronavirus: Croatia, Greece and Turkey could join UK quarantine list amid spikes in COVID-19 cases

Greece, Croatia and Turkey could join the UK's quarantine list as the countries record a rise in coronavirus cases. British holidaymakers returning to the UK from these countries could be next to face quarantine measures after France, Malta, the Netherlands and other nations were suddenly removed from the UK's travel corridor list. Many thousands of Britons are believed to be holidaying in Greece, Croatia and Turkey, which have all seen spikes in coronavirus cases.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-croatia-greece-and-turkey-could-join-uk-quarantine-list-amid-spikes-in-covid-19-cases-12050886>

South Africa relaxes lockdown after coronavirus peaks

South Africa's president has said coronavirus infections appear to have peaked in the country, as he announced a sweeping relaxation of lockdown measures. President Cyril Ramaphosa said nearly all restrictions on the country's economy will be eased from today. A controversial ban on the sale of alcohol and tobacco will be lifted. Domestic travel, small family gatherings and the reopening of businesses will all be allowed.

<https://www.herald.co.zw/south-africa-relaxes-lockdown-after-coronavirus-peaks/>

Latin America coronavirus cases exceed six million and continue to accelerate

Coronavirus cases in Latin America, the region of the world worst-affected by the pandemic, exceed six million and continued to accelerate, according to the WHO figures, as most of its nations begin to relax lockdown measures. The region has reported an average of more than 86,000 daily infections of the new coronavirus in the last seven days and more than 2,600 Covid-19 deaths. That accounts for just under one-third of the world's total case load and a similar share of reported deaths from the pandemic. The Pan American Health Organization, the regional arm of the World Health Organization (WHO), warned this month of an increase in other diseases due to the saturation of health services and the suspension of routine vaccination campaigns as a result of the pandemic.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/08/17/latin-america-coronavirus-cases-exceed-six-million-and-continue-to-accelerate>

Greater Manchester lockdown latest as Andy Burnham maps out possible next steps

Andy Burnham says the extra Covid-19 curbs in force across Greater Manchester could 'possibly' be relaxed later this week. The mayor of Greater Manchester said he believes restrictions could remain - and possibly tighten - in areas with high rate of infection, but be eased in other areas where cases have fallen. As a result, he said restrictions limiting different households from mixing in homes and gardens could be lifted by Government. Mr Burnham told the Mirror : "Hopefully, we will begin to see some people getting released. "If things stay as they are I think it is likely that we would see a change." "Our cases are flattening - with one exception, Oldham - and we are starting to turn the tide in most of our boroughs.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/andy-burnham-coronavirus-curbs-lifted-18781550>

Here's how many UK universities will offer in person teaching when they reopen

With new coronavirus cases being diagnosed each day across the UK, and certain lockdown restrictions and measures still in place, will universities open as usual in September? Universities in the UK will open this year with many discussing and planning ways in which they can continue to

work in regards to keeping both staff and students safe as the coronavirus pandemic continues. Some may choose to do virtual learning, stick with in person teaching, or do a mixture of both.

<https://www.southyorkshiretimes.co.uk/education/heres-how-many-uk-universities-will-offer-person-teaching-when-they-reopen-2944646>

Brittany Ferries lobbies French Government to drop quarantine plan

The boss of Brittany Ferries has called on the French government not to impose reciprocal quarantine plans on Brits travelling to France saying it will add to what has already been a “disastrous” summer for businesses. Christophe Mathieu, the firm’s director general, said Brittany Ferries is now lobbying French ministers at the highest levels to avoid the implementation of reciprocal quarantine measures following the UK’s decision to impose a 14-day lockdown on travellers coming to Britain from France.

<https://www.business-live.co.uk/enterprise/brittany-ferries-lobbies-french-government-18781021>

South African rand stronger after Ramaphosa announces lockdown easing

The South African rand began the week stronger on Monday after President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a sweeping removal of lockdown restrictions over the weekend. Ramaphosa said that from midnight on Monday a ban on alcohol and tobacco sales would be lifted, inter-provincial travel would be allowed and restaurants and taverns could return to normal business subject to hygiene protocols.

<https://www.cnbc.com/economy/2020/08/17/south-african-rand-stronger-after-ramaphosa-announces-lockdown-easing/>

Covid-19 plan launched to support pupils and parents in Aberdeen

Aberdeen City Council has published a detailed plan showing how organisations are working together to keep pupils safe in the new term. The document, which is child-friendly, emphasises the importance of self isolating if pupils have symptoms of coronavirus, and encourages them to stay at home if they feel unwell. It also highlights the ongoing work in partnership between the council and NHS Grampian in monitoring school records of pupils and staff feeling unwell.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/covid-19-plan-launched-to-support-pupils-and-parents-in-aberdeen/>

Face masks, smaller classes and distanced desks: Europe's back-to-school plan

Across Europe, the start of the new school year was meant to signal a return to normality. Countries such as Italy kept pupils at home from March to the summer holidays, while others such as Denmark allowed schools to reopen for the remainder of the term after the worst of the pandemic's first wave had passed. All tried to reassure parents and children that in-person teaching would restart in the fall. Yet the planned reopening of schools could not come at a worse time: Many European countries, from Spain to Poland, are experiencing an uptick in coronavirus cases. Already the spike has forced some schools to close their doors again, including in the northern German state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern where four schools had to partly shut after reopening last week due to coronavirus cases.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/16/europe-coronavirus-masks-class-396877>

Partisan Exits

Half of Brazilians think Bolsonaro has “no responsibility at all” for the 100000 pandemic's dead

Almost half of Brazilians think President Jair Bolsonaro bears “no responsibility at all” for the country’s more than 100,000 dead from the coronavirus pandemic, the world’s second-highest death toll, according to a new Datafolha poll. The poll was published on Saturday in Brazil’s Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper and says 47% of Brazilians do not assign him any blame for the body count, whereas 11% do. Brazil has the world’s worst outbreak outside of the United States and Bolsonaro’s

response to the pandemic has been widely condemned by health experts. Right-wing Bolsonaro has pushed for the use of unproven anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine to fight the disease, replaced health ministers who opposed his agenda, encouraged Brazilians to oppose lockdown measures and shown indifference to the rising death toll.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/08/17/half-of-brazilians-think-bolsonaro-has-no-responsibility-at-all-for-the-100-000-pandemic-s-dead>

Thousands march in Berlin anti-lockdown protest

Up to 17,000 people, including libertarians and anti-vaccination activists, have marched in Berlin to protest against Germany's coronavirus regulations. Many flouted guidance on wearing masks and physical distancing as they accused the government of 'stealing our freedom'. While Germany had initial success in containing the virus, infections are rising and its R number has risen above one.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/thousands-march-berlin-anti-lockdown-114100208.html>

Anti-mask protests held across Spain as COVID-19 cases rise

Hundreds of people rallied on Sunday in Madrid to protest against the mandatory use of facemasks and other restrictions imposed by the Spanish government to contain the coronavirus pandemic. They chanted "freedom".

<https://www.wionews.com/world/anti-mask-protests-held-across-spain-as-covid-19-cases-rise-321037>

Tony Blair warns another national lockdown is 'impossible' and blasts 14 day quarantine rules as too long - as he claims ministers have been over relying on experts during ...

Tony Blair today warned it will not be possible to impose another UK-wide coronavirus lockdown as he claimed ministers had got the Government's travel quarantine policy 'wrong'. The former prime minister said it was 'not credible' for the Government to repeat the sweeping draconian measures put in place back in March because of the economic damage another shut down would cause. He said Britons must learn to 'live with' the deadly disease until there is a vaccine and that a mass testing programme is the only way to keep the country moving.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8634645/Tony-Blair-warns-national-lockdown-impossible.html>

Surreal scenes inside Russia's battle against the pandemic

Now, of course, the government has announced this Russian COVID-19 vaccine—that they are making it official for use. For some months the government has been saying how well it was progressing with the vaccine, and there were rumors that some important people had already been vaccinated. On the state-owned channel it's a big story; they're saying how good the vaccine will be for Russia's financial markets, that it's safe, that President Vladimir Putin's daughter received it and is doing well, that there's nothing to worry about. On Russian Twitter I'm seeing a lot more cynicism and sarcasm. "Our vaccinations didn't undergo all necessary tests. What do I not understand?" "Oxford vaccine—42,000 volunteers for the third phase of trials. Russia—76 people, there is no third phase (!!)."

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/science-and-technology/2020/08/surreal-scenes-inside-russias-battle-against-the-pandemic>

Beijing art exhibition glorifies China's Covid-19 response

The world may be in the midst of a global pandemic, but visitors to a new Beijing exhibition could be forgiven for thinking the battle has already been won. A triumphant art show celebrating the "great spirit of the Chinese people" in fighting Covid-19 opened this month at the country's National Museum, near Tiananmen Square in the center of Beijing. Through a collection of almost 180 artworks, including sculptures, watercolors and dramatic oil paintings of heroic doctors, the exhibition aims to document the initial coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan and its aftermath.

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/beijing-covid-art-exhibition/index.html>

Europe Battles Second Wave Coronavirus Lockdowns As China Goes Mask Off, Party Time

The second wave of coronavirus is rolling into Europe. Whether or not this is a bad thing, or just something we will learn to live with, remains to be seen. Markets think we will learn to live with it. That's the consensus view. But the risk, of course, is that European governments will react more in line with how the Australian and New Zealand government has reacted to mini-outbreaks and not like Sweden, or the southern states of the U.S.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/08/16/no-summer-of-love-for-economy-as-coronavirus-second-wave-rolls-in/>

'I will never come to Australia again': new research reveals the suffering of temporary migrants during the COVID-19 crisis

In the early days of the COVID-19 lockdown in March, many temporary visa holders working in heavily casualised industries, such as hospitality and retail, lost their jobs and struggled to meet basic living expenses. These included international students, backpackers, graduates, sponsored workers and refugees, among others. Despite the devastating financial impact on these temporary migrants, the government excluded them from JobKeeper and JobSeeker. Instead, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said if they could not support themselves, it was time to go home.

<https://theconversation.com/i-will-never-come-to-australia-again-new-research-reveals-the-suffering-of-temporary-migrants-during-the-covid-19-crisis-143351>

Here's why lockdowns are the best economic solution, too

Auckland will be in level 3 restrictions for another 10 days, and the rest of the country in level 2. The purpose is to eliminate community transmission, but is the economic cost worth it? My read of the data so far is yes. It is still too early to conduct a complete analysis of the full costs and benefits of elimination as a strategy, and the use of lockdowns. But from my analysis of the data available so far, the evidence supports elimination as a strategy. Success depends on compliance with restrictions, fortitude by business and the public, and making sure we do not lift restrictions too early.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/opinion-analysis/300083404/heres-why-lockdowns-are-the-best-economic-solution-to-covid-19>

Continued Lockdown

The South West companies finding success during the Covid-19 pandemic and UK lockdown

The UK is in the deepest recession since records began and the West of England, like the rest of the country, is reeling from the impact of the pandemic. Businesses from all industries have been hit, with major sectors in the region such as aerospace, tourism, hospitality and retail particularly affected.

<https://www.business-live.co.uk/enterprise/south-west-companies-finding-success-18768211>

Coronavirus: UK lockdown loneliness strikes women and younger workers most

Women and younger workers are the two groups most likely to have been adversely affected by feelings of loneliness while working remotely, according to a new study. Half of women and nearly three-quarters (74%) of younger workers said they had felt lonely in lockdown according to research conducted by Totaljobs. Social distancing, working from home and endless screen time has meant it is inevitable that experiences of loneliness will spike, the recruitment website said. The poll of 2,000 UK workers found that almost half (46%) of UK workers have experienced loneliness and social isolation during lockdown. More than half of workers agreed that the majority of their social interactions happened in the workplace. Employees are facing what Totaljobs calls a "social silence" when it comes to interactions with colleagues.

<https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/coronavirus-uk-lockdown-loneliness-strikes-women-and-younger-workers-most-08>

[2234733.html](#)

Child marriages in Maharashtra soar during lockdown

When Mitali Sathe stepped out of her home in Latur decked in a yellow sari, the mehendi and green glass bangles gave her away. A member of an adolescent girls' protection group spotted the 15-year-old before her marriage to a man four decades her senior. After her elder sister's death, Mitali was the sacrificial bride on offer to the 50-year-old widower: he needed her to care for the children. With their earnings as seasonal labourers cut off and the daughter out of school due to the pandemic, Mitali's parents saw this as a way out. However, timely intervention halted the wedding and led to the suitor's arrest.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/child-marriages-in-maharashtra-soar-during-lockdown/articleshow/77581915.cms>

Covid-19 lockdown extended in Bihar till September 6

The Bihar government has once again decided to extend the lockdown till September 6, owing to the rising cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in the state. The state's home department issued an order in this regard on Monday. The lockdown was imposed from July 16 to July 31 and later extended till August 16. The orders issued on July 30 for the containment of Covid-19 would be prevalent across the state. No public transport would be allowed to ply in areas falling under lockdown norms, but there would be no bar on construction activities besides transportation of goods, state officials said. Air and rail travel have been allowed to continue and offices, banks, and other offices would function with minimal staff strength, they added.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/lockdown-extended-in-bihar-till-september-6-as-covid-18-cases-spike/story-lxIFSqApFQljRkGW1aMdJO.html>

Lockdown deaths in India ignite debate on police brutality

For two and a half minutes the popular Indian radio DJ described in graphic detail what she said was the torture and killing of a father and son in police custody. The father was arrested for flouting coronavirus lockdown rules by keeping his mobile phone shop in southern India open past curfew, Suchitra Ramadurai alleged in a video posted to her Instagram. The man's son went to check on him at the police station and both were beaten so badly they were still bleeding when they appeared before a judge the next day. Three days later, on June 23, they were both dead.

<https://apnews.com/434547757272fecb25777597c8cb333c>

Lockdown extended in Bihar till September 6 as Covid-18 cases spike

The Bihar government has extended the lockdown to control the spread of Sars-Cov-2, which causes Covid-19, till September 6 amid the rising number of cases in the state, according to a report on Monday. HT's sister publication Hindustan said the home department issued the extension order after a high-level meeting. The order issued on July 30 will be effective, Hindustan reported. The previous order, which was issued till August 16 under which religious places in Bihar were not allowed to open, will stand. Prohibition on religious, political, social or cultural events and restrictions on bus services have been upheld. Commercial and private establishments have been allowed to open but parks, gyms and educational institutions will remain closed as before, Hindustan reported.

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/other/lockdown-extended-in-bihar-till-september-6-as-covid-19-cases-spike/ar-BB182XI5>

Scientific Viewpoint

Masks 'tremendously effective' at curbing Covid-19 spread

Wearing a face mask significantly cuts the risk of spreading Covid-19 through speaking and coughing, research suggests. A new study by scientists at the University of Edinburgh has found face coverings can block out 99.9 per cent of potentially lethal droplets expelled when an infected

person coughs or talks. The findings show that a person is exposed to 10,000 times more particles from a person who coughs with their face uncovered while standing two metres away than from someone half a metre away who is wearing a mask.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/masks-tremendously-effective-curbing-covid-19-spread-2944566>

How long does Covid-19 immunity last after infection? It's bad news

As work on a vaccine continues, many are wondering how long immunity lasts for those who have already contracted the coronavirus. Scientists haven't been able to provide a definitive answer as the coronavirus hasn't been around long enough to tell.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/08/17/how-long-covid-19-immunity-last-infection-bad-news-13138862/>

The great gamble of COVID-19 vaccine development

My prediction is that vaccines indeed will become a reality, as in Russia, but they will be hurried to market only to be partially effective and the uptake and population benefit will remain uncertain given all the issues discussed. In the meantime, many doctors on the front lines and in clinics continue to press regulators for unrestricted use of any and all available medications to treat COVID-19 patients at home. Every day of vaccine development means more hospitalizations and deaths. Caregivers, unlike government officials and biotechnology executives, are terrible gamblers. They are trained to take calculated risks and prescribe drugs they know have a basis to work early with COVID-19. Vaccine stakeholders, including government agencies, should not hold up treatment now in the gamble for a future panacea - even if it comes at "warp speed."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/the-great-gamble-of-covid-19-vaccine-development/ar-BB183Rxz>

Scientists See Signs of Lasting Immunity to Covid-19, Even After Mild Infections

To the immune system, not all germs are equally memorable. But our body's cells seem to be seriously studying up on the coronavirus. Scientists who have been monitoring immune responses to the virus are now starting to see encouraging signs of strong, lasting immunity, even in people who developed only mild symptoms of Covid-19, a flurry of new studies suggests. Disease-fighting antibodies, as well as immune cells called B cells and T cells that are capable of recognizing the virus, appear to persist months after infections have resolved — an encouraging echo of the body's enduring response to other viruses. "Things are really working as they're supposed to," said Deepta Bhattacharya, an immunologist at the University of Arizona and an author on one of the new studies, which has not yet been peer-reviewed.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/health/coronavirus-immunity-antibodies.html>

Poor housing linked to high Covid-19 death rate in London borough

Appalling housing conditions and crippling rents in one of the UK's poorest boroughs helped turn it into a hotspot of Covid-19 deaths, according to a poverty inquiry that examined links between local inequalities and the pandemic. The Brent Poverty Commission, which had been running for two months when Covid-19 struck, said chronic overcrowding and widespread poverty in the north-west London borough had created ideal conditions for the virus to thrive. Latest figures show Brent has the worst death rate of any local authority in England and Wales per 100,000 population, with 490 deaths to the end of July, including 36 deaths alone in one of its most deprived neighbourhoods, Church End. The chair of the commission, Lord Best, said there was a clear link between coronavirus deaths and poverty, inequality and poor housing. "It's definitely the case that those people who have had Covid-19 and died of it come from the poorest areas, the most deprived estates and parts of the borough. That's just a fact."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/17/poor-housing-linked-high-covid-19-death-rate-london-borough-brent>

COVID-19 recession is having a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable

The report What can previous recessions tell us about the Covid-19 downturn? published today (17 August 2020) by LSE's Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), shows that these groups are more

likely to have lost their jobs, not be working any hours or had their pay cut in the current crisis. And the report authors - Brian Bell, Mihai Codreanu and CEP director Stephen Machin - warn that because the current crisis is generating the largest economic shock to the UK since at least the 1980s there is scope for long-term scars to cut even deeper than in the past. The authors have created a comprehensive measure using information on people with jobs who report working no hours to assess a "realistic" employment rate. They also compare the current pandemic-induced downturn with the three previous recessions - those of the early 1980s, the early 1990s and following the global financial crisis in the 2000s. They find that in all these episodes particular vulnerable groups of people were affected. But this recession has distinctive features with some groups being hit especially hard.

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2020/h-August-20/COVID-19-recession-is-having-a-disproportionate-impact-on-the-most-vulnerable>

India coronavirus deaths hit 50,000

India's official coronavirus death toll soared past 50,000 on Monday as the pandemic rages through smaller cities and rural areas where health care is feeble and stigmatisation rife. Many experts say the real numbers may be far higher due to low testing rates and because deaths are often not properly recorded in the vast and impoverished nation of 1.3 billion people. India last week overtook Britain with the world's fourth-highest number of fatalities, behind the United States, Brazil and Mexico, and as of Monday had recorded 50,921 deaths, according to the health ministry.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-india-coronavirus-deaths.html>

Coronavirus: Vietnam's outbreak sparks interest in Russian vaccine

It was one of the world's most remarkable pandemic success stories, managing to suppress the virus and avoid a single coronavirus death — despite sharing a long border with China. But after 100 days of seemingly having outwitted COVID-19, Vietnam has hit a major setback with a deadly surge in cases that's left scientists baffled. And so shaken is Vietnam by its mysterious outbreak, it appears to be considering a bulk order of Russia's coronavirus vaccine despite worldwide scepticism of its safety and effectiveness.

<https://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/health-safety/coronavirus-vietnams-outbreak-sparks-interest-in-russian-vaccine/news-story/d801bd414979e32c0c740f47e77c1b2d>

Australia's Health Minister Believes A Covid-19 Vaccine Will Be Available In 2021

For months now, the world's top scientists and laboratories across the world have been focused on one goal: the eradication of coronavirus. While countries across the globe have sought to enforce their own restrictions to flatten the curve, introducing widespread lockdowns and social distancing rules, inevitably the coronavirus remains waiting for us on the other side. And as those of us in Victoria have witnessed firsthand, the easing of restrictions was quick to see the number of coronavirus cases skyrocket. As many health officials have noted, the return to normal won't happen until a vaccine has been developed and made accessible. With dozens of health organisations and companies all scrambling to find a way to immunise the wider population against Covid-19, Australia's Health Minister, Greg Hunt, says he's optimistic a vaccine will be ready by 2021.

<https://www.gq.com.au/fitness/health-nutrition/australias-health-minister-believes-a-covid19-vaccine-will-be-available-in-2021/image-gallery/9aba1602abe079ab9255c0257775d22a>

Coronavirus Resurgence

It's 'highly likely' fresh lockdown restrictions will be imposed in Milton Keynes if Covid-19 cases continue to rise, says council leader

Councillor Pete Marland said on Friday that 29 people had officially tested positive in the city over the previous two weeks. But the true figure of untested cases in the community will be higher, he said. Over the weekend seven more cases were confirmed. Pete said: "Most recent cases have been

in young adults, particularly people in their 20s and 30s. And they've been spread across several areas of Milton Keynes, not just on one place. I must therefore say this: If people continue not to follow the guidance and if cases continue to rise, it is highly likely that restrictions will be reimposed here."

<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/people/its-highly-likely-fresh-lockdown-restrictions-will-be-imposed-milton-keynes-if-covid-19-cases-continue-rise-says-council-leader-2944245>

Concern over rise in Covid-19 cases in Northern Ireland after nearly 300 are diagnosed within a week

Almost 300 people have been diagnosed with Covid-19 in Northern Ireland over the last week, official figures have revealed. The Department of Health said yesterday that 27 cases had been confirmed over the previous 24 hours, bringing to 288 the number of people diagnosed over the last seven days. According to the official statistics, there were seven people with Covid-19 in hospital and one person with the virus fighting for their life in intensive care yesterday. It follows on from the diagnosis of a further 65 cases of Covid-19 on Saturday and 74 cases on Friday, and the news that the R number is likely to be 1.6. The majority of positive cases over the past week have been in Mid and East Antrim, with 74 people diagnosed, followed by Belfast where 60 people have tested positive, and a further 48 cases in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/concern-over-rise-in-covid-19-cases-in-northern-ireland-after-nearly-300-are-diagnosed-within-a-week-39454086.html>

Second wave Covid-19 spike in Oldham bigger than height of the pandemic

Oldham's second covid-19 spike is bigger than it was during the height of the pandemic. For the week ending August 11 there were 266 cases of coronavirus confirmed in the borough, according to government figures. This is an increase of 18 from the previous highest week's total of 248 which was recorded in the week to April 12. The borough is currently on the verge of a local lockdown being introduced to try and halt the numbers of new cases of the virus. But the town's MP Jim McMahon has confirmed that he would not back a borough-wide lockdown if the government decided more stringent lockdown measures were required. Cases of Covid-19 have been cropping up across many areas of the borough in recent weeks, but the biggest spikes have been seen in the Alexandra Park and Werneth areas around the town.

<https://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/139/main-news/136021/second-wave-covid19-spike-in-oldham-bigger-than-height-of-the-pandemic>

Urgent warning as Birmingham 'on road to lockdown' if Covid cases keep rising

Birmingham's infection rate has more than doubled in a week - with more than 300 new cases. Director of public health Dr Justin Varney said it was likely the city would feature in the national "watch list" of places most at risk of intervention within days, with no sign of the current rise in cases easing off. There have been 321 new cases in the past week. "We could very easily be in a situation like we have seen in Leicester and Greater Manchester," he said this morning. Both areas have had lockdown restrictions imposed by health secretary Matt Hancock after seeing sustained spikes in infection. His concern has been triggered by a rapidly rising rate of infections across the city.

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/urgent-warning-birmingham-on-road-18780609>

Germany warns local coronavirus outbreaks are 'mostly connected with celebrations'

Health Minister Jens Spahn has warned stricter event bans could be put in place in Germany amid a rise in coronavirus outbreaks. Spahn attributed rising cases in Germany to holidaymakers returning to the country. But he said celebrations among people, such as weddings, were also causing problems. He urged people to only celebrate within a close family circle. "There are more infections in the country due to returning travellers, but there are also local outbreaks, which are mostly

connected with celebrations, said Spahn to German broadcaster ZDF on Sunday night. "This is what we have to keep in mind beyond travel," the politician, who's a member of Angela Merkel's centre Christian Democrats (CDU), said. When asked about a possible new lockdown or stricter measures to contain the pandemic, Spahn said that in his view there was no point in closing retail stores or outlets like hairdressers again. With mandatory face masks and distance rules (1.5 metre from others not in your household) the situation could be managed, he said.

<https://www.thelocal.de/20200817/germany-warns-local-coronavirus-outbreaks-are-mostly-connected-with-celebrations>

Coronavirus: Italy closes nightclubs as authorities blame holidaymakers for new outbreaks

Unlike the first coronavirus outbreak, which saw affected mostly Lombardy and other northern areas, the second wave struck much more uniformly across the country - with hundreds of local outbreaks.

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/08/16/coronavirus-world-health-organization-reports-daily-record-number-of-covid-19-cases>

Coronavirus: Italy toughens mask rules and closes nightclubs after scientists warn cases are climbing

Wearing a face covering is to become mandatory in public places in Italy overnight and nightclubs have been ordered to close due to a spike in coronavirus cases, according to reports. Masks will need to be worn where social distancing is not possible between 6pm and 6am, while the closure of nightclubs and dance halls also applies to outdoor venues where people dance, such as beaches and common areas in hotels. Economic support will be provided to all venues that have to close, Italy's government said.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-italy-toughens-mask-rules-and-closes-nightclubs-after-scientists-warn-cases-are-climbing-12050654>

Italy shuts nightclubs, mandates masks as coronavirus case numbers rise again

With daily coronavirus case numbers rising, Italy on Monday imposed its first new restrictions on daily life since coming out of lockdown nearly four months ago, ordering the closure of nightclubs and mandating mask-wearing, even outdoors, in areas with nightlife. The new measures come as Italy faces its most precarious moment of the summer. School is due to start in less than a month, Italians are moving en masse for their August holidays, and tourists are coming in from other European countries that have seen even greater increases.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/italy-shutters-nightclubs-mandates-masks-as-coronavirus-case-numbers-rise-again/2020/08/17/24e5e2e4-e066-11ea-82d8-5e55d47e90ca_story.html

More cases among young people and a lower death rate: How the coronavirus epidemic has changed in Spain

If an expert was presented with data from the coronavirus epidemic in Spain in two blocks - from the start until June 21, when the lockdown ended, and from that date up until now - they would struggle to determine that they represented the same pathogen. The age of those being infected, the areas worst affected and the death rates are completely different between the two data sets. The change in behavior of Covid-19 has been achieved thanks to isolating those infected, and monitoring suspected cases - although the recent rise in new cases could reverse this trend. Here is an analysis of the radical changes in the most frequently used indicators.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-08-17/more-cases-among-young-people-and-a-lower-death-rate-how-the-coronavirus-epidemic-has-changed-in-spain.html>

France reports post-lockdown peak with 3,310 new Covid-19 cases in 24 hours

The French Health Ministry on Saturday reported 3,310 new coronavirus infections over the past 24

hours, setting a new post-lockdown high for the fourth day in a row and taking the country's cumulative cases to 215,521. A total of 252 clusters are being investigated, up 17 compared with 24 hours earlier, the ministry said in a website update. In all, 4,857 people were in French hospitals on Saturday night for Covid-19, including 376 in intensive care. The total death toll had increased by four over the past 24 hours, with the new total at 30,409.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/france-reports-post-lockdown-peak-194030753.html>

South Korea struggles to contain surging COVID-19 cases tied to churches

South Korea continues to face its most serious COVID-19 outbreak since March as health officials reported 197 new infections, with a large number of cases tied to a conservative Christian church in Seoul whose pastor is an outspoken anti-government figure. Monday's total marked the fourth day in a row of triple-digit cases, numbers South Korea hasn't seen in over five months. Most of the infections are concentrated in the capital city, Seoul, and neighboring Gyeonggi Province, home to roughly half of the country's 51 million people. On Sunday, the country recorded 279 new infections.

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2020/08/17/South-Korea-struggles-to-contain-surging-COVID-19-cases-tied-to-churches/7211597646953/

Australia Has Deadliest Day With 25 Covid-19 Deaths in Victoria

Australia had its deadliest day in the coronavirus pandemic, with 25 fatalities in the state of Victoria. The nation's second-most populous state, which has imposed a lockdown and nighttime curfew in its capital Melbourne, on Monday also reported 282 new cases in the past 24 hours, down from daily tallies in the 700s in late July. Victoria is isolated from the rest of the nation as other states have closed their borders -- threatening to deepen and prolong the economic recession. On Sunday, Victoria's government announced it will extend a state of emergency until mid-September.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-16/australia-has-deadliest-day-with-25-covid-19-deaths-in-victoria?srnd=premium>

New Zealand: Jacinda Ardern delays general election by a month due to Coronavirus outbreak

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has postponed the country's general election after a spike in coronavirus cases has left parts of the country in lockdown. Ms Ardern announced the election would be pushed back to 17 October after parties complained they could not campaign properly with nearly a third of New Zealand's five million people under lockdown in the city of Auckland. She said the delay would "provide sufficient time for parties to plan around the range of circumstances we will be campaigning under".

<https://inews.co.uk/news/world/new-zealand-delays-general-election-month-coronavirus-jacinda-ardern-581121>

Why New Zealand's coronavirus outbreak should concern Australia

New Zealand's Covid-19 outbreak has some in Australia - especially in tourism - arguing their tough travel restrictions need to be lifted. Ever since Covid-19 shut Australia's internal and external borders, travellers trying to move around the country have faced some form of lockout. No industry has been harder hit than tourism. Still reeling from the summer bushfires, coronavirus has decimated Australia's economy and nowhere has the impact been as instant or more devastating than in tourism. This week, Australians learnt the full extent of what just two months without domestic tourism has done to the economy.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/news/article.cfm?c_id=7&objectid=12356970

Covid 19 coronavirus: Victoria has deadliest day since pandemic began

Victoria has recorded its worst daily death toll since the pandemic began after another 25 people died due to the virus. Victoria has now lost 334 people to coronavirus. There were always fears Victoria could lose more people to coronavirus after health authorities confirmed yesterday there were 664 people in hospital with 40 in the ICU and 29 on a ventilator. The state also recorded

another 282 new coronavirus cases, a slight increase from yesterday's 279 cases. Victoria extended its state of emergency for another four weeks yesterday. Announcing the extension on Sunday, Premier Dan Andrews said it was unlikely Victoria would be virus-free for a long time. "Even when this second wave is over, we will see cases, we will see outbreaks, that's just a function of this thing," Andrews told reporters.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=12357100

Russia reports nearly 5,000 new coronavirus cases

Russia reported 4,892 new cases of the novel coronavirus on Monday, pushing its tally so far to 927,745, the fourth largest in the world. Authorities said 55 people had died across the country in the last 24 hours, increasing Russia's official coronavirus death toll to 15,740.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-russia-cases/russia-reports-nearly-5000-new-coronavirus-cases-id UKKCN25D0PK>

New Lockdown

Hunt announces opening of 15 mental health clinics across Victoria amid second lockdown

Health Minister Greg Hunt has announced an additional \$31.9 million to assist Victorians who are suffering during the course of the lockdown with their mental health. As part of the national response to Victoria's recent COVID-19 outbreaks, 15 new adult mental health clinics will be set up for an initial period of 12 months. Nine will open in metropolitan Melbourne and six in rural and regional Victoria.

<https://www.9news.com.au/health/victoria-coronavirus-health-minister-greg-hunt-announces-mental-health-funding-for-those-suffering-during-lockdown/5c3ac426-6861-4843-857d-4b66b930e9bc>

Coronavirus Australia: Victorian daily numbers shows lockdown is working

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews says the state's strategy to drive down community transmission is working after it recorded 279 cases in the past 24 hours. Sunday's COVID-19 figures follow a week of markedly lower daily infection numbers compared to earlier in the month, suggesting the harsh lockdown in Melbourne and tougher rules across the state appear to be having the desired effect.

<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/health-problems/coronavirus-australia-victorian-daily-numbers-shows-lockdown-is-working-says-daniel-andrews/news-story/e1576fc410b7f90fd8844a1c370f6f4a>

Second Lockdown A Wakeup Call For Kiwi Businesses To "get Digital"

New Zealand website agency Zeald has had fresh interest in its free ecommerce websites, following the announcement of Covid 19's resurgence in the country last week. New enquiries add to the more than 600 free websites Zeald has already given away since the first lockdown, to help get struggling small businesses trading online. Founder and Chairman of Zeald, David Kelly, says getting online will help future-proof small businesses against ongoing uncertainty. "While this latest blow has come as a shock, it proves we simply can't be complacent, even when it looks like we're getting a handle on Covid 19. We will be operating in an uncertain trading environment for some time to come, and small businesses need to prepare digitally," says Kelly.

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU2008/S00263/second-lockdown-a-wakeup-call-for-kiwi-businesses-to-get-digital.htm>

Lebanon needs two-week lockdown after 'shocking' COVID-19 rise, minister says

Lebanon must shut down for two weeks after a surge in coronavirus infections, the caretaker health minister said on Monday, as the country reels from the massive Beirut port blast. The country's health ministry registered a record 456 new infections on Monday, with two deaths, taking the cumulative number of cases to 9,337 since February, with 105 fatalities. "We declare today a state of general alert and we need a brave decision to close (the country) for two weeks," Hamad Hassan

told Voice of Lebanon radio. Lebanon, already deep in financial crisis, was struggling with a COVID-19 spike before the Aug. 4 blast that killed at least 178 people, wrecked swathes of the capital and pushed the government to resign

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-lebanon/lebanon-needs-two-week-lockdown-after-shocking-covid-19-rise-minister-says-idUKKCN25D0ID>