

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

25th May 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Israel to end COVID-19 restrictions after vaccine success

- Israel will end local COVID-19 restrictions following a successful vaccine rollout that has nearly stamped out new infections, the country's Health Ministry said.
- With the majority of the population having received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, and about 92% of those 50 and older inoculated or recovered, Israel has been gradually reopening its economy after three lockdowns.
- [The country reported just 12 new virus cases on Saturday, down from a daily peak of more than 10,000 in January.](#)
- Curbs on higher-risk activities and limits on how many people can gather in a specific area remain, with a government-issued 'Green Pass' that indicates immunity post-vaccination or recovery from COVID-19 allowing greater freedom.
- Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said on Sunday that he will not be extending the arrangement, meaning the restrictions and the Green Pass system will be revoked from the start of June.
- 'The economy and the citizens of Israel will get extra room to breathe,' he said, but also warned that they could be reimposed should the situation take a turn.
- Israel will still keep its borders closed to most incoming travel, though it has started to let in small groups of vaccinated tourists. The Health Ministry will also re-examine the requirement to wear face masks in closed spaces.

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<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-end-covid-19-restrictions-after-vaccine-success-2021-05-23/>

Chile to loosen restrictions for those vaccinated against COVID-19

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Chileans fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will be allowed to move more freely within the country, the government said on Monday, although the nation's borders will remain closed through mid-June to tamp down a fresh spike in infections. People in Chile who have completed their vaccination cycle will be able to move between communities that are both in and out of quarantine for some activities, as well as travel more freely inside the country starting on Wednesday, the government said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/chile-loosen-restrictions-those-vaccinated-against-covid-19-2021-05-24/>

The world's economic recovery from Covid-19 looks likely to be uneven

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After the most severe global recession in decades, private and official forecasters are increasingly

optimistic that world output will recover strongly this year and thereafter. But the coming expansion will be unevenly distributed, both across and within economies. With the coronavirus still running rampant in many countries, one key question is whether the emergence of virulent new strains will trigger repeated stop-and-go cycles, as we've seen in some cases where economies reopened too soon. One particularly ominous possibility is that more vaccine-resistant variants appear, heightening the urgency of vaccination efforts that have so far been too slow in many regions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/may/24/world-economic-recovery-covid-19-us-china-europe>

SoftBank CEO slams Olympics as Japan races to catch up on vaccinations

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Japanese tycoon Masayoshi Son warned of significant dangers around holding the Olympics in Tokyo, where the government on Monday kicked off a mass vaccination drive to catch up with other countries and ensure a "safe and secure" Games. In a series of tweets, the influential SoftBank Group (9984.T) CEO expressed bewilderment and concern about the Tokyo Olympics, calling Japan a "vaccine laggard" and saying the slow inoculation drive less than two months before the start of the Games could put people's lives at risk. "Currently more than 80% of people want the Olympics to be postponed or cancelled. Who and on what authority is it being forced through?" the billionaire executive, wrote in a tweet in Japanese over the weekend.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/olympics-a-lot-lose-softbanks-ceo-speaks-out-against-games-2021-05-24/>

COVID-19: Boris Johnson's review of social distancing rules set to be delayed by Indian variant

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The public will likely have to wait longer for details of the government's review of social distancing rules and its proposals for COVID certification due to the growth in cases of the Indian variant. Downing Street signalled Boris Johnson would wait longer to unveil the plans, despite the prime minister having previously promised to provide details by the end of this month. Mr Johnson's official spokesman on Monday said the review of social distancing rules would be published "as soon as possible based on the latest data, which will help inform us what measures we can take around certification".

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-boris-johnsons-review-of-social-distancing-rules-set-to-be-delayed-by-indian-variant-12315874>

COVID-19: London's Vaxi Taxi scheme is driving vulnerable people to get their jabs

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Throughout the pandemic, we have heard time and time again that "no one is safe until everyone is safe". That message is echoed by the London GP Dr Sharon Raymond, who is putting her words into action in the form of the Vaxi Taxi project, which helps vulnerable people access COVID-19 vaccinations. She started the initiative in February, through the COVID Crisis Rescue Foundation, which she is the director of. The foundation has partnered with NHS England and third sector organisations, like housing charities, to support people who have difficulties accessing healthcare. Black cabs pick people up and take them to pop-up vaccination centres, or they can receive their jab in the back of the taxi

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-londons-vaxi-taxi-scheme-is-driving-vulnerable-people-to-get-their-jabs-12315281>

Vaccine deliveries poised to slow this week with Canada expecting 600K Pfizer doses

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Canada is set for a relatively quiet few days on the COVID-19 vaccine front with only about 600,000

Pfizer-BioNTech doses set to arrive this week. The two pharmaceutical firms were originally scheduled to deliver two million shots in the next seven days, but shipped 1.4 million of those doses last week instead in anticipation of the May long weekend. Pfizer and BioNTech have been consistently delivering doses even as other vaccine makers have struggled to keep their shipments flowing. They're set to increase their weekly deliveries to 2.4 million doses starting in June.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/vaccine-deliveries-poised-to-slow-this-week-with-canada-expecting-600k-pfizer-doses-1.5440641>

Japan opens mass vaccine centers 2 months before Olympics

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Japan mobilized military doctors and nurses to give shots to elderly people in Tokyo and Osaka on Monday as the government desperately tries to accelerate its vaccination rollout and curb coronavirus infections just two months before hosting the Olympics. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is determined to hold the Olympics in Tokyo after a one-year delay and has made an ambitious pledge to finish vaccinating the country's 36 million elderly people by the end of July, despite skepticism it's possible. Worries about public safety while many Japanese remain unvaccinated have prompted growing protests and calls for canceling the games, set to start on July 23.

<https://apnews.com/article/japan-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-olympic-games-sports-64115230b1805f18e5521bd0c29d1c28>

COVID testing's value shrinks as vaccines beat back virus

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Federal health officials' new, more relaxed recommendations on masks have all but eclipsed another major change in guidance from the government: Fully vaccinated Americans can largely skip getting tested for the coronavirus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last week that most people who have received the full course of shots and have no COVID-19 symptoms don't need to be screened for the virus, even if exposed to someone infected. The change represents a new phase in the epidemic after nearly a year in which testing was the primary weapon against the virus. Vaccines are now central to the response and have driven down hospitalizations and deaths dramatically. Experts say the CDC guidance reflects a new reality in which nearly half of Americans have received at least one shot and close to 40% are fully vaccinated.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-education-business-science-health-6e197fa0858a71a6339259bf84c35453>

Indian migrant workers at risk of being left out of vaccine drive

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Experts say many of India's 140 million migrant workers run the risk of being left out of the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination drive either due to a lack of awareness, want of a targeted strategy, or a severe shortage of doses. The trend is sharper for adults below 45, the age group that most migrant workers are in. Vaccination for this group started on May 1. S Irudaya Rajan, chairman of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD) in Trivandrum, Kerala, said migrant workers were stigmatised as carriers of the disease and their vaccination should be prioritised.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/24/india-migrant-workers-at-risk-of-being-left-out-of-vaccine-drive>

US agencies examine reports of early COVID infections in Wuhan

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United States intelligence agencies are examining reports that researchers at a Chinese virology laboratory were seriously ill in 2019, one month before the first cases of COVID-19 were reported, according to US government sources who cautioned that there is still no proof the disease originated at the lab. A still-classified US intelligence report circulated during former President Donald Trump's

administration alleged that three Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers became so ill in November 2019 that they sought hospital care, sources familiar with US intelligence reporting and analysis told the Reuters news agency.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/24/us-agencies-examine-reports-of-early-covid-19-infections-in-wuhan-reuters>

India warns against mass farmers protest, citing COVID 'super-spreader' risk

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Indian government leaders appealed to farmers to call off a mass protest this week for fear it could prove a viral "super-spreader" event as the country's overall death toll from COVID-19 crossed 300,000 on Monday. Over a third have died over the past three weeks during a devastating second wave fuelled by a new virus variant detected in India, mass political and religious gatherings, and lowering of the guard by the public, health officials and experts say. Farmers are camped out on Delhi's outskirts despite a great risk of infection to themselves, the joint committee of farmers organisations said in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to repeal laws to liberalise the farm sector.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-total-deaths-covid-19-surpass-300000-2021-05-24/>

Officials 'hounded' over PPE contract approval, High Court told

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Senior officials in the UK were "hounding" colleagues over the approval of a PPE supply contract worth a quarter-of-a-billion pounds to a hedge fund with "close ties" to the Government the High Court has heard. The Good Law Project and EveryDoctor are bringing legal action against the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), claiming that contracts awarded to PestFix, Clandeboye and Ayanda Capital were given unlawfully at the height of the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in April and May 2020. The two groups allege DHSC has failed to provide proper reasons for why the contracts were awarded and say the Government violated principles of equal treatment and transparency when making the deals worth more than £700 million.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/ayanda-capital-ppe-high-court-department-for-international-trade-government-b936082.html>

Revealed: Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy highest among among 25- to 34-year-olds as nearly one in 10 say they will refuse jab

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Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy is highest among Ireland's 25- to 34-year-olds, despite a growing majority of the population saying they will take the jab. A tracker poll on vaccine take-up shows nearly 9pc - almost one in ten - of 25- to 34-year-olds say they will not get the vaccine. And 12pc in this age group are unsure about accepting the jab, the latest poll from the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA), representing the big drug companies, shows today. Last month, 10pc of this age group said they would refuse a vaccine and 8pc were unsure. If this group turn down the offer of a vaccine, it would mean a substantial number of people will remain susceptible to the virus and be at risk of passing it on to others.

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/revealed-covid-19-vaccine-hesitancy-highest-among-among-25-to-34-year-olds-as-nearly-one-in-10-say-they-will-refuse-jab-40460102.html>

He's a Stanford professor and a Nobel laureate. Critics say he was dangerously misleading on Covid

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One day last August, as they struggled to figure out whether to lift Covid-19 restrictions, the

supervisors of Placer County, California, convened a panel of experts. It was a reasonable move. If being a local official could be thankless in normal times, the pandemic had made it nearly impossible. Federal messaging had been hopelessly muddled. Rules meant to stop viral spread came with painful side effects. One constituent insisted the sheriff enforce lockdowns; another called stay-at-home-orders an economic death sentence. Wanting advice from doctors and professors was hardly surprising. What was surprising was that the first invited speaker had chosen to frame himself as an authority on Covid-19 at all. His name was Michael Levitt. His credentials were stellar — an endowed Stanford professorship, one-third of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Chemistry — but utterly unrelated to infectious disease outbreaks. He'd won his honors with the computer-programming work he'd done in the 1960s and 70s, revealing the intricate origami of proteins, modeling how they fold and form the tiny machinery of life. Prior to those papers, the chair of the Nobel selection committee had said, studying chemical reactions was “like seeing all the actors before Hamlet and all the dead bodies after, and then you wonder what happened in the middle.” Levitt and his colleagues had described “the whole drama,” showing how each character died.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/24/stanford-professor-and-nobel-laureate-critics-say-he-was-dangerously-misleading-on-covid/>

Canada to deploy healthcare resources to help Manitoba combat COVID-19

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The government of Canada said it was preparing to deploy a number of healthcare resources for the province of Manitoba that is reeling under a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. This comes after Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister last week said he had asked Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to supply critical care nurses, respiratory therapists and contact tracers to battle the raging health crisis in the province.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/canada-deploy-healthcare-resources-help-manitoba-combat-covid-19-2021-05-24/>

COVID-19 may increase the risk of other health conditions

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A recent study concludes that people with COVID-19 have an increased risk of developing a new health problem after the initial phase of the underlying infection. The study reviewed data from more than 200,000 people who had diagnosed COVID-19. While older people are more likely to have poor COVID-19 outcomes, the study suggests that younger people have a higher risk of developing new health conditions.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/covid-19-may-increase-the-risk-of-other-illnesses>

Trained on smelly socks, bio-detection dogs sniff out COVID-19

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Sniffer dogs trained using smelly socks worn by people infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus could soon be used at airports or mass gathering venues to pick up the “corona odour” of COVID-19-infected people, British scientists said on Monday. Working in teams of two, the COVID-trained dogs could screen a line of several hundred people coming off a plane within half an hour, for example, and detect with up to 94.3% sensitivity those infected, the scientists said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/trained-smelly-socks-bio-detection-dogs-sniff-out-covid-19-2021-05-23/>

Johnson & Johnson seeks COVID-19 vaccine approval in Japan

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U.S. health care conglomerate Johnson & Johnson said Monday one of its units had filed for regulatory approval of its one-shot COVID-19 vaccine in Japan, and that it could begin supplying

doses to the country in early 2022, once approval is given. According to the unit, Janssen Pharmaceutical K.K., its Phase 1 study results from 250 healthy people between the ages of 20 and 55 and those aged 65 or older in Japan showed that the vaccine did not pose safety risks. The health ministry on Friday gave its final approval for emergency use of two COVID-19 vaccines — developed by U.S. pharmaceutical company Moderna Inc. and Britain's AstraZeneca PLC, respectively — in hopes of giving the developed world's slowest vaccine rollout a much-needed shot in the arm. They are administered in two shots, similar to the vaccine produced by U.S. drugmaker Pfizer Inc., the only coronavirus vaccine approved prior to that.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/24/national/johnson-coronavirus-vaccine-japan-approval/>

The women possibly at higher risk for Covid-19 that no one is talking about

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More than a year into the pandemic, one study has found that some women are at higher risk for Covid-19 compared to others in their age and sex groups. These women, often young and otherwise healthy like Aguilar, have an underlying condition that isn't mentioned on any Covid-19 comorbidity list: polycystic ovary syndrome, or PCOS. PCOS, which affect about 1 in 10 women of "childbearing age," is an imbalance of reproductive hormones that can lead to irregular menstrual cycles, high androgen levels and ovarian cysts. But it can also come with a host of other health problems, nearly all of which overlap Covid-19 comorbidities.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/23/health/women-covid-pcos-high-risk/index.html>

Single Covid vaccine dose 'not particularly protective,' says Nervtag scientist

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A single dose of a Covid-19 coronavirus vaccine "is not particularly protective", a scientist who advises the UK Government has said. Professor Ravi Gupta, from the University of Cambridge and a member of the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag) advising the Government, told BBC Breakfast this morning (Monday, May 24) that people needed to have a second dose.

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/single-covid-vaccine-dose-not-5448679>

Coronavirus: so many variants, but vaccines are still effective

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Viruses are constantly changing. This is because errors sometimes occur when they copy their genetic material. Some errors have no effect at all. Some might make the virus less viable. Some make it more benign, which means it can survive but doesn't cause disease. The errors to watch for are those that might make the virus more infectious, or better able to avoid the immune system that is trying to counter them, either driven by natural infection or stimulated by a vaccine. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is no different. Each time it divides, it rolls the dice, which could give rise to a more malign virus. This can happen anywhere, anytime. So it's important to track variants and to see if they are spreading more easily from person to person, causing more mild or more severe disease, might avoid detection with current tests, or might respond less well to current treatments. Perhaps the biggest concern is breakthrough infections, where a fully vaccinated person still gets COVID.

<https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-so-many-variants-but-vaccines-are-still-effective-161222>

India: Dirty oxygen cylinders, ventilators behind 'black fungus'?

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A rapid rise in cases of mucormycosis, also known as "black fungus", has added to the challenges faced by India's healthcare system as it deals with a massive second wave of COVID-19 infections. Mucormycosis is a fungal infection that causes blackening or discolouration over the nose, blurred or

double vision, chest pain, breathing difficulties and coughing blood. Mucormycosis is caused by exposure to mucor mould, which is commonly found in soil, air and even in the nose and mucus of humans. It spreads through the respiratory tract and erodes facial structures. Sometimes, doctors will have to surgically remove an infected eye to stop the infection from reaching the brain

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/24/what-is-black-fungus-that-is-hitting-indias-covid-19-patients>

World Health Assembly kicks off with pandemic issues at fore

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The World Health Assembly (WHA) annual meeting began today, virtually for the second year in a row, with ending the pandemic and preparing for the next one as the main themes. In an address to the group today, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, PhD, warned the group that the world remains in a very dangerous situation and as of today, more COVID-19 deaths have been reported in 2021 than in all of 2020. "Since our Health Assembly started this morning, almost 1000 people have lost their lives to COVID-19. And in the time it takes me to make these remarks, a further 400 will die," he said. Though global cases have dropped for the past 3 weeks, the world remains in a fragile situation, Tedros said.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/world-health-assembly-kicks-pandemic-issues-fore>

Moderna taps Samsung for fill-finish duties on 'hundreds of millions' of COVID-19 vaccine doses

Moderna taps Samsung for fill-finish duties on 'hundreds of millions' of COVID-19 vaccine doses

As Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine rolls out across the globe, the mRNA specialist has continued to bolster its production network. With a deal unveiled over the weekend, it's now bringing a Korean manufacturing heavyweight into the fold. Moderna has tapped Samsung Biologics for large-scale, commercial fill-finish duties on its mRNA-based vaccine, the companies said Saturday. Once the deal closes, tech transfer will kick off "immediately" at Samsung's facilities in Incheon, South Korea, where the CDMO plans to leverage a finishing, labeling and packaging line to crank out "hundreds of millions" of vaccine doses for countries other than the United States.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/moderna-taps-samsung-for-fill-finish-duties-hundreds-million-covid-19-vaccine-doses>

Low oxygen levels, shallow breathing tied to COVID death

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A blood oxygen level below 92% and fast, shallow breathing were associated with significantly elevated death rates in a study of hospitalized COVID-19 patients, suggesting that people who test positive for the virus should watch for these signs at home, according to a study led by University of Washington at Seattle researchers. The study, published today in *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses*, involved a chart review of 1,095 adult coronavirus patients hospitalized at University of Washington hospitals or Rush University Medical Center in Chicago from Mar 1 to Jun 8, 2020. Almost all patients with low oxygen levels (99%) and rapid breathing (98%) were given supplemental oxygen and glucocorticoids to quell inflammation.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/low-oxygen-levels-shallow-breathing-tied-covid-death>

Brazil nears 450,000 COVID-19 deaths, says Health Ministry

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Brazil's Health Ministry on Monday registered 790 new COVID-19 deaths in the past 24 hours and 37,498 new cases of coronavirus. The country has confirmed 449,858 deaths from the virus out of more than 16 million confirmed cases since the pandemic began, according to ministry data.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-nears-450000-covid-19-deaths-says-health-ministry-2021-05-24/>

Osaka buckles under strain of Japan's fourth COVID-19 wave

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Hospitals in Japan's second-largest city of Osaka are buckling under a wave of coronavirus cases, running out of beds and ventilators as exhausted doctors warn of a "system collapse" and advise against going ahead with the Olympics this summer. The speed at which Osaka's healthcare system has been overwhelmed underscores the challenges of hosting a key global sports event in two months' time, particularly when only about half of Japan's medical staff have completed inoculations. "Simply put, this is a collapse of the medical system," said Yuji Tohda, the director of Kindai University Hospital in Osaka. "The highly infectious British variant and slipping alertness have led to this explosive growth in the number of patients." Japan has avoided the large infections suffered by other nations but Osaka prefecture has taken the brunt of the fourth wave, with 3,849 new positive tests in the week to Thursday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/24/osaka-buckles-under-strain-of-japans-fourth-covid-19-wave>

Singapore airport tightens measures after COVID-19 outbreak

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Singapore's airport said on Monday it was stepping up measures to keep out the coronavirus, including further segregating arrivals and about 14,000 workers into different risk zones, after it became the country's largest active COVID-19 cluster. The Changi airport cluster, which involves over 100 cases, may have initially spread through a worker who helped an infected family arriving in the country, according to authorities. Some of the cases included the B.1.617 variant first detected in India.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/singapore-airport-tightens-measures-after-covid-19-outbreak-2021-05-24/>

COVID-19 deaths in Latin America surpass 1 mln as outbreak worsens

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The death toll from COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean passed 1 million people on Friday, according to a Reuters tally, with the pandemic worsening in the part of the world with the highest per capita death rate. From the dusty highlands of Bolivia to the Brazilian metropolis of São Paulo, the pandemic has swamped underfunded healthcare systems after spreading fast across nations where many people survive hand-to-mouth and have been unable to enter lockdown. In Peru, among the hardest hit nations in the region, COVID-19 patients have died in crowded hospital corridors of the capital Lima. Deep in the Amazon jungles of Brazil, many residents of the city of Manaus have died at home with no oxygen to fill damaged lungs, after supplies ran out there this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/covid-19-deaths-latin-america-set-surpass-1-mln-outbreak-worsens-2021-05-21/>

Thailand to tighten border controls after detecting South African COVID-19 variant

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Thai border controls will tighten after the discovery of three local cases of the South African COVID-19 variant stemming from illegal border crossings, authorities said on Sunday, as the country grapples to contain its worst coronavirus outbreak yet. The first local case of the South African variant, known as B.1.351, was detected on May 4 in a 32-year-old Thai man after he was visited by family who entered Thailand from Malaysia through an informal border crossing, the director-general of the disease control department said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-tighten-border-controls-after-detecting-south-african-covid-19-variant-2021-05-23/>

Thai villages isolated over variant find amid vaccine worry

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Thailand placed barbed wire and checkpoints in several southern villages along the Malaysian border Monday after identifying a cluster of infections with a coronavirus variant that's believed to spread faster. The lockdown came as Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha sought to assure people that his government could manage a recent surge as it is set to start a national vaccination campaign next month. "Please understand that we can manage this," Prayuth said as he received the second dose of his coronavirus vaccine.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/thai-villages-isolated-over-variant-find-amid-vaccine-worry-thai-bangkok-malaysian-covid-south-africa-b1852672.html>

Top Pakistan health official doesn't foresee India scenario

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Pakistan's top health official said Monday the COVID-19 variant that devastated neighboring India, causing record infections and deaths, has not yet been found in Pakistan. Faisal Sultan said Pakistan was still in the middle of a third wave of infections that began earlier this year, flooding hospitals with COVID patients. But he said he hoped the tide of new cases would subside in the coming weeks. "I don't foresee an India-like situation in Pakistan," he told The Associated Press. Pakistan recently offered medical aid to India to help handle the COVID-19 crisis there, but the Foreign Ministry says New Delhi did not respond. Pakistan and India have a history of bitter relations and they have fought two of their wars over Kashmir since gaining independence from Britain in 1947.

<https://apnews.com/article/asia-pacific-pakistan-india-coronavirus-pandemic-health-6b7795a313dee25a48d0175b942c6320>

UN chief says world at 'war' against COVID-19

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The world is "at war" against COVID-19, the UN chief says, calling for the application of wartime logic to the inequitable access to the weapons needed to fight the pandemic. Addressing the opening of the World Health Organization's annual assembly of member states on Monday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres decried the "tsunami of suffering" sparked by the coronavirus crisis.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/24/un-chief-says-world-at-war-against-covid-19>

Venezuela receives 1.3 million COVID-19 vaccines from China: Maduro

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Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said 1.3 million vaccines from China had arrived in the South American country, which is poised to start a vaccination campaign in the coming days. The announcement comes as Venezuela, mired in an economic crisis, experiences a second wave of COVID-19 cases amid a weak healthcare system and slow vaccination rollout.

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/venezuela-receives-13-million-covid-19-vaccines-from-china-maduro/ar-AAKkohF>

Squabbles and accusations: Inside Brazil's COVID Senate inquiry

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In the latest session of Brazil's COVID-19 Senate inquiry, set up to investigate the government's handling of the pandemic, former Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello mistook one senator's surname for a military rank. "I am not a military man; Coronel is a surname," Senator Angelo Coronel - whose last name means "colonel" in Brazilian Portuguese - told the former minister.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/24/squabbles-and-accusations-inside-brazil-covid-senate-inquiry>