

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

28th Jun 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Delta Variant Outbreak in Israel Infects Some Vaccinated Adults - Government Reimposes Mask Requirement

- About half of adults infected in an outbreak of the Delta variant of COVID-19 in Israel were fully inoculated with the Pfizer vaccine, prompting the government to reimpose an indoor mask requirement and other measures to contain the highly transmissible strain.
- [Preliminary findings by Israeli health officials suggest about 90% of new infections were likely caused by the Delta variant, according to Ran Balicer, who leads an expert advisory panel on COVID-19 for the government. Children under 16, most of whom haven't been vaccinated, accounted for about half of those infected, he said.](#)
- **The government this week expanded its vaccination campaign to include all 12-to-15 year olds** due to a jump in infections among schoolchildren in a town in central Israel. This outbreak has since quickly spread geographically and to other groups of the population.
- The number of cases in Israel is relatively low by global standards. But new cases of COVID-19 rose to over 200 on Thursday from around 10 per day for most of June.
- Israel is now reassessing its COVID-19 regulations after moving to open up its society and economy following multiple lockdowns last year.
- 'The entrance of **the Delta variant has changed the transmission dynamics,**' said Prof. Balicer, who is also the chief innovation officer for Israel's largest health-management organization, Clalit.
- The Delta variant, which first emerged in India in late 2020 and is also known as B.1.617.2, has now been detected in more than 70 countries. In the U.S., public health experts expect it to soon become the dominant strain.
- These so-called breakthrough cases - defined as positive COVID-19 test results received at least two weeks after patients receive their final vaccine dose - are broadly expected, as the Pfizer vaccine is highly effective but not 100% foolproof, according to Prof. Balicer.
- Israeli health officials are optimistic that even if the variant does spread, **evidence from countries such as the UK indicate the vaccine will prevent a large increase in severe illness and hospitalizations** that plagued the country's health systems in previous outbreaks. Israel has only recorded five severe cases in the past 10 days. Prof. Balicer said, but whether more will emerge is too early to tell.
- Those exempt from the mask requirement included children under seven, people with disabilities that prevent them from wearing a mask or two workers who work regularly together. The government had cancelled the indoor mask mandate requirement 10 days ago and dropped most other preventative measures after running one of the world's fastest vaccination campaigns. About 80% of Israel's of age 16 and above have received two doses of the vaccine that was developed by Pfizer and German partner BioNTech.
- Israel was an early test case for the effectiveness of the vaccine after outbreaks last year at one point gave it one of the world's highest per-capita infection rates. Since the start of the pandemic, 840,522 of the country's 9.3 million citizens have been infected, of which 6,429 died.
- Israeli health officials said **the highly contagious strain had likely entered the country**

through its main international airport, near Tel Aviv, where a system meant to vet every new arrival through testing was overloaded in recent days amid a surge in foreign travel.

- On Wednesday, the government delayed allowing foreign nationals to enter into the country for tourism from July 1 to Aug 1 and reimposed a mask requirement inside airports.
- 'Our goal at the moment, first and foremost, is to safeguard the citizens of Israel from the Delta variant that is running amok in the world,' Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Wednesday.

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/vaccinated-people-account-for-half-of-new-covid-19-delta-cases-in-israeli-outbreak-11624624326>

Iceland becomes first country in Europe to lift ALL coronavirus restrictions

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Icelanders will no longer need to wear masks or keep a safe distance from others All Covid-19 restrictions will be lifted from Saturday, health minister confirmed Government said 87 per cent of Icelanders received first dose of a Covid vaccine It has infection incidence of 1.6 per 100,000 inhabitants on two-week average

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9725543/Iceland-country-Europe-lift-coronavirus-restrictions.html>

Covid-19: Japan to donate millions more AstraZeneca vaccine doses across Asia

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Japan will donate one million Covid-19 vaccine doses each to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand starting from next Thursday, said foreign minister Toshimitsu Motegi on Friday. Kyodo News reported that the foreign minister said that the country will also offer one million doses each to Taiwan and Vietnam, in addition to the batches of 1.24 million and one million shots provided to them, respectively, earlier in the month. The decision to provide coronavirus vaccine developed AstraZeneca came after requests were made from the said countries and Taiwan.

<https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/covid-19-japan-to-donate-millions-more-astrazeneca-vaccine-doses-across-asia/83870006>

Vietnam's Prime Minister Aims for Domestic Vaccine by June 2022

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Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh aims to have a domestic Covid-19 vaccine produced by June 2022 at the latest as the government ramps up its nationwide vaccination program, according to a post on the government website.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-25/vietnam-s-prime-minister-aims-for-domestic-vaccine-by-june-2022>

U.S. Offers Afghanistan 3 Million J&J Covid-19 Vaccine Doses

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The Biden administration plans to deliver three million doses of the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine next week to Afghanistan, which is battling its deadliest wave of the pandemic amid a rapidly deteriorating security situation. The White House is offering the single-dose vaccines ahead of President Biden's Friday meeting with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Afghanistan's chief peace negotiator, Abdullah Abdullah. They plan to discuss how Washington can continue supporting the embattled Afghan government, which lost large territories to the Taliban this month, once the U.S. military completes its withdrawal. Mr. Biden aims to press Mr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah—who ran against the Afghan president in elections in 2014 and 2019—to align more closely and create a broader front against the Taliban, if Washington is to continue supporting Kabul, according to a senior administration official.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-offers-afghanistan-3-million-j-j-covid-19-vaccine-doses-11624551266>

UN chief urges European Parliament to support COVID vaccines for all

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The Secretary-General reiterated his recent call for an Emergency Task Force that would mobilize pharmaceutical companies and key industry players in implementing a plan to ensure the entire global population is vaccinated by "as early as possible in 2022." Members would include vaccine-producing countries, as well as nations that could manufacture these treatments provided they have assistance, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO); the vaccine alliance, GAVI, and international financial institutions. The Task Force would explore all options to scale-up vaccine production, such as technology transfers, patent pooling, sharing intellectual property, and addressing supply chain bottlenecks.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1094682>

WHO urges fully vaccinated people to continue to wear masks as delta Covid variant spreads

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The WHO urged fully vaccinated people to continue to wear masks and practice other Covid-19 pandemic safety measures as the highly contagious delta variant spreads rapidly across the globe. "People cannot feel safe just because they had the two doses. They still need to protect themselves," WHO official Dr. Mariangela Simao told reporters.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/25/delta-who-urges-fully-vaccinated-people-to-continue-to-wear-masks-as-variant-spreads.html>

Assam exempts fully vaccinated travellers from COVID testing at airports, rail stations

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People who have been vaccinated with two doses of the #COVID vaccine will be exempted from mandatory testing on arrival at airports or railway stations in Assam: Assam Govt

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/assam-exempts-fully-vaccinated-travellers-from-covid-testing-at-airports-rail-stations.html>

As variant rises, vaccine plan targets 'movable middle'

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Thrown off-stride to reach its COVID-19 vaccination goal, the Biden administration is sending A-list officials across the country, devising ads for niche markets and enlisting community organizers to persuade unvaccinated people to get a shot. The strategy has the trappings of a political campaign, complete with data crunching to identify groups that can be won over. But the message is about

public health, not ideology. The focus is a group health officials term the “movable middle” — some 55 million unvaccinated adults seen as persuadable, many of them under 30.

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-coronavirus-pandemic-health-government-and-politics-0ff389cdb6ac2e81e70ab9f486ba2b32>

Honduras to receive 1.5 mln doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine from U.S. on Sunday

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Honduras will receive 1.5 million doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine from the United States on Sunday as part of an initial delivery of doses through the COVAX international vaccine-sharing program, White House officials told Reuters. The shipment is part of 80 million U.S. doses that President Joe Biden has pledged to share with other countries around the world either directly or through the COVAX program. "We are sharing vaccines with Honduras because it's the right thing to do from a global public health perspective, and right for our collective security and well-being in the region," said Juan Gonzalez, senior director for the Western Hemisphere on the White House National Security Council, in a statement shared with Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/honduras-receive-15-mln-doses-moderna-covid-19-vaccine-us-sunday-2021-06-25/>

Iceland Ends Covid Restrictions With 87% of People Getting Shots

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Iceland is abolishing all domestic Covid-19 restrictions, with officials saying 87% of those 16 and older have received at least one vaccine dose. The island nation, with a population of about 369,000, has seen 6,637 cases, with 30 deaths. About 48% of those 16 and over are fully vaccinated, which puts them in line with the rate in the U.K. and just above the U.S. rate, according to the Bloomberg Vaccine Tracker. Iceland could be one of the first European countries to end restrictions, Iceland Health Minister Svandis Svavarsdottir said in announcing the move in a news briefing Friday. The limits will officially end on Saturday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-25/iceland-ends-covid-restrictions-with-87-of-people-getting-shots>

More UK Covid-19 patients are requiring oxygen and intensive care, doctors reveal

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Although hospitalisations have crept up slowly in recent weeks, medical experts are warning that patients in intensive care are becoming sicker when they come into hospital with Covid symptoms.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9727693/More-UK-Covid-19-patients-requiring-oxygen-intensive-care-doctors-reveal.html>

Child labour: The hidden costs of Covid in Uganda

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With one of the youngest populations in the world, Uganda was already struggling with high rates of child labour. But with the world now facing a wave of economic hardship, NGOs say in a single year, the pandemic has set back any progress made to reduce child labour by 20 years. In Karamoja, north-east Uganda, when all schools closed due to the pandemic, nine-year-old Teddy joined her mother mining for gold.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-57600658>

India set to shift T20 World Cup to UAE due to pandemic - sources

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This year's Twenty20 World Cup is set to be shifted to the United Arab Emirates due to the COVID-19 situation in India, Indian cricket board sources told Reuters on Saturday. The pandemic swept the world's second-most populous nation last year, resulting in a lengthy shutdown. Infections have

rocketed again in another wave this year as the country scrambles to curb a more transmissible variant of the virus, hitting plans to ease lockdown measures.

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/india-set-shift-t20-world-cup-uae-due-pandemic-sources-2021-06-26/>

Russian regions run low on vaccines as COVID-19 cases jump

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A central Russian region on Saturday suspended COVID-19 vaccinations for two days due to a shortage of doses, local officials said, as the country reported its highest daily increase in coronavirus cases since mid-January. Russia is facing a surge in new cases that authorities blame on the highly infectious Delta variant and slow progress on the vaccination drive, with daily deaths hitting a record in the capital, Moscow, on Friday

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-regions-run-low-vaccines-covid-19-cases-hit-record-2021-06-26/>

Finnish Football Fans Bring Virus Back From Russia

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Nearly 100 supporters of Finland's national football team who traveled to Russia for a Euro 2020 defeat against Belgium have caught the coronavirus, authorities said Thursday. The prime minister joined the THL health authority overseeing the epidemic in calling for Finns who returned home after Monday's 2-0 loss in St. Petersburg to take a test

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/06/24/finnish-football-fans-bring-virus-back-from-russia-a74337>

San Francisco becomes biggest US city to demand all 35000 of its municipal workers get Covid vaccine

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The City of San Francisco is requiring all 35,000 of its employees to be vaccinated against Covid-19 or risk losing their jobs. Workers who don't comply could be fired; About 70% of city's residents are already fully vaccinated, one of the highest vaccination rates of any U.S. city. City officials say the requirements will promote safety in municipal workplaces. It includes police officers, firefighters, building inspectors and other city workers who come into regular contact with members of the community. The requirement will take effect once a Covid vaccine receives full authorization from the Food and Drug Administration

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9728205/San-Francisco-biggest-city-demand-35000-municipal-workers-Covid-vaccine.html>

Israel's new leader urges youth to get vaccine

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Israel's new prime minister is urging the country's youth to get vaccinated as coronavirus case numbers have crept up in recent days due to a localized outbreak of the Delta variant. Naftali Bennett's comments came at a meeting of the government Sunday in Jerusalem. "We don't want to impose any restrictions: not on parties, on trips or anything like that. But specifically because of this, if you don't want restrictions, go get vaccinated today. Talk to your parents and get vaccinated," he said. Israel reinstated a mask mandate indoors amid a rise in new infections in the past week. Israel's Health Ministry recorded 113 new coronavirus cases Saturday.

<https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-europe-malaysia-international-soccer-coronavirus-pandemic-b67114dc21e81d70aefea9f69e710aac>

Test And Trace Has Lost Track Of Nearly 600 Million Covid Tests

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Boris Johnson's £37bn Test and Trace service is facing fresh criticism after a damning new report found that it had lost track of nearly 600 million Covid tests. The National Audit Office spending

watchdog concluded that the system was still failing to “deliver value for taxpayers”, with a lack of any targets for self-isolation by the public and a continued reliance on private consultants. Test and Trace, which was run by Tory peer Dido Harding, has already come under fire for its use of private firms Serco and Deloitte and its repeated failures in 2020 to track down contacts of people who had Covid.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nhs-test-and-trace-lost-covid-tests_uk_60d48f44e4b0c101fc857eeb

COVID: New restrictions amid struggle to contain Delta variant

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Authorities in several countries – from Bangladesh and Indonesia to Australia and Israel – are racing to contain the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, while Russia’s Saint Petersburg announced a record death toll, laying bare the challenges faced by nations worldwide in their efforts to return to pre-pandemic life. While vaccination campaigns have brought down infections in mostly wealthy nations, the rise of the Delta variant has stoked fears of new waves of a virus that has already killed nearly four million people.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/26/delta-covid-19-variant-forces-new-lockdowns-as-europe-eases-curbs>

Study on Covid vaccine against Delta plus variant is underway: ICMR

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A study on the effectiveness of the existing coronavirus vaccine against the Delta Plus variant, which has been notified as a "variant of concern", following its detection in several parts of India, is underway, said Dr Samiran Panda, Head of Epidemiology, ICMR today. Amid emerging cases and concerns over the third wave of Covid-19, the epidemiologist said the third wave will not be as severe as the second one, which had ravaged the country in April-May, and stretched healthcare infrastructure.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/study-on-covid-vaccine-against-delta-plus-variant-is-underway-icmr-11624717133267.html>

AP analysis: Almost all US coronavirus deaths among unvaccinated

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Almost all recent deaths from the coronavirus in the U.S. are among those who have not been vaccinated, an analysis of government data by The Associated Press found. The data from May showed only 0.8 percent of COVID-19 deaths were people who were fully vaccinated. That is only 150 people out of the more than 18,000 who died from the virus last month, according to AP. The rate of hospitalization among fully vaccinated individuals was also incredibly low in May at 0.1 percent. Out of more than 853,000 hospitalizations, fewer than 1,200 were among fully vaccinated people

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/560240-almost-all-us-coronavirus-deaths-among-unvaccinated>

Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines Immunize For Up to Three Years

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COVID-19 vaccines developed with new messenger RNA technology, currently those produced by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech, can prevent an adult from severe COVID-19 cases for three years, according to a study by Swiss scientists released on June 25. As reported by La Opinion de Malaga, the research, published by the Swiss Government’s Scientific Working Group against covid-19, reduces, however, to 16 months the possible immunity of those vaccinated with this type of vaccine against moderate forms of the virus. According to Swiss scientists, the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, the only ones currently administered in Spain, create an antibody response between two and four times greater than that presented by those who have overcome the disease, which means longer-lasting protection.

<https://www.euroweeklynnews.com/2021/06/26/pfizer-and-moderna-vaccines-immunize-for-up-to-three-years/>

FDA adds heart inflammation warning to Moderna, Pfizer vaccines

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The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has added a warning about the risk of heart inflammation to fact sheets for Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines. The warning on Friday noted that reports of adverse events following vaccination – particularly after the second dose – suggest increased risks of myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle, and pericarditis, or inflammation of the tissue surrounding the heart.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/26/fda-adds-heart-inflammation-warning-to-moderna-pfizer-vaccines>

Booster may be needed for J&J shot as Delta variant spreads, some experts already taking them

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Infectious disease experts are weighing the need for booster shots of the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna mRNA-based vaccines for Americans who received Johnson & Johnson's one-dose vaccine due to the increasing prevalence of the more contagious Delta coronavirus variant. A few say they have already done so themselves, even without published data on whether combining two different vaccines is safe and effective or backing from U.S. health regulators. Canada and some European countries are already allowing people to get two different COVID-19 shots

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/booster-may-be-needed-for-j-26j-shot-as-delta-variant-spreads-some-experts-already-taking-them/ar-AALsD47>

ACIP Backs Flu and COVID Vaccine Co-Administration

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Influenza vaccines can be co-administered with COVID-19 vaccines for both children and adults, according to updated recommendations from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). In a unanimous 14-0 vote on Thursday, the committee approved language for co-administration of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, in line with current CDC guidance that says COVID-19 vaccines can be administered with other vaccines, though providers should be aware of increased reactogenicity.

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/meetingcoverage/acip/93283>

The man who tested positive for Covid 43 times

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Scientists are studying the case of a man in Bristol who has recovered from 290 days being positive with SARS-CoV-2. Dave, 72, is a driving instructor and musician who's spent the last 10 months with an active coronavirus infection, visiting hospital seven times. His immune system was vulnerable to the virus after a leukaemia diagnosis and chemotherapy treatment. Dave was eventually treated with a new mixture of anti-viral drugs provided by the US company Regeneron on compassionate grounds. Now scientists at the University of Bristol are studying Dave's case to try and understand how Covid acts and mutates within the body.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-57586965>

How Bad Could the Delta Variant Get in the U.S.?

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The COVID picture in America has vastly improved from where it was a short time ago. But there are two troubling trends to reckon with: a marked slowdown in vaccinations and the rise of the Delta variant. I spoke with New York editor-at-large David Wallace-Wells about what to expect in the near future.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/opinion/how-bad-could-the-delta-variant-get-in-the-us/ar-AALppj1>

Record Vaccinations May Not Stop Deadly Third Wave in India

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Officials in New Delhi rejoiced earlier this week when India hit a single-day record by administering more than 8 million Covid-19 vaccinations. But even this unprecedented pace may not be fast enough for a country just emerging from a devastating second wave to head off a third one, experts say. They also question whether this week's push averaging about 4.6 million doses a day, up from about

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/coronavirus-outbreak/record-vaccinations-may-not-stop-a-deadly-third-wave-in-india>

Bangkok, 9 provinces restrict movements to curb rising cases

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Faced with a sharp rise in coronavirus cases, the Thai capital on Sunday announced a ban on indoor dining and gatherings of more than 20 people, in addition to the closure of construction sites and the sealing off of workers' quarters in Bangkok and nine other provinces. The measures will remain for 30 days. Thailand reported 3,995 confirmed cases and 42 dead in the last 24 hours. The numbers have doubled recently, and health officials blame a lack of cooperation from migrant workers employed in construction and in factories.

<https://apnews.com/article/bangkok-business-coronavirus-pandemic-health-f8ade99d1a516b44f11e82e0c9f6e14a>

Sydney and Darwin in lockdown as COVID-19 cases pop up across Australia

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Australia reported on Sunday one of the highest numbers for locally acquired coronavirus cases this year, triggering lockdowns in the cities of Sydney and Darwin and forcing tighter restrictions in four states. Sydney began a two-week lockdown on Sunday as the Bondi neighbourhood cluster of the highly infectious coronavirus Delta variant rose to 110 in Australia's largest city, while an outbreak in the northern city of Darwin prompted a hard two-day stay-at-home order.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-new-south-wales-state-reports-30-new-covid-19-cases-2021-06-27/>