

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

21st Jul 2021

Overnight NewsRoundUp

J&J vaccine may be less effective against Delta, study suggests

- The coronavirus vaccine made by Johnson & Johnson is much less effective against the Delta and Lambda variants than against the original virus, according to a new study posted online on Tuesday.
- [Although troubling, the findings result from experiments conducted with blood samples in a laboratory](#), and may not reflect the vaccine's performance in the real world. But the conclusions add to evidence that the **13 million people inoculated with the J&J vaccine may need to receive a second dose** - ideally of one of the mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna, the authors said.
- The conclusions are at odds with those from smaller studies published by Johnson & Johnson earlier this month suggesting that a single dose of the vaccine is effective against the variant even eight months after inoculation.
- The new study has not yet been peer reviewed nor published in a scientific journal. But it is **consistent with observations that a single dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine - which has a similar architecture to the J&J vaccine - shows only about 33% efficacy against symptomatic disease caused by the Delta variant.**
- 'The message that we wanted to give was not that people shouldn't get the J&J vaccine, but we hope that in the future, it will be boosted with either another dose of J&J or a boost with Pfizer or Moderna,' said Nathaniel Landau, a virologist at NYU's Grossman School of Medicine, who led the study.
- Other experts said the results are what they would have expected, because all of the vaccines seem to work better when given in two doses. **'I have always thought, and often said, that the J&J vaccine is a two-dose vaccine,' said John Moore, a virologist at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York.**
- Dr Moore pointed to several studies in monkeys and people that have shown greater efficacy with two doses of the J&J vaccine, compared with one dose. He said the new study was particularly credible because it was published by a team with no ties to any of the vaccine manufacturers.
- But the data from the new study 'does not speak to the full nature of immune protection,' said Seema Kumar, a spokesperson for J&J. Studies that have been sponsored by the company indicate that the vaccine 'generated strong persistent activity against the rapidly spreading Delta variant,' she said.
- The Delta variant is the most contagious version yet of the coronavirus. It accounts for 83% of infections in the United States, Dr Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said at a Senate hearing on Tuesday.
- The variant may also be mainly responsible for a recent rise in infections. Although they are still low relative to last winter, cases are rising in all 50 states, and hospitalizations are increasing in nearly all of them. In the two weeks ending on Tuesday, the nation averaged 268 deaths per day.
- **Delta may cause more breakthrough infections than earlier forms of the virus, but more than 99% of the hospitalizations and deaths are occurring among**

unvaccinated people. Rates of immunization in the country have stalled, with just under 60% of adults fully protected against the virus.

- Several studies have suggested that the mRNA vaccines made by the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna will maintain their efficacy against the coronavirus, including all variants identified so far. One recent study showed, for example, that the vaccines trigger a persistent immune reaction in the body that may protect against the coronavirus for years.
- But evidence on the J&J vaccine has been limited, because it was rolled out later than the mRNA vaccines. Most studies of effectiveness of the coronavirus vaccines were conducted at medical centers and hospitals that relied on staff members who received the mRNA vaccines.

New York Times - 20 July 2021

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The coronavirus vaccine made by Johnson & Johnson is much less effective against the Delta and Lambda variants than against the original virus, according to a new study posted online on Tuesday. Although troubling, the findings result from experiments conducted with blood samples in a laboratory, and may not reflect the vaccine's performance in the real world. But the conclusions add to evidence that the 13 million people inoculated with the J.&J. vaccine may need to receive a second dose — ideally of one of the mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna, the authors said. The conclusions are at odds with those from smaller studies published by Johnson & Johnson earlier this month suggesting that a single dose of the vaccine is effective against the variant even eight months after inoculation.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/20/health/coronavirus-johnson-vaccine-delta.html>

Israel to launch digital tracking for people in COVID quarantine

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Under new measure, people in isolation must reply to a text message sent by police who will then use it to track their immediate location; PM calls for criminal charges for confirmed coronavirus patients who violate their isolation, streamlining enforcement process on the ground

https://www.ynetnews.com/health_science/article/bjum9twcu

Canada to open border to fully vaccinated U.S. citizens on Aug. 9

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Canada on Monday said it will begin to ease pandemic restrictions at the U.S.-Canada border next month, allowing U.S. citizens and permanent residents living in the United States who are fully vaccinated with Canadian-authorized vaccines to enter for nonessential travel without quarantining. The decision, which takes effect Aug. 9, follows months of criticism from U.S. lawmakers across the political spectrum, business groups and some travelers over what they said was an overly cautious approach to lifting curbs that have split families, battered the tourism sector and upended life in close-knit border communities.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/19/canada-us-border-open/>

Will we all need COVID vaccine booster shots?

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As more and more people are fully vaccinated around the world, attention has turned to whether or not booster vaccines will be required to maintain immunity and to protect against emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus. A booster vaccine is designed to strengthen our body's immune response to an antigen or "foreign invader" that it has been primed to respond to by a previous vaccine. These are commonly used to protect against diseases such as tetanus and polio, where, after time, our

immunity against the antigen wanes. Boosters are usually a shot of the same vaccine again, just given at a later date.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/7/20/will-we-all-need-covid-vaccine-booster-shots>

COVID-19: Employers will have to apply for isolation exemption for 'pinged' workers as govt rules out critical jobs list

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An increasing number of people are being forced to self-isolate as they are identified as close contacts of somebody who is COVID positive, leading to many critical workers being unable to do their jobs.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-employers-will-have-to-apply-for-isolation-exemption-for-pinged-workers-as-govt-rules-out-critical-jobs-list-12359593>

Zimbabwe orders COVID-19 vaccination for all civil servants

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Zimbabwe's government on Tuesday ordered that all its workers should receive a COVID-19 vaccine and only 10% of civil servants report for duty, with the rest working from home in a bid to curb the spread of the pandemic. The head of the public commission, Jonathan Wutawunashe, said in a circular to government departments that all civil servants - about 250,000 - were considered frontline workers who should get COVID-19 shots.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/zimbabwe-orders-covid-19-vaccination-all-civil-servants-2021-07-20/>

Amazon to slow down COVID-19 testing for warehouse workers - source

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Amazon.com Inc will slow down COVID-19 testing for its warehouse employees in the United States by July 30, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Monday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/amazon-stop-covid-19-testing-warehouse-workers-information-2021-07-19/>

More than 110,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses have been destroyed in Georgia since December

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More than 110,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been destroyed in Georgia since December 2020, when vaccines were first administered in the state, Georgia health officials said. Georgia Department of Health spokesperson Nancy Nydam told CNN that 110,079 doses were destroyed because they were not being used. There are various reasons for vaccines to go unused, according to Nydam, including doses not being needed after being prepared, parent or child refusal, damaged vials, syringe leaks and apparent contamination.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/07/19/us/georgia-covid-vaccine-destroyed/index.html>

Pharmacies call for more Pfizer doses as young people 'clamouring' for vaccine

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In Ireland, pharmacies are calling for the Government to provide them with more Pfizer vaccines to keep up with demand. It comes as pharmacists today administer their 100,000th vaccine, with 86% of these going to the 18-34s. Darragh O'Loughlin from the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) says the majority of jabs administered there have been single-shot doses. Over 800 pharmacies around the country are administering Janssen vaccines while the HSE provided Pfizer vaccine to just 350 pharmacies.

https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40341101.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

Unvaccinated say vaccines more dangerous than COVID-19: poll

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Unvaccinated individuals believe the coronavirus vaccine is more dangerous than the virus, according to a poll conducted by Yahoo News and YouGov. The poll found 37 percent of unvaccinated individuals believe the vaccines pose greater health risks than the virus while 29 percent acknowledge the coronavirus is a greater health risk than the vaccines, which studies have shown are effective in reducing cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Thirty-four percent of individuals were unsure which poses a greater threat to their health. The study highlights how misinformation about the vaccines are deeply ingrained with many Americans.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/563837-unvaccinated-say-vaccines-more-dangerous-than-covid-19-poll>

Nearly a third of hospital workers in New York City are still unvaccinated against COVID-19

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Nearly one-third of employees at New York City hospitals have still not gotten COVID-19 vaccines, city data show. Figures from the state Health Department reveal only 70 percent have completed their vaccine series since the shots were rolled out in December 2020. Of the five boroughs, Manhattan has the highest percentage of vaccinated workers with 76 percent having received their shots. Queens has fared second best with more than two-thirds of health care workers, or 67 percent, being vaccinated. However, almost 40 percent of hospital staff in the remaining three boroughs have either refused the COVID-19 vaccine or not gotten it yet.

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9803201/One-New-York-hospital-workers-unvaccinated-according-official-st-ate-data.html?ito=social-twitter_dailymailus

More than half of Australia's population under COVID-19 lockdowns

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South Australia joins Victoria and Sydney in lockdown. New cases ease slightly in New South Wales, Victoria. 21 NSW cases spent time in community while infectious.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/australias-victoria-reports-13-local-covid-19-cases-lockdown-call-looms-2021-07-19/>

Australia's Victoria extends COVID-19 lockdown by seven days

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Australia's Victoria state extended its COVID-19 lockdown by seven days until July 27 as officials sought more time to quell an outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant that has now reached more than 80 cases in a week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-victoria-extends-covid-19-lockdown-by-seven-days-2021-07-20/>

80% of new COVID-19 cases in Spain among non-vaccinated people, health minister says

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The vast majority of new COVID-19 cases in Spain in the past five weeks were detected among non-vaccinated people, Health Minister Carolina Darias said on Monday, as new infections rose by 27,286. Just 5.5% of new cases within the period were detected among people who had been fully vaccinated, Darias said, adding 11.4% were partially vaccinated and 83.1% were unvaccinated.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/80-new-covid-19-cases-spain-among-non-vaccinated-people-health-minister-says-2021-07-20/>

Global quest underway to speed COVID-19 vaccine trials

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Scientists are working on a benchmark for COVID-19 vaccine efficacy that would allow drugmakers to conduct smaller, speedier human trials to get them to market and address a huge global vaccine shortage. Researchers are trying to determine just what level of COVID-19 antibodies a vaccine must produce to provide protection against the illness. Regulators already use such benchmarks - known as correlates of protection - to evaluate flu vaccines without requiring large, lengthy clinical trials.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/global-quest-underway-speed-covid-19-vaccine-trials-2021-07-20/>

Delta variant behind more than 80% of U.S. cases, Fauci says

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The Delta variant of the coronavirus is the cause of more than 80% of new U.S. COVID-19 cases, but the authorized vaccines remain more than 90% effective in preventing hospitalizations and deaths, said top U.S. infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci during U.S. Senate hearing on Tuesday. The hearing featured a pointed exchange with Republican U.S. Senator Rand Paul, in which he accused Fauci of lying about the National Institutes of Health providing funding for research at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/delta-variant-behind-more-than-80-us-cases-vaccines-still-highly-effective-fauci-2021-07-20/>

Vaccinating children in Australia would help protect against Covid but high-risk groups first, experts say

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Public health experts say vaccinating children against Covid-19 will be important for protecting Australians against the Delta variant, but that high-risk populations must take priority. On Monday, the New South Wales government indicated the state would consider vaccinating young people as part of its efforts to control the current Delta outbreak. "I think there will be a key role for vaccinating children," the NSW chief health officer, Dr Kerry Chant, said at the daily press conference. "It is pleasing to see in some countries overseas that we have vaccines that are licensed for use in children."

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jul/21/vaccinating-children-in-australia-would-help-protect-against-covid-but-high-risk-groups-first-experts-say>

Kazakhstan considers producing second Russian vaccine locally

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Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev ordered his cabinet on Monday to look into the possibility of importing and locally producing the Russian-developed Sputnik Light vaccine, his office said. The Central Asian nation already produces the Sputnik V vaccine, developed earlier, at a local plant in addition to importing it from Russia.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kazakhstan-considers-producing-second-russian-vaccine-locally-2021-07-19/>

Circumventing Covid-19 with better ventilation and air quality

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Gathering outdoors has provided people a safer alternative to meeting inside during the Covid-19 pandemic. But for those who spend their days in crowded indoor spaces — workers in office buildings and industrial facilities, students in schools, and the like — how can their indoor environments be made more similar to the outdoors? With better air quality and ventilation. Yet federal regulations are insufficient for improving indoor ventilation and few states are moving to improve it. We examined the Covid-19 US State Policy database and found that only Michigan,

Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington have explicit occupational safety and health standards to promote better air and/or ventilation quality.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/07/20/circumventing-covid-19-with-better-ventilation-and-air-quality/>

Vietnam agrees to tech transfers on Russian, U.S. COVID-19 vaccines

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Vietnam said on Tuesday it has reached agreements on technology transfers for Russian and U.S. coronavirus vaccines. The Southeast Asian nation is keen to boost its vaccine capacity. The World Health Organization said in May it was reviewing a proposal by an unidentified manufacturer in Vietnam to become an mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine technology hub.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-says-agrees-tech-transfers-russian-us-covid-19-vaccines-2021-07-20/>

Taiwan's Medigen to start late-stage clinical trial for COVID-19 vaccine in Paraguay

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Taiwan's Medigen Vaccine Biologics Corp said on Tuesday it will start a late-stage clinical trial this year in Paraguay for its COVID-19 vaccine, part of the island's push to make its own shots against the coronavirus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwans-medigen-start-late-stage-clinical-trial-covid-19-vaccine-paraguay-2021-07-20/>

Takeda agrees to supply additional 50 mln Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to Japan

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Takeda Pharmaceutical Co said on Tuesday it agreed to supply an additional 50 million doses of Moderna Inc's COVID-19 vaccine to Japan. The drugmaker will supply the extra doses from as early as the beginning of 2022, it said in a statement. That adds to an earlier agreement for Takeda to bring in 50 million doses of the vaccine, which has been primarily used in mass vaccination sites and workplace inoculations in Japan

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/takeda-agrees-supply-additional-50-mln-moderna-covid-19-vaccines-japan-2021-07-20/>

COVID-19: Geneticists criticize poor sequencing efforts in US

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Genetic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is vital to track the spread of existing variants and quickly identify new variants of concern. Writing in the journal PLOS Genetics, scientists say the United States has failed to contribute adequately to these global surveillance efforts. They blame poor central coordination and, until recently, a lack of funding.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/covid-19-geneticists-criticize-poor-sequencing-efforts-in-us>

Researchers: Virus surge a 'raging forest fire' in Arkansas

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Public health researchers on Tuesday called the rapid rise in coronavirus cases and hospitalizations in Arkansas a "raging forest fire," and the state's top health official warned that he expects significant outbreaks in schools. The model by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences' Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health projected a daily average of 1,039 new cases over the next week. The model also predicted an average increase of 169 new cases per day in children under the age of 17. Arkansas leads the country in new cases per capita, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University researchers. The state also has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country, with only 35% of the population fully vaccinated.

<https://apnews.com/article/science-health-education-forests-arkansas-3b1adb89c919596f4a763140b1fe0b13>

Olympic athletes, baseball players, soccer stars: Why we're still seeing Covid-19 cases among top athletes

Olympic athletes, baseball players, soccer stars: Why we're still seeing Covid-19 cases among top athletes

The close proximity that athletes spend time in could be a breeding ground for infectious diseases, he said. It should be noted that vaccine programs vary in nations around the world, and not as much is known about some vaccines given in some countries, he added. And some teenage athletes might come from countries that don't vaccinate people that age, he said. CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta, reporting from Tokyo, said the Olympics bring a unique challenge. More than 11,000 athletes representing 206 national Olympic committees have come to an island nation that has seen a surge in cases.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/07/20/sport/covid-sports-world-olympics-intl-spt/index.html>

"Don't get sick": Indonesia's poor miss out on COVID care

In the teeming, impoverished North Jakarta neighbourhood of Muara Baru, people have made a grim joke out of the acronym for the Indonesian government's lockdown to combat the coronavirus pandemic: PPKM. "Pelan Pelan Kita Mati," Herdayati, a 48-year-old mother of six and sole breadwinner for a family living in a narrow, claustrophobic alley, said, explaining the gallows humour.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/dont-get-sick-indonesias-poor-miss-out-covid-care-2021-07-19/>

Senegal's COVID-19 surge forces difficult Eid al-Adha decisions

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On the whole, Senegal has been spared the levels of death and infection seen in other parts of the world, recording just 52,671 cases and 1,227 deaths during the pandemic, according to health ministry figures. But cases have soared in the past week, threatening to overwhelm health services just as Senegalese prepare to gather in extended families for the year's most anticipated feast. President Macky Sall threatened on Friday to close borders and impose a new state of emergency after the country broke its daily case record three times in a single week

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/senegals-covid-19-surge-forces-difficult-eid-al-adha-decisions-2021-07-20/>

S.Korea leaders apologise for navy ship COVID outbreak amid vaccine furore

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South Korea's prime minister and defence minister apologised as hundreds of COVID-19-infected sailors were flown to Seoul on Tuesday after a navy destroyer patrolling the waters off Africa was found to be riddled with the coronavirus. Almost 250 of the 301 unvaccinated crew aboard the destroyer Munmu the Great were infected, sparking a public furore at the government's failure to protect those serving abroad. The whole crew arrived home on Tuesday after the government carried out an emergency air evacuation, the defence ministry said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-leaders-apologise-navy-ship-covid-19-outbreak-amid-vaccine-furore-2021-07-20/>

Covid-19 hospitalizations and deaths are increasing, and the vast majority were not vaccinated

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The surge in Covid-19 cases fueled by the Delta variant and vaccine hesitancy has now led to increasing rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Data from Johns Hopkins University shows: The average number of new Covid-19 cases each day the past week was 32,278. That's a 66% jump from the average daily rate the previous week, and 145% higher than the rate from two weeks ago.

An average of 258 Americans died from Covid-19 each day this past week -- up 13% from the rate of daily deaths the previous week.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/07/19/health/us-coronavirus-monday/index.html>

A million children in England out of school last week because of Covid-19

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More than one million children in England were out of school last week for reasons relating to Covid-19, official figures show. About one in seven (14.3 per cent) state school pupils did not attend on July 15 — the highest number since classes returned in March. This includes approximately 934,000 children self-isolating due to a possible contact with an infected person, 47,000 pupils with a confirmed case of Covid-19, and 34,000 with a suspected case. A further 35,000 pupils were off as a result of school closures due to the coronavirus, according to Department for Education (DfE) statistics.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-million-children-in-england-out-of-school-last-week-because-of-covid-19-w5pf9fgxt>

Covid-19 deaths in England and Wales up 68% in a week

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Deaths from Covid in England and Wales have risen by more than 68% in a week, according to the latest data available from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). A total of 183 deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending July 9 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, according to the ONS – up 68% on the previous week. There were 9,752 deaths in England and Wales registered in the week ending July 9, 2021, this was 944 more deaths than the previous week and 6.2% above the five-year average.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-07-20/covid-19-deaths-in-england-and-wales-up-68-in-a-week>

India's pandemic death toll could be in the millions

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India's excess deaths during the pandemic could be a staggering 10 times the official COVID-19 toll, likely making it modern India's worst human tragedy, according to the most comprehensive research yet on the ravages of the virus in the South Asian country. Most experts believe India's official toll of more than 414,000 dead is a vast undercount, but the government has dismissed those concerns as exaggerated and misleading.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-science-health-india-pandemics-334c326d86efa73a0631bf7cb6e3f92e>

China reports spike in new COVID cases on border with Myanmar

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China has reported its highest daily increase in new confirmed COVID-19 cases since January, driven by an outbreak in Yunnan province, which shares a border with Myanmar, where the coronavirus is surging due to the spread of the Delta variant. Mainland China recorded 65 new confirmed cases for July 19, compared with 31 a day earlier, the National Health Commission said in a statement. That was the most since January 30, when 92 new cases were reported.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/20/china-reports-spike-in-new-covid-cases-on-border-with>

'The hospitals are very near to not coping': UK health workers speak out

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On Monday, for the first time since the early days of the vaccination programme in the UK, new Covid cases outnumbered the number of daily doses administered. As England lifts most restrictions, six healthcare workers from paramedics to paediatricians speak about what the reality is like amid rising coronavirus infections.

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jul/20/the-hospitals-are-very-near-to-not-coping-uk-health-workers-speak-out?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Iran orders week-long shutdown in Tehran amid fifth COVID wave

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Iran imposed a one-week lockdown in the capital and a nearby province on Tuesday as daily COVID-19 caseloads hit a record high amid a fifth wave of the pandemic, state television reported. The lockdown affects Tehran and Alborz provinces, with only essential businesses allowed to stay open. Most offices, theatres and sports facilities must shut down in an effort to prevent the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, the TV said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-orders-week-long-shutdown-tehran-amid-fifth-covid-wave-2021-07-20/>

Ex-aide launches new salvo against UK's Johnson over virus

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A disgruntled former top aide to Prime Minister Boris Johnson claims the British leader was dismissive of the threat caused by surging coronavirus cases last year, saying he did not want to impose a lockdown because the disease was only killing the elderly. Dominic Cummings left his job as Johnson's adviser in November and has since launched a series of excoriating attacks on his former boss. In an interview with the BBC broadcast Tuesday, Cummings said Johnson resisted imposing a second lockdown in the fall of 2020 because "the people who are dying are essentially all over 80."

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-health-government-and-politics-coronavirus-pandemic-1bde438616c9def70bb641d1e6ee5a0f>

Japanese PM Suga says world should see safe Olympics staged

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The world needs to see that Japan can stage a safe Olympics, the country's prime minister told sports officials Tuesday ahead of the Tokyo Games. Tens of thousands of athletes, officials, games staff and media are arriving in Japan amid a local state of emergency and widespread opposition from the general public. Events start Wednesday — in softball and women's soccer — two days ahead of the formal opening ceremony of an Olympics already postponed a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://apnews.com/article/sports-2020-tokyo-olympics-japan-coronavirus-vaccine-japan-olympic-team-39e7c783f206566cc323c3ebbcf5fca9>