

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

25th Jan 2022

Lockdown Exit

Canada's Trudeau slams 'fear mongering' over COVID vaccine mandate for truckers

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused conservative politicians of stoking fear that COVID-19 vaccine mandates for cross-border truck drivers are exacerbating supply chain disruptions and fueling inflation. The United States imposed a mandate, meant to aid the fight against the fast spreading Omicron variant of the coronavirus, on Jan. 22, while Canada's started on Jan. 15. The trucking industry has warned the measure will take thousands of drivers off the roads during what is already a dire labor shortage in the industry

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/canadas-trudeau-slams-fear-mongering-over-covid-vaccine-mandate-truckers-2022-01-24/>

India's Omicron wave may intensify in coming weeks -experts

India's COVID-19 infections, led by the Omicron variant, may see a sharp rise in the coming weeks, some top experts said, noting that the variant was already in community transmission and hospitals were seeing more patients despite a decline in cases in major cities. India reported 306,064 new infections over the last 24 hours, the health ministry said, about an 8% decline from the average daily cases reported in the last four days. Deaths were 439, the lowest in five days. But weekly positivity rates have risen to 17.03% in the week to Jan. 24, from about 0.63% Dec. 27, led by the highly-transmissible Omicron variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-omicron-wave-may-intensify-coming-weeks-experts-2022-01-24/>

S.Korea's daily COVID-19 count exceeds 8,000 for the first time -KDCA

South Korea's daily count of new coronavirus cases topped 8,000 for the first time on Tuesday, as the highly infectious Omicron variant spreads rapidly despite the recent extension of strict social-distancing rules to slow infection. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 8,571 cases for Monday, exceeding the previous high posted in mid-December of 7,848. The new record came amid the spread of the more transmissible Omicron variant which became dominant last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skoreas-daily-covid-19-count-exceeds-8000-first-time-kdca-2022-01-25/>

Do not assume COVID pandemic reaching 'end game', warns WHO

Article reports that the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Monday that it was dangerous to assume the Omicron variant would herald the end of COVID-19's acutest phase, exhorting nations to stay focused to beat the pandemic. "It's dangerous to assume that Omicron will be the last variant and that we are in the end game," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a WHO executive board meeting of the two-year pandemic that has killed nearly 6 million people. "On the contrary, globally the conditions are ideal for more variants to emerge."

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-chief-says-world-critical-juncture-covid-pandemic-2022-01-24/>

England to drop COVID travel test demand, PM Johnson says

Fully vaccinated travellers arriving in Britain will no longer have to take a COVID-19 test, transport minister Grant Shapps said on Monday, as the government sets out plans to move beyond restrictions and live with the virus. Currently, vaccinated people arriving in Britain are required to take a lateral flow test within 2 days of arriving. At times, the government has previously also

required all passengers to take tests before departing for Britain.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/england-drop-covid-travel-test-demand-pm-johnson-says-2022-01-24/>

Rich countries' access to foreign nurses during Omicron raises ethical concerns, group says

The Omicron-fuelled wave of COVID-19 infections has led wealthy countries to intensify their recruitment of nurses from poorer parts of the world, worsening dire staffing shortages in overstretched workforces there, the International Council of Nurses said. Sickness, burnout and staff departures amid surging Omicron cases have driven absentee rates to levels not yet seen during the two-year pandemic, said Howard Catton, CEO of the Geneva-based group that represents 27 million nurses and 130 national organisations. To plug the gap, Western countries have responded by hiring army personnel as well as volunteers and retirees but many have also stepped up international recruitment as part of a trend that is worsening health inequity, he continued.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/rich-countries-access-foreign-nurses-during-omicron-raises-ethical-concerns-2022-01-23/>

Biden says nation weary from COVID but rising with him in WH

President Joe Biden acknowledged that the pandemic has left Americans exhausted and demoralized but insisted at a news conference marking his first year in office that he has “outperformed” expectations in dealing with it. Facing sagging poll numbers and a stalled legislative agenda, Biden conceded Wednesday he would likely have to pare back his “build back better” recovery package and instead settle for “big chunks” of his signature economic plan. He promised to further attack inflation and the pandemic and blamed Republicans for uniting in opposition to his proposals rather than offering ideas of their own.

<https://apnews.com/article/voting-rights-coronavirus-pandemic-joe-biden-health-business-fdc4e641dc797b2a75131fd290c70f6d>

There is an urgent need to make WHO financially fit for purpose

The failure to invest in pandemic preparedness, response and, more generally, in the health of all people has been the most glaring symptom of the world’s ailing approach to investing in global public health, and universal health coverage, for decades. The G20 leaders meeting in Rome last year doubled down but failed to do enough to address the inadequacies in funding the work needed to protect the world from pandemics, and in particular in the financing of the World Health Organization (WHO) to deliver on its broad – and ever-growing – mandate to act as the world’s leading authority on global health.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/there-is-an-urgent-need-to-make-who-financially-fit-for-purpose/ar-AAT50UF>

Schools May Be Open—But They’re Struggling

The fast-spreading Omicron variant of Covid-19 has dealt a fresh pandemic blow to Brooklyn Tech, one of the nation’s largest high schools, with more than 5,800 students, and among the most competitive, with an admission rate under 10%. The problem there and in many other schools boils down to a mismatch between demand and supply. While many officials and parents nationwide push to keep kids in school and away from remote learning, Omicron has left many schools short of the essentials needed to operate, like teachers, substitutes, bus drivers, cafeteria workers—and sometimes students themselves.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/parents-want-schools-to-be-open-schools-are-struggling-to-comply-11642960091>

U.S. COVID peak may be over but not the pain as deaths rise

Even as COVID-19 cases drop and hospitalizations show signs of plateauing in hard-hit pockets of the United States, the still-rising death toll from the Omicron variant highlights the trail of loss that follows every virus surge. Coronavirus deaths hit an 11-month high on Sunday, climbing 11% in the past week when compared to the prior week, according to a Reuters analysis. COVID-19 fatalities

are a lagging indicator, meaning their numbers usually rise a few weeks after new cases and hospitalizations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-covid-peak-may-be-over-not-pain-deaths-rise-2022-01-24/>

Sinovac regimen gets strong boost from Pfizer, AstraZeneca or J&J COVID shots - study

Article reports that a third booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine made by AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNTech or Johnson & Johnson increases antibody levels significantly in those who have previously received two doses of Sinovac's CoronaVac shot, a study has found. The study found that CoronaVac received the strongest boost from a viral vector or RNA shot, including against the Delta and Omicron coronavirus variants, researchers from Brazil and Oxford University said on Monday. China-based Sinovac's vaccine uses an inactivated version of a coronavirus strain that was isolated from a patient in China

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/mixed-covid-vaccine-schedules-offer-stronger-boost-after-sinovac-regimen-study-2022-01-24/>

U.S. FDA limits use of Regeneron, Lilly COVID-19 antibody treatments

The U.S. health regulator revised on Monday the emergency use authorizations for COVID-19 antibody treatments from Regeneron (REGN.O) and Eli Lilly (LLY.N) to limit their use, as the drugs are unlikely to work against the Omicron coronavirus variant. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said the treatments are currently not cleared for use in any U.S. states or territories, but may be authorized in certain regions if they work against potential new variants.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-fda-restrict-use-regeneron-lilly-covid-antibody-drugs-wapo-2022-01-24/>

Britain says 6000 more people needed for trial of Merck COVID pill

Britain said on Tuesday it needed to recruit 6,000 more people onto a trial of Merck's (MRK.N) COVID-19 antiviral pill molnupiravir to inform how the drug can be rolled out more widely. Britain's MHRA medicine regulator approved the pill, made by Merck and Ridgeback Therapeutics, in November, and the government launched a national study to establish the best way to use the drug. The health ministry said that while 4,500 trial participants had signed up, thousands more were needed to gather the data needed.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-says-6000-more-people-needed-trial-merck-covid-pill-2022-01-25/>

Exit Strategies

Vaccine distribution is creating a new kind of vaccine inequality

As vaccine shipments finally surge into poorer countries, the world is in danger of trading in one form of vaccine inequality for another, with disparities in access replaced by disparities in the ability to distribute them on the ground. After a trying period of vaccine hoarding by wealthy countries, the last 40 days of 2021 saw more doses shipped to countries in need through the U.N.-backed Covax program than in the rest of last year combined, according to the World Health Organization's vaccine director. But distribution campaigns on the ground can take months to ramp up, even in rich nations, and a host of developing countries now receiving shipments are facing a combination of rollout challenges.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/24/vaccine-distribution-logistics-inequality-access/>

Belgium OKs 4th vaccine shot for immunocompromised people

Belgium's health ministers have approved a recommendation to use a fourth dose of coronavirus vaccine to better protect people with a weakened immune system against the virus. Christie Morreale, the minister for public health in the federal government, said Monday that she and her regional counterparts have greenlighted the proposal made by the country's health council. Morreale did not give a date for the start of the program. About 77% of Belgium's nearly 11.5 million

people are now fully vaccinated, and some 6.3 million Belgians have received a booster dose
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/belgium-brussels-protesters-covid-european-union-b1999497.html>

Hong Kong's Hotel Quarantine Criticized After Omicron Outbreak

Hong Kong's onerous system of hotel quarantine for travelers was meant to stop infection from seeping into a largely virus-free city. Instead, it's become a spreading ground, seeding an omicron outbreak that's led to thousands of people being locked down and calls for reform of the controversial setup. An outbreak at a public housing estate of over 200 confirmed and preliminarily positive cases on Monday has been traced to a traveler who caught omicron while undergoing 21 days of isolation at a hotel in Kowloon. While she entered the hotel Covid-free, the pathogen was transmitted to her from an infected person staying at the same hotel.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-24/hong-kong-s-hotel-quarantine-criticized-after-omicron-outbreak>

As Cases Mount, China Eases Olympics Covid Testing Standards

The Beijing Winter Olympics has eased a testing requirement for Covid-19 even as a growing number of cases associated with the games are being found, underscoring the challenge China faces in trying to keep the infectious omicron variant at bay while minimizing disruption to the massive sporting event. With less than two weeks to go before the opening ceremony, a total of 78 cases among Olympics participants have been reported since Jan. 4, which includes "stakeholders" such as marketing and other support staff. The first case among an athlete or team official was detected at Beijing airport on Sunday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-24/as-cases-mount-china-eases-olympics-covid-testing-standards>

Diplomats at Beijing Olympics Risk 21 Days in Quarantine

China warned foreign diplomats attending the Winter Olympics opening ceremony they could face 21 days in quarantine if they are deemed close contacts of positive cases in the audience. The notice, sent to diplomatic missions and seen by Bloomberg News, came amid a long list of measures that attendees must comply with to attend the Feb. 4 event. They included avoiding parties, meals with friends or even elevator chitchat, along with regular Covid-19 tests and travel restrictions.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-24/diplomats-at-beijing-olympics-risk-21-days-in-quarantine>

Beijing Tests Shoppers Buying Fever Drugs Before Winter Olympics

China's capital is requiring anyone who buys commonly available anti-fever medicine to undergo Covid-19 testing, as authorities try to root out undetected virus infections without locking down the country's most important city and host of next week's Winter Olympics. Beijing residents who purchase antipyretics, antivirals and drugs that target coughs and sore throats will get an alert on the mobile app China uses for contact tracing and which is frequently checked to allow entry to public venues. The buyer will then need to take a Covid test within 72 hours or face movement restrictions.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-24/beijing-tests-shoppers-buying-fever-drugs-to-root-out-covid>

Some Hong Kong civil servants, bankers to work from home as COVID spreads

Hong Kong has told some civil servants to work from home from Tuesday, and some banks have given similar instructions to staff following a spate of COVID-19 infections in the Asian financial hub a week before the busy Lunar New Year holiday. Health authorities said there were 109 new cases on Monday, out of which 98 were locally transmitted and five were untraceable. Daily cases hit an 18-month high of 140 on Sunday, fuelled by an outbreak in a congested public housing estate.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-says-civil-servants-work-home-much-possible-covid-spreads-2022-01-24/>

China tests 2M in Beijing, lifts COVID lockdown in Xi'an

Less than two weeks before the opening of the Winter Olympics, a few dozen COVID-19 cases in Beijing have prompted authorities to test millions of people in the capital and extend that to anyone buying cold medicine. The tough new measures came even as the city of Xi'an, a major tourist destination that is the home of the Terracotta Warrior statue army, lifted a lockdown Monday that had isolated its 13 million people for a month. More than 3,000 people have arrived for the Games since Jan. 4, including over 300 athletes and team officials, plus media and other participants, organizers said Monday. So far, 78 people have tested positive, including one who was an athlete or team official.

<https://apnews.com/article/winter-olympics-coronavirus-pandemic-sports-travel-health-63e4ebc0a67c939bf020c93cd715297a>

Thailand Offers 4th Covid Shot in Tourist Spots Before Borders Reopen

Thailand is ramping up the rollout of fourth Covid-19 shots to residents in its tourism-dependent regions as the nation gears up for border reopening next month. Authorities are offering AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines in Bangkok, Phuket, Krabi and seven other provinces to those who have received their third dose at least three months ago, the health ministry said. The Southeast Asian nation has already administered more than 800,000 fourth doses, mostly to healthcare workers and those in high-risk groups, official data showed.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-24/thailand-rolls-out-fourth-covid-shot-in-popular-tourist-spots>

France bars unvaccinated from restaurants, sports venues

People who aren't vaccinated against COVID-19 are no longer allowed in France's restaurants, bars, tourist sites and sports venues unless they recently recovered from the virus. The new law came into effect Monday requiring a "vaccine pass" that is central to the government's anti-virus strategy. France is registering Europe's highest-ever daily coronavirus infection numbers, and hospitals are continuing to fill up with virus patients, though the number of people in intensive care units has dropped in recent days.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-sports-business-lifestyle-health-37901cb95b27cf6c33fa3cc42cad1fc4>

Partisan Exits

Protesters hurl stones at police in Guadeloupe COVID unrest

Protesters attacked police with stones in the early hours of Monday as police moved in to clear out some blockades on Guadeloupe, the authority on the French Caribbean island said, amid ongoing protests against COVID-19 protocols. The Guadeloupe authority said police had been attacked at the Riviere-des-Peres part of the island as they tried to clear out roads that had been blockaded.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/protesters-hurl-stones-police-guadeloupe-covid-unrest-2022-01-24/>

Truckers fighting government vaccine mandate march to Canadian capital

A convoy of truckers started their march from Vancouver on Sunday to the Canadian capital city of Ottawa protesting the government's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for truckers, which the industry says would create driver shortages and fuel inflation. Canada imposed the vaccine mandate for the trucking industry from Jan. 15, under which unvaccinated Canadian truckers re-entering Canada from the United States must get tested for COVID-19 and quarantine themselves.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/truckers-fighting-government-vaccine-mandate-march-to-canadian-capital/ar-AA4f4w>

Water cannon, tear gas at COVID-19 protests in Brussels

Police fired water cannons and thick clouds of tear gas Sunday in Brussels to disperse people protesting COVID-19 vaccinations and government restrictions that aim to curb the fast-spreading omicron variant. Police said the protest in the Belgian capital drew an estimated 50,000 people,

some traveling from France, Germany and other countries to take part. Protesters yelled “Liberty!” as they marched and some had violent confrontations with police. Video showed black-clad protesters attacking a building used by the European Union’s diplomatic service, hurling projectiles at its entrance and smashing windows.

<https://apnews.com/415d5a6a7cf46f3fccafb339a17dc9d0>

Protesters March in Washington Against Covid-19 Vaccine Mandates

Protesters rallied in Washington DC Sunday against government mandates for Covid-19 vaccinations, a sign of the challenges for public-health officials looking for ways to persuade more Americans to get the shots. Protesters marched along the National Mall and gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial, despite cold temperatures. The organizers said they would be protesting mandates, not vaccines themselves.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/protesters-march-in-d-c-against-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-11642963718>

Continued Lockdown

One surrendered Hong Kong hamster tests COVID positive as city lockdown grows

Hong Kong authorities said on Sunday one hamster surrendered to authorities by pet owners had tested positive for COVID-19 and that over 2,200 hamsters had been culled as the city struggled to contain an outbreak. On Tuesday, officials ordered the killing of hamsters from dozens of pet shops after tracing a coronavirus outbreak to a worker at a shop and asked people to surrender any bought on or after Dec. 22. While a handful of hamsters had already tested positive for the virus, this latest case is the first involving a hamster in the care of a pet-owner that had tested positive.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/one-surrendered-hong-kong-hamster-tests-covid-positive-city-lockdown-grows-2022-01-23/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Increase in the Incidence of type 1 diabetes in children during the Covid-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, more children and adolescents newly developed type 1 diabetes than in previous years. This is shown by a recent study of the DZD, the University of Giessen and the University of Ulm with co-authors from other centers in Germany, based on the data of the multicenter German Diabetes Prospective Follow-up Registry (DPV*). The aim of this study was to investigate the incidence of type 1 diabetes in children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany in comparison to previous years. For this purpose, the researchers recorded the children and adolescents aged between six months and under 18 years newly diagnosed in Germany for the period from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

<https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/940971>

‘Stealth Omicron’: Everything we know about new ‘under investigation’ Covid-19 strain BA.2

Health chiefs have revealed they are officially monitoring a new version of Covid-19 – which has been nicknamed “stealth Omicron”. The UK Health Security Agency has marked BA.2 a “variant under investigation” – one level below a “variant of concern” – after early data suggested it may be both more transmissible and better able to evade vaccines than previous strains of the killer virus. It is a sub-lineage of the original Omicron – BA.1 – but appears to have certain differences that may make it both faster at spreading and harder to detect. According to the World Health Organisation, it is now probably outpacing the earlier strain with some 8,000 cases identified in more than 40 countries, including the US, India, Germany and Australia.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/new-covid-variant-ba2-omicron-b1999247.html>

EU regulator set to rule on Pfizer COVID pill by end-Jan, ahead of Merck - source

The European Union's drug regulator is set to decide whether to approve Pfizer's COVID-19 pill at the

end of this month, before doing a final review of Merck's similar but less effective drug in February, a source with knowledge of the matter said. Late last year, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) gave guidance to member states on how to use both antiviral pills as emergency treatments, while it carried out rolling reviews to help member states decide on quick adoption ahead of any formal EU-wide approval

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-regulator-set-rule-pfizer-covid-pill-by-end-jan-ahead-merck-source-2022-01-24/>

UK to begin testing Merck's COVID pill for hospitalised patients

British scientists will begin testing Merck (MRK.N) and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics' antiviral pill molnupiravir as a possible treatment for patients hospitalised with COVID-19, amid the worldwide spread of the Omicron variant. The pill is approved in Britain for use in people with mild to moderate COVID-19, but it is not known whether it would work in patients hospitalised with severe illness, researchers of the RECOVERY trial said on Monday. The study will compare 800 mg doses of molnupiravir, given twice daily for five days, with standard care for adult patients in hospitals because of COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-begin-testing-mercks-covid-19-pill-hospitalised-patients-2022-01-24/>

WHO chief says world at 'critical juncture' in COVID pandemic

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Monday that it was dangerous to assume the Omicron variant would herald the end of COVID-19's acutest phase, exhorting nations to stay focused to beat the pandemic. "It's dangerous to assume that Omicron will be the last variant and that we are in the end game," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a WHO executive board meeting of the two-year pandemic that has killed nearly 6 million people. "On the contrary, globally the conditions are ideal for more variants to emerge."

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-chief-says-world-critical-juncture-covid-pandemic-2022-01-24/>

Fourth COVID vaccine shot raises resistance to serious illness for over-60s: Israel

A fourth dose of COVID-19 vaccine given to people over 60 in Israel made them three times more resistant to serious illness than thrice-vaccinated people in the same age group, Israel's Health Ministry said on Sunday. The ministry also said the fourth dose, or second booster, made people over 60 twice as resistant to infection than those in the age group who received three shots of the vaccine. A preliminary study published by Israel's Sheba medical centre last Monday found that the fourth shot increases antibodies to even higher levels than the third but "probably" not to the point that it could completely fend off the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/fourth-covid-vaccine-shot-sharply-raises-serious-illness-resistance-over-60s-2022-01-23/>

Omicron 'sub-variant' throws up new virus questions

Scientists are keeping a close watch on a recently-discovered sub-variant of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus to determine how its emergence could affect future pandemic spread. The initial Omicron variant has become the dominant virus strain in recent months but British health authorities have notably identified hundreds of cases of the latest version, dubbed BA.2, while international data suggest it could spread relatively quickly.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/22/omicron-sub-variant-throws-up-new-virus-questions>

Europe could be headed for pandemic 'endgame': WHO

The Omicron variant has moved the Covid-19 pandemic into a new phase and could bring it to an end in Europe, the WHO Europe director said Sunday. "It's plausible that the region is moving towards a kind of pandemic endgame," Hans Kluge told AFP in an interview, adding that Omicron could infect 60 percent of Europeans by March. Once the current surge of Omicron sweeping across

Europe subsidies, "there will be for quite some weeks and months a global immunity, either thanks to the vaccine or because people have immunity due to the infection, and also lowering seasonality". "We anticipate that there will be a period of quiet before Covid-19 may come back towards the end of the year, but not necessarily the pandemic coming back," Kluge said. Top US scientist Anthony Fauci expressed similar optimism on Sunday, telling ABC News talk show "This Week" that with Covid-19 cases coming down "rather sharply" in parts of the United States, "things are looking good".

<https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/europe-could-headed-pandemic-endgame-who-1697732>

WHO chief warns against talk of 'endgame' in pandemic

The World Health Organization's director-general on Monday warned that conditions remain ideal for more coronavirus variants to emerge and it's dangerous to assume omicron is the last one or that "we are in the endgame." But Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the acute phase of the pandemic could still end this year if some key targets are met. Tedros laid out an array of achievements and concerns in global health over issues like reducing tobacco use, fighting resistance to anti-microbial treatments, and risks of climate change on human health. But he said "ending the acute phase of the pandemic must remain our collective priority."

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-pandemics-united-nations-world-health-organization-d500f7942d0c920912261b30ab8bfd66>

Researchers find genetic link to COVID-19-induced loss of smell and taste

A new study suggests there is a genetic factor that increases the odds of someone losing their sense of smell or taste after getting COVID-19. Researchers analyzed data from close to 70,000 people for the study. Although more research is needed, the study's findings might help scientists better understand why some people who contract the virus lose one or both senses.

<https://thehill.com/changing-america/well-being/medical-advances/590271-researchers-find-genetic-link-to-covid-induced>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Vietnam reports 14,362 new Covid-19 cases and now 2,155,784 infections in total on Monday (Jan 24)

Vietnam recorded 14,362 new Covid-19 cases on Monday, including 14,307 locally transmitted and 55 imported, according to its Ministry of Health. The Vietnamese capital Hanoi remained the locality with the highest number of infections on Monday with 2,801 cases, followed by central Da Nang city with 958 cases and northern Hai Phong city with 733 cases. The new Covid-19 infections detected in the Southeast Asian country brought the total tally to 2,155,784 with 36,884 deaths. Nationwide, as many as 1,841,180 patients have so far recovered. Some 176.4 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines, including 23.8 million third shots, have been administered, according to the ministry.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2022/01/24/vietnam-reports-14362-new-covid-19-cases-and-now-2155784-infections-in-total-on-monday-jan-24>

Indonesia reports 2,927 new Covid-19 cases, seven more deaths on Monday (Jan 24)

Indonesia on Monday confirmed 2,927 new Covid-19 cases, taking the country's tally of infections to 4,289,305, according to the country's health ministry. The ministry's senior official Siti Nadia Tarmizi reported on Monday morning that the total number of confirmed Omicron cases in the archipelago has increased to 1,626. Among the Omicron cases, 1,019 are imported, while 369 are local transmissions, she said. Health authorities are still identifying sources of the 238 cases. The ministry said that in the past 24 hours, the death toll from Covid-19 in Indonesia rose by seven to 144,227, while 944 more people recovered from the disease, bringing the total number of recoveries to 4,124,211.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2022/01/24/indonesia-reports-2927-new-covid-19-cases-seve>

[n-more-deaths-on-monday-jan-24](#)

Australia COVID-19 deaths mount as return to school threatens new Omicron peak

Australia recorded another surge of COVID-19 deaths on Monday as an outbreak of the highly contagious Omicron variant peaked, and authorities warned numbers could rise further when schools return from end-of-year holidays next week. The world No. 13 economy is trying to strike a balance between reopening after two years of movement restrictions and coping with the highest numbers of deaths and cases of the pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-covid-19-deaths-mount-return-school-threatens-new-omicron-peak-2022-01-24/>

Omicron spreads in New Zealand, spoiling PM's wedding plans

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is postponing her wedding after announcing new COVID-19 restrictions Sunday following the discovery of nine cases of the omicron variant in a single family that flew to Auckland to attend a wedding. The so-called “red setting” of the country’s pandemic response includes heightened measures such as required mask wearing and limits on gatherings. The restrictions will go into effect on Monday. Ardern stressed that “red is not lockdown,” noting that businesses can remain open and people can still visit family and friends and move freely around the country. “Our plan for managing omicron cases in the early stage remains the same as delta, where we will rapidly test, contact trace and isolate cases and contacts in order to slow the spread,” Ardern told reporters.

<https://apnews.com/article/new-zealand-covid-restrictions-jacinda-ardern-wedding-plans-6f17d8f4cf4d54053b83f08616021f43>