

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

13th May 2022

Lockdown Exit

Biden Calls for Renewed Efforts to Bolster Fight Against Covid-19

Article reports that President Biden is seeking to bolster the U.S. role in the world-wide fight against Covid-19, pledging to share vaccine patents and urging world leaders to redouble their efforts to thwart the virus. "We have to start working to prevent the next variant and the next pandemic now," Mr. Biden said Thursday at the second virtual Covid-19 Summit, held as the U.S. approaches the milestone of 1 million Covid-19 deaths. "That's going to require all of us to do more." Heads of state and organizations convened at the Summit to accelerate efforts to get people vaccinated, enhance access to tests and treatments, and finance and build health security against future pandemics and other health crises. The Summit secured more than \$3 billion from countries and philanthropies for Covid-19 relief efforts.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-calls-for-renewed-efforts-to-bolster-fight-against-covid-19-11652391811>

Biden marks 1 million Americans dead from COVID

President Joe Biden on Thursday commemorated the COVID-19 deaths of 1 million people in the United States, marking what he called "a tragic milestone" and urging Americans to "remain vigilant" during the ongoing pandemic. In a statement, Biden acknowledged the impact of the deaths on families left behind and urged the country not to "grow numb to such sorrow." The United States on Wednesday reached more than 1 million COVID-19 deaths, according to a Reuters tally, crossing a once-unthinkable milestone about two years after the first cases upended everyday life.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-marks-1-million-americans-dead-covid-2022-05-12/>

Biden urges world to renew COVID fight as US nears 1M deaths

President Joe Biden appealed to world leaders at a COVID-19 summit Thursday to reenergize a lagging international commitment to attacking the virus as he led the U.S. in marking the "tragic milestone" of 1 million deaths in America. He ordered flags lowered to half-staff and warned against complacency around the globe. "This pandemic isn't over," Biden declared at the second global pandemic summit. He spoke solemnly of the once-unthinkable U.S. toll: "1 million empty chairs around the family dinner table." The coronavirus has killed more than 999,000 people in the U.S. and at least 6.2 million people globally since it emerged in late 2019, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-africa-pandemics-8135c845f812f5047520ffc9b9df80ff>

Covid-19 deaths in the United States: Reinforcing the notion of 'two Americas'

The notion of Covid-19 causing two Americas was on many minds in the summer of 2021. The Washington Post and LA Times both wrote about it; Dr. Anthony Fauci mentioned it in an interview. One America had high demand for Covid-19 vaccines, the other had widespread vaccine hesitancy and opposition to mask and vaccine mandates. This narrative helped shape the understanding of what happened as well as what the country should be doing now to control the pandemic. But Covid has been dividing the nation since the start of the pandemic. Our recent analysis of Covid-19 deaths by region, published in PLoS One, supports the two Americas idea.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/05/12/covid-19-deaths-us-reinforcing-two-americas/>

U.S. will share COVID-19 vaccine technology, Biden tells global summit,

The United States will share technologies used to make COVID-19 vaccines through the World Health

Organization and is working to expand rapid testing and antiviral treatments for hard-to-reach populations, President Joe Biden said on Thursday. Speaking at the second global COVID-19 summit, Biden called on Congress to provide additional funds so that the U.S. may contribute more to the global pandemic response. "We are making available health technologies that are owned by the United States government, including stabilized spike protein that is used in many COVID-19 vaccines," Biden said in his opening speech.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-helped-raise-31-billion-global-pandemic-response-2022-05-12/>

Exit Strategies

North Korea 'isolates and treats' 187,000 people for fever after reporting its first Covid-19 cases

North Korea has treated 187,000 people for fever after the country reported its first Covid cases. The state-run news agency KCNA said 'up to 187,800 people are being isolated and treated' and six people who were sick with fever had died, including one who tested positive for the Omicron variant. The report added: 'A fever whose cause couldn't be identified explosively spread nationwide from late April.' North Korea on Thursday confirmed its first-ever case of Covid-19, with state media calling it a 'severe national emergency incident' after more than two years of keeping the pandemic at bay. KCNA said samples taken from patients sick with fever in Pyongyang on Sunday were 'consistent with' the virus' highly transmissible Omicron variant. The country's top officials, including leader Kim Jong Un, held a crisis politburo meeting to discuss the outbreak and announced they would implement a 'maximum emergency' virus control system.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10811697/North-Korea-isolates-treats-187-000-people-fever-reporting-Covid-19-cases.html>

S.Africa's new COVID cases cross 10000 for first time since January

South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases on Wednesday reported 10,017 new COVID-19 cases, the first day since January the institute has reported more than 10,000 new infections. Health authorities have warned South Africa may be entering a fifth wave of infections driven by the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron sub-variants. South Africa has recorded the most coronavirus cases and deaths on the African continent and only exited a fourth wave in January. Healthcare worker collects a swab from Bronwen Cook for a PCR test against COVID-19 before traveling to London, at O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/safricas-new-covid-cases-cross-10000-first-time-since-january-2022-05-11/>

S.Africa's Ramaphosa to multilateral agencies: buy COVID vaccines from African providers

South Africa's president told a global COVID-19 summit on Thursday that multilateral agencies and philanthropic organisations should buy vaccines and booster doses from African manufacturers to ensure that manufacturing capacity on the continent was retained. South African firm Aspen's COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity is at risk because of a lack of orders.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/safricas-ramaphosa-multilateral-agencies-buy-covid-vaccines-african-providers-2022-05-12/>

U.S. will share COVID-19 vaccine technology, Biden tells global summit

The United States will share technologies used to make COVID-19 vaccines through the World Health Organization and is working to expand rapid testing and antiviral treatments for hard-to-reach populations, President Joe Biden said on Thursday. Speaking at the second global COVID-19 summit, Biden called on Congress to provide additional funds so that the U.S. may contribute more to the global pandemic response.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-helped-raise-31-billion-global-pandemic-response-2022-05-12/>

Partisan Exits

Opinion | Forget the WHO. India owes its people the truth about covid-19.

In April 2021, the oxygen supply to the intensive care unit of the hospital where Manju Begum was admitted ran out. Manju, just 30, was among 20 patients who died; this was just one case among scores in hospitals across the country. Amid oxygen shortages, hospitals posted desperate SOS messages, families carried bottle-size oxygen cylinders to their relatives, and Sikh gurudwaras that usually feed the poor for free organized oxygen drives instead. Despite this catastrophe, India's Parliament was informed this year that there was not a single death from oxygen shortage reported by any state during the pandemic. The unforgivable erasure of these covid-19 deaths has been underscored again by the recent dispute between the World Health Organization and the Indian government over exactly how many people died during the pandemic.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/05/11/barkha-dutt-india-covid-deaths-who-report/>

Trump officials and meat industry blocked life-saving Covid controls, investigation finds

Trump officials "collaborated" with the meatpacking industry to downplay the threat of Covid to plant workers and block public health measures which could have saved lives, a damning new investigation has found. Internal documents reviewed by the congressional select subcommittee on the coronavirus crisis reveal how industry representatives lobbied government officials to stifle "pesky" health departments from imposing evidence-based safety measures to curtail the virus spreading - and tried to obscure worker deaths from these authorities. At least 59,000 workers at five of the largest meatpacking companies - Tyson Foods, JBS USA Holdings, Smithfield Foods, Cargill and National Beef Packing Company which are the subject of the congressional inquiry - contracted Covid in the first year of the pandemic, of whom at least 269 died.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/12/meatpacking-industry-trump-downplay-covid-threat>

UK police recommend more than 100 fines for Downing Street lockdown breaches

British police said on Thursday they had now made more than 100 referrals for fines as part of their investigation into lockdown rule-breaking at gatherings held in Downing Street during the COVID-19 pandemic. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson apologised for receiving a fine in April for breaking lockdown rules by attending a gathering in his office to celebrate his birthday, but has refused to resign over it.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-police-recommend-100-more-fines-downing-street-parties-probe-2022-05-12/>

Report criticizes meat industry, USDA response to pandemic

During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the meat processing industry worked closely with political appointees in the Trump administration to stave off health restrictions and keep slaughterhouses open even as the virus spread rapidly among workers, according to a congressional report released Thursday. The report by the House's Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis said meat companies pushed to keep their plants open even though they knew workers were at high risk of catching the coronavirus. The lobbying led to health and labor officials watering down their recommendations for the industry and culminated in an executive order President Donald Trump issued in spring 2020 designating meat plants as critical infrastructure that needed to remain open.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-congress-donald-trump-0800b4a4e1af64eec53015c38a42a05d>

Continued Lockdown

China to "strictly limit" unnecessary overseas travels by Chinese citizens to combat COVID

China would "strictly limit" unnecessary travel outside the country by Chinese citizens as part of its COVID-19 response, the National Immigration Administration said in a statement on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-strictly-limit-unnecessary-overseas-travels-by-chinese-citizens-combat-2022-05-12/>

Beijing denies lockdown rumours as Shanghai hunts elusive COVID

Beijing denied it was heading for lockdown as panic buying gripped the capital on Thursday, while Shanghai combed the city for lingering COVID-19 cases in the hope of clearing the way to escape from weeks of painful restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-hunts-down-covid-cases-beijing-curbs-taxi-services-2022-05-12/>

Scientific Viewpoint

New COVID sub-variant, dubbed BA.2.12.1, is rapidly becoming dominant in US

Like an eraser sweeping away a chalkboard, the new COVID subvariant, dubbed BA.2.12.1, is rapidly excising its predecessor's once-rapid spread. Currently, this new iteration is on track to outtake its predecessor in the omicron BA.2 lineage; notably, previous omicron lineages have dropped to zero in studied lab samples.

<https://www.salon.com/2022/05/12/ba2-12-1-dominant/>

Symptoms linger two years for some; inflammatory protein patterns may provide long COVID clues

The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review. COVID-19 symptoms still afflict many two years later Half of the COVID-19 patients discharged from a Chinese hospital in early 2020 still have at least one symptom two years later, a new study shows. Overall, regardless of initial disease severity, the 2,469 COVID-19 survivors in the study had improvements in physical and mental health over time. Nearly 90% of those who were employed returned to their jobs within two years.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/symptoms-linger-two-years-some-inflammatory-protein-patterns-may-provide-long-2022-05-12/>

COVID-19: Around 60,000 NHS workers living with PTSD after battling the pandemic

An estimated 60,000 NHS workers are believed to be living with post-traumatic stress as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new research. NHS Charities Together also found nine in 10 workers (90%) say it will take them years to recover. Meanwhile, nearly three-quarters (73%) have expressed concerns about their colleagues leaving the workforce due to poor mental health. Neal Ashurst, an operating department practitioner, was redeployed during the pandemic, switching from anaesthetics to a critical care unit. He told Sky News he had felt "incredibly apprehensive" initially as it meant significant changes from his usual role which he found "very daunting"

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-around-60000-nhs-workers-living-with-ptsd-after-battling-the-pandemic-12611786>

Volunteers receive first dose in clinical trial of Melbourne-made COVID-19 vaccines

Volunteers receive first dose in clinical trial of Melbourne-made COVID-19 vaccines Doses of two new Melbourne-made COVID-19 vaccines have been given to six Victorian volunteers.

<https://www.9news.com.au/videos/national/volunteers-receive-first-dose-in-clinical-trial-of-melbourne-made-covid-19-vaccines/cl32r9az000260jo9p99yktag>

More than half of early Covid-19 patients at one hospital had symptoms two years later, study finds

Even two years after their initial infection, the majority of people who were hospitalized with Covid-19 early in the pandemic had lingering symptoms, according to a new study that may be one of the longest and largest on record to follow people with long Covid. The study, published Wednesday in The Lancet, found that 55% of patients still had at least one Covid-19 symptom two years later. That was actually an improvement from six months after infection, when 68% had symptoms.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/11/health/long-covid-two-years-later/index.html>

Researchers recommend kidney transplant recipients continue getting COVID-19 vaccinations

Although COVID-19 vaccines lower the risk of infection among kidney transplant recipients, breakthrough infections can occur, and researchers recommend patients continue to receive boosters when available. "The SARS-CoV-2 messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines have shown high clinical efficacy in preventing COVID-19 in the immunocompetent population," Ivan Zahradka, MD, from the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine in the Czech Republic, and colleagues wrote. They added, "However, data about the effectiveness of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines are conflicting, and to what extent the two doses of an mRNA vaccine protect [kidney transplant recipients] KTRs from COVID-19 is unclear."

<https://www.healio.com/news/nephrology/20220511/researchers-recommend-kidney-transplant-recipients-continue-getting-covid19-vaccinations>

COVID-19 jabs still necessary, says Serbian epidemiologist

An increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases was not registered during the Labour Day and Easter holidays but everyone should be careful, and vaccinations are still necessary, said Serbian epidemiologist Predrag Kon on Tuesday. In a statement to Serbian public broadcaster RTS, Kon said that with the summer holidays approaching, people would be travelling to and from Serbia, which would increase the potential of spreading the virus. "We are in the situation where we should be extremely strongly recommending vaccination as half of the population has not been inoculated," Kon stressed, noting that there was much higher vaccine uptake in cities than in rural areas.

https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/covid-19-jabs-still-necessary-says-serbian-epidemiologist/

Study finds cancer patients with COVID-19 at greater risk of hospitalisation and death

Cancer patients with COVID-19 have a greater risk of both hospitalisation and death following infection compared with those without the disease. Cancer patients with COVID-19 have been found to be at a greater risk of hospitalisation and 30-day all-cause mortality compared to those without the disease according to the results of a study by a US team from Texas. The presence of cancer has become a recognised factor that is associated with a higher risk for severe outcomes in those infected with COVID-19 and which is largely due to the presence of a compromised immune system. During the early course of the pandemic, studies observed that a higher proportion of cancer patients infected with COVID-19 were both hospitalised and subsequently died, compared to those without the disease.

<https://hospitalhealthcare.com/clinical/oncology/study-finds-cancer-patients-with-covid-19-at-greater-risk-of-hospitalisation-and-death/>

Covid-19 inquiry to look at impact of pandemic on mental health and young people

A public inquiry into the Covid-19 pandemic and its handling will now include the impact of the pandemic on mental health, and on children and young people. It will also look into collaboration between the central government and regional government, including devolved administrations. The chairwoman of the inquiry has also proposed changes to also look at support for victims of domestic abuse, first contact with the NHS, including 111 and 999 services, care in the home, and regulatory control. The updated remit was confirmed in the updated terms of reference published today.

<https://metro.co.uk/2022/05/12/covid-inquiry-to-look-at-impact-of-pandemic-on-mental-health-and-young-people-16631867/>

Moderna completes FDA submission for use of COVID shot in adolescents, kids

Moderna Inc has made all necessary submissions required by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration for emergency use authorization of its COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents and children, it said on Wednesday. The company is seeking approval for the use of its vaccines in three distinct age groups

- adolescents aged 12 to 17 years, children aged six to 11 and those between six years and six months. The submissions for all three groups were made on May 9, it said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-completes-fda-submission-use-covid-shot-adolescents-kids-2022-05-11/>

South African firm says it may close its COVID vaccine plant

The first factory to produce COVID-19 vaccines in Africa says it has not received enough orders and may stop production within weeks, in what a senior World Health Organization official described Thursday as a “failure” in efforts to achieve vaccine equity. South Africa’s Aspen Pharmacare said that it cannot let its large-scale sterile manufacturing facilities sit idle, and will return instead to making anesthetics. At the outset of the COVID pandemic, the company shifted its production and achieved capacity to produce more than 200 million doses annually of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. “It was widely hailed as a great achievement for Africa, a game-changer for the continent. But it has not been followed up with orders. We have not received any orders from the big multilateral agencies,” Stavros Nicolaou, senior executive for strategic trade development at Aspen Pharmacare, told The Associated Press Thursday.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-africa-united-nations-7491de8c9634ab2ad88cd92ae1050819>

Severe COVID, similar illnesses may raise risk for psychiatric disorders

A new study shows that the more than 32,000 survivors of severe COVID-19 and more than 16,000 survivors of other severe respiratory infections studied in England were at significantly higher risk than the general population for new anxiety disorders, dementia, psychosis, bipolar disorder, and new neuropsychiatric drug prescriptions in the first year after hospital release. In the observational study, published today in JAMA Psychiatry, a team led by University of Oxford researchers analyzed data from all 8.38 million adults registered in national databases from Jan 24, 2020, to Jul 7, 2021.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/05/severe-covid-similar-illnesses-may-raise-risk-psychiatric-disorders>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Biden marks one million U.S. COVID deaths after losing political battles

President Joe Biden on Thursday commemorated the COVID-19 deaths of 1 million people in the United States, marking what he called “a tragic milestone” and urging Americans to “remain vigilant” during the ongoing pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-marks-1-million-americans-dead-covid-2022-05-12/>

North Korean state media confirms first Covid death

Six people have died amid an “explosive” spread of fever, North Korean state media has announced, a day after it admitted for the first time ever that an outbreak of Covid had occurred. There were 187,800 people being treated in isolation after a fever of unidentified origin spread in the country since late April, the official KCNA news agency reported. Around 350,000 people had shown signs of that fever with 162,200 of them treated so far. At least six people who showed fever symptoms died, with one of those cases confirmed to have contracted the Omicron variant of the virus, KCNA said. The North Korean ruler, Kim Jong-un, visited the anti-virus command centre on Tuesday, a day after declaring the “gravest state emergency” and ordering a national lockdown.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/12/north-korean-state-media-confirms-first-covid-death>

N.Korea reports first COVID-19 death after 350000 sickened with fever

At least one person confirmed to have COVID-19 has died in North Korea and hundreds of thousands have shown fever symptoms, state media said on Friday, offering hints at the potentially dire scale of country's first confirmed outbreak of the pandemic. About 187,800 people are being treated in isolation after a fever of unidentified origin has “explosively spread nationwide” since late April, the

official KCNA news agency reported.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-reports-first-covid-19-death-outbreak-spreads-kcna-2022-05-12/>

COVID-19: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wears face mask for the first time amid outbreak

North Korea has imposed a nationwide lockdown to control a COVID-19 outbreak after holding for more than two years to a widely doubted claim of a perfect record in keeping out the virus that has spread to nearly every place in the world.

<https://news.sky.com/video/covid-19-north-korean-leader-kim-jong-un-wears-face-mask-for-the-first-time-amid-outbreak-12611194>

Coronavirus: signs of 'large cluster' at Hong Kong's Kennedy Town, university says in warning to staff and students

A "large Covid-19 cluster" could be developing in and around Kennedy Town, the University of Hong Kong's medical school has warned, urging staff and students not to visit the area for lunch this week.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3177436/coronavirus-signs-large-cluster-hong-kongs>

Number of Covid-19 hospital patients in England lowest since Christmas

The number of people with Covid-19 in hospital in England has fallen to its lowest level since last Christmas, new figures show. A total of 7,034 patients were in hospital as of 8am on May 11, down 21% week-on-week, according to NHS England. This is the lowest figure since December 21 2021, when it stood at 6,902. It was in late December that patient numbers started to rise sharply, driven by the spread of the original Omicron variant of coronavirus. They peaked at 17,120 on January 10 2022, then fell back – only to rise again due to the subsequent wave of infections caused by Omicron BA.2, hitting a slightly lower peak of 16,600 on April 7. Numbers have been dropping for the past month, with all regions of England now showing a steady decline. In south-east England, they have fallen to levels last seen in mid-October 2021. The trend reflects the large drop in the prevalence of the virus in recent weeks, as reported by the Office for National Statistics in its regular infection survey.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/number-covid-19-hospital-patients-23932555>

Analysis: COVID crisis could deepen N.Korea food shortages amid drought warnings

North Korea's coronavirus outbreak threatens to deepen its already dire food situation this year, as a nationwide lockdown would hamper ongoing anti-drought efforts and the mobilisation of labour, analysts said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-northkorea-food-an/analysis-covid-crisis-could-deepen-n-korea-food-shortages-amid-drought-warnings-idUSKCN2MY19P>

S.Africa's new COVID cases cross 10000 for first time since January

South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases on Wednesday reported 10,017 new COVID-19 cases, the first day since January the institute has reported more than 10,000 new infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/safricas-new-covid-cases-cross-10000-first-time-since-january-2022-05-11/>

Omicron sub-variants driving Africa's COVID surge - WHO

Sub-variants of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and a relaxation of public health measures are driving a current surge in infections in southern Africa, a senior official from the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/omicron-sub-variants-driving-africas-covid-surge-who-2022-05-12/>

COVID claims 1 million US lives

The United States has now recorded more than 1 million COVID-19 deaths, according to a Reuters tally, crossing a once-unthinkable milestone about two years after the first cases upended everyday life and quickly transformed it.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/covid-claims-1-million-us-lives-leaving-trail-loss-2022-05-11/>

Shanghai reports 1305 new asymptomatic COVID cases, 144 symptomatic cases for May 11

The Chinese financial hub of Shanghai reported 1,305 new local asymptomatic coronavirus cases for May 11, up from 1,259 a day earlier, the city's health authority said on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reports-1305-new-asymptomatic-covid-cases-144-symptomatic-cases-may-11-2022-05-12/>

North Korea admits to Covid outbreak for first time and declares 'severe national emergency'

North Korea has declared a "severe national emergency" after confirming its first outbreak of Covid-19, prompting its leader, Kim Jong-un, to vow to quickly eliminate the virus. State media reported on Thursday that a sub-variant of the highly transmissible Omicron virus, known as BA.2, had been detected in the capital, Pyongyang. "There has been the biggest emergency incident in the country, with a hole in our emergency quarantine front, that has been kept safely over the past two years and three months since February 2020," the official KCNA news agency said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/12/north-korea-admits-to-covid-outbreak-for-first-time>

WHO: COVID-19 falling everywhere, except Americas and Africa

The number of new coronavirus cases reported worldwide has continued to fall except in the Americas and Africa, the World Health Organization said in its latest assessment of the pandemic. The decline comes as Europe marked a COVID-19 death milestone: 2 million on the continent. In its weekly pandemic report released late Tuesday, the U.N. health agency said about 3.5 million new cases and more than 25,000 deaths were reported globally, which respectively represent decreases of 12% and 25%.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-world-organization-pandemics-67ac873ce85cdd71620ea11811a159d8>

Shanghai hunts down COVID cases, Beijing curbs taxi services

Beijing denied it was heading for lockdown as panic buying gripped the capital on Thursday, while Shanghai combed the city for lingering COVID-19 cases in the hope of clearing the way to escape from weeks of painful restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/shanghai-hunts-down-covid-cases-beijing-curbs-taxi-services-2022-05-12/>

New Lockdown

N.Korea reports first COVID outbreak, orders lockdown in "gravest emergency"

North Korea reported its first COVID-19 outbreak on Thursday, calling it the "gravest national emergency" and ordering a national lockdown, with state media saying an Omicron variant had been detected in the capital, Pyongyang.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-says-it-detected-outbreak-stealth-omicron-virus-state-media-2022-05-12/>

North Korea confirms 1st COVID outbreak, Kim orders lockdown

North Korea imposed a nationwide lockdown Thursday to control its first acknowledged COVID-19 outbreak after holding for more than two years to a widely doubted claim of a perfect record keeping out the virus that has spread to nearly every place in the world. The outbreak forced leader Kim Jong Un to wear a mask in public, likely for the first time since the start of the pandemic, but the scale of transmissions inside North Korea wasn't immediately known. A failure to slow infections

could have serious consequences because the country has a poor health care system and its 26 million people are believed to be mostly unvaccinated. Some experts say North Korea, by its rare admission of an outbreak, may be seeking outside aid.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-pandemics-south-korea-north-0e0cb1be7a3878a771124dcdbdba06c>