

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

8th May 2020

News Highlights

Countries around the world are grappling with a dilemma: either ease lockdown restrictions to restart the economy or continue with lockdowns to control the coronavirus infection rate.

India, which has imposed a strict lockdown for over 40 days, relaxed its rules, and infection rates and morbidities jumped almost immediately. Russia, which had relatively few cases, saw a spike of more than 10,000 cases in a single day, just as it said it was considering relaxing lockdown rules next week. France, the UK, Spain and Germany are all making plans to ease restrictions and resume economic and social activity based on revised rules. However, Spain's two hardest hit cities, Barcelona and Madrid, may keep restrictions in place.

Unfortunately, amid the lockdown in South Africa, more and more people are making calls to support groups for help with issues related to anxiety, panic and stress. Depression and anxiety are terrible companions to have at the best of times, let alone during a global pandemic.

Lockdown Exit

COVID-19: how Asia-Pacific is emerging from lockdown

Countries all over the world are announcing their plans to emerge from COVID-19-inflicted lockdown, and the Asia-Pacific region is no different. Even countries like Thailand and Viet Nam, that have not suffered a heavy infection rate or death toll, must now reckon with the economic damage caused by the pandemic, and are eager to cautiously reopen their schools and get people back to work. Here is a roundup of measures announced from countries and economies in the Asia-Pacific area:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/covid-19-asia-pacific-ending-lockdown/>

What Canada can learn from Hong Kong's Covid-19 successes

Professor Samuel Yeung-shan Wong says Canada should follow Hong Kong by supporting public mask wearing and testing all arrivals at airports for coronavirus. A study by Wong, published in Canada, says Hong Kong's aggressive contact tracing and quarantine measures also helped restrict the spread of the disease.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/3083417/masks-tests-quarantine-centres-what-can-canada>

How to stay safe on public transport under Italy's lockdown phase two

Italy's health ministry has issued new guidance on reducing the risk of infection when using public transport. The Italian government has also stated that masks must be worn when using on all forms of public transport. In addition to this, the Italian health ministry on Wednesday published official advice on staying safe when using public transport – assessed by workplace injury insurance agency INAIL as being a “medium-high risk” environment for coronavirus infection, the Ansa news agency reports. The risk rises to “high” during peak times in urban areas, the insurers said.

<https://www.thelocal.it/20200507/how-to-stay-safe-on-public-transport-under-italys-lockdown-phase-two>

France to test controversial Covid-19 tracking app during lockdown exit

As France awakens from lockdown on 11 May, the government will start testing “under real conditions” a prototype for its much-criticised StopCovid contact tracking phone app, ahead of the

product's intended full roll-out on 2 June. The app works by using Bluetooth to interact with nearby phones and detect when users come into contact with potential coronavirus carriers. It generates an anonymous numerical ID that's exchanged with other smartphones also running the app. The ID of anyone who tests positive is red-flagged, and a warning is then sent to those who have crossed paths with the infected person. The app does not, however, reveal details about where and when the encounter took place – unlike similar technology in China, geolocation data is not recorded. The use of StopCovid – developed in France by researchers and companies under the supervision of the government – will be purely voluntary, but it needs to be widespread if it's to play any meaningful role slowing the epidemic.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/france-test-controversial-covid-19-115231425.html>

Coronavirus: Private renters facing 'tsunami of evictions' once lockdown ends, charity warns

Shelter says that those relying on benefits must find an estimated £13m a week in total to keep up with their rent payments. The government has suspended evictions for the duration of the crisis, but thousands could be forced out of their homes when the lockdown ends. Polly Neate, chief executive at Shelter, has warned of a "tsunami of evictions" amid the "serious financial difficulty" that people across the country are now facing. "As renters lose their jobs and see their incomes hit, many will have to rely on the welfare safety net for the first time," she said. "Our services are already hearing from families in homes they could comfortably afford under normal circumstances, who are now in serious financial difficulty. "We're facing an onslaught of people suddenly unable to afford their rent, at a time when people need to stay put and cannot safely move to a cheaper home.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/coronavirus/coronavirus-private-renters-facing-tsunami-of-evictions-once-lockdown-ends-charity-warns/ar-BB13JleC?li=BBOPRmx>

Hugs, rugby on agenda as New Zealand continues to ease lockdown

Super Rugby in New Zealand is poised to resume when the country relaxes its COVID-19 lockdown, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Thursday, with bars, retailers and schools also set to open. Ardern is due to announce next Monday whether New Zealand will move to 'Alert Level 2', which allows significantly more freedom than Kiwis have experienced since lockdown began in late March. While she stressed no decision had yet been made, Ardern acknowledged New Zealand's success in containing the virus had put it in a good position to cautiously relax the rules. "Think of ourselves as halfway down Everest," she said. "It's clear that no one wants to hike back up that peak and the descent is known to be even more dangerous."

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200507-hugs-rugby-on-agenda-as-new-zealand-continues-to-ease-lockdown>

Coronavirus: Lockdown bites poor as France eases grip

The government will set out on Thursday how it plans to lift restrictions on movement on Monday. But for many the damage from one of Europe's strictest lockdowns has been done. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe gave details of the changes on Thursday. The plan is to divide the country into red and green zones, with different rules for different places. "From Monday we will progressively unwind the lockdown that started on 17 March... but the country is cut in two, with the virus circulating more quickly in some regions, notably in the Paris region, which is very densely populated," the prime minister said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-52557722>

Exiled Parisians face bittersweet homecoming as France eases Covid-19 lockdown

Two months ago, some 1.2 million people fled the Paris region in a reverse rural flight that prompted howls of protests from countryfolk fearful of the spreading coronavirus. Now, residents of the French capital and its suburbs have been told they can head back the other way as the country prepares to end its lockdown on May 11. Already, the logistics of their return from exile is a headache for the

SNCF, France's national train operator, which is running a limited service and can only fill 50% of seats to comply with social distancing rules. But the government has pledged to let all Parisians return home, provided they carry a justification form required of all travellers who plan to cover a distance of more than 100 kilometres once the lockdown is lifted.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200506-exiled-parisians-face-bittersweet-homecoming-as-france-eases-covid-19-lockdown>

Parts of Asia that relaxed restrictions without a resurgence in coronavirus cases did these three things

South Korea and Hong Kong successfully relaxed pandemic restrictions without having another rise in cases by data sharing, using targeted testing and contact tracing. The varying results of efforts across Asia to contain the virus and reopen society present policy options and perhaps lessons for countries behind on the outbreak's timeline. Public health specialists who spoke with CNBC said they're not confident U.S. officials are taking note of what's working and not working in Asia.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/07/coronavirus-lessons-learned-in-asia-show-us-is-at-risk-of-a-resurge-in-cases-as-states-reopen-businesses.html>

Pew-pew woo-hoo! Hong Kong reopens video arcades shut by coronavirus lockdown

Hong Kong will reopen video game arcades as the city begins to ease its pandemic precautions and attempts to kick its economy into a higher gear. The new guidelines, announced yesterday, will allow bars, gyms, beauty salons, cinemas and "amusement game centres" to resume business on Friday with some restrictions. In arcades, operators will either need barriers between machines, or to leave every second console inoperable. The number of people allowed to gather in groups will be raised from four to eight and schools will resume in three phases starting 27 May. The reopening has been ordered because: "In light of the more stabilised situation in Hong Kong in terms of the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the recent weeks... a window of opportunity exists for us to lift some of the social distancing measures at the moment," a spokesperson for the Food and Health Bureau said.

https://www.theregister.co.uk/2020/05/06/hong_kong_reopens_video_arcades/

Less is more: Chinese consumers look for meaning after lockdown

After almost two months of lockdown and being out of work, Chinese consumers are not shopping as much as they used to.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/chinese-consumers-meaning-lockdown-200504062527322.html>

Exit Strategies

Pubs, transport and shops - how the UK's lockdown measures could be eased

According to some reports, unlimited outdoor exercise will be allowed from Monday, however gyms and playgrounds are expected to remain closed. Public Health England has signalled the "stay home" message could be abandoned and reports suggest people using benches, having picnics or sunbathing will no longer be asked to move on, provided they keep two metres apart. Health Secretary Matt Hancock suggested on Wednesday that outdoor "pavement cafes" could be put in place over the summer.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/pubs-transport-shops-uk-lockdown-130632718.html>

How will lockdown be eased? Boris Johnson expected to relax some UK coronavirus rules - but it's not yet clear which ones

It is widely reported that the Government is going to scrap its key "stay at home" message from next week, and replace it with a new slogan. The main focus for easing the restrictions is likely to be about restarting the economy and allowing some people to return to work without risking their health. According to the Daily Mirror, employees at workplaces that stayed open during the

lockdown will be encouraged to return. Some outlets have reported that the Government will advise Britons to wear face masks on public transport and in shops and offices where it is harder to stick to social distancing rules. Despite some reports about shops opening as long as social distancing can take place, The Daily Telegraph says non-essential retailers, including garden centres, will have to hold on a little longer before fully reopening.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/lockdown-how-eased-boris-johnson-ease-uk-coronavirus-rules-when-end-explained-2846183>

Five-part plan to get UK out of lockdown over six months

Britain's plan for returning to normal will be implemented in five stages over the next six months, it is understood. Boris Johnson is set to lay out his 'roadmap' for exiting lockdown on Sunday, with some changes hoped to take effect the next day. While that is sooner than expected, a 50-page blueprint being drafted by officials indicates some restrictions won't be lifted until at least October, according to The Daily Mirror. The five-stage plan reportedly proposes reopening some garden centres and open-air markets as early as Monday, but keeping bigger indoor venues like pubs, bars and restaurants closed until August.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/05/07/five-part-plan-get-uk-lockdown-six-months-12667578/>

Don't expect a snapback for the UK economy after lockdown is lifted

One of the lessons of the last recession was that austerity measures were imposed too quickly and recovery was choked off, and the stakes are much higher this time. Whether or not there is a second wave of infections there is certainly the risk of a second wave of acute economic distress starting in the autumn. The psychological impact of Covid-19 on consumer behaviour meant it was never realistic for the UK to have a V-shaped recession. The aim now is to avoid a great depression.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/07/snapback-uk-economy-lockdown-recession-coronavirus>

Coronavirus: NI Executive discusses plan for easing lockdown

Executive ministers met for more than three hours on Thursday, ahead of a call between the PM and leaders of the devolved institutions. They agreed to recommend that people in Northern Ireland should now wear face coverings when they were in enclosed spaces for short periods of time, where social distancing is not possible. The decision was taken in line with scientific advice, Mrs Foster told the Executive's daily press conference. Health Minister Robin Swann later said that while evidence on the overall protection provided by face coverings "is not conclusive, on balance it is sufficient to recommend that members of the public consider using them in particular circumstances". "In practice, these circumstances will largely relate to public transport and retail environments," he added. "Their use will not be mandatory. Crucially, face coverings must not lead to any false sense of security about the level of protection provided."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52558941>

UK due to extend lockdown ahead of deconfinement measures

Johnson suggested on Wednesday that some restrictions could be relaxed as of 11 May, while repeating that he wanted to avoid a second wave of the new coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic at all costs. "The reality is we're still at a high point of the virus. We believe we are past the peak, but we have to make sure we do not create a situation we can have a strong second peak very quickly," echoed Brandon Lewis, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on BBC Radio 4. "We're going to make sure we go forward in a way that actually puts people's health first," he added. British media reported that citizens will soon be able to exercise unlimitedly outdoors, have picnics or even sunbathe in parks, as long as they keep a safe distance of two metres between people. People are currently only allowed to go out for groceries, medical treatment or exercise.

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/110130/uk-due-to-extend-lockdown-ahead-of-deconfinement-measures/>

Britain heading for a limited easing of lockdown next week

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will announce a very limited easing of Britain's coronavirus lockdown

next week, adopting a cautious approach to try to ensure there is no second peak of infections that could further hurt the economy. "If people don't follow the rules or if we see that the R-level (the reproductive rate of the virus) goes back up, we will tighten the restrictions again." The government has been criticised for moving too slowly to tackle the outbreak which has led to more than 30,000 deaths in Britain - the worst official death toll in Europe. But with an increasing number of anecdotal reports that more people are flouting the lockdown in anticipation of Sunday's announcement and a public holiday on Friday, ministers are under pressure to make any new rules as clear as possible after being criticised for mixed messaging.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-johnson/uk-to-announce-very-limited-easing-of-lockdown-next-week-idUKKBN22J1XZ>

When will the UK lockdown rules be reviewed, and what happens in phase two?

The Prime Minister has said we are now past the peak of the pandemic, and hinted that lockdown measures could be lifted soon. He will address the nation on Sunday 10 May at 7pm to outline the Government's plan to lift the lockdown. He said the "dates and times" of each measure being lifted would come when the Government had more data, but the UK is heading towards "phase two" of its coronavirus response, which will involve partially lifting lockdown. Here, we analyse when the lockdown could end and what the "new normal" might look like....

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/10/uk-lockdown-extended-coronavirus/>

Coronavirus in Germany: Summer holidays on the horizon as Angela Merkel agrees to ease lockdown restrictions

Germans are already planning their summer holidays abroad with the lifting of lockdown restrictions across the nation. Thomas Bareiss, the federal tourism commissioner, told German newspaper Der Tagesspiegel that, if the coronavirus outbreak remained under control in the country, then people may be able to holiday abroad soon.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/coronavirus-germany-summer-holidays-angela-merkel-lockdown-lifted-2845221>

Spain virus death toll declines as lockdown easing moves ahead

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez argues that his administration needs enhanced powers to coordinate the health service, which is normally under the remit of the 17 regional governments, and to implement economic policies designed to mitigate the impact of the lockdown. Even though Sanchez won the vote, it could be a prelude to another political crisis. The main opposition party, the conservative PP, abstained and threatened to vote against Sanchez if he seeks another extension. The PP had backed Sanchez's previous requests for a longer state of emergency and a negative vote could compromise the political legitimacy of the measure. The government is pursuing a cautious easing of confinement rules to avoid a resurgence in infections. Spain has the second-most extensive outbreak in the world, behind the U.S. and ahead of Italy, the original epicenter of the virus in Europe.

<https://www.thetelegraph.com/news/article/Spain-virus-death-toll-declines-as-lockdown-15253240.php>

Coronavirus: Germany moves to carefully lift lockdown as infection rates fall

Pressure to relax the rules had been growing as the lockdown achieved the country's goal in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Angela Merkel has laid out a plan for Germany exiting the lockdown as the rate of daily coronavirus infections in the country continues to drop. The German chancellor announced a loosening of the measures after meeting with the country's 16 state governors. She said restaurants and other businesses will be allowed to reopen in the coming weeks.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-germany-moves-to-carefully-lift-lockdown-as-infection-rates-fall-11984535>

When could hairdressers re-open in the UK after lockdown?

With several more European countries, including Germany, Spain and Portugal, now easing their social distancing measures enough to allow hairdressers to re-open, how are stylists operating amid

a new way of work and what can we expect from salons when they finally open their doors again in the UK? Here's what we know about salons that have reopened in other countries while social distancing.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/beauty/hair/re-open-when-hairdressers-salons-uk/>

Factbox: From hairdressers to beaches - Spain's plan to phase out lockdown

Spain has a four-phase plan to lift a coronavirus lockdown and return to normal by the end of June. Following are the key points of the plan, which will vary from province to province. Advancing through the stages will depend on factors such as how the rate of infection evolves, the number of intensive care beds available locally and compliance with distancing rules

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-spain-plan-factbox/factbox-from-hairdressers-to-beaches-spains-plan-to-phase-out-lockdown-idUKKBN22J1TS>

French PM to unveil final strategy to exit Covid-19 lockdown

On Thursday, people in France will find out what awaits them on Monday 11 May if the 2-month lockdown is lifted. Edouard Philippe, who has promised there will be no easy return to normal, is due to present the first phase of the government's exit plan at 16:00 local time. Many questions hang in the balance, including whether the exit will go ahead as planned on Monday. Philippe had said previously that if the indicators were bad the lockdown would be extended. The indicators guiding his choice include the evolution of the pandemic, the ability of hospitals to deliver critical care and testing capacity.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/french-pm-unveil-final-strategy-075334958.html>

Prime Minister's five-step plan to ease lockdown - and it could start as early as Monday

Millions of Britons could take the first steps out of lockdown as early as Monday under the Government's plan to return the nation to some kind of normality. The proposals will be set out in a "roadmap" by the Prime Minister on Sunday - and the first could be enacted within hours of his address. The Mirror reports that unlimited exercise will be allowed from Monday, May 11 and staff encouraged to return to work at businesses which have stayed open during the lockdown. But the full plan is likely to take several months to work through and steps could be delayed or changed by a second spike of coronavirus later in the year.

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/prime-ministers-five-step-plan-18214471>

Live: France unveils final plan on easing Covid-19 lockdown

"Next Monday will mark the start of a very gradual process stretching over several weeks at least, which will allow the country to emerge slowly but steadily from the lockdown," Philippe told a news conference, hours after the government put the final touches to its highly-anticipated roadmap. Philippe said the government was looking to "strike the right balance between the indispensable resumption of economic (...) life and the indispensable need" to ensure the safety of the public. He said the exit from lockdown would be "differentiated", with restrictions to be lifted gradually and varying between regions. "The country is cut in two, with the virus circulating more quickly in some regions," he explained.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200507-live-france-unveils-final-plan-on-easing-covid-19-lockdown>

France Set to Ease Lockdown to Relieve Coronavirus Pain

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said the country was ready for a nationwide plan to relax curbs on public life, though strict controls will remain on public transport in Paris, where infection rates are too high. Looser restrictions on businesses and stores will start coming into effect on Monday in a gradual process designed to avoid a second wave of infections. "We are always looking for a balance between the indispensable return to normal life and the indispensable respect of all measures that will prevent the epidemic from restarting," Philippe said on Thursday, adding that restrictions could be reimposed if infections rise. "The target of all the French people is that we can

live with this virus” until a cure is found.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-07/france-set-to-join-germany-in-easing-curbs-to-relieve-virus-pain>

French PM to present end of lockdown roadmap today

In that previous speech he urged people to be disciplined in the run-up to May 11, so as to ensure there was not a resurgence of Covid-19 and that deconfinement could begin on schedule. If all went as hoped, he said a first deconfinement stage could then begin, lasting until June 2, when it was expected that there would be further changes. Rules for the first stage will to some extent vary depending on whether people live in a geographical department that has been labelled green (good), orange (intermediate) or red (bad), for the number of new cases, the capacity of hospitals to cope, and whether or not the area is well equipped for testing and contact tracing (alerting people who may be at risk due to having had close contact with an infected person).

<https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/Edouard-Philippe-to-explain-final-Covid-19-deconfinement-plan-for-France>

Lockdown Level 3: These are the 12 biggest changes that will take place

Level 3 will include more significant changes than the ones we saw in the transition to Level 4. Here's how the government see the next phase working.

<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/what-will-change-in-lockdown-level-three-work-social-travel-government-list/>

Barcelona and Madrid may be left in lockdown as Spain lifts curbs

Spain's two hardest-hit cities may keep restrictions in place as the rest of the country emerges from lockdown. Sanchez's plan to lift lockdown restrictions has four stages, in which restrictions are progressively eased, with each region applying to enter the next phase if it meets certain conditions, such as hospital capacity requirements. The first phase would allow for groups of up to 10 people to meet in homes or outdoors, and street cafes to reopen. Religious celebrations can also be observed, as long as places of worship practise social distancing and limit themselves to 30 percent of their previous capacities. Catalonia's regional government on Wednesday said Barcelona and Girona would not be included in the first phase, which starts on Monday, saying there was a moderate to high risk of a new wave of infections. But Madrid - the city which is at the centre of Spain's outbreak, and which is still registering high numbers of new cases - has applied to the national health ministry to begin opening its doors on Monday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/barcelona-madrid-left-lockdown-spain-lifts-curbs-200507211505073.html>

Pakistan to Ease Coronavirus Lockdown Saturday

Pakistan has announced it will gradually ease a nationwide coronavirus-related “partial” lockdown starting Saturday, saying the number of COVID-19 infections remain relatively low and under control. COVID-19 is the disease caused by the coronavirus.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/pakistan-ease-coronavirus-lockdown-saturday>

Pakistan Cabinet approves easing lockdown after May 9

The Pakistan cabinet has approved easing the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in the country gradually after May 9th, provided that strict implementation of the coronavirus-related preventative measures suggested by the government ensured. Prime Minister Imran Khan, however, warned that threat from the viral disease was not over and could strike again if the government's standard operating procedures were not followed

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-cabinet-approves-easing-lockdown-after-may-9/articleshow/75590883.cms>

Study to explore the impact of Covid-19 lockdown on children

The country's largest longitudinal study is about to launch a new research project to discover how

the Covid-19 lockdown has affected children in Aotearoa New Zealand. Growing Up in New Zealand is following the lives of more than 6,000 New Zealand children and their families from before birth until adulthood. The University of Auckland study plans to carry out a digital survey with cohort children later this week to gather information about their experiences of "lockdown" at Covid-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3. Study director, Professor Susan Morton, of the University's School for Population Health in the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, says hearing the voices of children is crucial to provide insights into how young people may have been impacted by the pandemic.

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU2005/S00046/study-to-explore-the-impact-of-covid-19-lockdown-on-children.htm>

As India Loosens Its Strict Lockdown, Coronavirus Deaths Jump Sharply

Part of India's success in blunting the spread of the coronavirus had been a fierce lockdown that was zealously obeyed. But in the last few days, the government has loosened up the rules, drawing people into the streets. And now the dangerous contagion appears to be spreading more aggressively.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/world/asia/india-coronavirus-lockdown-infections.html>

The great Indian lockdown survey: The good, bad and the ugly

Economic Times Online conducted a readers' poll to gauge the mood of the public in a country that has been under a crippling lockdown for over 40 days. Now that the wheels have begun clacking again in factories and plants, we present here the insights gleaned from almost 13,000 of India's best-informed readers of business news.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/the-great-lockdown-survey-what-now-for-india-the-good-bad-and-the-ugly-of-life-after-covid/articleshow/75571053.cms>

Germany Paves Way for Broad Economic Restart With Virus Tamed

Merkel and state leaders have agreed on a framework to ease the lockdown in Germany. These moves are to be phased in regionally with an emergency stop built in should there be a repeat of a coronavirus spike in any one region

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-06/germany-prepares-to-open-restaurants-in-next-easing-step>

Germany eases lockdown, with 'emergency brake' on hand if needed

Chancellor Angela Merkel announced steps on Wednesday to ease the coronavirus lockdown in Germany but at the same time launched an "emergency brake" mechanism allowing for renewed restrictions in case infections pick up again. Declaring an end to the first phase of the pandemic in Germany, Merkel said there was still a long way to go in the battle against the virus, which has battered Europe's largest economy. The government will decide on an economic stimulus package in June, Merkel said, adding this was a "very ambitious" time frame. Germany went into lockdown in March to contain coronavirus contagion. Its reproduction rate has been falling for several days, and Merkel said it was now consistently below 1 - meaning a person with the virus infects fewer than one other on average. "We are at a point where our goal of slowing the spread of the virus has been achieved and we have been able to protect our health system..., so it has been possible to discuss and agree on further easing measures," Merkel told reporters.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/germany-ease-lockdown-merkel-hails-140935213.html>

UK has drawn up three-stage plan for easing coronavirus lockdown: The Times

The United Kingdom has drawn up a three-stage plan to ease the coronavirus lockdown that was first imposed at the end of March, The Times newspaper said. The government must review the lockdown by May 7 but Prime Minister Boris Johnson has made clear that he is worried about triggering a second deadly spike in cases. Johnson is expected to set out a plan for exiting the lockdown on Sunday. The first phase will involve small shops reopening alongside outdoor workplaces and the second will involve large shopping centres reopening, with more people encouraged to go into work, The Times said. Pubs, restaurants, hotels and leisure centres will be

among the last to open, the newspaper said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-lockdown/uk-has-drawn-up-3-stage-plan-for-easing-coronavirus-lockdown-the-times-idUSKBN2210Z3>

Welcoming Britain back: tourism businesses set out post-lockdown plans

However, behind the scenes tourism officials and hospitality bosses are busy working out how destinations will start to welcome back visitors this summer. Without knowing exactly what changes will be announced when Boris Johnson produces his roadmap on Sunday, tourist boards across the UK are setting out plans for a phased reopening of attractions and businesses as they endeavour to salvage some of the 2020 season. "We can't afford to wait until lockdown's over and find we've not got the plans in place," said Gill Haigh, chief executive of Cumbria Tourism. "The question is how we reset."

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/may/06/british-tourism-businesses-post-lockdown-plans>

Life after lockdown: France unveils grand culture bailout as Germany re-opens museums 'with poles'

France announced grand plans to save Gallic culture on Wednesday, including a pledge of massive public commissions for creative projects and an extension of its uniquely generous unemployment system for arts and entertainment workers to avoid collapse under coronavirus. Theatres and museums could slowly start preparing to re-open from next week while respecting safety guidelines to avoid a resurgence of infections, said President Emmanuel Macron. The moves came as countries around Europe are grappling with how to support the arts and re-open cultural venues and are coming up with creative ways to respect social distancing, including using ribbons and poles.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/06/life-lockdown-france-unveils-grand-culture-bailout-germany-re/>

Russia sees record spike in coronavirus cases with more than 10,000 in one day

Despite a rise in coronavirus cases of 10,000+ in a single day, Russia has indicated it could gradually lift confinement measures from next week.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/russia-sees-record-spike-in-coronavirus-cases-with-more-than-10-000-in-one-day>

Australia to ease COVID-19 curbs in three stages, targets July for full removal

Australia will ease social distancing restrictions implemented to slow the spread of the coronavirus in a three-step process, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Friday, with the aim of removing all curbs by July. Australia imposed strict social distancing restrictions in March, which, coupled with the closure of its borders, is credited with drastically slowing the number of new infections of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. Morrison said Australia's states and territories will decide when to begin implementing each stage.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australia-to-ease-covid-19-curbs-in-three-stages-targets-july-for-full-removal-idUSKBN22K09U>

Partisan Exits

UK newspapers accused of giving 'mixed messages' on lockdown

Downing Street was keen to pour cold water on reports that the lockdown could be lifted from Monday, after newspaper headlines such as Lockdown Freedom Beckons and Happy Monday. Senior government figures privately expressed concern about what one referred to as "over-egged" reports about both the "tone and the pace" of a potential easing. The same source also played down one report that people could be able to sit two metres away from friends outside as soon as Monday. "It will be much more cautious than what is being reported," they said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/07/uk-newspapers-accused-of-giving-mixed-messages-on-coronavirus-lockdown>

Keir Starmer: UK needs to leave lockdown together

The leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer, has said that easing of lockdown restrictions needs to take place across the UK as a whole, as he urged "caution" to avoid another spike in cases of coronavirus.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/keir-starmer-uk-needs-leave-lockdown-together-2846079>

Coronavirus: PM 'must show respect' to UK nations over lockdown

The SNP's Mr Ian Blackford said: "We are still facing an enormous death toll and everything we do should be based on the scientific and medical advice. "What we should be focusing on are the health considerations for the public and the absolute desire to drive down the impact of this virus. "If we allow an earlier removal of restrictions, all we are going to do is run the risk of that second spike and the impact on the health of individuals and the economy will actually be greater. "There has to be discipline and an appreciation from the population of what we are doing and why." Also appearing on the Good Morning Scotland programme, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said he was "worried" about Scotland potentially taking a different approach to restrictions to the rest of the UK. He said: "Across the United Kingdom, we went into lockdown together and I think it would be far better if any easing or relaxation was done together. "There are real problems if different regions and different nations do it at different times.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-52572662>

Strain emerges between UK government and Scotland over easing lockdown

Nicola Sturgeon's spokesman confirmed the first minister plans to renew all Scotland's lockdown regulations on Thursday without amending them. They were not aware of any scientific or expert advice which supported Johnson's proposals, he said. "I think the first minister has said in recent days she's been very clear that she's not anticipating any imminent changes to the current measures that are recently in place." The UK's nations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have collaborated closely on policies and strategies during the pandemic, with Johnson announcing the lockdown plans on 20 and 23 March on behalf of all four governments.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/06/strain-emerges-between-uk-government-and-scotland-over-easing-lockdown>

Scotland appeals for "four nation" approach to lockdown as UK plans early exit

Scotland's Health Secretary has appealed for a "four nation" approach to easing the Coronavirus lockdown in the UK amid reports that Boris Johnson will lift some restrictions south of the border this weekend.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scotland-appeals-four-nation-approach-lockdown-uk-plans-early-exit-2845670>

Coronavirus: Lockdown tensions between UK and Welsh ministers grow

The results of a review into Wales' coronavirus lockdown will be announced by the Welsh Government on Friday. First Minister Mark Drakeford is expected to outline how and when minor adjustments could be made. It comes after Downing Street conceded Wales and the other UK nations may move differently on easing the restrictions. The Welsh Government said more details will be announced in Friday's press conference. Mr Drakeford's approach is expected to be cautious, with a focus on ensuring the R rate of transmission is not allowed to rise.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-politics-52572954>

Germany's Maas condemns anti-lockdown protesters' attack on journalists

For the second time in a week, journalists in Berlin were attacked by members of the public. Illegal anti-lockdown protesters turned on a camera team, in a move decried by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

<https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-maas-condemns-anti-lockdown-protesters-attack-on-journalists/a-53359614>

Leaving Lockdown, Entering Recession: Strike in Spain Shows Workers' Fears

Labor unions in Europe have recently voiced concerns about the safety of employees who have been returning to work. But the strike at Nissan highlights what may be the next major concern of organized labor: protecting jobs in a post-pandemic economy. The coronavirus has brought about a recession that is expected to be the worst ever in the European Union, one that will most likely push companies to close down struggling factories. Automakers in particular are believed to have excess capacity, as demand for new cars has slipped in recent years. About a fifth of carmaking capacity worldwide is not being used.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/07/business/spain-nissan-strike-recession.html>

Spanish PM secures support for lockdown plans

The fragile left-wing coalition government is set to rescue its lockdown plans from "chaos" in a parliamentary vote today after securing the support of a centre-right party. The Socialist-led government of Pedro Sánchez, the prime minister, was in danger of losing a vote for a two-week extension of the state of emergency after one of its allies, a Catalan separatist party, decided to vote against it. The Catalan Republican Left party withdrew its support, saying powers should now be returned to the regions. However, the government won the backing of Ciudadanos, a centre-right party, and maintained the support of a Basque regional party to stave off what the Socialists called "chaos".

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/spanish-pm-secures-support-for-lockdown-plans-585zxk20v>

Anger grows in French coastal areas over continued Covid-19 beach ban

Local Mayors and MPs have struggled to explain the decision and numerous campaigns including #RendezNousLaMer have sprung up on social media to get the decision overturned. Gwendal Richard, a keen surfer, told French newspaper Ouest-France that the beach ban was "completely unjust". "All those who love the sea" are welcome to join him on nearby beach in Erquy to express their anger "peacefully" on 11 May, he says. He's calling on them to line up on the beach while respecting social distancing regulations and wearing facemasks and he plans to stream the event live on Facebook.

<http://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20200507-anger-grows-in-french-coastal-areas-over-continued-covid-19-beach-ban>

Continued Lockdown

Why lockdown rules aren't always the same around Italy

As Italy adjusts to phase two, the staggered reopening has been complicated by the highly decentralised government system which allows the country's 20 regions to layer on their own rules. Veneto and Calabria have thus been serving food and drink at bars and restaurants with outdoor seating since last week. The area around Genoa is thinking of reopening its beaches. Neighbouring Emilia-Romagna is keeping them closed - even to those who live by the sea. And fines for breaking the rules range from a maximum of 3,000 euros in most places to 5,000 in Lombardy. Such regional differences in the rules have been cause for confusion throughout the lockdown.

<https://www.thelocal.it/20200507/why-the-coronavirus-quarantine-rules-arent-always-the-same-around-italy>

Breaking A Sweat: Gyms Across Spain Weary About Re-Opening Under New Lockdown Limitations

Since the beginning of the quarantine most social and leisure activities have moved online, for example watching concerts or meeting up with friends has now taken place on the internet. Similarly, working out has been done virtually although since May 2, residents in Spain have had the opportunity to take to the streets to exercise. When it comes to sports installations or gymnasiums, which according to sources are the preferred source of exercise for around 5.5 million people in Spain, they will be allowed to reopen their facilities after Phase 1 of the de-escalation plan begins. For now, Phase 1 will allow these sports establishments to recommence individual sports activities

with advanced bookings, no physical contact and closed changing rooms. Further on, in Phase 3, the gyms will be limited to 30 per cent capacity and changing rooms will remain closed.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/05/07/breaking-a-sweat-gyms-across-spain-weary-about-re-opening-under-new-lockdown-limitations/>

Spain approves fourth lockdown extension to May 25 as PM secures 'last minute' support from opposition parties

The country's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez finally managed to secure enough 'last minute' support from the opposition parties to extend the country's lockdown for a fourth time, despite many threatening to withhold their vote this time round (as reported). The lockdown extension will allow the government to restrict citizen's movements to contain the coronavirus.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/05/06/breaking-news-spain-approves-fourth-lockdown-extension-to-may-25-as-pm-secures-last-minute-support-from-opposition-parties/>

Major Brazilian cities set lockdowns as virus spreads

São Luis became Brazil's first major city to begin a coronavirus "lockdown" on Tuesday with another, Fortaleza, saying it would follow suit on Friday, as local health services struggle to cope with the pandemic. Tuesday's lockdown measure covers São Luis and parts of three other municipalities with a total population of around 1.3 million people in the poor northeastern state of Maranhão. It forbids people from going outside except to obtain groceries, medications or cleaning supplies. Maranhão has not felt the brunt of the crisis, in contrast to the populous southeastern states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and the interior state of Amazonas, where hospitals are overwhelmed and authorities have resorted to burying victims in mass graves. But with 4,227 confirmed cases and 249 deaths, Brazil's poorest state is still dealing with a significant caseload.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-brazil-lockdown/first-major-city-in-brazil-declares-lockdown-as-virus-spreads-idUKKBN22H2V5>

Brazil faces 'economic collapse' in 30 days due to lockdown: economy minister

Brazil could face "economic collapse" in a month's time due to stay-at-home measures to stem the coronavirus outbreak, with food shortages and "social disorder," Economy Minister Paulo Guedes warned Thursday. Brazil, Latin America's biggest economy, is also the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in the region. But far-right President Jair Bolsonaro -- who appeared alongside Guedes, his free-market economics guru -- opposes stay-at-home measures to slow the virus, saying they are unnecessarily damaging the economy. "Within about 30 days, there may start to be shortages on (store) shelves and production may become disorganized, leading to a system of economic collapse, of social disorder," Guedes said. "This is a serious alert."

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200508-brazil-economy-minister-paulo-guedes-jair-bolsonaro-covid-19-coronavirus-lockdown-protests>

Brazil on Lockdown: New Rules for Most Heavily Affected Cities

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, northern and northeastern states have moved ahead and decreed lockdowns in municipalities with the imminent collapse of their health care systems.

<https://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/brazil/politics-brazil/brazil-on-lockdown-the-rules-for-cities/>

South African Business Wants Virus Lockdown Ended Within Weeks

Business For South Africa says up to 4 million jobs at risk - companies may need to consider cutting dividend, Kingston says. They are calling for the lockdown to end within weeks not months to avoid serious economic dislocation

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-07/south-african-business-wants-virus-lockdown-ended-within-weeks>

Anxious, stressed South Africans really battling under lockdown, says Sadag

Amid a protracted COVID-19 lockdown, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (Sadag) has been receiving more calls from people feeling anxious, panicked and stressed. A recent Sadag survey suggests that 55% had feelings of anxiety and panic and 46% were under financial stress and pressure. Before the lockdown, the group averaged about 600 calls per day - now it's between 1,200 and 1,400 calls. Sadag's Cassey Chambers said that besides people contacting them because of anxiety, panic and depression, they were also getting calls about stress related to accessing food parcels, food security, shelters, safety, social grants and UIF. She said that calls were coming from employees and business managers.

<https://ewn.co.za/2020/05/07/anxious-stressed-south-africans-really-battling-under-lockdown-says-sadag>

COVID-19: Moscow Cases 'Likely Three Times Higher' Than Official Toll; Pakistan To Lift Virus Lockdown

The global death toll from the coronavirus has passed 260,000 with more than 3.7 million infections confirmed, causing mass disruptions as governments continue to try to slow the spread of the new respiratory illness. Here's a roundup of COVID-19 developments in RFE/RL's broadcast regions.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/covid-19-serbia-lifts-state-emergency-curfew/30598819.html>

Day 44 of coronavirus lockdown: Ground report from Indian cities

Here is a look at the latest updates on the outbreak of coronavirus across some of India's most important cities

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/day-44-of-coronavirus-lockdown-ground-report-from-indian-cities/articleshow/75599072.cms>

People can't help flouting lockdown laws - but why?

The last few weeks have seen endless reports of 'covidiot' flouting Government lockdown laws, which clearly state that we're not allowed to meet up with friends or family from outside our household, and if we leave our homes for exercise or essentials we must keep two metres (6ft) away from others at all times. So far, police in England have issued more than 9,000 fines (CHK) under these new coronavirus laws - yet people are still flouting them. Although these rules are expected to be relaxed from next week, with a limit on exercise lifting and picnics and trips to rural areas to be allowed, police are concerned that this bank holiday weekend will spark another dangerous backlash against social distancing.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/05/07/people-flouting-lockdown-laws-12666083/>

'We pray for this bad time to end': the steep cost of lockdown in South Africa

In country where half of population lives in poverty, coronavirus lockdown is causing mounting problems. "We had no chance to prepare, to get food, to get ready, to save some money. It is like I have been bound in chains ... I understand it is [the same] for the whole world but we don't know how or when we will solve [this disease],"

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/06/we-pray-for-this-bad-time-to-end-the-steep-cost-of-coronavirus-lockdown-in-south-africa>

Spain's Andalucia & Costa del Sol ask Government for changes to lockdown 'outing' timetable due to soaring temperatures

The Junta of Andalucia has approached the Central Government to request changes to the existing 'outing' timetable, announced last weekend, in order to protect families with young children from the soaring summer temperatures. Currently a parent can take out up to three children for an hour between the hours of 12pm and 7pm, but given the increasing heat the Junta is proposing a few changes to the existing lockdown 'outing' timetable.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/05/06/spains-andalucia-costa-del-sol-ask-government-for-changes-to-lockdown-outing-timetable-due-to-soaring-temperatures/>

Spain's parliament votes to extend lockdown powers

Spain's parliament has granted a government request to prolong the extraordinary legal order that underpins the country's lockdown after fierce clashes in parliament and a last-minute deal with an opposition party.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f4586bf4-3cf5-4272-a472-eee985bc3e34>

Scientific Viewpoint

Easing French coronavirus lockdown will 'spark second wave of cases'

France has been warned it faces an inevitable "second wave" of coronavirus as the country prepares to take its first significant steps out of lockdown. President Emmanuel Macron has already announced that schools and nurseries will progressively be reopened from Monday as part of a phased revival of activity. But Olivier Schwartz, head of the virus department at France's Pasteur Institute, issued a word of caution. "There will be a second wave, but the problem is to which extent. Is it a small wave or a big wave? It's too early to say," he said.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/france-coronavirus-lockdown-second-wave-of-cases-a4434911.html>

COVID-19 surges in Russia, Brazil; WHO warns of huge death toll in Africa

With an ongoing surge of COVID-19 activity, Russia's total is now the world's fifth highest, as cases soared in parts of Brazil, another pandemic hot spot. And in another development, the World Health Organization (WHO) today warned that smoldering uncontained outbreaks in the first pandemic year in Africa could kill as many as 190,000 people.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/05/covid-19-surges-russia-brazil-who-warns-huge-death-toll-africa>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Japan extends state of emergency amid fears over second wave

Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, has extended the country's state emergency until the end of the month, amid warnings that relaxing physical distancing advice too soon could flood already crowded hospitals with coronavirus patients. Abe declared a month-long state of emergency in Tokyo and six other prefectures on 7 April, enabling local governors to request that people avoid unnecessary trips outside and that non-essential businesses close. The measures have since been expanded nationwide, but they are far less restrictive than those introduced in the US and parts of Europe, with no fines or other penalties for those who do not comply.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/04/japan-to-extend-state-of-emergency-covid-19-amid-fears-second-wave-could-cripple-tokyo-hospitals>

New Lockdown

'If this thing boomerangs': Second wave of infections feared

As Europe and the U.S. loosen their lockdowns against the coronavirus, health experts are expressing growing dread over what they say is an all-but-certain second wave of deaths and infections that could force governments to clamp back down. "We're risking a backslide that will be intolerable," said Dr. Ian Lipkin of Columbia University's Center for Infection and Immunity. Elsewhere around the world, German authorities began drawing up plans in case of a resurgence of the virus. Experts in Italy urged intensified efforts to identify new victims and trace their contacts. And France, which hasn't yet eased its lockdown, has already worked up a "reconfinement plan" in the event of a new wave.

<https://apnews.com/bda9923cff8c143084141bc4c097b95c>