

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

4th May 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Factory owners around the world stand ready to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines

- Bill Gates said he doesn't think the recipe (Intellectual Property) for vaccine should be shared and there are not factories that can be used sitting idly by. [However, drugmakers all over the world are only too eager to retrofit their facilities and get to work.](#)
- Thomas Cueni, the president of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations, said that sharing IP 'wouldn't give us the the tools to produce more doses of vaccines.' The drugs industry is strenuously arguing that any legal proposal to allow the sharing of intellectual property and creation of generic coronavirus vaccines is pointless because there are no facilities around the world that can be tapped. Bill Gates told Sky News bluntly 'It is not like there's some idle vaccine factory, with regulatory approval, that makes magically safe vaccines.'
- **Except that is EXACTLY like it is. Factory owners around the globe, from Bangladesh to Canada, have said they stand ready to retrofit facilities and move forward with vaccine production if given the chance.**

Factory Owners Around the World Stand Ready to Manufacture Covid-19 Vaccines

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The drug industry has strenuously argued that any legal proposal to allow the sharing of intellectual property and creation of generic coronavirus vaccines is pointless because there are no facilities around the world that can be tapped. Thomas Cueni, the president of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations, said that sharing IP “wouldn’t give us the tools to produce more doses of vaccines.” Bill Gates, the billionaire philanthropist whose foundations help manage the United States and Europe’s primary Covid-19 outreach efforts to the developing world, known as Covax, was even more blunt. “It’s not like there’s some idle vaccine factory, with regulatory approval, that makes magically safe vaccines,” Gates said last weekend by way of explaining to Sky News why he thought the recipe for making coronavirus vaccine should not be shared.

<https://theintercept.com/2021/04/29/covid-vaccine-factory-production-ip/>

Biden Confronts Coronavirus Vaccine Patents

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The issue is coming to a head as the World Trade Organization’s General Council, one of its highest decision-making bodies, meets Wednesday and Thursday. India and South Africa are pressing for the body to waive an international intellectual property agreement that protects pharmaceutical trade secrets. The United States, Britain and the European Union so far have blocked the plan. Inside the White House, health advisers to the president admit they are divided. Some say that Mr. Biden has a moral imperative to act, and that it is bad politics for the president to side with pharmaceutical executives. Others say spilling closely guarded but highly complex trade secrets into the open would do nothing to expand the global supply of vaccines.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/03/us/politics/biden-coronavirus-vaccine-patents.html>

India's Serum Institute plans to start vaccine production outside India

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The Serum Institute of India, which manufactures the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, is planning to start vaccine production in other countries as it struggles to meet supply commitments, its chief executive officer told The Times. "There's going to be an announcement in the next few days," Adar Poonawalla was quoted as saying by the newspaper in an interview published on Friday. Poonawalla said last week that the Serum Institute would be able to raise its monthly output to 100 million doses by July, later than a previous timeline of end-May. Several states in India have run out of vaccines against COVID-19

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/indias-serum-institute-ceo-plans-start-vaccine-production-outside-india-times-2021-04-30/>

U.S. hears global demand for vaccines, but still studying how to allocate

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The United States is hearing "huge demand" from countries around the world for vaccines not needed by Americans, but has not yet developed a criteria for allocating them, the U.S. State Department's coordinator for global COVID-19 response, Gayle Smith, said on Friday. The White House said on Monday the United States will start to share up to 60 million doses of AstraZeneca Plc's coronavirus vaccine with other countries, as soon as the next few weeks, but the Federal Drug Administration still needs to approve those doses.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-hearing-huge-demand-around-world-vaccine-doses-us-covid-19-coordinator-2021-04-30/>

'Everything falls on my shoulders': SII CEO Adar Poonawalla on vaccine pressure in India

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Level of expectation and aggression is really unprecedented; it's overwhelming' Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla on Saturday spoke out about the pressures he was under over the production of COVID-19 vaccines to meet the ever-increasing demand in India as the country battles through a devastating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/everything-falls-on-my-shoulders-sii-ceo-adar-poonawalla-on-vaccine-pressure-in-india-246826>

'Escape mutation' in Covid strain discovered in Angola able to evade Coronavirus antibodies

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A relatively unknown Covid-19 variant that was first discovered on a flight from Tanzania to Angola is now considered the world's most mutated Coronavirus strain. The variant carries around 34 mutations, including a so-called 'escape mutation' according to findings that were shared in a pre-print research report and reported on by various media. The 'escape mutation', or E484K change, enables the variant to evade or resist antibodies, meaning that people who have had Covid in the past could become sick again.

<https://www.cityam.com/escape-mutation-in-covid-variant-discovered-in-angola-able-to-evade-coronavirus-antibodies/>

'Unprecedented achievement': who received the first billion COVID vaccinations?

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The world has reached the milestone of administering one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines, just four months after the World Health Organization (WHO) approved the first vaccine for emergency use, and roll-outs began in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. The speed

at which they have been administered is remarkable, but unequal distribution of the vaccinations highlights global disparities, say researchers. "It is an unprecedented scientific achievement. Nobody could have imagined that, within 16 months of the identification of a new virus, we would have vaccinated one billion people worldwide with a variety of different vaccines, using different platforms and made in different countries," says Soumya Swaminathan, the WHO's chief scientist, based in Geneva, Switzerland. As of 27 April, 1.06 billion doses had been given to 570 million people, which means that about 7.3% of the world's population of 7.79 billion have received at least one dose. But scientists say that more than 75% of the world's population will need to be vaccinated to bring the pandemic under control.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01136-2>

EXCLUSIVE Scientists say India government ignored warnings amid coronavirus surge

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INSACOG was set up as a forum of scientific advisers by the government in late December specifically to detect genomic variants of the coronavirus that might threaten public health. INSACOG brings together 10 national laboratories capable of studying virus variants. INSACOG researchers first detected B.1.617, which is now known as the Indian variant of the virus, as early as February, Ajay Parida, director of the state-run Institute of Life Sciences and a member of INSACOG, told Reuters. INSACOG shared its findings with the health ministry's National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) before March 10, warning that infections could quickly increase in parts of the country, the director of the northern India research centre told Reuters. The findings were then passed on to the Indian health ministry, this person said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/exclusive-scientists-say-india-government-ignored-warnings-amid-coronavirus-2021-05-01/>

Exclusive: Scientists say India government ignored warnings amid coronavirus surge

A forum of scientific advisers set up by the government warned Indian officials in early March of a new and more contagious variant of the coronavirus taking hold in the country, five scientists who are part of the forum told Reuters.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/world/2021/05/01/exclusive-scientists-say-india-government-ignored-warnings-amid-coronavirus-surge>

Triple mutation in SARS-CoV-2 seen in second wave of COVID-19 in India

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Researchers sequenced the viral genome from samples in the state of Maharashtra and found a unique combination of three mutations that suggest the SARS-CoV-2 virus is continually evolving to evade the human immune response.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20210427/Triple-mutation-in-SARS-CoV-2-seen-in-second-wave-of-COVID-19-in-India.aspx>

Mutated variant from India found in 10 Hong Kong Covid-19 cases

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Seven of the cases arrived on a flight from New Delhi on April 4, though those might prove the tip of the iceberg, as the University of Hong Kong is now. Conducting genome sequencing on passenger samples. Screening for mutations linked to that variant now standard practice in Hong Kong Covid-19 surveillance, authorities say

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3131755/coronavirus-least-10-previously-confirmed-hong>

Rapid spread of India Covid variant in UK is 'worrying', say scientists

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Coronavirus variants first detected in India risk becoming the UK's second most dominant within weeks, experts have warned after total cases rose to 400. Public Health England (PHE) said on Thursday that there was "no evidence of widespread community transmission or that these variants cause more severe disease or render the vaccines currently deployed any less effective". But other scientists said it was worrying that the UK's detected cases appear to be increasing rapidly despite England still being under social-distancing restrictions. India was placed on England's travel "red list" from 23 April, restricting arrivals to citizens and residents who must quarantine in a hotel

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/29/rapid-spread-of-india-covid-variant-in-uk-is-worrying-say-scientists>

Nepalese hospitals run out of beds as India coronavirus outbreaks spills across border | TheHill

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Hospitals in Nepal have run out of beds and vaccine supply is dwindling as India's massive coronavirus outbreak has spilled past its border into the small, neighboring country. The Nepal Health Ministry on Friday issued a statement saying that the coronavirus situation in the country has become "unmanageable." "As the number of infections has been increasing, the health system is not able to cope and a situation has already arisen in which hospital beds cannot be made available," the statement read. According to The New York Times, Nepal recorded 5,657 new coronavirus infections on Friday, the highest daily number recorded in the South Asian country since October.

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/551333-nepalese-hospitals-run-out-of-beds-as-india-coronavirus-outbreaks-spill>

India becomes first country to hit 400000 daily Covid cases

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With its health system already strained beyond the brink, India has become the first country in the world to report more than 400,000 new coronavirus cases in a single day. After 10 consecutive days of recording more than 300,000 new infections,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/india-covid-cases-coronavirus-update-b1840717.html>

India's covid-19 crisis is a dire warning for all countries

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It has become painfully clear that newer variants of the virus have transformed the nature of this pandemic. We cannot just vaccinate rich countries and hope that we will be safe. The only way to end this pandemic is to end it everywhere. Otherwise, we will forever play whack-a-mole with a constantly mutating virus. History will not be kind to us if we do not ensure global access to covid-19 vaccines. The rollout of highly effective vaccines in record time is one of the greatest triumphs of science. But the hoarding of vaccines and roadblocks around sharing raw materials and information on how to make these vaccines globally will be seen as our biggest strategic mistake. Global leaders must collaborate, waive intellectual property rights, share technology, and allow and support more countries to manufacture vaccines. Sharing of the mRNA vaccine recipe is critical, since these vaccines can be quickly redesigned to keep up with the newer variants.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/04/30/indias-covid-19-crisis-is-dire-warning-all-countries/>

Covid in Africa: 'The number of bodies is jaw-dropping' — but we don't know the truth

Covid in Africa: 'The number of bodies is jaw-dropping' — but we don't know the truth

The cemetery in Medani, a Sudanese city on the banks of the Blue Nile, is bustling. Vehicles bearing the dead rumble back and forth to the burial site in an almost continual procession. Masanik, 22, a nurse who lives next to the cemetery, knows only too well what keeps the grave diggers so busy.

She works as a volunteer at an “isolation centre” where the oxygen needed to keep Covid sufferers alive often runs out. “I feel like the world will end soon because of the big number of deaths we’re seeing,” she told me. “The hospitals are full, they’re turning people away. This virus has hit us really hard.” Another volunteer, Rana, 24, said: “I’ve seen a lot of people die. Some are young, like me. It’s hard to watch.” Such bleak testimony challenges the claim that Africa has escaped the worst of the havoc wrought by Covid-19 on other parts of the world from India to America.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/0adea150-a9de-11eb-acd8-e39d812fcf8b?shareToken=e47b2a5f84bcee64d6846c3a19c9e89>

EU Set to Test Vaccine Certificates With Goal of June Roll-Out

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The European Union will start testing its vaccine certificate system in early May with the aim of getting it fully operational by June 30, EU officials said. Legislation may not be completely finalized by then, meaning a roll-out could still be delayed, officials said in a briefing Friday. The European Parliament on Thursday broadly backed the European Commission’s vaccine certificate plans, allowing negotiations to begin with the bloc’s member states over final details.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-30/eu-set-to-test-vaccine-certificates-with-goal-of-june-roll-out>

Estonia introduces a digital vaccine passport

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Estonia has introduced a digital vaccine passport to support the country’s response to COVID-19 pandemic; the secure vaccination certificate, called VaccineGuard, is issued through the Estonian national patient portal and is available immediately, enabling the country’s citizens to cross borders with proof of vaccination status. The VaccineGuard platform is based on a yearlong collaboration with the Estonian, Hungarian and Icelandic governments, the World Health Organisation and AstraZeneca Estonia, the local branch of the British-Swedish pharmaceutical company. The platform was developed by Estonian-founded deep tech company, Guardtime.

<https://estonianworld.com/technology/estonia-introduces-vaccine-passport/>

Prince Harry calls for equitable distribution of Covid vaccines

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The Duke of Sussex made his first public appearance since the funeral of his grandfather, the Duke of Edinburgh, at a charity concert in Los Angeles to promote the equitable distribution of coronavirus vaccines worldwide. Prince Harry urged people to “look beyond ourselves with empathy and compassion” during a speech at Vax Live, hosted by Global Citizen at the SoFi stadium before an audience of vaccinated guests. He pleaded for vaccines to be distributed to everyone, everywhere.

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/may/03/prince-harry-calls-for-equitable-distribution-of-covid-vaccines?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw_t_gu&utm_medium&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1620033491

U.S. hears global demand for vaccines, but still studying how to allocate

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The United States is hearing “huge demand” from countries around the world for vaccines not needed by Americans, but has not yet developed a criteria for allocating them, the U.S. State Department’s coordinator for global COVID-19 response, Gayle Smith, said on Friday. The White House said on Monday the United States will start to share up to 60 million doses of AstraZeneca Plc’s coronavirus vaccine with other countries, as soon as the next few weeks, but the Federal Drug Administration still needs to approve those doses.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-hearing-huge-demand-around-world-vaccine-doses-us-covid-19-coordinator-2021-04-30/>

Indian COVID strain spreads in Israel, also among vaccinated

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The Health Ministry has identified 41 new cases of the Indian coronavirus variant in Israel, including four in people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19. Israel's genomic sequencing system found that 24 of those infected with the variant, which experts say may be more contagious than other variants, had returned recently from abroad. The other 17 contracted it via community transmission, including five schoolchildren. The Health Ministry and the IDF Home Front Command are carrying out widespread testing at the schools where the children are enrolled.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/dozens-of-cases-of-indian-covid-variant-found-in-israel-including-among-vaccinated-1.9758121>

Tackling the rise of concerning COVID-19 variants in the UK

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Variants that are considered to have concerning epidemiological, immunological or pathogenic properties, as well as evidence of community transmission in the UK or abroad, are first designated as a VUI. After being risk assessed by the relevant expert committee, a VUI may be upgraded to VOC. The first VOC — B.1.1.7 — was detected in Kent in September 2020 and is now the dominant lineage in the UK. It has also been detected in more than 100 countries around the world. A similar variant with an additional mutation — B.1.1.7 + E484K — was detected in Bristol in December 2020 and is also circulating in the UK but at very low levels, with no new cases reported since 1 March 2021. Two further VOCs have been identified in the UK — one first detected in South Africa and one first detected in Japan (in a traveller from Brazil). To date, there are relatively small numbers of cases in the UK with only isolated pockets of community transmission. Identified cases are being tackled aggressively through surge testing — increased testing and enhanced contact tracing in specific locations — and genomic sequencing.

<https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/feature/tackling-the-rise-of-concerning-covid-19-variants-in-the-uk>

One vaccine shot leaves many vulnerable to Covid variants, UK study finds

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Individuals who receive one shot of the Covid-19 vaccine and have never been infected by the virus could be very vulnerable to new variants, according to a new UK study. Researchers from Imperial College London, Queen Mary University of London and University College London looked at immune responses in healthcare workers who had received one shot of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine. The scientists found that people who had not previously been infected by Covid-19 showed very low levels of neutralising antibodies against the original strain from Wuhan, the B.1.1.7 variant first identified in Kent and B.1.351 from South Africa. By contrast, those who had previously had mild or asymptomatic infection and then received a single dose appeared to have greatly enhanced protection against both B.1.1.7 and B.1.351, demonstrating high neutralising antibodies and a strong response by T cells, which remember past infection.

<https://www.ft.com/content/87335d59-1598-4887-bfb9-4b1e3a226399>

Risk from COVID-19 variants remains after first Pfizer shot: study

A single dose of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine may not generate a sufficient immune response to protect against dominant new variants, except in people who have already been infected with COVID-19, a UK study has found. The Imperial College-led study, which looked at immune responses in British healthcare workers after their first dose of the Pfizer shot, found that people who had previously had mild or asymptomatic infection had enhanced protection against more infectious mutated variants that emerged in Britain and South Africa. But the immune response after a first dose of the shot was weaker in people who had not previously been infected, potentially leaving them at risk from such variants, researchers leading the work said on Friday.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7823141/covid-19-variants-pfizer-vaccine/>

Prior SARS-CoV-2 infection boosts response to variants after first vaccine dose

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A single dose of vaccine boosts protection against SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus variants, but only in those with previous COVID-19, a study has found. In those who have not previously been infected and have so far only received one dose of vaccine the immune response to variants of concern may be insufficient. The findings, published today in the journal Science and led by researchers at Imperial College London, Queen Mary University of London and University College London, looked at immune responses in UK healthcare workers at Barts and Royal Free hospitals following their first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.* They found that people who had previously had mild or asymptomatic infection had significantly enhanced protection against the Kent and South Africa variants, after a single dose of the mRNA vaccine. In those without prior COVID-19, the immune response was less strong after a first dose, potentially leaving them at risk from variants.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/220613/prior-sars-cov-2-infection-boosts-response-variants>

Six new cases of Brazilian COVID-19 variant found in T&T

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The Brazilian COVID-19 variant (P1 variant) has been detected in six additional COVID-19 positive samples in Trinidad and Tobago. This brings the total local number of confirmed COVID-19 positive samples of the P1 variant to 15. In a statement on Friday night, the Ministry of Health noted that the Variants of Concern were detected in Nariva/Mayaro and St George West. The latest cases include one non-national and five nationals. The Ministry provided the following details: Nariva/Mayaro (1) - non-national, primary contact of another confirmed P1 variant case - St George West (5) - all nationals, one case is the primary contact of another confirmed P1 variant case

<http://www.looptt.com/content/six-new-cases-brazilian-covid-19-variant-found-tt>

Moderna Is Testing a New Version of Its COVID-19 Vaccine That Wouldn't Require Ultra-Cold Storage

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As safety concerns over COVID-19 vaccines from AstraZeneca and Johnson&Johnson-Janssen have led to disruptions in the inoculation efforts of numerous countries relying on those shots, companies like Moderna are attempting to fill the resulting gaps. The Massachusetts-based biotech company announced on April 29 that it is investing billions to boost manufacturing facilities in Switzerland, Spain and the U.S., building enough capacity to produce up to 3 billion doses of its mRNA-based vaccine through 2022. Stephane Bancel, CEO of Moderna, says that some of the wealthier, developed countries are eager to up their orders of the mRNA vaccines (which include both the Moderna shot and one produced by Pfizer/BioNTech).

https://time.com/5978280/moderna-vaccine-ultra-cold-storage/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=editorial&utm_term=health_covid-19&linkId=11749774

Moderna to provide 500m vaccine doses for Covax programme

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Moderna and vaccine promoter Gavi have announced a deal by which the pharmaceutical company will provide up to 500 million doses for the UN-backed Covax programme by the end of 2022.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/moderna-to-provide-500m-vaccine-doses-for-covax-programme/ar-BB1gjcCq?ocid=msedgdp>

WHO authorizes Moderna coronavirus vaccine for emergency use

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The World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday listed the Moderna coronavirus vaccine for

emergency use, adding another shot to its arsenal in the fight against the coronavirus. The shot from Moderna, which is estimated to have an efficacy rate of 94.1 percent, joins shots from Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca-SK Bio, Serum Institute of India and Janssen on WHO's list of emergency use vaccines. The addition of Moderna's shot to the WHO's emergency use listing is a prerequisite for it to be a part of COVAX, the program to disseminate shots to low-income countries. It also allows countries to expedite their own regulatory approval to import and administer the COVID-19 vaccine.
<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/551287-who-authorizes-moderna-coronavirus-vaccine-for-emergency-use>

Malaysia reports first case of Indian COVID-19 variant

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Malaysia has detected its first case of a highly infectious coronavirus variant first identified in India, Health Minister Adham Baba said on Sunday, days after imposing a ban on flights from India. The variant, named B.1.617, was detected in an Indian national screened at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, he said. The World Health Organisation has described it as a "variant of interest", suggesting it may have mutations that would make the virus more transmissible, cause more severe disease or evade vaccine immunity

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/malaysia-reports-first-case-indian-covid-19-variant-2021-05-02/>

Brazil authorizes production of active ingredient for AstraZeneca vaccine

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Brazil's health regulator Anvisa authorized on Friday the government biomedical institute Fiocruz to produce domestically the active ingredient for the AstraZeneca vaccine against COVID-19, according to a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/brazil-authorizes-production-active-ingredient-astrazeneca-vaccine-2021-04-30/>

Covid UK: Number of people hospitalised after first vaccine dose is 'tiny', says SAGE

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File presented to SAGE shows only 526 people admitted 3+ weeks after a jab This was out of a study of 52,000 sent to hospital in the second wave. Number of admissions tumbles with time after the vaccine. Most patients are in frail and elderly groups known to benefit less from jabs. No data yet for impact of second doses, which could reduce 'vaccine failure'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9525237/Coronavirus-Number-people-hospitalised-Covid-vaccine-dose-tiny.html>

Coronavirus vaccinations 'to begin for secondary school pupils from September'

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Secondary school pupils will reportedly be offered Covid-19 vaccinations from September under plans being developed by the NHS. Health service officials are compiling planning documents which include a measure to offer a single dose of the Pfizer jab to children aged 12 and older when the new school year starts, according to The Sunday Times. Pfizer has said trials of its vaccine in children aged 12 to 15 showed 100% efficacy and a strong immune response. The plans, which the Times said it had confirmed with Government and NHS sources, are contingent on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) due this summer. Committee member Professor Adam Finn, from the University of Bristol, told the Times: "We need to be in a position to immunise children, particularly teenagers, promptly and efficiently if we need to.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/coronavirus-vaccinations-begin-secondary-school-020059329.html>

All aboard! Cameroon's race to vaccinate every child

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Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers and health workers step aboard a make-shift boat, headed to Manoka, a remote island off the coast of Douala, Cameroon's economic capital. The boat is made of traditional wooden materials, steered by its passengers and driven by an outboard motor. Wearing life jackets and face masks, the group sits as socially distanced as they can, sharing the space with some water – a necessary carry-on for the journey – and mini-fridges. By reaching Manoka's zero-dose children, health workers and volunteers unlock a door that brings the entire community into contact with the health system.

<https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/all-aboard-camerouns-race-vaccinate-every-child>

S.Korea counts on large shipments of vaccines arriving in coming weeks

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South Korea is banking on the arrival of nearly 14 million doses of coronavirus vaccine by June, officials said on Monday, to boost an immunisation drive that could lose momentum due to dwindling supplies as result of shipment delays. Nearly 3.4 million of the population of 52 million had received their first dose by Sunday in the campaign begun in February, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said. A shipment of 8.9 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine, including 1.67 million via the global COVAX sharing scheme, and 5 million doses of Pfizer's product will arrive by June, the agency's director Jeong Eun-kyeong said, without giving dates.

https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-eyes-mid-may-arrival-coronavirus-vaccines-stocks-run-down-2021-05-03/?taid=608fe1142ffb0700019759ac&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

Thousands of doctors planning to leave the NHS citing pandemic stress and burnout

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Thousands of doctors are planning to leave the NHS in the coming year, exhausted by the coronavirus pandemic. A survey by the British Medical Association found that half of doctors plan to work fewer hours, one in four were more likely to take a career break and 21% were considering leaving the NHS for a different career. The tracker survey was responded to by 2,099 people. Many blamed their workload, including an inability to take breaks, and almost 40% said they did not have anywhere at work where they could relax safely with colleagues. An acute speciality doctor who outlined their workload told the BMA: "My own mental and physical health will have to become a priority at some point."

<https://news.sky.com/story/thousands-of-doctors-planning-to-leave-the-nhs-citing-pandemic-stress-and-burnout-12293782>

Club Trials Guinea Pigs

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The 'trials' being carried out in the UK on thousands of people entering crowded indoor venues without masks & social distancing are unethical. Don't just listen to us- listen to Prof Monks- the study lead, who himself accepts people are 'guinea pigs'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0ctykhFRW4>

Six more Olympic torch staffers diagnosed with COVID-19

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Six additional Olympic torch staffers have tested positive for COVID-19, Reuters reported. Tokyo 2020 said in a statement on Saturday that the six people helped out on the relay portion in the southern prefecture of Kagoshima on Tuesday. Two other Olympic staffers have tested positive for the virus earlier in April. Olympic organizers said that the sick staffers assisted on traffic control and wore masks in two other cities of the country, according to Reuters. This comes as Japan declared a state of emergency last month for major cities and populations of Tokyo and Osaka to contain the

fourth wave of infections. Olympic organizers have urged Japan's citizens to comply with COVID-19 guidelines, according to Reuters.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/public-global-health/551386-six-more-olympic-torch-staffers-diagnosed-with-covid>

Florida GOP Kills Measure To Protect Vaccinated Workers From Retaliation

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In one of the more bizarre developments in the heated political wars over COVID-19, Republicans in the Florida Senate have defeated a measure that would have stopped schools from banning vaccinated teachers. The measure was introduced by Democratic State Sen. Jason Pizzo earlier this week to protect teachers and other workers from being barred or fired by employers because they've been inoculated against the deadly pandemic. He was spurred to act after a private Miami school put vaccinated teachers on notice that their jobs were at risk. Pizzo's proposal was an amendment to a bill just passed by the Florida legislature Thursday that would prohibit businesses, schools and government entities in the state from asking anyone to provide proof of a COVID-19 vaccination.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/jason-pizzo-miami-covid-vaccination_n_608c7bf1e4b02e74d2275743?ri18n=true

A Normal Summer Depends on These Key Vaccine Holdouts

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By June or July, if we immunize most American adults and adolescents, levels of virus transmission will decrease precipitously. In an epidemiological modeling study with the CUNY School of Public Health, we found that roughly three-quarters of the susceptible U.S. population would need to be vaccinated to significantly slow or stop virus transmission. However, the new B.1.1.7 (United Kingdom) variant, among others now accelerating across the country, is more transmissible than the original virus lineages examined in our study. This means even higher levels of vaccine coverage, possibly 80 percent or higher, may be necessary.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/a-normal-summer-depends-on-these-key-republican-vaccine-holdouts>

After a Year of Loss, South America Suffers Worst Death Tolls Yet

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As vaccinations mount in some of the world's wealthiest countries and people cautiously envision life after the pandemic, the crisis in Latin America — and in South America in particular — is taking an alarming turn for the worse, potentially threatening the progress made well beyond its borders. Last week, Latin America accounted for 35 percent of all coronavirus deaths in the world, despite having just 8 percent of the global population, according to data compiled by The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/29/world/americas/covid-latin-america.html>

Jordan detects three cases of Indian COVID-19 variant - minister

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Jordan detected three cases of the Indian COVID-19 variant in people who had not travelled, the health minister told state-owned Al Mamlaka TV. "Two cases were recorded in Amman and one in Zarqa in people who did not travel, which confirms that the emergence of mutated cases does not necessarily have to come from outside, but rather as a result of specific reproduction," Minister Firas Al-Hawari told Al Mamlaka TV. Jordan recorded on Saturday 704 cases of COVID-19 with 35 deaths, bringing the total cases detected in the kingdom to 712,077 with 8,871 deaths, according to the health ministry.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-jordan/jordan-detects-three-cases-of-indian-covid-19-variant-minister-idUSL1N2MO0J>

COVID-19 Variant Found in India Reported in Memphis | Tennessee News | US News

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Officials in Tennessee's most populous county said Thursday that one case of a COVID-19 variant found in India has been identified in a person who had recently traveled there. The Shelby County Task Force said one person has been found to have contracted the B1617 variant of the coronavirus. The person is under quarantine and the person's past contacts are being investigated, officials said.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/tennessee/articles/2021-04-29/covid-19-variant-found-in-india-reported-in-memphis>

Mounting desperation in Cambodia amid COVID lockdown

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Iv Sovann has been in lockdown with her family in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh since April 5 when the government imposed a raft of stringent measures to curb a sudden surge of coronavirus cases. The 36-year-old's family of six has no income. Her husband, a teacher, lost his job when the school where he worked shut down a year ago. Sovann has been keeping the family afloat by working as an accounts assistant for a local transport company. "We are not rich. We live hand to mouth. If we were rich like others, it would be OK for us to be in quarantine for a year," she said. Desperate for food, this week she was among a group of people in the Phnom Penh district of Stueng Meanchey who took matters into their own hands.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/2/mounting-desperation-in-cambodia-amid-covid-lockdown>

B.C. bending COVID-19 variant curve, independent modelling shows

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Efforts by British Columbia health officials and residents are managing to suppress infections that have been driven by COVID-19 variants, a group of modelling experts says. The group of researchers from the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences says projections show a 30 to 40 per cent decline in transmission rates since March. "We're seeing drops in cases and that's fantastic," said Sarah Otto, one of the group's members and a professor at the University of British Columbia.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7826325/bc-bending-variant-curve/>

Access to mental health services dwindled as pandemic need strained providers: GAO report | TheHill

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Access to mental health services dwindled as providers were strained and under the demand for care during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report made public on Friday. The GAO concluded that the number of people experiencing anxiety, depression and drug overdoses heightened during the pandemic, while mental health professionals dealt with layoffs, decreased hours and having to turn away patients. Respondents to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveys determined that about 38 percent reported symptoms of anxiety or depression between April 2020 and February 2021. Eleven percent said the same in 2019. Similarly, emergency departments saw 36 percent more visits for overdoses and 26 percent more visits for suicide attempts from mid-March to mid-October of last year, compared to the previous year.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/551260-access-to-mental-health-services-dwindled-amid-increasing-demand-during>