

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

27th May 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

With COVID-19 cases surging, Nepal asks global community for urgent vaccine help

- Nepal has one of the highest COVID-19 viral reproduction rates in the world. The situation is dire: reports indicate Nepal has a consistently higher number of COVID-19 cases per million than India. By mid-July, new case numbers could reach 800,000, among a population of 30 million, with a predicted death toll of 40,000.
- [Last month, Nepal's Ministry of Health said: 'Since coronavirus cases have spiked beyond the capacity of the health system and hospitals have run out of beds, the situation is unmanageable,' The ministry also said it had no more vaccines.](#)
- Only two per cent of Nepal's population is fully vaccinated. Nearly two million Nepalis have received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, However, with the halt of exports of vaccines from India, most have not had access to a second dose. This shortage of vaccines in Nepal has global epidemiological implications, such as the possibility of virus mutations that could readily spread regionally and beyond.
- As social scientists and public health practitioners familiar with Nepal's healthcare delivery and emergency response systems, we recognise that ultimately, the capacity to care for people suffering from COVID-19 in Nepal is severely limited, with roughly 1,500 intensive care beds and just over 800 ventilators in the country. The mountainous terrain throughout much of the country, along with a lack of infrastructure, political marginalization and poverty compound the impacts of infectious disease.
- However, we are also familiar with Nepal's unique grassroots public health capabilities, including the ability to quickly and effectively distribute vaccines to its people. Distributing vaccines to Nepal should help mitigate the country's exigent crisis and help to flatten the curve in South Asia.
- **Inequalities Mount**
- As North America and Europe return to semblances of normal life, the danger of creating and maintaining a 'vaccine apartheid' is very real.
- Vaccine apartheid refers to the idea that wealthy nations or groups get vaccines, while others do not. As World Health Organization Director, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says: 'The solution is more sharing.'
- Last week, in a positive step towards moving the needle on vaccine apartheid, U.S President Joe Biden pledged an additional 20 million vaccine doses to share with the rest of the world. This is welcome news. However, Nepal has not been identified as a priority.
- Structural inequalities are exacerbated by the pandemic. Nepal is at the mercy of powerful global actors and faces a desperate humanitarian catastrophe.
- As in India, Nepal has experienced a shortage of oxygen supplies for those who fall severely ill. The toll of the virus rolls down steep slopes of inequality impacted by social-structural factors like ethnicity, class, caste, geography and gender that co-mingle with public health policies. Nepal acutely illustrates how these differences exacerbated by a pandemic can lead to synergistic epidemics, or 'syndemics.'
- While aid in the form of cash, oxygen supply chain assistance and essential supplies for

healthcare facilities are helpful, access, to vaccines is paramount to stopping sickness and death.

With COVID-19 cases surging, Nepal asks global community for urgent vaccine help

With COVID-19 cases surging, Nepal asks global community for urgent vaccine help

Nepal, the landlocked Himalayan country, currently has one of the highest COVID-19 viral reproduction rates in the world. The situation is dire: reports indicate Nepal has a consistently higher number of COVID-19 cases per million than India. By mid-July, new case numbers could reach 800,000, among a population of 30 million, with a predicted death toll of 40,000.

<https://theconversation.com/with-covid-19-cases-surging-nepal-asks-global-community-for-urgent-vaccine-help-161333>

Swiss accelerate economic re-opening as COVID-19 infections wane

Swiss accelerate economic re-opening as COVID-19 infections wane

Switzerland will allow larger private indoor and outdoor gatherings than originally planned starting on Monday, the government said, as rising vaccinations and falling COVID-19 infections prompt the nation to accelerate its economic re-opening. The government said on Wednesday that the improving epidemiological situation would allow for private gatherings of 30 people indoors and 50 outdoors, after saying last week it planned to maintain the limit at 10 people indoors and 15 people outdoors.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/swiss-accelerate-economic-re-opening-covid-19-infections-wane-2021-05-26/>

France will impose self isolation for people coming from UK

France will impose self isolation for people coming from UK

France on Wednesday declared a mandatory quarantine period for people coming from Britain, due to the increasing prevalence there of a highly contagious coronavirus variant first detected in India. France follows Austria, which said on Tuesday it was banning direct flights and tourist visits from Britain, and Germany, which said on Friday that anyone entering from the UK would have to quarantine for two weeks on arrival.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/france-will-impose-self-isolation-people-coming-uk-2021-05-26/>

South Koreans no longer need masks outdoors if vaccinated against COVID-19

South Koreans no longer need masks outdoors if vaccinated against COVID-19

South Korea on Wednesday said masks will no longer be required outdoors from July for those vaccinated with at least one COVID-19 shot. The move is a bid to encourage older residents to get vaccinated as South Korea aims to immunise at least 70% of its 52 million people by September, from just 7.7% now. People given at least one dose also will be allowed to gather in larger numbers starting June, Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum told a coronavirus response meeting on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-koreans-no-longer-need-masks-outdoors-if-vaccinated-against-covid-19-2021-05-26/>

UAE mandates COVID-19 vaccines for live events

UAE mandates COVID-19 vaccines for live events

The United Arab Emirates said vaccinations against COVID-19 will be mandatory for people attending all "live events" from June 6, as the country pushes a vaccination campaign which has consistently been one of the fastest in the world. The policy applies to all sports, cultural, social, arts exhibition, activities and events, a spokeswoman for the ministry of health said late on Tuesday. Attendees must also present a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken at least 48 hours before the event.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/uae-mandates-covid-19-vaccines-live-events-2021-05-26/>

Experts question Olympic COVID readiness, ask WHO to weigh in

Experts question Olympic COVID readiness, ask WHO to weigh in

A group of infectious disease experts yesterday raised concerns about several gaps in the International Olympic Committee's (IOC's) COVID-19 protocols, and they called on the World Health Organization (WHO) to convene an emergency committee to weigh the risks and make recommendations for the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo. If a WHO emergency committee takes up the issue, it would mark the second time in recent years that international experts have tackled the safety of the Summer Games. In 2016, a WHO emergency committee weighed in on the Zika threat to the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, saying that the event—by comparison, a relatively modest mosquito-borne outbreak—posed a very low threat.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/experts-question-olympic-covid-readiness-ask-who-weigh>

Australia's Victoria state likely to enter COVID-19 lockdown -media reports

Australia's Victoria state likely to enter COVID-19 lockdown -media reports

Australia's second-most populous state Victoria is likely to enter a snap COVID-19 lockdown from Thursday after senior ministers met Wednesday night to discuss steps to contain a fresh outbreak in Melbourne, local media reported. The state government was set to confirm final details of the lockdown on Thursday morning before announcing the public health measures, the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper reported, citing government sources. A Victoria state health department spokesman said there would likely be an update on the coronavirus situation in Victoria later on Thursday morning.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/australias-victoria-state-likely-enter-covid-19-lockdown-media-reports-2021-05-26/>

The world's biggest vaccine maker is stalling on exports. That's a problem for the planet's most vulnerable

The world's biggest vaccine maker is stalling on exports. That's a problem for the planet's most vulnerable

As India's own coronavirus crisis has spiraled, SII -- world's largest vaccine maker -- can no longer export its goods. Last week, the SII said it wouldn't restart deliveries to COVAX, a worldwide initiative aimed at distributing vaccines to countries regardless of wealth, until the end of this year. While SII's decision will be a lifeline for India, which is still reporting about 200,000 new cases a day, the delay poses a huge problem for developing countries that depend on COVAX to control large outbreaks of their own. The world is already 140 million doses short -- and by the end of June, that gap will have reached 190 million shots, the United Nations children's agency, one of the partners in COVAX, said last week. There is currently no timeframe for resolving the shortage, UNICEF said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/25/asia/covax-india-serum-institute-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>

China to gift 1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to Nepal

China to gift 1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to Nepal

China will provide 1 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine to Nepal, its ambassador said on Wednesday, as authorities in the Himalayan country scramble to secure shots amid a surge in infections that has overwhelmed its rickety health system. The announcement was made during a telephone conversation between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Nepali counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari on Wednesday, China's ambassador Hou Yanqi said in a Twitter post.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-to-gift-1-million-covid-19-vaccine-doses-to-nepal/ar-AAKpfVQ>

Vaccine inequality in India sends many falling through gaps

Vaccine inequality in India sends many falling through gaps

As the coronavirus tears through India, night watchman Sagar Kumar thinks constantly about getting

vaccines for himself and his family of five amid critical shortages of shots in the country. But even if he knew how to get one, it wouldn't be easy. The main way is to register through a government website. But it is in English — a language the 25-year-old Kumar and nearly 90% of Indians can't speak, read or write — and his family has a single smartphone, with spotty internet service. And even though his state of Uttar Pradesh gives free shots to those under 45, there is no vaccination site in his village, with the nearest hospital an hour away. "All I can do now is hope for the best," Kumar said.

<https://apnews.com/article/india-technology-coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-9fc262598b4a6e1fc5ff223fdd748cea>

Only way to decrease variants of COVID-19 is by increasing vaccination, says Dr Gagandeep Kang

Only way to decrease variants of COVID-19 is by increasing vaccination, says Dr Gagandeep Kang

Stressing that the only way to decrease variants of COVID-19 is by increasing vaccination, prominent clinical scientist Gagandeep Kang said massive inoculation being a mistake is a topic brought up with "pseudo-scientific messy incorrect immunology". She was reacting to French virologist and Nobel laureate Luc Montagnier's comments on mass vaccination. Dr. Kang said that apparently he did not say all vaccinated people will die in two years, as claimed by some, but he did say that new variants are created through selection imposed by antibodies made through vaccination.

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/covid-19-only-way-to-decrease-variants-of-covid-19-is-by-increasing-vaccination-says-kang/article34650308.ece>

In 'vaccine apartheid,' Nepal is ground zero. It needs U.S. help

In 'vaccine apartheid,' Nepal is ground zero. It needs U.S. help

The world has reached the era of Covid-19 "vaccine apartheid." That was the warning this week from World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Nepal is now ground zero. Nepal has surpassed India in terms of Covid-19 deaths per capita, and is far ahead of other south Asian countries. About 40% of Covid-19 tests are coming back positive. With fewer than 2,000 ICU beds and 600 ventilators for a population of 30 million, Nepal's health care system is collapsing. As a member of the Nepali Parliament (G.K.T.) who represents a hard-hit area of Kathmandu and a U.S. physician-researcher who has collaborated with colleagues on strengthening health systems for 15 years, we implore action. The humanitarian crisis posed by the pandemic is likely to exceed the fallout from the 2015 earthquakes that devastated the country and took nearly 9,000 lives. This crisis has the potential to invite political instability and threaten the foundations of Nepal's democratic institutions.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/26/in-vaccine-apartheid-nepal-is-ground-zero-it-needs-u-s-help/>

Shuttered hospitals, soaring Covid-19 deaths: Rural Black communities lose a lifeline in the century's worst health crisis

Shuttered hospitals, soaring Covid-19 deaths: Rural Black communities lose a lifeline in the century's worst health crisis

In every corner of Latasha Taylor's home are plants she knows nothing about. After years spent shirking her mother's calls to join her in the yard at sunrise, Taylor now waters them out of duty. When her mom, Kat, was dying of Covid-19, she would ask about her flowers whenever she was conscious. Taylor promised she'd look after them. Her mother keeps a watchful eye from framed photos on the wall, dressed like the Queen of England in wide-brimmed hats and matching dresses. Taylor's mom, 62, was the third member of her family to die of Covid-19; the virus also took her aunt and uncle. Friends tell Taylor she's strong, but she doesn't feel that way. "If you had to, you would do what I did," she said. "Bury your whole family."

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/26/shuttered-hospitals-soaring-covid19-deaths-rural-black-communities-lose-lifeli>

[ne-in-pandemic/](#)

Withdrawal of pandemic welfare fuels poverty in Brazil

Withdrawal of pandemic welfare fuels poverty in Brazil

The pandemic shantytown sprang up virtually overnight when people began using scavenged wooden boards to build shacks on a plot of empty land in Sao Paulo, Brazil's biggest city. Geovani de Souza and his pregnant wife were among the 200 families who moved in over the last six months amid the economic turmoil caused by COVID-19. "Without a job, I couldn't pay my rent, was evicted from where I was living and found the solution here," said de Souza, who now relies on occasional work as a bricklayer. Similar stories abound. The Penha Brasil shantytown's rapid creation reflects a resurgence in poverty after the government limited socioeconomic turmoil in 2020 with one of the world's most generous welfare programs. Now that flow of money has been curtailed, leaving vulnerable Brazilians exposed to soaring food prices and a still-worsening job market. And the strain comes at a time when there is no near-term hope of mass vaccination to safeguard the labor force.

<https://apnews.com/article/world-news-brazil-pandemics-business-health-a642964c71a3a4112fc67be5bda25165>

UK PM Johnson was advised to lock down on March 14, but there was no plan - Cummings

UK PM Johnson was advised to lock down on March 14, but there was no plan - Cummings

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was told on March 14, 2020 that he needed to implement a lockdown, but the government did not have a plan for one, his former senior adviser Dominic Cummings said on Wednesday. "On the 14th we said to the Prime Minister: 'you are going to have to lockdown' - but there is no lockdown plan, it doesn't exist," Cummings told a parliamentary committee. Johnson announced a lockdown on March 23.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-lockdown/uk-pm-johnson-was-advised-to-lock-down-on-march-14-but-there-was-no-plan-cummings-idUSS8N2MQ093>

Department for Education was 'unprepared' for Covid-19 challenges, parliamentary committee finds

Department for Education was 'unprepared' for Covid-19 challenges, parliamentary committee finds

The Department for Education (DfE) "had no plan" and was unprepared for the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, a parliamentary committee has found. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) said that children had "very unequal experiences" during the end of the last academic year, as it explored the DfE's response to Covid-19 in England's first lockdown.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/covid-schools-department-education-exams-b1853612.html>

WHO asked to review spiked Italy report, whistleblower case

WHO asked to review spiked Italy report, whistleblower case

Whistleblower protection groups urged the World Health Organization on Wednesday to launch an independent review into the case of an Italian researcher who reported being pressured to falsify data in a now-spiked WHO report into Italy's coronavirus response. The groups, including Transparency International, Whistleblowing International Network and some 30 other public health and anti-corruption groups, sent an open letter to the president of the World Health Assembly. The assembly, WHO's highest decision-making body, is made up of all WHO member states and is meeting this week. In the letter, the signatories called for the U.N. agency to commit to reforming its whistleblowing protection policy. They said the Italian researcher, Dr. Francesco Zambon, had suffered retaliatory treatment for having reported the incident within WHO's internal ethics system.

<https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-europe-italy-coronavirus-pandemic-health-913f53909b17c8d09a1d21d56718ada5>

UK PM's ineptitude led to tens of thousands of deaths, ex-aide says

UK PM's ineptitude led to tens of thousands of deaths, ex-aide says

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's inept handling of the COVID pandemic led to tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths, and officials even feared he would ask to be injected with the virus on television to show it was benign, his former chief adviser said on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-pm-johnson-considered-having-covid-injection-in-early-2020-ex-adviser-says-idUKKCN2D62VU?edition-redirect=uk>

EU seeks huge fine for AstraZeneca vaccine delays

EU seeks huge fine for AstraZeneca vaccine delays

A lawyer for the European Union asked a Brussels court on Wednesday to impose a large fine on AstraZeneca (AZN.L) for its delays in delivering COVID-19 vaccines to the EU. The lawyer said the EU was seeking 10 euros for each day of delay for each dose as compensation for AstraZeneca's non-compliance with the EU contract. The lawyer said the EU was also seeking 10 million euros as penalties for AstraZeneca for each breach of the contract that the judge may decide.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-seeks-huge-fine-astrazeneca-vaccine-delays-2021-05-26/>

Covid-19: Variants are spreading in countries with low vaccination rates

Covid-19: Variants are spreading in countries with low vaccination rates

With new daily covid-19 cases in steep decline across Europe and North America, and now falling in India, the curve of global daily mortality is trending downwards. But the virus continues to flare up, most recently in Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam—countries often cited as models of pandemic control. Taiwan's covid-19 death toll has more than doubled in one week—to 23 deaths in all. Having recorded just 135 locally acquired infections in the entire pandemic up to 14 May, Taiwan has since detected over 4000 cases as the country's atrophied testing system struggles to keep up with new suspected cases. Covid testing had largely been abandoned even in cases of fever, such was the disease's rarity in Taiwan. Case numbers have also surged in parts of South America, where mortality has been on a different scale of magnitude. Argentina has the world's highest per capita death rate, having seen 493 deaths a day on average over the past week, or 10.8 deaths per million people per day, compared with 9.4 in Colombia, 8.8 in Brazil, and 1.6 in the US. Argentina's toll this week was proportionally higher than the worst week seen in Colombia, Peru, or the US, though less deadly than the worst weeks in Brazil, Hungary, or the UK.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1359>

Covid-19: Public debate is needed to decide how UK will live with SARS-CoV-2, says ethics collaborative

Covid-19: Public debate is needed to decide how UK will live with SARS-CoV-2, says ethics collaborative

As the UK eases its covid-19 restrictions, and the initial two-dose vaccination rollout nears its end, more radical forms of public engagement will be essential when resolving the difficult questions about how the country will live with SARS-CoV-2, the UK Pandemic Ethics Accelerator collaborative has said. As part of the collaborative, researchers from the universities of Oxford, Bristol, Edinburgh, and University College London considered some of the challenging ethical questions that the pandemic has raised. The accelerator has been funded by £1.4m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, as part of the rapid response to covid of UK Research and Innovation, the non-departmental government body that directs research and innovation funding. The pandemic has resulted in 130 000 covid-19 deaths in the UK and three million worldwide. Many people have also been affected by long covid.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1327>

On the road to Recovery—the world's biggest covid-19 treatment trial

On the road to Recovery—the world's biggest covid-19 treatment trial

When it comes to covid-19 therapeutics, the UK is the world leader, spearheaded by the largest, most successful trial in the world. Chris Stokel-Walker looks at Recovery, and why it has proved hard to replicate elsewhere. It's hard to overestimate the impact of the Recovery trial. In just one year, it's thought to have saved up to a million lives worldwide. Its finding that the low cost steroid dexamethasone reduces death from covid-19 by up to one third is arguably the major drug discovery in covid treatments so far. Hatched on a London bus ride on 9 March 2020, Recovery quickly became—and remains—the largest covid-19 treatment trial in the world, with nearly 40 000 patients enrolled at 181 sites globally, helping to shape the treatment of patients worldwide during a live and ever-changing pandemic.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1299>

Three-quarters of adults have Covid-19 antibodies, data suggests

Three-quarters of adults have Covid-19 antibodies, data suggests

More than three-quarters of adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are estimated to have Covid antibodies, according to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The ONS data suggest 75.9 per cent of adults in England have antibodies as of the week beginning May 3. Coronavirus antibodies occur when someone has had the virus in the past, or has been vaccinated. In Wales, an estimated 76.6 per cent have antibodies and 75 per cent of adults in Northern Ireland are estimated to have antibodies.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uk-three-quarters-adults-covid-antibodies-b937292.html>

Belgium restricts use of J&J coronavirus vaccine to over-41s after death

Belgium restricts use of J&J coronavirus vaccine to over-41s after death

Belgium Wednesday said it would no longer give people aged 41 and younger Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine after the death of a woman. The health ministry said the woman died on May 21 after being admitted to hospital with severe thrombosis and platelet deficiency — rare side effects the European Medicines Agency has previously said could be linked to the vaccine following analysis of cases in the U.S. Belgium has asked the EMA to evaluate whether the vaccine was linked to the death of the woman, who received the vaccine through her employer, reported Reuters.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-restricts-use-of-jj-coronavirus-vaccine-to-over-41s-after-death/>

COVID strain first detected in India found in 53 territories: WHO

COVID strain first detected in India found in 53 territories: WHO

The coronavirus variant first detected in India has now been officially recorded in 53 territories, a World Health Organization (WHO) report shows. Additionally, the WHO has received information from unofficial sources that the B.1.617 variant has been found in seven other territories, figures in the UN health agency's weekly epidemiological update showed on Wednesday, taking the total to 60.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/26/covid-strain-first-detected-in-india-found-in-53-territories-who>

WHO expert backs follow-up coronavirus mission to China

WHO expert backs follow-up coronavirus mission to China

A leading scientist on the World Health Organization's COVID-19 mission to China has said a follow-up trip could be helpful to gather additional research on the origins of the disease, but should be separate from any audit of information provided by Beijing. The comments from Dutch virologist Marion Koopmans came on Tuesday after the United States called for international experts to be

allowed to evaluate the source of the coronavirus and the early days of the outbreak, in a second phase of the WHO's investigation into the origins of the coronavirus.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/25/who-expert-eager-for-follow-up-coronavirus-mission-to-china>

Patients with mild cases of COVID-19 still have antibodies 11 months after infection and may even have lifelong protection, study suggests

Patients with mild cases of COVID-19 still have antibodies 11 months after infection and may even have lifelong protection, study suggests

A new study looked at blood samples from 77 patients who previously had mild cases of COVID-19. Antibody levels dropped within the first few months of infection, but could be found up to 11 months after some patients first tested positive. Of 18 patients who gave bone marrow samples, 15 had plasma cells secreting antibodies seven to eight months later and five did 11 months later. The researchers say the findings suggest that those with mild infections could have lifelong protection

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9618229/Patients-mild-cases-COVID-19-LIFE-LONG-protection-study-suggests.html?ito=social-twitter_mailonline

Mild, asymptomatic COVID-19 cases may be as infectious as severe ones

Mild, asymptomatic COVID-19 cases may be as infectious as severe ones

Only 8% of more than 25,000 German COVID-19 patients had high viral loads, one-third of whom were presymptomatic, asymptomatic, or mildly symptomatic, according to a study published yesterday in Science. High viral loads suggest greater infectiousness. Led by researchers from the Charite-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, the study involved measuring SARS-CoV-2 viral loads and estimating probability of virus cell culture isolation in 25,381 coronavirus patients, 24% of whom were identified at testing facilities, 38% of whom were hospitalized, and 6% of whom were infected with the B117 variant first seen in the United Kingdom.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/mild-asymptomatic-covid-19-cases-may-be-infectious-severe-ones>

German researchers tie cold viruses used to deliver COVID-19 vaccine to rare blood clot risk

German researchers tie cold viruses used to deliver COVID-19 vaccine to rare blood clot risk

German researchers on Wednesday said that based on laboratory research, they believed they have found the cause of the rare but serious blood clotting events among some people who received COVID-19 vaccines made by AstraZeneca Plc and Johnson & Johnson. The researchers, in a study not yet reviewed by experts, said COVID-19 vaccines that employ adenovirus vectors - cold viruses used to deliver vaccine material - send some of their payload into the nucleus of cells, where some of the instructions for making coronavirus proteins can be misread. The resulting proteins could potentially trigger blood clot disorders in a small number of recipients, they suggest.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/german-researchers-tie-cold-viruses-used-deliver-covid-19-vaccine-rare-blood-2021-05-26/>

COVID-19: Risk of death in Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities higher in second wave, new data says

COVID-19: Risk of death in Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities higher in second wave, new data says

Mortality rates for people of Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds in England increased during the second COVID-19 wave, while other ethnic groups saw a drop in relative risk compared to white Britons, new figures suggest. Most people from ethnically diverse backgrounds remained at higher risk of death involving COVID-19 compared to white Britons, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS). However, the mortality rate changed between the first and second wave.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-risk-of-death-in-bangladeshi-and-pakistani-communities-higher-in-second-wave-new-data-says-12317423>

Zambian president bans campaign rallies to stem COVID-19 spread

Zambian president bans campaign rallies to stem COVID-19 spread

Zambian President Edgar Lungu on Wednesday banned campaign rallies ahead of elections scheduled for Aug. 12, saying large gatherings risked spreading the COVID-19 virus. Lungu, a lawyer, is pitted against economist Hakainde Hichilema of the United Party for National Development (UPND), whom he narrowly beat in the 2016 elections. Zambia, Africa's no.2 copper producer, is the grips of an economic crisis after it failed to make payment of a coupon on one of its dollar bonds in November, dragging it into sovereign default.

<https://www.cnbcfrica.com/2021/zambian-president-bans-campaign-rallies-to-stem-covid-19-spread/>

Aussie rules: Melbourne fans to get tested amid COVID scare

Aussie rules: Melbourne fans to get tested amid COVID scare

Thousands of Australian Rules football fans have been told to self-isolate and get tested for coronavirus after a spectator later confirmed to have COVID-19 was found to have attended a match in Melbourne and the city raced to avoid another lockdown. Australia's second-biggest city is scrambling to contain the latest outbreak, with 15 cases identified so far. The state of Victoria has already tightened curbs on gatherings and ordered people to wear masks indoors and on public transport until June 4. New Zealand has also suspended its quarantine-free travel arrangement with the state.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/26/aussie-rules-melbourne-fans-to-get-tested-amid-covid-scare>

Maldives imposes strict curbs as COVID-19 cases spike

Maldives imposes strict curbs as COVID-19 cases spike

The Maldives will restrict movement from Wednesday to curb a surge in coronavirus infections that is putting pressure on the island's healthcare facilities, officials said. People will be allowed out for a few hours each day for essential supplies and a strict curfew will be in place from 4 p.m. to 8 a.m. (0300 GMT) the next day, the Health Protection Agency said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/maldives-imposes-strict-curbs-covid-19-cases-spike-2021-05-26/>

U.S. says it is confident Taiwan can control COVID, in talks on vaccines

U.S. says it is confident Taiwan can control COVID, in talks on vaccines

The top U.S. diplomat in Taipei said on Wednesday he was confident Taiwan could control a spike in COVID-19 cases, noting its infection numbers remained quite low, and that they were in talks on vaccines though did not say shots were on the way. After months of relative safety, Taiwan is battling a surge in domestic COVID-19 cases, but has only vaccinated around 1% of its more than 23 million people

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-signals-no-rush-send-covid-19-shots-taiwan-2021-05-26/>

Covid-19 vaccination programme extended to 30-year-olds in England

Covid-19 vaccination programme extended to 30-year-olds in England

People aged 30 and over can book their Covid-19 jab from Wednesday, the NHS in England has said. About one million people aged 30 and 31 will get a text message in coming days asking them to come forward for their Covid vaccine. Health Secretary Matt Hancock praised the "phenomenal pace" of the vaccination programme. Health officials have sped up the timetable to offer second jabs in a bid to ensure that those at highest risk are protected from the variant of the virus first identified in India.

<https://www.itv.com/thismorning/articles/covid-19-vaccination-programme-extended-to-30-year-olds-in-england>