

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

1st Jun 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Vietnam detects hybrid of Indian and UK COVID-19 variants

- Authorities in Vietnam have detected a new coronavirus variant that is a combination of the Indian and the UK COVID-19 variants and spreads quickly by air, the health minister said.
- [After successfully containing the virus for most of last year, Vietnam is grappling with a rise in infections since late April that accounts for more than half of the total 6,856 registered cases. So far, there have been 47 deaths.](#)
- 'Vietnam has uncovered a new COVID-19 variant combining characteristics of the two existing variants first found in India and the UK,' Health Minister Nguyen Thanh Long said, describing it as a hybrid of the two known variants.
- 'That the new one is an Indian variant with mutations that originally belong to the UK variant is very dangerous,' he told a government meeting, a recording of which was obtained by Reuters.
- The Southeast Asian country had previously detected seven virus variants: B.1.222, B.1.619, D614G, B.1.1.7 - known as the UK variant, B.1.351, A,23,1 and B.1.617.2 - the Indian variant.
- Long said Vietnam would soon publish genome data of the newly identified variant, which he said was more transmissible than the previously known types.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified four SARS-CoV2 variants of global concern. These include variants that emerged first in India, Britain, South Africa and Brazil.
- 'At the present time, we have not yet made an assessment of the virus variant reported in Vietnam,' Mara Van Kerkhove, WHO Technical Lead for COVID-19 said in an emailed statement. 'Our country office is working with the Ministry of Health in Vietnam and we expect more information soon.'
- From the WHO's current understanding, the variant detected in Vietnam was the B.1.617.2 variant, possibly with an additional mutation, she said. 'However, we will provide more information as soon as we receive it,' Van Kerkhove added.
- Long said laboratory cultures of the new variant showed the virus replicated itself very quickly, possibly explaining why so many cases had appeared in different parts of the country in a short period of time.
- The health ministry told the meeting the government was working to secure 10 million vaccine doses under the COVAX cost-sharing scheme, as well as a further 20 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine and 40 million of Russia's Sputnik V.
- 'The country of about 98 million people has so far received 2/9 million doses and aims to secure 150 million this year.'

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the two existing variants first found in India and the UK," Health Minister Nguyen Thanh Long said, describing it as a hybrid of the two known variants.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-detects-hybrid-indian-uk-covid-19-variant-2021-05-29/>

Vietnam warns of dangerous new Covid variant | News

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Vietnam has detected a "very dangerous" hybrid of the Indian and British strains of the coronavirus, which spreads rapidly through the air, the country's health minister said. The World Health Organisation has not yet confirmed the characteristics of the variant and is working with the Vietnamese authorities to do so. Beginning today, Ho Chi Minh City, where nine million of the country's 97 million people live, will be put under social distancing rules. Tourist and religious sites, as well as businesses such as restaurants, beauty salons and massage parlours, have been told to close.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/vietnamese-sound-alarm-over-hybrid-k095dx5qc>

Thai Covid variant under investigation as new strain discovered in UK

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A new variant of coronavirus is under investigation in the UK, as fears grow around the Indian strain derailing the country's emergence from lockdown. Health officials confirmed on Thursday that a variant first detected in Thailand had been found in the UK - but it was unclear whether the strain was more infectious or dangerous. Public Health England (PHE) said the variant was imported from Egypt - a country, like Thailand, on the UK's amber list.

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/05/27/new-thai-variant-under-investigation-as-another-covid-strain-breaches-uk-borders-14663971/>

Covid-19 variants to be given Greek alphabet names to avoid stigma

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Coronavirus variants are to be named after letters of the Greek alphabet instead of their place of first discovery, the World Health Organization has announced, in a move to avoid stigma. The WHO has named four variants of concern, known to the public as the UK/Kent (B.1.1.7), South Africa (B.1.351), Brazil (P.1) and India (B.1.617.2) variants. They will now be given the letters Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta respectively, to reflect their order of detection, with any new variants following the pattern down the Greek alphabet. The decision to go for this naming system came after months of deliberations with experts considering a range of other possibilities such as Greek Gods, according to bacteriologist Mark Pallen who was involved in the talks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/01/covid-19-variants-to-be-given-greek-alphabet-names-to-avoid-stigma>

WHO's Tedros says

WHO's Tedros says "time has come" for pandemic treaty

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) called on Monday for speedily launching global negotiations to agree on an international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general, also told a closing session of its annual week-long ministerial assembly that the U.N. agency required sustainable and flexible funding. "The one recommendation I believe will do the most to strengthen WHO and global health security is the recommendation of a treaty on pandemic preparedness and response which could also strengthen relations between member states and foster cooperation. This is an idea whose time has come," Tedros said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-who-tedros/whos-tedros-says-time-has-come-for-pandemic-treaty-idUSL5N2NC5D6>

Japan's Covid-19 failures leave a dark cloud hanging over Tokyo Olympics

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Between 60 and 80 per cent of Japanese people want the Tokyo Olympics to be cancelled or postponed, according to four surveys in May. They point to the rising number of Covid-19 cases and the government's failure to deal with the crisis. An editorial on May 26 in Asahi, one of Japan's most prestigious newspapers and an official partner of the Tokyo Olympics, urged Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga to cancel the Games. Mainichi, another major paper and official partner to the Games, along with 15 other local newspapers, have also published critical editorials in recent weeks. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3135054/tokyo-olympics-how-japans-coronavirus-failures-have-left-dark-cloud>

COVID-19 cases 'growing exponentially' as professor warns government against repeating 'mistake' of acting too late

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COVID infections appear to be "growing exponentially", a professor has warned as he urged the government not to repeat the mistake of acting too late to tackle the spread of the virus. Sir Tim Gowers - whose argument against herd immunity helped trigger England's first lockdown last year - told Sky News that the recent increase in coronavirus cases "worries me". "They seem to be multiplying by a certain fraction each day - in other words, growing exponentially," he said. <https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-cases-growing-exponentially-as-professor-warns-government-against-repeating-mistake-of-acting-too-late-12319957>

Covid-19: Up to 75% of new UK cases could be Indian variant - Matt Hancock

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Up to three quarters of new UK Covid cases could be of the Indian variant, Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said. Public Health England data shows cases of the variant have risen by 3,535 to 6,959 since last week. Mr Hancock told a Downing Street briefing that the government had always expected cases to rise as restrictions were eased. But he said it was "critical" to monitor the link between cases and hospitalisations. On Thursday, a further 3,542 coronavirus cases and 10 deaths within 28 days of a positive test were reported in the UK. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-57275276>

Delhi declares Covid-linked black fungus an epidemic as 150 cases added in a day

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Delhi has joined the growing list of states in India to declare an epidemic of the deadly and permanently disfiguring Covid-linked "black fungus", as the speed with which cases are growing in the capital threatening a "dangerous outbreak" of the disease. With 153 cases of the rare fungal infection mucormycosis reported in a single day, the Delhi government said it was invoking the Epidemic Diseases Act making it mandatory for the next year for healthcare facilities to report each case of infection.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/delhi-black-fungus-covid-india-b1855730.html>

India COVID-19 variant exhibits resistance; antibody drug shows promise

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Antibody drugs and COVID-19 vaccines are less effective against a coronavirus variant that was first detected in India, according to researchers. The variant, known as B.1.617.2, has mutations that make it more transmissible. It is now predominant in some parts of India and has spread to many other countries. A multicenter team of scientists in France studied a B.1.617.2 variant isolated from a traveler returning from India. Compared to the B.1.1.7 variant first identified in Britain, the India

variant was more resistant to antibody drugs, although three currently approved drugs still remained effective against it, they found. Antibodies in blood from unvaccinated COVID-19 survivors and from people who received both doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine were 3-fold to 6-fold less potent against the India variant than against the UK variant and a variant first identified in South Africa, according to a report posted on Thursday on the website bioRxiv ahead of peer review <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/science/india-covid-19-variant-exhibits-resistance-antibody-drug-shows-promise-2021-05-28/>

Sanofi, GSK launch Phase III trial for their COVID-19 shot

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France's Sanofi (SASY.PA) and Britain's GlaxoSmithKline (GSK.L) on Thursday launched a late-stage human trial for their recombinant COVID-19 vaccine candidate that they hope to get approved by the end of this year.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/sanofi-gsk-launch-phase-iii-trial-for-their-covid-19-shot/ar-AAKqBRB>

COVID-19: Number of Indian variant cases in England doubles in a week

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The number of cases of the Indian COVID variant in England has more than doubled since last week - rising by 3,535 to 6,959, according to official figures. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the variant is spreading and the latest estimates show it makes up more than half - and possibly as many as three-quarters - of all new COVID cases. The B.1.617.2 variant of concern, which is believed to be more transmissible than the Kent variant which became dominant in the country after Christmas, has resulted in surge testing and vaccinations in numerous areas.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-number-of-indian-variant-cases-in-england-doubles-in-a-week-12318431>

Two covid deaths linked to Indian variant after being fully vaccinated as Govt looks to scrap social distancing by June

Two covid deaths linked to Indian variant after being fully vaccinated as Govt looks to scrap social distancing by June

New figures have revealed that only two people have died after contracting the Indian Covid variant after being fully vaccinated. Public Health England analysis has shown that only three per cent of people who caught the mutant strain already had both jabs - raising hopes that "freedom day" is on track.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/15106623/two-covid-deaths-linked-indian-variant-fully-vaccinated/>

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The discovery of the Indian variant in Britain was not announced to the public by ministers for a fortnight while thousands of potentially infected people were allowed to enter the country. Ministers were given the news of the variant's arrival on April 1 but no official statement was made until April 15. India was not placed on the red list banning travellers from the country for another eight days. By contrast, last December a travel ban was imposed on South Africa within two days after it was discovered that the strain from that country had entered Britain.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ministers-knew-about-the-indian-variant-on-april-1-the-public-was-told-on-april-15-crjdn7jc>

Indian variant now dominant in UK, says Prof Neil Ferguson, as June 21 easing 'in the balance'

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The Indian Covid variant is now the "dominant strain" in Britain and cases are set to grow into

another surge of the disease, a leading scientist has said. Professor Neil Ferguson, the Imperial College London epidemiologist whose work was key to the first lockdown, added that the B.1.617.2 variant's spread meant that the June 21 final easing of lockdown was still "in the balance". He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "It's now in well over the majority of local authority areas in the country and is now the dominant strain, the majority of new cases are of the variant - that is obviously concerning."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/indian-variant-dominant-uk-june-21-lockdown-easing-neil-ferguson-b937507.html>

Vietnam Suspends Some International Flights After Discovering 'Very Dangerous' Coronavirus Variant Combining India And U.K. Strains

Vietnam Suspends Some International Flights After Discovering 'Very Dangerous' Coronavirus Variant Combining India And U.K. Strains

Vietnam will suspend international flights into its capital city Hanoi this week and tighten restrictions in the city amid a new surge of Covid-19 cases, the government announced Monday, as the country—which has had among the lowest Covid-19 case numbers in the world—faces a new coronavirus variant mixing those first detected in India and the United Kingdom.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2021/05/31/vietnam-suspends-some-international-flights-after-discovering-very-dangerous-coronavirus-variant-combining-india-and-uk-strains/?utm_campaign=forbes&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_term=Gordie&sh=617815d7383d

Myanmar COVID-19 outbreak hits health system shattered after coup

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Breathless, fevered and without the extra oxygen that could help keep them alive, the new coronavirus patients at a hospital near Myanmar's border with India highlight the threat to a health system near collapse since February's coup. To help her tend the seven COVID-19 patients at Cikha hospital, day and night, chief nurse Lun Za En has a lab technician and a pharmacist's assistant. Mostly, they offer kind words and paracetamol. "We don't have enough oxygen, enough medical equipment, enough electricity, enough doctors or enough ambulances," Lun Za En, 45, told Reuters from the town of just over 10,000. "We are operating with three staff instead of 11."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-covid-19-outbreak-hits-health-system-shattered-after-coup-2021-05-30/>

Japan extends emergency Covid rules less than two months before Olympics

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Japan has extended emergency coronavirus measures in Tokyo and several other regions as the country struggles to rein in the latest wave of infections less than two months before the Olympics. The state of emergency - the third in the capital since the start of the pandemic - was called in late April and due to end on 11 May but was extended until the end of this month, as restrictions on businesses failed to make a dent in infections. The latest extension is scheduled to end on 20 June, little over a month before the Olympics are due to begin. The number of infections have fallen in Tokyo in recent days, but the daily caseload is still too high to justify an end to the measures, according to medical experts, while hospitals are contending with a record number of critically ill patients.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/28/japan-tokyo-olympic-games-extend-emergency-covid-measures?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw_t_b-gdnnews&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1622177389

Australian City Enters Its Fourth Lockdown as Virus Returns

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Melbourne, the Australian city that's already endured one of the world's longest and most stringent

lockdowns, is ordering residents to stay home for the fourth time since the pandemic began as the return of infections tests the country's zero-tolerance approach to the virus. The city of 5 million people, along with all other areas of Victoria state, will go into lockdown from midnight for seven days, acting Premier James Merlino told reporters in Melbourne on Thursday. The number of cases within the community had doubled in the past day to 26, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-26/lockdown-looms-for-melbourne-as-covid-cluster-grows-to-27>

South Africa faces third COVID wave, returns to stricter lockdown

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President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced that South Africa is to reimpose stricter measures against COVID-19 fearing the whole country will soon face a third wave of the pandemic. Four of the nation's nine provinces, including Gauteng which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria and has the biggest population, are already battling a third wave of infections, Ramaphosa said on Sunday. "It may only be a matter of time before the country as a whole will have entered a third wave," he said. South Africa is officially the worst-hit country on the continent with more than 1.65 million cases and 56,363 deaths. "The number of infections has begun to rise sharply in several parts of the country," the president said as hospital entries also climb.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/30/south-africa-faces-third-covid-wave-returns-to-stricter-lockdown>

Malaysia struggling to contain sharp rise in Covid cases

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Malaysia's intensive care units are struggling to cope with a sharp rises in Covid cases, the health director general has warned, as the country prepares to enter a near total lockdown from Tuesday. Malaysia managed to avoid the worst of the pandemic last year, but has struggled to contain a recent outbreak that has been driven by more infectious variants of the virus, and exacerbated by gatherings ahead of Eid al-Fitr. This month alone, more than 1,200 deaths have been recorded, compared with 471 during the whole of 2020.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/31/malaysia-struggling-to-contain-sharp-rise-in-covid-cases?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw_t_b-gdnnews&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1622450515

German scientists claim they have figured out why some Covid vaccines cause blood clots

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German scientists say they have figured out why the Covid vaccines from AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson are linked to rare blood clots. In a new pre-print, the team says the problem is with the adenovirus vector, a common cold virus used to get the body to induce an immune response. They claim the vaccine is sent into the cell nucleus instead of surrounding fluid, where parts of it break off and create mutated versions of themselves. The mutated versions then enter the body and trigger the rare blood clots. Scientists say they can genetically adapt the vaccine to prevent the virus's spike proteins, which it uses to enter cells, from splitting apart

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9622627/German-scientists-claim-figured-Covid-vaccines-cause-blood-clots.html>

Pfizer-BioNTech Covid Shot Cleared for Children in Europe

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European regulators cleared Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE's Covid-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15, preparing the way for mass inoculations of younger teenagers across the continent. The green light from the European Medicines Agency gives Europe, whose immunization campaign was initially fraught with difficulties, the first vaccine in its arsenal for younger adolescents. The shot was already

cleared for people as young as 16. "It's an important step in the fight against the pandemic," Marco Cavaleri, the regulator's head of biological health threats and vaccines strategy, said on Friday.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-28/pfizer-biontech-covid-shot-cleared-for-children-in-europe?sref=WlclZRmG&cmpid%3D=socialflow-twitter-tictoc&utm_content=tictoc&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_source=twitter

Vir, GSK win US nod for another COVID-19 antibody drug as rival falters

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The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday cleared a COVID-19 antibody treatment from Vir Biotechnology and partner GlaxoSmithKline for emergency use, making the drug, known as sotrovimab, the third of its kind available in the U.S. As with similar treatments from Eli Lilly and Regeneron, the agency authorized Vir and GSK's drug for people who have mild-to-moderate symptoms of COVID-19, but are at high risk of worse outcomes due to age or underlying medical conditions. The drug reduced the risk of hospitalization or death in such patients by 85% in a Phase 3 trial that produced results in March. Vir's approval comes as coronavirus infections have receded in the U.S. amid a mass vaccination campaign, which could curtail demand for the drug. But the antibody might still prove useful, as lab tests have indicated sotrovimab retains its potency against virus variants that appear to erode the strength of some vaccines and antibodies.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/vir-gsk-fda-authorization-covid-antibody-sotrovimab/600901/>

Seeking a pill to cure COVID-19: Drugmakers eye alternative to vaccines

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Prevention is better than cure — but when it comes to COVID-19, what happens when people can't get the vaccine, don't want it or they're immunosuppressed and it fails to stop infection? The hunt is on for a coronavirus treatment that can be taken as a pill soon after a confirmed positive, halting the disease in its tracks so that cases that might have been severe end up being nothing more than a bad cold. Several companies are working on so-called oral antivirals, which would mimic what the drug Tamiflu does for influenza. "It's great that we have vaccine rollout that has been significant, but it certainly will not be taken by everybody in our population, and not everybody who takes the vaccine will have a full response to it," said David Hirschwerk, an infectious diseases physician at Northwell Health in New York.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/05/28/world/science-health-world/coronavirus-medicine-development/>

One-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine approved for use in UK - with 20million on order

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A single-shot coronavirus vaccine from pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson has been approved for use in the UK, with the first deliveries expected later this year. Britain has ordered 20 million doses of the Janssen vaccine, which health officials previously said could be used for hard-to-reach groups of people. The Janssen jab has been shown to be 67 per cent effective overall at preventing moderate to severe Covid-19, with studies suggesting the vaccine also offers complete protection from admission to hospital and death. The UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) approved the safety of the jab, giving Britain four vaccines that have been approved for use under the biggest vaccination programme in UK history.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/breaking-one-dose-johnson--24205143>

U.S. agency says employers can mandate COVID-19 vaccination

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U.S. companies can mandate that employees in a workplace must be vaccinated against COVID-19, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) said on Friday. The EEOC, in a statement posted on its website explaining its updated guidance, said employees can be required to be

vaccinated as long as employers comply with the reasonable accommodation provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-agency-says-employers-can-mandate-covid-19-vaccination-2021-05-29/>

Half of Brits would feel unsafe without a mask on public transport

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New poll suggests many people would not feel comfortable ditching face masks. Survey showed more than half of Britons would not feel safe on public transport. Almost two in five would feel unsafe shopping for clothes without a mask on.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9624721/Half-Brits-feel-unsafe-without-mask-public-transport.html>

Antivaccine activists use a government database on side effects to scare the public

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On 5 May, Fox News host Tucker Carlson delivered a 10-minute monologue casting doubt on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines on his show, Tucker Carlson Tonight. He announced that almost 4000 people had died after getting COVID-19 vaccines, and added that those data “comes from VAERS,”—the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, a U.S. government program that collects reports of side effects possibly caused by vaccines. It was a misleading statement. The reporting of a death to VAERS indicates nothing about what caused it, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) subsequent investigations have found no indication that deaths were caused by COVID-19 vaccines, save in a small subset with an extremely rare clotting disorder linked to one vaccine. But the TV segment pulled VAERS, a 31-year-old early warning system widely relied on by scientists, even deeper into the culture wars over vaccination. After the broadcast, a new phalanx of antivaccine activists began plumbing VAERS for data to scare the public about vaccination, says Angelo Carusone, president of Media Matters for America, a left-leaning nonprofit that is monitoring anti-COVID-19 vaccine activity on social media. “We have been tracking these attacks since February and this one resonated in a different way after Tucker hit it,” Carusone says.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/05/antivaccine-activists-use-government-database-side-effects-scare-public>

CDC approves first cruise ship to sail with paying passengers in June

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Wednesday gave the green light to a Celebrity Cruises ship to be the first to sail with paying passengers next month. Starting on June 26, the Celebrity Edge will embark on the first revenue cruise since the COVID-19 pandemic first crippled the cruise industry in March 2020. The seven-night trip will launch from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and be led by Cpt. Kate McCue, who was the first American female captain, the company announced. The Celebrity Edge will have a fully vaccinated crew and require U.S. guests aged 16 and older to be fully vaccinated. In August, the ship will extend that requirement to U.S. guests aged 12 and older.

<https://thehill.com/policy/transportation/555692-cdc-approves-first-cruise-ship-to-sail-with-paying-passengers-in-june>

Macron says it is in Europe's interest to provide Africa with COVID-19 vaccines

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Shipping COVID-19 vaccines to Africa is not just a moral duty but it is also in Europe and the world's interest in order to prevent the resurgence of new virus variants, French President Emmanuel Macron said in Rwanda. Macron said France was on track to deliver 30 million COVID-19 vaccination doses to Africa by year-end, that Germany would also deliver 30 million doses and that collectively the European Union would deliver more than 100 million doses to Africa this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/macron-says-it-is-europes-interest-provide-africa-with-covid-19-vaccines-2021-05-27/>

Third wave of Covid may be under way in UK, scientists say

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Scientists have warned ministers that a third wave of coronavirus may have already begun in Britain, casting doubt on plans in England to lift all lockdown restrictions in three weeks' time. Experts cautioned that any rise in coronavirus hospital admissions could leave the NHS struggling to cope as it battles to clear the huge backlog in non-Covid cases. Downing Street insisted it was too soon for speculation about whether the plan to lift all lockdown rules in England on 21 June could go ahead, prompting calls from the hospitality industry for the government to ensure it provided "advance notice" for struggling businesses of any "lingering" measures.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/30/third-wave-of-covid-may-be-under-way-in-uk-scientists-say>

A Shot and a Beer: Do Vaccine Incentives Work? - Mother Jones

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Free crawfish in New Orleans. Beers on the house in New Jersey. Million-dollar lottery jackpots in Ohio. A week of complimentary subway rides in New York City—no turnstile-jumping required. As COVID vaccination rates slow, cities and states are coming up with creative incentives to get hesitant residents vaccinated. But do these incentives actually work? The answer depends on which populations the programs are targeting. Take New Jersey, whose governor's office teamed up with the state Department of Health and various local breweries to offer a free beer to each resident who gets an initial vaccine dose during the month of May. Dan Bryan, a communications advisor for Gov. Phil Murphy, said this program, part of a reopening plan called Operation Jersey Summer, was aimed at young people who weren't opposed to the vaccine but simply hadn't gotten around to getting it yet.

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/05/free-beer-lottery-jackpot-college-scholarships-vaccine-incentives-work/>

'No going back to normal': 43,000 US kids lost a parent to COVID

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As many as 43,000 children in the U.S. are estimated to have lost at least one parent to COVID-19 by February, a study published in JAMA Pediatrics found, resulting in a "dramatic" 20 percent increase in parental bereavement compared to a typical year. These losses are not only tragic for children, but can also lead to mental health problems, challenges in school and economic disparities that last for years, said Emily Smith-Greenaway, the study's co-author and an associate professor of sociology and spatial studies at the University of Southern California. "People are coping with these losses in a more isolated, economically precarious year for so many families," Smith-Greenaway told Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/5/31/no-going-back-to-normal-43000-us-kids-lost-a-parent-to-covid>

Hong Kong tycoons offer \$1 million flat to boost Covid jabs

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Hong Kongers reluctant to get the coronavirus jab have been given a million-dollar reason to roll up their sleeves after property tycoons donated a brand new flat to a vaccine lottery. Worth HK\$10.8 million (US\$1.4 million), the one-bedroom apartment will be the lucky draw's grand prize, the property developers announced Friday. They will also offer 20 other prizes worth HK\$100,000 each. Hong Kong is one of the few places in the world to have secured more than enough doses to inoculate all 7.5 million people. But rampant distrust of the government combined with a lack of urgency in a comparatively virus-free city -- has led to hesitancy and a dismally lagging inoculation drive.

<https://news.yahoo.com/hong-kong-tycoons-offer-1-105002839.html>

COVID-19: Hundreds head to London's Chinatown as vaccine bus offers appointment-free jabs

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Hundreds of people headed to London's Chinatown on Thursday after an advert promised a COVID-19 vaccination without an appointment and with no ID checks. Footage showed crowds of people gathered after an official advert posted on the Chinese Information and Advice Centre website said jabs would be offered on a "vaccine bus". Similar strategies are being used around the UK in areas where take-up has been low.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-hundreds-head-to-londons-chinatown-as-vaccine-bus-offers-appointment-free-jabs-12318757>

Free flights, lotteries, cash: Hong Kong's vaccine incentives

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When bar and nightclub owners in Hong Kong met with city officials this month, they expected to hear how the government planned to coax more of the largely resistant population to get vaccinated, with their businesses only allowed to open to inoculated people. Instead, officials turned the tables — asking them what they were going to do to help boost one of the slowest Covid-19 vaccine takeups among global cities. Carrie Lam's administration is increasingly leaning on local businesses and institutions to help get people vaccinated, as her Beijing-backed government struggles to convince reluctant residents in an atmosphere of mistrust following widespread anti-China protests in 2019. Major companies, restaurants, and even colleges have started offering cash payouts, extra time off, even the chance to win a \$1.4 million apartment.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/5/31/bbfree-flights-home-lotteries-cash-payouts-hk-vaccine-incentiv>

In rich countries, vaccines are making Covid-19 a manageable health issue

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So when will the pandemic be over? Covid-19 won't end with a bang or a parade. Throughout history, pandemics have ended when the disease ceases to dominate daily life and retreats into the background like other health challenges. Barring a horrific new variant, rich countries such as Britain and the US may be within months, if not weeks, of what their citizens will see as the end of the pandemic. This isn't the case in poorer countries in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia. For countries that can't afford vaccines, technology or treatments for Covid-19, populations will remain trapped by outbreaks that cause chaos in hospitals and kill health workers and vulnerable and elderly people. It's now incumbent on richer countries that are emerging from the pandemic to turn their attention to poorer nations and ensure they have the resources they urgently require

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/may/31/rich-countries-vaccines-covid-19-manageable-health-issue-pandemic>

Tens of thousands of lives could have have been saved - top scientists back Dominic Cummings

Tens of thousands of lives could have have been saved - top scientists back Dominic Cummings

Dominic Cummings' central charge against the Government - that delays over imposing lockdowns led to tens of thousands of people dying from Covid-19 unnecessarily - was today backed up by two of Britain's leading coronavirus experts. Professor John Edmunds, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said a "very large number" of Covid-19 deaths could have been avoided in the second wave if the Government had taken more drastic action as being advised by scientists. In his damning evidence to a joint session of the Commons health and science committees, former No10 top adviser Mr Cummings said on Wednesday: "Tens of thousands of people died who did not need to die."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/covid-deaths-second-wave-could-have-been-avoided-john-edmunds-b93749>

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