

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

30th Jun 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

Oxygen prices leap in Indonesia's capital as COVID-19 cases surge

- Oxygen prices in Indonesia's capital had more than doubled and some suppliers reported shortages on Tuesday after a surge in COVID-19 cases that **prompted the Red Cross to warn of a coronavirus 'catastrophe' in Southeast Asia's biggest country.**
- [Indonesia has announced record daily COVID-19 infections of more than 20,000 in recent days, in a new wave fuelled by the emergence of highly transmissible virus variant and increased mobility after the Muslim fasting month.](#)
- With hospitals filling up in the capital Jakarta, and patients being turned away, some people sought to secure oxygen for infected family members at home. The price of a tank of oxygen had jumped to \$140 from the usual \$50, suppliers said.
- 'I'm queuing here now to refill oxygen for my wife and son who are now positive with COVID-19,' said Taufik Hidyat, 51, at one supplier. 'I went around and it was all sold out.'
- Sellers in other areas in Jakarta told Reuters their stocks had also dried up.
- But Sulung Mulia Putra, an official at Jakarta health agency, said a shortage of hospitals was temporary and due to distribution issues that were being resolved.
- 'Distributors don't have enough transport so hospitals will be helped by police, parks agencies and the Red Cross to transport oxygen,' he said.
- Hospitals in several designated 'red zone' areas have reported overcapacity, including Jakarta, with its isolation beds 93% occupied as of Sunday.
- 'Hospitals are full because of the case surge caused by mobility and loosening health protocol adherence, worsened also by the Delta variant,' said senior health ministry official Siti Nadia Tarmizi.
- In the face of the rise in cases, Indonesia's health minister is leading a push for stricter controls, sources familiar with government discussions told Reuters.
- **The spread of the Delta variant has prompted concerns of a crisis in the world's fourth most populous country on the scale of that in recent months in India, where the variant was first detected.**
- 'Every day we are seeing this Delta variant driving Indonesia closer to the edge of a COVID-19 catastrophe,' said Jan Gelfand, head of the Indonesian delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- Indonesia is banking on mass vaccinations to get on top of the virus, but only 13.3 million of the 181.5 million targeted for inoculation have received the required two doses.
- Japan will provide two million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in July, Indonesia's foreign minister Retno Marsudi said on Tuesday.
- Indonesia has so far received 104 million doses of coronavirus vaccines in total. Out of its population of more than 270 million, 181.5 million are set to be vaccinated by January 2022.
- Indonesia reported 20,467 more infections on Tuesday and 463 more deaths, bringing the totals to 2,156,465 cases and 58,024 deaths.

Indonesia's COVID-19 situation nears 'catastrophe' - Red Cross

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Oxygen prices in Indonesia's capital had more than doubled and some suppliers reported shortages on Tuesday after a surge in COVID-19 cases that prompted the Red Cross to warn of a coronavirus "catastrophe" in Southeast Asia's biggest country. Indonesia has announced record daily COVID-19 infections of more than 20,000 in recent days, in a new wave fueled by the emergence of highly transmissible virus variants and increased mobility after the Muslim fasting month. With hospitals filling up in the capital, Jakarta, and patients being turned away, some people sought to secure oxygen for infected family members at home. The price for a tank of oxygen had jumped to \$140 from the usual \$50, suppliers said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-indonesia/update-1-indonesias-covid-19-situation-nears-catastrophe-red-cross-idUSL2N2OB000>

Israel may have to throw away nearly 1 million COVID vaccines

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In Israel, the Health Ministry will destroy at least 800,000 expiring coronavirus vaccine doses if no buyers are found for them in the next two weeks, according to a report Monday. The doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, set to expire at the end of July, are worth hundreds of millions of dollars, according to the Kan public broadcaster. Israel's search for a taker for the shots come as many countries are expanding their vaccination drives to combat the fast-spreading Delta variant of the coronavirus, which has sent case numbers in some places soaring.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-may-have-to-throw-away-nearly-1-million-covid-vaccines/>

COVID Delta variant takeover in U.K. offers a warning, and some hope

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Britain, where the strain already accounts for 99% of new cases, can offer some useful insight into battling the highly-transmissible variant first detected in India.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/uk-offers-a-warning-and-hope-as-covid-delta-variant-takes-over/ar-AALAj4F>

Opinion | Vaccine Mandates Are Needed in the U.S.

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The mRNA vaccines, made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech, will likely get full approval for use from the Food and Drug Administration soon, which may be necessary for broader vaccine mandates. Although the vaccines are already known to be safe and effective, after being given to hundreds of millions of people, with full approval, more groups will begin mandating that their employees get vaccinated. It's unlikely the United States can overcome the pandemic without such actions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/28/opinion/covid-vaccine-mandate.html>

Fearing COVID, struggling Malawian women forgo prenatal care

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Prenatal services at the health clinic were free, but the motorcycle taxi fare cost more than Monica Maxwell could afford. Just four weeks before delivering her baby, she cobbled together 1,400 kwacha (\$1.75) for the 50-kilometer (31-mile) round trip. It was only her third visit -- fewer than her first two pregnancies. The money she made selling tomatoes at the local market dried up due to the pandemic. Her husband's income selling goat meat also dwindled. "It was the most difficult period of our lives. We had no money for our daily survival," Maxwell, 31, said as she waited outside with other women to be seen by a medical midwife. "Mostly we stayed home." In a country where hospitals are so bare that women are expected to bring their own razor blades for cutting their babies' umbilical cords, the deepening poverty brought on by the pandemic is further imperiling women's lives.

<https://apnews.com/article/only-on-ap-united-nations-malawi-africa-coronavirus-pandemic-8c95d373af2f1939095df1b5edd356c6>

South Africa's third COVID wave could be the worst yet

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From his 10-bed private clinic in western Johannesburg, Bayanda Gumende is more used to treating renal diseases than COVID-19. But with the city's hospitals full, patients lingering in casualty wards for days and ambulances stuck waiting in car parks, that is beginning to change. The 27-year-old chief nephrology technologist says he has been swamped with calls from patients desperate for oxygen and who cannot find it elsewhere. But with supply being limited, he is forced to prioritise.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/29/south-africas-third-wave-set-to-be-the-worst-yet>

Cuba begins coronavirus vaccine trials on children

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Cuba has begun testing its Soberana 2 coronavirus candidate vaccine on children ages three to 18 years, the government said this week. State-run television broadcast video of children receiving their first of three doses on Monday after adolescents were vaccinated last week. Soberana 2 is awaiting final stage trial results after its producer the Finlay Institute reported a 62% efficacy rate after two of three shots, the final one a booster called Soberana Plus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/cuba-begins-coronavirus-vaccine-trials-children-2021-06-29/>

US to send 2.5m doses of Moderna coronavirus vaccine to Pakistan

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The Biden administration is shipping 2 million doses of the Pfizer COVID vaccine to Peru and 2.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine to Pakistan, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said on Monday. "Thanks to the President's commitment to playing a leading role in ending the pandemic everywhere, 2 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine will begin to ship to Peru from the United States, and 2.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine will ship to Pakistan," Psaki said. The White House earlier this month laid out a plan for the United States to donate 80 million surplus COVID-19 vaccine doses to the world by the end of June.

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/357525-us-to-send-25m-doses-of-moderna-coronavirus-vaccine-to-pakistan>

Shanghai urged to clarify rules after some vaccinated arrivals hospitalised

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The Spanish consulate in Shanghai is calling on the city's health authorities to clarify quarantine rules for inbound travellers after a number of people vaccinated for the coronavirus were subjected to several days of hospital tests on arrival. "In the past few weeks, without any official message from the Chinese authorities, foreign citizens ... that have been vaccinated either with a Chinese or foreign vaccine ... are being put in hospital against their will for three or four days upon arrival in China," the consulate said in a statement on Thursday. "Neither the people admitted [to hospital] nor the consulates general in Shanghai were informed of this surprising and unethical practice."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3139081/coronavirus-spain-urges-shanghai-clarify-rules-vaccinated>

Russia says people can decline its vaccine. But for many, they'll get fired if they do

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If you ask the Kremlin whether Covid-19 vaccination in Russia is voluntary, its officials will tell you it is. Yet authorities in Moscow have put together a policy that essentially gives people in public-facing roles little choice but to get their shots. Faced with stubbornly low vaccination rates, Moscow authorities announced just over a week ago that at least 60% of staff in service industries -- spanning everything from catering to housing and transport -- must get vaccinated with at least one shot by July 15. "Vaccination remains voluntary," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. But while Peskov says someone can refuse a vaccine, they just might lose their livelihood for doing so.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/29/europe/russia-vaccine-voluntary-compulsory-cmd-intl/index.html>

Poland considers obligatory COVID-19 jabs for health workers

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Poland could make vaccinations obligatory for some people at high risk from COVID-19 to help fend off a potential new surge of infections from August, the health minister said on Tuesday. The country of around 38 million has fully vaccinated 12.8 million people, but authorities have warned of problems with convincing those not yet vaccinated to get a jab. "Unfortunately we have the impression that we have reached a certain ceiling - it is hard to convince those who are unconvinced because all the arguments and other types of actions have already been taken," Adam Niedzielski told Catholic radio station Radio Plus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-considers-obligatory-covid-19-jabs-health-workers-2021-06-29/>

Japan to donate 1 mln AstraZeneca vaccines to the Philippines

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The Philippines will receive one million doses of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines next month provided by Japan, its ambassador to the Southeast Asian nation said on Tuesday. "We are working double time so this donation reaches Philippine shores without delay," the ambassador posted on his official Twitter account. The vaccines will be delivered on July 8.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-donate-1-mln-astrazeneca-vaccines-philippines-2021-06-29/>

Royal Caribbean cruises out of Florida to require unvaccinated passengers buy travel insurance

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Royal Caribbean cruises departing from Florida are requiring unvaccinated passengers above the age of 12 to buy travel insurance for medical and travel costs that could occur if they get COVID-19. The company announced on Tuesday unvaccinated passengers must get \$25,000 in medical expense insurance and \$50,000 insurance for quarantine and medical evacuation costs. The insurance is required for cruises that leave from Florida from Aug. 1 to Dec. 31. The policy will not apply to people who booked their cruises between March 19 and Monday.

<https://thehill.com/policy/transportation/560783-royal-caribbean-cruises-out-of-florida-to-require-unvaccinated>

Delta variant: LA recommends indoor masks regardless of vaccination status

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Monday's recommendation by the LA county health department comes as the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted that Delta variants are now responsible for about one in every five new infections across the US. LA county health officials noted that "fully vaccinated people appear to be well protected from infections with Delta variants". But the department suggests that people wear masks when inside grocery or retail stores, as well as theaters and family entertainment centers and workplaces when people's vaccination statuses are not known.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jun/29/delta-variant-los-angeles-indoor-masks-vaccine-status>

S.Korea to secure more mRNA vaccines for COVID-19 booster shot

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South Korea plans to secure more mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 to use them as a booster shot next year for its entire population, Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum said on Tuesday. South Korea has already agreed to buy 106 million doses of mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna to cover full vaccination of its population of 52 million this year. The government is also hoping to achieve herd immunity earlier than its November target by inoculating at least 70% of its population with a minimum of one vaccine dose.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-secure-more-mrna-vaccines-covid-19-booster-shot-2021-06-29/>

S.Korean companies offer employees COVID-19 vaccines at work

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South Korea's large manufacturing employers have received permission from the country's health authorities to administer COVID-19 vaccines at in-house clinics, hoping to speed up inoculation of their employees. The inoculation plans come amid the South Korean government's push to ramp up vaccinations after a slow start. South Korea has inoculated 15.3 million people, or about 30% of its population, with at least one dose since it began administering vaccines in February. Affiliates of the country's biggest conglomerate Samsung Group, including Samsung Electronics Co Ltd (005930.KS), Samsung Display and Samsung SDI Co Ltd (005930.KS), plan to offer vaccine doses to employees at work next month

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorean-companies-offer-employees-covid-19-vaccines-work-2021-06-29/>

Brazil's Bolsonaro under fire after vaccine deal allegations

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Accusations that Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro turned a blind eye to possible corruption in a deal to purchase coronavirus vaccines have heightened threats to his presidency, including a move to recommend slapping him with a criminal charge. The claims have added impetus to the opposition's impeachment drive and left the Brazilian leader's allies in Congress evaluating the costs of their support.

<https://apnews.com/article/caribbean-brazil-coronavirus-pandemic-health-4262c98628a2a3f9250e60335df27230>

Brazil to suspend Indian vaccine deal as graft allegations probed

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Brazil will suspend a \$324 million Indian COVID-19 vaccine contract that has mired President Jair Bolsonaro in accusations of irregularities, the health minister said on Tuesday, following the guidance of the federal comptroller, the CGU. The deal to buy 20 million doses of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin shot has become a headache for Bolsonaro after whistleblowers went public with alleged irregularities. One Health Ministry official said he alerted the president about his concerns.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/brazil-suspend-indian-vaccine-deal-graft-allegations-probed-2021-06-29/>

Google is giving Brits incorrect Covid-19 advice

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Google shows incorrect answers to queries on self isolation, investigation says Users have been told they don't have to self-isolate when the NHS says they do Google is reportedly fixing the problem after a request from the UK government

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9736459/Google-giving-Brits-incorrect-Covid-19-advice.html>

Malaysia PM announces \$36 bn aid package amid extended lockdown

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Malaysia Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Monday announced a 150 billion ringgit (\$36.22 billion) aid package, including cash aid and wage subsidies, a day after extending a nationwide lockdown indefinitely to tackle a stubborn COVID-19 outbreak. Lockdown measures originally set to end on Monday would not be eased until daily reported cases fell below 4,000, the state news agency reported on Sunday, citing Muhyiddin. On Monday, Malaysia reported 5,218 new infections, bringing total cases to 739,266, including 5,001 deaths.

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4235121>

Third Dose Of Oxford Vaccine Boosts Immunity To Coronavirus

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Scientists say a third dose of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine boosts the immune system's response to Coronavirus. Developed by Oxford University and pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca, the drug — known as 'ChAdOx1 nCoV-19' or AZ1222 — is typically given in two doses 4-12 weeks apart, which provides up to 81% protection against moderate to severe disease. A person who's had both doses is currently considered 'fully vaccinated'. But immunity to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is expected to wane over time, partly driven by the presence of new variants that can escape the immune system. As a consequence, a third booster shot could become necessary to help prevent people from developing Covid.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jvchamary/2021/06/28/oxford-coronavirus-vaccine-dose/>

COVID-19: 'Mix and match' jabs study finds combination of Oxford and Pfizer vaccines creates robust immune response

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People who have been double-dosed with the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine could have a stronger immune response if they were given a different jab as a booster, a leading scientist has said. Professor Matthew Snape from the Oxford Vaccine Group said the "mix and match" approach may result in additional protection against coronavirus. He made the comments following the results of a clinical trial comparing the current UK strategy of giving two doses of either the AstraZeneca or Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines against a combination of the two jabs.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-mix-and-match-jabs-study-finds-combination-of-oxford-and-pfizer-vaccines-creates-robust-immune-response-12344108>

India's Cipla gets regulator nod to import Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine

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Indian drugmaker Cipla has received regulatory approval to distribute partner Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine in the country, a senior government official said on Tuesday, clearing the way for the shot to be imported. Moderna's vaccine will be the fourth shot authorized for use in India, after AstraZeneca and partner Serum Institute of India's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Sputnik V developed by Russia's Gamaleya Institute. "Our vaccine basket is now richer by this addition," government official Vinod Kumar Paul said at a news briefing on Tuesday, adding the government remained in talks with Pfizer over the drugmaker's vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/indias-cipla-gets-regulator-nod-import-modernas-covid-19-vaccine-cnbc-tv18-2021-06-29/>

Sanofi to invest 400 million euros in a mRNA vaccines facility

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Sanofi will invest about 400 million euros (\$476 million) annually in research and development of next-generation vaccines using mRNA technologies, which proved their efficiency in the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 jabs. Sanofi added on Tuesday that its "mRNA Center of Excellence" will bring together around 400 employees based at existing sites close to Lyon in southern France and in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is expected to produce a minimum of six clinical candidates by 2025. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, mRNA technologies demonstrated potential to deliver new vaccines faster than ever before", said Jean-Francois Toussaint, global head of R&D at Sanofi Pasteur, the company's vaccines division.

https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/sanofi-invest-400-million-euros-mrna-vaccines-facility-2021-06-29/?taid=60daf3d2b9a1150001df2611&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

J&J scraps India COVID-19 vaccine trial, aims to accelerate availability - ET

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Johnson & Johnson said on Tuesday it was in talks with the Indian government to explore ways to speed up delivery of its single-shot COVID-19 vaccine in the country. The Economic Times newspaper reported earlier on Tuesday that the company would no longer undertake local trials for its vaccine, after India's decision to scrap bridging clinical trials for vaccines approved by regulators in other nations. J&J did not specify in its comment whether it has scrapped the trial.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/jj-decides-not-conduct-trials-india-its-covid-19-vaccine-et-2021-06-29/>

Pandemic tied to spike in diabetes in children; type of immune response lasts months after Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine

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Hospitalization rates for children with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes rose sharply during the pandemic, two hospitals reported at the American Diabetes Association Scientific Sessions, held virtually this year. At Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, children with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes accounted for 0.62% of inpatients from March through December 2020, up from 0.27% the year before. Those numbers are low, "but just the fact that this rate has more than doubled over the past year is ... significant," said Dr. Daniel Hsia of Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge. Children hospitalized in 2020 had more severe diabetes, with higher blood sugar and more dehydration, than children admitted in the prior year, he said.

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/science/pandemic-tied-spike-diabetes-children-type-immune-response-lasts-months>

[after-2021-06-28/?taid=60da57fbbcdfda0001430918&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter](https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/science/pandemic-tied-spike-diabetes-children-type-immune-response-lasts-months-after-2021-06-28/?taid=60da57fbbcdfda0001430918&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter)

Covid-19: The countries that have mandatory vaccination for health workers

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What would you do to keep your job? It's a question that healthcare workers in Texas were confronted with in April, when local hospital network Houston Methodist required its staff to be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2. Nearly 25 000 employees dutifully lined up to be protected against covid-19, and to protect their patients. More than 150 didn't, and have since either been sacked or resigned. A court case brought by one of the employees, a former nurse, was dismissed by a district court judge, but the case raised questions about requiring vaccination using products that have not been fully approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.² The employee, meanwhile, has appealed the ruling. What was once a hypothetical question is now a real one, and not just in the US. Businesses around the world are considering making coronavirus vaccinations mandatory for workers (Morgan Stanley and the publisher Bloomsbury are two major companies to have already made the move). And those on the frontlines of the pandemic are no different.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1645>

Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine safe and effective in children as young as three - Lancet study

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CoronaVac, the COVID-19 jab developed in China by Sinovac Biotech, was found to be safe and effective in children and adolescents, according to a study published in leading medical journal The Lancet. Two doses of the vaccine, given 28 days apart, produce a strong antibody response among those aged between three and 17. Chinese researchers conducted a randomized, double-blind, controlled phase 1/2 clinical trial in Zanhuang County, China. The vaccine was given to more than 500 healthy children and adolescents, 96 percent of whom developed Sars-CoV-2 antibodies.

<https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2021-06-29/Sinovac-COVID-19-vaccine-safe-for-children-as-young-as-three-study-11uL>

Cambridge hospital's mask upgrade appears to eliminate Covid risk to staff

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An NHS hospital that upgraded the type of face masks used by staff on Covid-19 wards recorded a dramatic fall of up to 100% in hospital-acquired coronavirus infections among those workers, research shows. Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge upgraded the masks from fluid-resistant surgical masks (FRSMs) to filtering face piece 3 (FFP3) respirators, with the change made in late December in response to its own staff testing data. Public Health England (PHE) had, until recently, recommended that healthcare workers caring for Covid-19 patients should use FRSMs as respiratory protective equipment.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/29/cambridge-hospitals-mask-upgrade-appears-to-eliminate-covid-19-risk-to-staff>

Japan's Chugai applies for approval of antibody treatment for COVID-19

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Chugai Pharmaceutical said on Tuesday it applied for regulatory approval in Japan of an antibody treatment for COVID-19. The filing is for the antibody cocktail casirivimab and imdevimab and is based on results from a global phase III study and a phase I trial in Japan. Chugai in December licensed the drug from Roche which has a controlling stake in the Japanese company.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japans-chugai-applies-approval-antibody-treatment-covid-19-2021-06-29/>

India's richest state gears up to protect children from looming third wave of COVID-19

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India's western state of Maharashtra is training thousands of health workers in how to care for children afflicted with COVID-19 as a first line of defence against surges involving new variants, health officials and experts said on Tuesday. The state, home to the financial capital of Mumbai, was the worst hit by a devastating second wave of infections in April and May that killed hundreds of thousands, and is still reporting a quarter of all new cases nationwide. It has re-imposed curbs to rein in the fast-spreading Delta variant that has touched off new outbreaks globally, even as daily national tallies stand at their lowest in nearly two months, allowing some states to re-open businesses

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-reports-37566-new-covid-19-infections-907-deaths-2021-06-29/>

US counties see an increase in COVID-19 cases as Indian Delta variant takes hold

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U.S. counties in the South and the West are seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases over the past seven days. Counties in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Wyoming reported between 100 and 500 cases per 100,000 in the last week, compared to the national average of 23.9 cases per 100,000. All five states have fully vaccinated 35% or fewer residents, lower than the national average, and only three counties between the five have fully vaccinated more than 50%. Former FDA commissioner Dr Scott Gottlieb warns that he expects outbreaks of the Indian 'Delta' variant to rise in areas with low vaccination rates. Previous studies have shown that two doses of COVID-19 vaccines are much more effective against the variant than one shot. In the UK, the Delta variant has driven an explosion of coronavirus cases, causing numbers to spike by about 75% in one week.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9737361/US-counties-increase-COVID-19-cases-Indian-Delta-variant-takes-hold.html>

Aussie Rules teams flee COVID outbreaks, rugby league crowds banned

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Four Australian Football League (AFL) teams are set to base themselves in Melbourne as COVID-19 outbreaks and lockdowns across the country play havoc with the competition's schedule. The Gold Coast Suns and Brisbane Lions were booked on a charter plane for Melbourne to beat a snap three-day lockdown starting late on Tuesday in Brisbane and surrounds. Perth-based teams Fremantle Dockers and West Coast Eagles are also heading to Melbourne after authorities in Western Australia state locked down Perth after new cases of COVID-19

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/aussie-rules-teams-flee-covid-outbreaks-rugby-league-crowds-banned-2021-06-29/>

Surge in Covid-19 cases in Tokyo, less than a month out from Olympics

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A rise in daily cases of the coronavirus in Tokyo has triggered fears of a possible fifth wave of infections, less than a month before the city is due to host the Olympics. Tokyo reported 317 infections on Monday – an increase of 81 from the same day last week and the ninth week-on-week same-day rise in a row. The rise in cases, coupled with evidence that the more transmissible Delta variant is spreading, raises the likelihood that Tokyo will still be subject to emergency measures in some form when the Olympics open on 23 July. Yasutoshi Nishimura, the minister overseeing Japan's pandemic response, this week said the government would “not hesitate” to call a new state of emergency if necessary.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/29/surge-in-covid-19-cases-in-tokyo-less-than-a-month-out-from-olympics>

COVID-19 Delta variant gaining traction in France -minister

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The Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus first found in India now represents some 20% of COVID-19 cases in France, French Health Minister Olivier Veran told France Info radio, up from last week's estimate of it representing 9-10% of cases. "The Delta variant now accounts for about 20% of new cases (...) its share keeps on increasing in percentage not in absolute terms as the total number of cases is decreasing," Veran said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-health-minister-covid-19-delta-variant-represents-20-covid-cases-france-2021-06-29/>

Australia's Brisbane city to start three-day COVID-19 lockdown

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Australian's Queensland state capital Brisbane and some neighbouring regions will enter a three-day snap COVID-19 lockdown from Tuesday evening, state Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said. About 2 million people in the city, the country's third largest, will be required to stay home except for essential work, healthcare, grocery shopping or exercise.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-brisbane-city-start-three-day-covid-19-lockdown-2021-06-29/>

Australia tightens lockdown amid Delta virus outbreak, vaccine chaos

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By Renju Jose SYDNEY (Reuters) -Australia reported a slight rise in COVID-19 infections on Tuesday, while officials in several states tightened movement curbs and pushed for vaccinations to limit flare-ups of the highly infectious Delta variant.

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/reuters/australia-tightens-lockdown-amid-delta-virus-outbreak--vaccine-chaos/46744066>

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Sajid Javid, the new UK health secretary, said on Monday that the country must “learn to live” with Covid-19 in a bullish statement to MPs that confirmed the government’s plan to return England to economic normality on July 19. In a sharp break with the tone of his predecessor Matt Hancock, Javid aligned himself with the views of many Conservative ministers who believe it is time to discard caution and reopen the country. “No date we choose comes with zero-risk for Covid,” Javid said in his first House of Commons statement since returning to the cabinet on Saturday. “We cannot eliminate it, instead we have to learn to live with it,” he added.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c7a7ffcc-f3b4-4dbb-bb1c-ed45c2585357>

Covid-19: Pandemic will cast “a long shadow” on mental health, warns England's CMO

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The covid-19 pandemic will continue to impact mental health and the provision of psychiatric services for a considerable period, England’s chief medical officer has warned. Speaking at the Royal College of Psychiatrists international congress, held online on 23 June, Chris Whitty stressed that even if the pandemic were to end now, it would cast “a long shadow on mental health, on provision for mental health, on our understanding of disease, and the research elements that will arise from it.” Whitty said the pandemic had led to considerable fear and public anxiety—particularly at the start of the first wave—and noted the impact of national lockdowns on people’s social support and financial vulnerability. “The mental health elements of the lockdowns and public anxiety were often underplayed,” he told delegates.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1655>