

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

26th Aug 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

One Minute Overview

Imposing Vaccine Mandates

- Germany's [Lufthansa](#) will require the crew on its planes to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, the airline said on Wednesday.
- **Air Canada** said on Wednesday [it would require all employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19, as the fast-spreading Delta variant drives an increase in infections](#). The move by Canada's largest carrier was in line with a government mandate that workers in the transportation sector be vaccinated by the end of October and follows similar moves by other major companies, including United Airlines
- In [a move aimed at pushing employees to get COVID vaccines](#), **United Airlines** has mandated shots for its employees.
- **Ford Motor Co** [will delay bringing most workers back to offices until January, and is still considering whether to require employees to get vaccinated against the coronavirus](#), the company's chief people officer told Reuters.
- **Credit Suisse** has asked [all non-vaccinated staff in the United States to work from home beginning Sept. 7](#), as it pushes back its return-to-office plans over concerns about the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant.
- **Goldman Sachs Group Inc** told employees on Tuesday that [anyone entering the investment bank's U.S. offices, including clients, must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 starting immediately](#), according to an internal memo seen by Reuters.
- **United Parcel Service Inc** said on Tuesday it would require employees [in certain U.S. locations to be vaccinated when they return to the office, as COVID-19 cases rise across the United States due to the fast-spreading Delta variant](#).
- **US Military** troops must immediately begin to get the COVID-19 vaccine, [Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a memo Wednesday, ordering service leaders to "impose ambitious timelines for implementation."](#) [More than 800,000 service members have yet to get their shots, according to Pentagon data](#).
- Scott Morrison has backed businesses to reject customers or guests who haven't been vaccinated against COVID-19, giving the clearest picture on how so-called **'vaccine passports'** could be used in Australia. [The Prime Minister has gradually been preparing the ground for such a scheme, but his latest position risks a backbench revolt and raising the ire of a growing movement of many thousands of people opposing vaccine passports](#).

Mask Mandates

- Massachusetts Education Commissioner Jeff Riley issued new regulations Wednesday requiring all public school students ages 5 and above, and all staffers, to wear masks indoors while at school. [All visitors are also expected to wear masks in school buildings. Masks are not required when outdoors. The regulations take effect immediately](#)

Mental Health

- Across Myanmar many are struggling with the grief of losing loved ones to disease and violence. [Yet, forced to grapple with more immediate dangers like basic safety and access to medicine, attention to mental health has taken a back seat.](#) But experts say the psychological toll is becoming impossible to ignore as rates of depression and suicide rise.

Vaccine Protection in Schools

- India will supply millions of additional COVID-19 vaccine doses to its states to try to inoculate all school teachers by early next month, the health minister says, as the country gradually resumes physical classes. [The pandemic has hit the country of 1.35 billion people particularly hard and hundreds of millions of its students have been stuck at home for months, with little or no access to online education for a majority of the poor.](#)

Vaccine Efficacy

- Protection against COVID-19 offered by two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines begins to fade within six months, underscoring the need for booster shots, according to researchers in Britain. [After five to six months, the effectiveness of the Pfizer jab at preventing COVID-19 infection in the month after the second dose fell from 88% to 74%, an analysis of data collected in Britain's ZOE COVID study showed.](#)
- Researchers say they are seeing some waning of protection against Covid infections in double-jabbed people. [The real-world study includes data on positive Covid PCR test results between May and July 2021 among more than a million people who had received two doses of Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccine. Protection after two shots of Pfizer decreased from 88% at one month to 74% at five to six months. For AstraZeneca, the fall was from 77% to 67% at four to five months. Waning protection is to be expected, say experts.](#)

Lufthansa to demand COVID-19 shots for crew

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<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/lufthansa-demand-covid-19-shots-crew-2021-08-25/>

Air Canada mandates COVID-19 vaccination for all employees

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<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/air-canada-mandates-covid-19-vaccination-all-employees-2021-08-25/>

Delta Air Lines to add \$200 monthly health insurance charge for unvaccinated staff

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Move aimed at pushing employees to get COVID vaccines. United Airlines mandated shots for its employees. Comes amid surge in Delta variant infections

<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/delta-add-200-monthly-health-insurance-charge-unvaccinated-staff-2021-08-25/>

Ford delays a return to offices, weighs vaccine mandate

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Ford Motor Co will delay bringing most workers back to offices until January, and is still considering whether to require employees to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, the company's chief people officer told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/ford-delays-return-offices-weighs-vaccine-mandate-2021-08-25/>

Credit Suisse tells unvaccinated U.S. staff to work from home, memo says

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Credit Suisse has asked all non-vaccinated staff in the United States to work from home beginning Sept. 7, as it pushes back its return-to-office plans over concerns about the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant. A full return to the office has been delayed until Oct. 18, Switzerland's second-largest lender told U.S. employees last week, while those without the COVID-19 shot have been told to stay home until receiving the vaccination or new guidance.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/credit-suisse-tells-unvaccinated-us-staff-work-home-memo-says-2021-08-25/>

Goldman Sachs to mandate COVID vaccine for staff, visitors at U.S. offices -memo

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Goldman Sachs Group Inc told employees on Tuesday that anyone entering the investment bank's U.S. offices, including clients, must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 starting immediately, according to an internal memo seen by Reuters.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/companies/goldman-sachs-to-mandate-covid-vaccine-for-staff-visitors-at-us-offices-memo/ar-AANHUKK>

UPS mandates COVID-19 vaccination for employees in some U.S. locations

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United Parcel Service Inc said on Tuesday it would require employees in certain U.S. locations to be vaccinated when they return to the office, as COVID-19 cases rise across the United States due to the fast-spreading Delta variant. The decision comes after the U.S. drug regulator on Monday granted full approval to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, a move that is expected to spur a string of similar mandates from corporate employers.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/ups-mandates-covid-19-vaccination-employees-some-us-locations-2021-08-24/>

Pentagon: US troops must get their COVID-19 vaccines ASAP

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Military troops must immediately begin to get the COVID-19 vaccine, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a memo Wednesday, ordering service leaders to "impose ambitious timelines for implementation." More than 800,000 service members have yet to get their shots, according to Pentagon data. And now that the Pfizer vaccine has received full approval from the Food and Drug Administration, the Defense Department is adding it to the list of required shots troops must get as part of their military service.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-4cf7451267919302de4a7b591508e80c>

PM backs businesses rejecting unvaccinated customers as vaccine passport plans firm

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Scott Morrison has backed businesses to reject customers or guests who haven't been vaccinated against COVID-19, giving the clearest picture on how so-called 'vaccine passports' could be used in Australia. The Prime Minister has gradually been preparing the ground for such a scheme, but his latest position risks a backbench revolt and raising the ire of a growing movement of many thousands of people opposing vaccine passports. "A business under property law has the ability to

say 'No, you can't come in', and they can ask for that," Mr Morrison told 2GB radio on Wednesday, when asked if people may need to show vaccination proof during their daily business.

<https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/politics/australian-politics/2021/08/26/morrison-unvaccinated-customers/>

Massachusetts issues mandate requiring masks in schools

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Massachusetts Education Commissioner Jeff Riley issued new regulations Wednesday requiring all public school students ages 5 and above, and all staffers, to wear masks indoors while at school. All visitors are also expected to wear masks in school buildings. Masks are not required when outdoors. The regulations take effect immediately and come a day after the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education gave Riley the authority to issue a mask mandate for K-12 public schools. The requirement will remain in place until at least Oct. 1 and could be revised in light of new public health data.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-b41ef0c78e240b1e4c39385484c23c03>

Coup, COVID take toll on young people's mental health in Myanmar

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Across Myanmar, young people are reporting feelings of anger, sadness and helplessness following the military's power grab on February 1 and its brutal suppression of anti-coup protests. They say these feelings have only increased since July when COVID-19 cases exploded in the country. Today, many are struggling with the grief of losing loved ones to disease and violence. Yet, forced to grapple with more immediate dangers like basic safety and access to medicine, attention to mental health has taken a back seat. But experts say the psychological toll is becoming impossible to ignore as rates of depression and suicide rise.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/25/coup-covid-takes-toll-on-young-peoples-mental-health-in-myanmar>

COVID vaccine protection wanes within six months - UK researchers

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Protection against COVID-19 offered by two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines begins to fade within six months, underscoring the need for booster shots, according to researchers in Britain. After five to six months, the effectiveness of the Pfizer jab at preventing COVID-19 infection in the month after the second dose fell from 88% to 74%, an analysis of data collected in Britain's ZOE COVID study showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-jab-protection-wanes-within-six-months-uk-researchers-2021-08-25/>

Covid infection protection waning in double jabbed

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Researchers say they are seeing some waning of protection against Covid infections in double-jabbed people. The real-world study includes data on positive Covid PCR test results between May and July 2021 among more than a million people who had received two doses of Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccine. Protection after two shots of Pfizer decreased from 88% at one month to 74% at five to six months. For AstraZeneca, the fall was from 77% to 67% at four to five months. Waning protection is to be expected, say experts.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-58322882>

U.N. sees massive drop in COVID vaccinations in Afghanistan after Taliban takeover

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Since the Taliban takeover "there's been an 80% drop in people reached with COVID-19 vaccines," a spokesperson for UNICEF told Reuters. In the week starting on Aug. 15, 30,500 people had been

vaccinated in 23 of the 34 provinces of the country, whereas the previous week 134,600 people were inoculated in 30 provinces, according to figures provided by UNICEF, which coordinates the rollout of COVID-19 shots distributed across the world by the World Health Organization (WHO) vaccine programme Covax.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-sees-massive-drop-covid-vaccinations-afghanistan-after-taliban-takeover-2021-08-25/>

NSW hospitals warning: nurses and staff 'flat out' and 'exhausted' as Covid numbers soar

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The nurses union has rubbished New South Wales health minister Brad Hazzard's claims that Sydney's hospitals are coping with the city's Covid outbreak, warning multiple facilities are under "enormous pressure" and have "very little capacity" in their emergency departments. NSW set a new daily record on Wednesday with 919 local Covid cases. There were 645 Covid patients in hospital, with 113 people in intensive care, but transmission and exposure at multiple hospitals has sidelined significant numbers of health staff due to isolation requirements.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/aug/26/nsw-hospitals-warning-nurses-and-staff-flat-out-and-exhausted-as-covid-numbers-soar>

Vietnam to pay recovered COVID-19 patients to help in hospitals

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Vietnam is offering patients who have recovered from the coronavirus a monthly allowance if they agree to stay on at stretched hospitals to help health workers struggling to cope with an influx of infected people. After successfully containing COVID-19 for much of the pandemic, Vietnam is facing its worst outbreak to date driven by the virulent Delta variant, with a surge in cases and deaths ramping up pressure on health authorities

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-pay-recovered-covid-19-patients-help-hospitals-2021-08-25/>

Swiss agree deal with Pfizer for 14 million more COVID-19 vaccine doses

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Switzerland has signed an agreement with Pfizer to supply 14 million more doses of its COVID-19 vaccine to cover 2022 and 2023, Health Minister Alain Berset said on Wednesday. "The Swiss government has completed a further contract with Pfizer, which will supply 7 million vaccine doses (in both) 2022 and 2023," Berset told a press conference in Bern.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/swiss-agree-deal-with-pfizer-14-million-more-covid-19-vaccine-doses-2021-08-25/>

US vice president pledges Vietnam COVID jobs; says China bullies

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US Vice President Kamala Harris has pledged to provide Vietnam with additional doses of COVID-19 vaccines during a regional visit aimed at countering China's growing influence. Harris, speaking at the top of a bilateral meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on Wednesday, said that the one million doses would begin to arrive within the next 24 hours.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/25/us-vp-harris-forges-on-with-vietnam-trip-despite-health>

Kroger plans for 1 million Covid-19 booster shots a week, including in nursing homes

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U.S. grocery chain Kroger Co (KR.N) is gearing up to administer 1 million COVID-19 booster shots a week once they are available to the general public, and plans to offer vaccines in nursing homes for those who cannot go to its stores. The U.S. government is planning to make COVID-19 vaccine

booster shots widely available from Sept. 20 to Americans if U.S. health regulators give the go-ahead. Only people who are immunocompromised have been eligible for booster shots since early this month.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/kroger-plans-1-million-covid-19-booster-shots-week-including-nursing-homes-2021-08-25/>

New Zealand pushes ahead with vaccinations as Delta outbreak widens

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New Zealand recorded 62 new cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday, taking the total number of infections in the latest outbreak to 210 as the government scrambled to scale up vaccinations amid growing criticism. Most of the cases are in the largest city Auckland, while 12 are in the capital Wellington, the Director General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said at a news conference.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-pushes-ahead-with-vaccinations-delta-outbreak-widens-2021-08-25/>

New NY governor adds 12,000 deaths to publicized COVID tally

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Delivering another blow to what's left of former Gov. Andrew Cuomo's legacy, New York's new governor acknowledged on her first day in office that the state has had nearly 12,000 more deaths from COVID-19 than Cuomo told the public. "The public deserves a clear, honest picture of what's happening. And that's whether it's good or bad, they need to know the truth. And that's how we restore confidence," Gov. Kathy Hochul said on NPR.

<https://apnews.com/article/andrew-cuomo-health-coronavirus-pandemic-7312b49695e726eda8d59848e82271c5>

China accuses US of politicizing COVID-19 origins research

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China went on the offensive Wednesday ahead of the release of a U.S. intelligence report on the origins of the coronavirus, bringing out a senior official to accuse the United States of politicizing the issue by seeking to pin the blame on China

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-beijing-wuhan-covid-tedros-adhanom-ghebreyesus-b1908470.html>

CEO angry about Covid-19 lockdowns demands back statue of Bull Allen gifted to Scott Morrison

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Businessman Keith Cullen gave PM a statue of a digger after a speech in 2017 Mr Morrison loves the gift and keeps it on his shelf in his Parliament House office Now Mr Cullen wants statue back because he disagrees with Covid lockdowns 'You are neither a worthy recipient nor qualified custodian,' Mr Cullen told PM

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9924279/CEO-angry-Covid-19-lockdowns-demands-statue-Bull-Allen-gifted-Scott-Morrison.html>

New Zealand won't 'throw in towel' on Covid-zero strategy despite rising infections

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New Zealand's Covid response minister says the country will not "throw in the towel" with its elimination strategy, as cases continue to rise. New Zealand announced 63 new cases of Covid-19 on Wednesday, bringing the total to 210 cases. It is the largest single-day jump since the outbreak began last week, and 12 people are hospitalised with the virus. Some commentators and media overseas have questioned whether the country should continue its elimination strategy, but Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins said the country would be staying its course.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/25/new-zealand-wont-throw-in-towel-on-covid-zero-strategy-despite-ris>

[ing-infections](#)

Ivermectin for Covid-19: abundance of hype, dearth of evidence

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Here's a tip for navigating the constantly evolving data on treatments for Covid-19: Beware when someone describes a drug as a "miracle." The ongoing devastation wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic creates an understandable allure for a quick-fix or magic-bullet solutions. But it is painstaking scientific testing — not magical thinking — that reveals what works and how well. For example, clinical trials involving tens of thousands of patients across multiple continents were needed to demonstrate the enormous value of Covid-19 vaccines.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/25/ivermectin-for-covid-19-abundance-of-hype-dearth-of-evidence/>

Johnson & Johnson vaccine boosters increase antibodies: Data

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The Johnson & Johnson (J&J) company is saying that a booster shot of its COVID-19 vaccine sharply increased levels of antibodies, according to interim data from two early-stage trials. A second dose of the United States company's single-dose vaccine resulted in binding antibody levels nine times higher than the levels 28 days after people received their first dose, the company said in a news release on Wednesday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/25/johnson-and-johnson-says-vaccine-boosters-increase-antibodies>

J&J says its Covid vaccine booster shot generated a promising immune response in early trials

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Johnson & Johnson said Wednesday a booster shot of its Covid-19 vaccine generated a promising immune response in early stage clinical trials. J&J recipients who received a booster dose of the shot generated virus-fighting antibodies "nine-fold higher" than those seen four weeks after a single dose. While promising, the company's press release made no mention of the booster shots potential impact on the delta variant or on safety.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/25/jj-says-its-covid-vaccine-booster-shot-generated-a-promising-immune-response-in-early-trials.html>

Thailand develops robotic system to up Covid vaccine doses

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Researchers in Thailand have developed a machine to draw out Covid-19 vaccine doses more efficiently and optimise lower-than-expected supplies as the country struggles with its worst coronavirus outbreak yet. Using a robotic arm, the "AutoVacc" system can draw 12 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in four minutes from a vial, according to researchers at Chulalongkorn University, who made the machine that has been used at the university's vaccination centre since Monday. That is up 20% than from the standard 10 doses drawn manually, they said. The machine works only on AstraZeneca multi-dose vials currently and labels show each vial can provide 10 to 11 doses.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/25/thailand-develops-robotic-system-to-up-covid-vaccine-doses>

Coronavirus: Sinopharm's twin approach to variants aims for improved vaccine while testing booster shot

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An updated vaccine is being developed to provide protection against Delta and Beta strains. Clinical trials of a booster shot are also under way, CNBG vice-president says

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3146361/coronavirus-sinopharms-twin-approach-variants-aims-improved>

WHO recommends vaccination of kids with comorbidities but elderly should be priority

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The World Health Organization in the Western Pacific on Wednesday recommended that children with comorbidities living in areas with high virus transmission can be vaccinated against COVID-19. The regional office of the UN health agency, however, emphasized that the elderly must still be prioritized for inoculation. "WHO is recommending to countries where children have comorbidities, and if these children are in places where there is ongoing community transmission as well as formation of clusters, then children could be vaccinated," said Dr. Socorro Escalante, WHO Western Pacific coordinator for essential medicines and health technologies.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/08/25/2122556/who-recommends-vaccination-kids-comorbidities-elderly-should-be-priority>

U.S. data show rising 'breakthrough' infections among fully vaccinated

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Some 25% of SARS-CoV-2 infections among Los Angeles County residents occurred in fully vaccinated residents from May through July 25, a period that includes the impact of the highly transmissible Delta variant, U.S. officials reported on Tuesday. The data, published in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's weekly report on death and disease, shows an increase in so-called "breakthrough" infections among fully vaccinated individuals.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-data-show-rising-breakthrough-infections-among-fully-vaccinated-2021-08-24/>

Japan withdraws 1.6 mln Moderna COVID-19 vaccine doses over contamination

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Around 1.6 million doses of Moderna Inc's COVID-19 vaccine has been withdrawn from use in Japan due to contamination, the Nikkei said, citing a health ministry announcement on Thursday. Several vaccination centres reported vials contained "foreign matter", the report said, adding that the ministry will look to minimise the impact of the withdrawal on Japan's vaccination drive.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-withdraws-16-mln-moderna-covid-19-vaccine-doses-over-contamination-nikkei-2021-08-25/>

Experts on WHO team say search for COVID origins has stalled

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The international scientists dispatched to China by the World Health Organization to find out where the coronavirus came from said Wednesday the search has stalled and warned that the window of opportunity for solving the mystery is "closing fast." Meanwhile, a U.S. intelligence review ordered up by President Joe Biden proved inconclusive about the virus's origin, including whether it jumped from an animal to a human or escaped from a Chinese lab, The Washington Post reported Wednesday.

<https://apnews.com/article/science-health-coronavirus-pandemic-united-nations-f08a2972ae5a59cc425a89a36c3389d1>

Vietnam urges WHO to send more COVID-19 shots as cases surge despite lockdown

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While the rapid spread of the Delta variant and low vaccinations have caught much of Asia off-guard, no country shows more vividly than Vietnam how easily the highly infectious version of the coronavirus can foil strict containment policy. Vietnam had successfully contained the coronavirus

for most of last year but since April has been dealing with a large COVID-19 outbreak in Ho Chi Minh City, driven by the Delta.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-urges-who-send-more-covid-19-shots-cases-surge-despite-lockdown-2021-08-25/>

Global Covid-19 cases plateau after nearly two months of increase, WHO reports

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The number of new Covid-19 cases reported globally "seems to be plateauing" after increasing for nearly two months, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Monday. WHO reported more than 4.5 million new cases and 68,000 new deaths worldwide last week -- only a slight increase from the more than 4.4 million cases and 66,000 deaths reported the prior week. The cumulative global caseload now stands at more than 211 million, with the total death toll surpassing 4.4 million, according to WHO's weekly epidemiological update.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/25/world/who-covid-cases-plateau-intl-hnk/index.html>

Japan further expands virus emergency areas as cases surge

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Japan expanded its coronavirus state of emergency on Wednesday for a second week in a row, adding eight more prefectures as a surge in infections fueled by the delta variant strains the country's health care system. The government last week extended the state of emergency until Sept. 12 and expanded the areas covered to 13 prefectures from six including Tokyo. With four new prefectures added to a separate "quasi-emergency" status, 33 of Japan's 47 prefectures are now under some type of emergency measures. Eight prefectures were upgraded from quasi-emergency status to a full emergency. They include Hokkaido and Miyagi in the north, Aichi and Gifu in central Japan, and Hiroshima and Okayama in the west.

<https://apnews.com/article/business-health-japan-coronavirus-pandemic-936e321a9dc5519313e2a36fe6092583>