

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

17th May 2022

Lockdown Exit

US Surpasses One Million Covid-19 Deaths - WSJ

The Covid-19 mortality count—just over one million and still rising—is reflected in death certificates recorded by the CDC. Of these certificates, at least 90% list Covid-19 as the underlying cause of death, the CDC said. The remainder list the disease as a contributing cause. These records show how deaths have swept through the U.S. since the pandemic began, hitting states and populations unevenly. Early hot spots included places like New York City and New Jersey. The burden later shifted southward, including in states where vaccination rates have lagged behind. Vaccines have shown they reduce the risk of severe illness and death.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-nears-one-million-covid-19-deaths-11650838998>

China's economy cools sharply in April as lockdowns bite

China's retail and factory activity fell sharply in April as wide COVID-19 lockdowns confined workers and consumers to their homes and severely disrupted supply chains, casting a long shadow over the outlook for the world's second-largest economy. Full or partial lockdowns were imposed in major centres across the country in March and April, including the most populous city Shanghai, hitting production and consumption and heightening risks for those parts of the global economy heavily dependent on China.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-economy-cools-sharply-april-lockdowns-bite-2022-05-16/>

Jersey's digital Covid vaccine certificates to show more doses and last longer

Jersey's digital Covid vaccine certificates have been upgraded. They will now show up to five doses rather than three and last for six months instead of one. The display has also been simplified for travel purposes to only include a single QR code showing the most recent vaccine.

<https://www.itv.com/news/channel/2022-05-13/jerseys-digital-covid-vaccine-certificates-to-show-more-doses-and-last-longer>

Covid-19 pushed 55 mn Africans into extreme poverty in 2020: UN Report

The disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic pushed an estimated 55 million Africans into extreme poverty in 2020 and reversed more than two decades of poverty reduction in Africa, said a report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The report with the theme "Fight against poverty and vulnerability in Africa during the Covid-19 pandemic", was issued by the ECA during the 54th session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/covid-19-pushed-55-mn-africans-into-extreme-poverty-in-2020-un-report-122051600044_1.html

Children less active after Covid-19 restrictions eased, study finds

Activity levels among children fell below national guidelines after Covid-19 restrictions eased, a study finds. A university of Bristol study found by the end of 2021, less than a third were meeting the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes of physical activity daily. The findings showed children in England aged between 10 and 11 were doing eight minutes less activity than before 2021. Researchers said it "highlights a greater need" to work with families, and schools to get children active.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-61463214>

We need a definitive exit from our Covid-19 pandemic. Here's the roadmap

As the virus accelerates its evolution, the humans capitulate. For two and a half years, the virus has been outrunning our response, getting progressively more and more transmissible, reaching a level of infectiousness that few pathogens have ever attained. Instead of taking a stance of getting ahead of the virus, and out-smarting it, people have succumbed. In recent months, we experienced a striking jump in transmissibility when the Omicron (BA.1) variant became dominant with at least a three-fold increase in reproductive number beyond Delta. Despite the hope that this might be reaching the upper limit of the virus's spread ability, we quickly transitioned to a BA.2 wave with at least another jump of about 30% transmissibility, and now we are heading, in the United States, to a dominant subvariant known as BA.2.12.1, which is another 25% more transmissible than BA.2 and already accounting for close to 50% of new cases.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/16/covid-19-pandemic-exit-roadmap>

Omicron Is Turning Out to Be a Weak Vaccine

With each new variant, that period of protection keeps getting shorter. In the past few weeks, studies out of South Africa, the US, and China have revealed that Omicron subvariants BA.2.12.1, BA.4 and BA.5 are alarmingly good at escaping immunity from a previous Omicron infection. In practical terms, this means that for the large swath of the US population that was first infected with Covid over the winter, the post-infection honeymoon may be over. Those people might wonder how safe it is to travel, attend large gatherings and have dinner with vulnerable friends and relatives. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers. "People want it to be, 'Am I safe or not?,'" says Abraar Karan, an epidemiologist at Stanford University. But risk is a continuum.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-05-16/omicron-is-turning-out-to-be-a-weak-vaccine>

Detroit Three automakers reinstate mask mandate at some Michigan facilities

General Motors, Ford and Chrysler parent Stellantis are reinstating a requirement that employees wear masks in southeastern Michigan where there are high levels of COVID-19. The Detroit Three automakers said in early March they would allow auto workers to stop wearing masks at workplaces where U.S. health officials said it was safe to do so

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/detroit-three-automakers-reinstate-mask-mandate-some-michigan-facilities-2022-05-15/>

US deaths from COVID hit 1 million, less than 2 1/2 years in

The U.S. death toll from COVID-19 hit 1 million on Monday, a once-unimaginable figure that only hints at the multitudes of loved ones and friends staggered by grief and frustration. The confirmed number of dead is equivalent to a 9/11 attack every day for 336 days. It is roughly equal to how many Americans died in the Civil War and World War II combined. It's as if Boston and Pittsburgh were wiped out. Some of those left behind say they cannot return to normal. They replay their loved ones' voicemail messages. Or watch old videos to see them dance. When other people say they are done with the virus, they bristle with anger or ache in silence.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-pandemics-public-7cefd8c3185fd970fd073386e442317>

Official: China's economy reviving as anti-virus curbs ease

China's sluggish economy is reviving as anti-virus curbs are eased and businesses in its commercial capital of Shanghai are allowed to reopen, a Cabinet official said Monday, while data showed April factory and consumer activity was even weaker than expected. About half of the 9,000 biggest industrial enterprises in Shanghai are back at work after controls that shut down most of the city starting in late March eased, said Fu Linghui, director of statistics for the National Bureau of Statistics. The ruling Communist Party is trying to reverse a deepening slowdown without giving up "zero-COVID" tactics that also have shut down sections of Beijing and other major cities to isolate every infected person.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-shanghai-economy-9fcc6caee92a1f30c7c8f8be575d811>

Exit Strategies

FDA to soon authorize Pfizer's COVID booster shot for younger kids - NYT

U.S. health regulators are expected to authorize a booster shot of Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 as soon as Tuesday, the New York Times reported on Monday, citing people familiar with the matter. The companies submitted an application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the authorization last month. They have cited data from a mid- to late-stage study showing a third dose of their shot increased protection against the original coronavirus version and the Omicron variant among children in the age group.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/fda-authorize-pfizers-covid-booster-shot-younger-kids-soon-nyt-2022-05-16/>

Global Covid-19 vaccines equity of access is a 'shared goal' as production surges, says industry

Global equity of access to Covid-19 vaccines should be a shared goal, according to the research-based biopharmaceutical industry, with production set to reach 16.3 billion doses by the end of June. In a joint statement at the Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment, IPHA and BPCI, the industry's representative organizations, said waiving intellectual property rights will not accelerate global Covid-19 vaccines access.

<https://www.thepharmaletter.com/article/global-covid-19-vaccines-equity-of-access-is-a-shared-goal-as-production-surges-says-industry>

Shanghai targets June COVID lockdown exit as China economy slumps

Shanghai set out plans on Monday for the end of a painful COVID-19 lockdown that has lasted more than six weeks, heavily bruising China's economy, and for the return of more normal life from June 1.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-targets-june-1-return-normal-covid-lockdowns-cool-economy-2022-05-16/>

Shanghai aims to reopen more businesses shut by COVID, Beijing battles on

Shanghai will gradually begin reopening businesses such as shopping malls and hair salons in China's financial and manufacturing hub from Monday after weeks in strict COVID-19 lockdown, while Beijing battles a small but stubborn outbreak. All but shut down for more than six weeks, Shanghai is tightening curbs in some areas that it hopes marks a final push in its campaign against the virus, which has infuriated and exhausted residents of China's largest and most cosmopolitan city.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-start-gradually-reopening-malls-other-firms-covid-lockdown-transition-2022-05-15/>

Factbox: Shanghai provides roadmap out of lockdown

Shanghai authorities on Monday provided their clearest timetable yet on lifting the city's lockdown that has been in place for over six weeks, saying they plan to fully restore normal life from June 1. Draconian measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 in China's largest city have generated widespread frustration and anger among its 25 million residents and contributed to a slowdown in the country's economic activity. Most people have been forbidden to leave their homes unless for emergency medical treatment or to buy daily necessities.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/shanghai-provides-roadmap-out-lockdown-2022-05-16/>

COVID lockdowns may end but China is still sneezing

With swathes of China spending April under lockdown -- 46 cities according to one estimate -- it was inevitable that dining out, shopping, factory output and energy usage would all take big hits. The dire data overshadowed announcements that some COVID curbs would be loosened. A Q2 economic

contraction looks inevitable. What's more, the 6.7% urban unemployment rate -- the highest since 2018 -- won't escape the notice of authorities, wary of any kind of unrest.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/covid-lockdowns-may-end-china-is-still-sneezing-2022-05-16/>

Dalian iron ore rebounds on supply woes, easing of China COVID curbs

Chinese iron ore futures rose on Monday, supported by supply concerns and shrinking portside inventories of the steelmaking ingredient, while the easing of some COVID-19 curbs in the world's top steel producer also lifted trader sentiment. The most-traded September iron ore contract on China's Dalian Commodity Exchange ended daytime trade 3.9% higher at 834.50 yuan (\$122.80) a tonne, after posting its biggest weekly loss in nearly three months on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/supply-woes-easing-chinas-covid-curbs-lift-dalian-iron-ore-2022-05-16/>

New York City Officials Say People Should Wear Masks Inside Again

New York City officials are recommending residents wear masks in indoor public spaces amid climbing Covid-19 cases in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. New York City Health Commissioner Ashwin Vasan issued the advisory Monday, requesting New Yorkers over the age of two years old wear masks in indoor public spaces such as grocery stores and offices.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-york-city-officials-say-people-should-wear-masks-inside-again-11652732146>

Shanghai says lockdown to ease as virus spread mostly ends

Most of Shanghai has stopped the spread of the coronavirus in the community and fewer than 1 million people remain under strict lockdown, authorities said Monday, as the city moves toward reopening and economic data showed the gloomy impact of China's "zero-COVID" policy. Vice Mayor Zong Ming said 15 out of Shanghai's 16 districts had eliminated virus transmission among those not already in quarantine. "The epidemic in our city is under effective control. Prevention measures have achieved incremental success," Zong said at a news briefing.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-economy-beijing-81cc24e17c09ca13139ba50e986c2d92>

Lacking vaccines, North Korea battles COVID with antibiotics, home remedies

Standing tall in bright red hazmat suits, five North Korean health workers stride towards an ambulance to do battle with a COVID-19 outbreak that - in the presumed absence of vaccines - the country is using antibiotics and home remedies to treat. The isolated state is one of only two countries yet to begin a vaccination campaign and, until last week, had insisted it was COVID-free. Now it is mobilizing forces including the army and a public information campaign to combat what authorities have acknowledged is an "explosive" outbreak

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/lacking-vaccines-nkorea-battles-covid-with-antibiotics-home-remedies-2022-05-16/>

Partisan Exits

Tokyo COVID curbs declared illegal in "Kill Bill" restaurant case

Japan's "Kill Bill" restaurant operator prevailed in a court case on Monday that declared Tokyo's now defunct COVID-19 infection curbs were illegal. The orders, enacted in the capital during various states of emergency, included shortened operating hours and a ban on alcohol sales, though there was a compensating government subsidy. Businesses that didn't comply were subject to fines. Global-Dining Inc, which runs more than 40 restaurants, defied the restrictions, taking the city government to court over the matter.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/tokyo-covid-curbs-declared-illegal-kill-bill-restaurant-case-2022-05-16/>

Continued Lockdown

Tesla delays plan to restore Shanghai output to pre-lockdown levels

Tesla Inc has delayed a plan to restore production at its Shanghai plant to levels before the city's COVID-19 lockdown by at least a week, according to an internal memo seen by Reuters. The U.S. electric car maker originally aimed to increase output at its Shanghai plant to 2,600 cars a day from May 16, Reuters reported earlier this month citing another memo. But the latest memo said that it plans to stick to one shift for its Shanghai plant for the current week with a daily output of around 1,200 units. It also said that it would now aim to increase output to 2,600 units per day from May 23. <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/tesla-delays-plan-restore-shanghai-plant-output-pre-lockdown-levels-memo-2022-05-16/>

European businesses fear more COVID disruption in China

European businesses in China are awaiting the next wave of disruption from COVID-19 outbreaks and see little chance of improvement until the country increases vaccination rates, the European Chamber of Commerce in China said on Monday. Shanghai has set out plans to end its COVID lockdown that has lasted more than six weeks, hitting China's economy, where industrial output and retail sales fell in April at the fastest in more than two years, missing expectations <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/european-businesses-fear-more-covid-disruption-china-2022-05-16/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Omicron No Vaccine Substitute, But Breakthroughs May Beat Boosters

One potential silver lining is that vaccinated people catching breakthrough infections via the omicron variant may have a form of super-immunity more powerful than a booster shot, according to a couple of recent studies. Of course, given the risk of long Covid and how little we know about the disease's long-term effects, nobody's recommending you throw a Covid party. And unvaccinated people shouldn't hope catching omicron will protect them from future infections, warns Lisa Jarvis. Even vaccinated people might find their super-immunity from an omicron infection won't last more than a few months. Catch you at the next surge.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-05-16/omicron-no-vaccine-substitute-but-breakthroughs-may-beat-boosters>

Coronavirus may be linked to cases of severe hepatitis in children

The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review. SARS-CoV-2 could be at root of mysterious hepatitis in kids. A chain of events possibly triggered by unrecognized infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus could be causing the mysterious cases of severe hepatitis reported in hundreds of young children around the world, researchers suggest.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/coronavirus-may-be-linked-cases-severe-hepatitis-children-2022-05-16/>

FDA declines to authorize common antidepressant as COVID treatment

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has decided not to authorize the antidepressant fluvoxamine to treat COVID-19, saying that the data has not shown the drug to be an effective therapeutic for fighting the virus. "Based on the review of available scientific evidence, the FDA has determined that the data are insufficient to conclude that fluvoxamine may be effective in the treatment of nonhospitalized patients with COVID-19 to prevent progression to severe disease and/or hospitalization," the agency said in a document published on Monday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/fda-declines-authorize-common-antidepressant-covid-treatment-2022-05-16/>

Shionogi starts COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial for adolescents

Osaka-based pharmaceutical company Shionogi says it has started a clinical trial for Japanese adolescents aged 12 to 19 of a coronavirus vaccine it is developing for all age groups. The product is

a recombinant protein-based vaccine. For adult usage, the company is set to apply for approval with Japanese authorities as early as next month. The company said on Monday the clinical trial involves 350 adolescents. They will receive two doses to see whether their neutralizing antibody levels will equal those found in adults who have received the shots, or rise even higher.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20220516_24/

Coronavirus: How Omicron infection turbocharges vaccinated people's immunity

People who are vaccinated and then get infected with Omicron may be primed to overcome a broad range of coronavirus variants, early research suggests. A pair of studies showed that infection produced even better immune responses than a booster shot in vaccinated patients. Teams from Covid-19 vaccine maker BioNTech SE and the University of Washington posted the results on preprint server bioRxiv in recent weeks. The findings offer a reassuring sign that the millions of vaccinated people who've caught Omicron probably won't become seriously ill from another variant soon – even though the research needs to be confirmed, especially by real-world evidence.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/3177958/coronavirus-how-omicron-infection-turbocharges>

Long Covid: Staff suffering long-term coronavirus symptoms need more help to carry on working

Companies are failing staff suffering from long Covid leaving them open to legal action as the condition could amount to a disability under the Equality Act, an employment specialist has said. Aleksandra Traczyk, employment solicitor at Winckworth Sherwood, said the latest advice seems to suggest that long Covid should be treated as a disability by employers in order to avoid falling foul of discrimination legislation. She said her practice has seen cases of people with long Covid being treated poorly by bosses who failed to make adjustments allowing them to carry on working. Although some campaign groups and bodies, including the TUC, have called for long Covid to be recognised as a disability under the Equality Act, this has not yet happened. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has acknowledged that the short amount of time that long Covid has been in existence as a condition, and the fluctuating nature of symptoms, may be a barrier to the Government doing so, Ms Traczyk said.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/long-covid-coronavirus-symptoms-more-help-carry-on-working-equality-act-1632086>

EC to terminate Covid-19 vaccine deal with Valneva

The European Commission (EC) has informed Valneva of its plan to terminate the advance purchase agreement (APA) for the latter's inactivated whole-virus Covid-19 vaccine candidate, VLA2001. The details were communicated by the EC through a notice to the company. An adjuvanted vaccine candidate, VLA2001 is for active immunisation of at-risk people to avert carriage and symptomatic Covid-19 infection. It comprises inactivated whole virus particles of the SARS-CoV-2 virus with increased S-protein density and two adjuvants, alum and Dynavax Technologies' CpG 1018.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/ec-vaccine-deal-valneva/>

Pfizer, BioNTech amend Covid-19 vaccine supply deal with EC

Pfizer and BioNTech have amended the supply agreement with the European Commission (EC) to rephase the delivery schedules of their Covid-19 vaccine. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is based on the messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) technology of BioNTech. Under the deal, the initial contractual supply schedules for the vaccine will be updated to rephase the supplies to support the vaccination programmes of EC and its member states.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/pfizer-biontech-vaccine-ec/>

Covid-19 news: Just 7 per cent of 5 to 11-year-olds in England jabbed

Six weeks into the vaccine roll-out for this age group, fewer than one in 10 children aged 5 to 11 have received their first dose. The 7 per cent figure compares with the 24 per cent of 12 to 15-year-

olds in England who received a first dose in the six weeks after they became eligible for the vaccine in September 2021. Children rarely become seriously ill with SARS-CoV-2 virus, however, testing positive can disrupt their schooling or put them at risk of long covid. Speaking of 5 to 11 year olds, Russell Viner at University College London told The Guardian: "It's a vaccination that probably isn't particularly beneficial for this age group. "However, it has a very, very good safety profile. And given that we remain in a pandemic, there's an argument that for individual parents, the balance of risks would appear to be towards vaccination."

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-just-7-per-cent-of-5-to-11-year-olds-in-england-jabbed/>

Lacking vaccines, North Korea battles COVID with antibiotics, home remedies

Standing tall in bright red hazmat suits, five North Korean health workers stride towards an ambulance to do battle with a COVID-19 outbreak that - in the presumed absence of vaccines - the country is using antibiotics and home remedies to treat. The isolated state is one of only two countries yet to begin a vaccination campaign and, until last week, had insisted it was COVID-free. Now it is mobilizing forces including the army and a public information campaign to combat what authorities have acknowledged is an "explosive" outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/lacking-vaccines-nkorea-battles-covid-with-antibiotics-home-remedies-2022-05-16/>

Valneva shares dive 20% after COVID vaccine deal with EU falls apart

Shares of Valneva plunged 20% on Monday after the French drugmaker said its COVID-19 vaccine agreement with the European Commission was being scrapped and it may have to rethink its financial guidance. Valneva said the European Commission had informed the company of its intent to terminate an advance purchase agreement (APA) for its COVID vaccine, which is currently under regulatory review by the European health regulator.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/valneva-says-european-commission-terminate-purchase-agreement-its-vla2001-covid-2022-05-16/>

FDA Authorizes Nonprescription Test for Covid-19, Flu and RSV

The Food and Drug Administration authorized the first nonprescription test that can detect Covid-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV. The test, developed by Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings, can be sold directly to consumers online or at retail. A person can collect a nasal-swab sample themselves before sending the sample to Labcorp for analysis. The test, called the Labcorp Seasonal Respiratory Virus RT-PCR DTC Test, searches for and amplifies the genetic materials of multiple viruses to figure out which one a person might be harboring.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/fda-authorizes-nonprescription-test-for-covid-19-flu-and-rsv-11652743114>

Long Covid Symptoms Often Include Crushing Fatigue. Here's How to Cope.

New studies offer clues about who may be more susceptible to long Covid, a term for lingering Covid-19 symptoms. WSJ breaks down the science of long Covid and the state of treatment

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/long-covid-often-means-crushing-fatigue-heres-what-can-help-11652662810>

Valneva says European Commission to terminate purchase agreement for its VLA2001 COVID candidate

Valneva said on Monday it had received a notice of intent from the European Commission (EC) to terminate the advance purchase agreement for its VLA2001 COVID-19 candidate vaccine. "The EC decision is regrettable especially as we continue to receive messages from Europeans who are looking for a more traditional vaccine solution," CEO Thomas Lingelbach said. Valneva's vaccine relies on technology that has been used for decades, including in some shots against polio, influenza and hepatitis. Valneva signed a deal with the EC last November to supply up to 60 million doses of vaccine over two years, including 24.3 million doses in 2022.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/valneva-says-european-commission-terminate-purchase>

[se-agreement-its-vla2001-covid-2022-05-16/](#)

Coronavirus Resurgence

NYC Nears High Covid-Alert Level, May Consider Requiring Masks

New York City is preparing to hit a high Covid-transmission level in the coming days that would have it reconsidering mask requirements in public places. "If NYC's Alert Level is raised to High, the City will consider requiring face masks in all public indoor settings," according to guidance on the city health department's website. Alert levels take into account cases, hospital admissions and the percentage of inpatient beds that are occupied by Covid-19 patients. Early in May, the city moved to a medium alert from low after surpassing 200 new cases per 100,000 people over a seven-day period.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-16/nyc-may-reach-high-covid-alert-level-consider-requiring-masks>

N.Korea reports 6 new COVID deaths as military mobilised for supplies

North Korea has mobilised its military to distribute COVID medications and deployed more than 10,000 health workers to help trace potential patients as it fights a sweeping coronavirus wave, state media KCNA said on Tuesday. The isolated country is grappling with its first acknowledged COVID-19 outbreak, which it confirmed last week, fuelling concerns over a major crisis due to a lack of vaccines and adequate medical infrastructure. The state emergency epidemic prevention headquarters reported 269,510 more people with fever symptoms, bringing the total to 1,483,060, while the death toll grew to 56 as of Monday evening, KCNA said. It did not say how many people have tested positive for COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-reports-6-new-deaths-270000-more-with-fever-amid-covid-outbreak-kcna-2022-05-16/>

Coronavirus cases proliferate, especially in the Midwest, as the U.S. death toll nears one million.

Coronavirus cases are spreading at an alarming rate across the United States, particularly in the Northeast and the Midwest, as the country's death toll nears the one million mark. An average of more than 90,

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/16/world/covid-19-mandates-vaccine-cases/coronavirus-cases-proliferate-especially-in-the-midwest-as-the-us-death-toll-nears-one-million>

Taiwan Navy confirms multiple COVID-19 cases on warship

Taiwan's Navy said Monday it had ordered one of its warships to return to base and everyone on board to get tested for COVID-19, as several crew members had obtained positive rapid antigen test results. The Navy, however, did not say how many people were on the Knox-class frigate, nor did it specify the number that had tested positive for COVID-19, saying only that everyone on board the "Fong Yang" had been asked to do rapid tests. Those who tested positive have been asked to take PCR tests, the Navy Command said in press release.

<https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/202205160021>

7061 Covid cases today, five virus-related deaths, 415 people in hospital

There are 7061 new community cases of Covid in the community today. The Ministry of Health reported a further five Covid-related deaths. Of the five deaths reported today, three people were from the Southern region, one person was from Auckland and one person was from Bay of Plenty. One person was in their 50s, one person was in their 70s, and three were aged over 90, the ministry said in today's update. There are 415 people in hospital with the virus, including 11 in intensive care.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-omicron-outbreak-7061-covid-cases-five-virus-related-deaths-415-people-in-hospital/47GWAAXBMBF24JXI4VOBUACDWA/>

Two COVID-19 deaths in South Australia as state government launches primary school vaccination hubs

Two people with COVID-19 have died in South Australia as the state government launches an initiative to increase the vaccination rate among children. SA Health has reported 3,392 new COVID-19 cases today, the lowest figure since last Monday, following a spike in numbers over the past week. The two deaths were a man and a woman, both in their 70s. Yesterday, 3,796 new cases were reported, following 3,816 on Saturday. There are now 248 people with COVID-19 in hospital, including seven people in intensive care.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-16/two-covid19-deaths-in-sa-primary-school-vaccination-hubs-launch/101064750>

Kim Jong-un calls in the army to respond to North Korea's Covid-19 crisis

Kim Jong-un has criticised North Korea's pandemic response and ordered the army to help distribute medicine, state media said Monday, as the country said 50 people had died since first reporting an outbreak of Covid-19. More than one million people have been sickened by what Pyongyang is referring to as "fever", state media said, despite Kim ordering nationwide lockdowns in a bid to slow the spread of disease through the unvaccinated population. After two years denying North Korea had any cases of Covid-19, last week officials confirmed that there had been a Covid outbreak in the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/16/kim-jong-un-calls-in-the-army-to-respond-to-north-koreas-covid-19-crisis>

COVID-19 may spread rapidly in North Korea, WHO warns

The World Health Organization warned on Monday that COVID-19 may spread rapidly in North Korea, where it said vaccination programmes had yet to begin. "With the country yet to initiate COVID-19 vaccination, there is risk that the virus may spread rapidly among the masses unless curtailed with immediate and appropriate measures," said Poonam Khetrpal Singh, WHO's regional director for South-East Asia, in a statement sent to journalists.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/covid-19-may-spread-rapidly-north-korea-who-warns-2022-05-16/>

China reports 1227 new COVID cases for May 15 vs 1789 a day earlier

Mainland China reported 1,227 new coronavirus cases for May 15, of which 151 were symptomatic and 1,076 were asymptomatic, the National Health Commission said on Monday. That compares with 1,789 new cases a day earlier, consisting of 239 symptomatic and 1,550 asymptomatic infections, which China counts separately. There were four new deaths, bringing the death toll to 5,213. As of May 15, mainland China had confirmed 221,955 coronavirus cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-1227-new-covid-cases-may-15-vs-1789-day-earlier-2022-05-16/>

N.Korea's Kim orders military to stabilise supply of COVID drugs

Leader Kim Jong Un has ordered North Korea's military to stabilise distribution of COVID-19 medicine in the capital, Pyongyang, in the battle against the country's first confirmed outbreak of the disease, state media said. Last week brought the North's first acknowledgment of an "explosive" outbreak, with experts warning it could devastate a country with limited medical supplies and no vaccine programme.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkoreas-kim-orders-military-stabilize-drug-supply-amid-covid-19-outbreak-2022-05-15/>

North Korea Covid Surge Accelerates as Unvaccinated Population Keeps Working

North Korea reported its biggest daily surge in fever cases during a nationwide outbreak of Covid-19 but didn't respond to a South Korean offer of vaccines even as the North's leader Kim Jong Un berated officials for failing to contain the disease. At the inter-Korean border, people could be seen walking around villages on the northern side Monday without face masks and working in groups in

fields during the rice planting season, showing how unvaccinated North Korea is far from a strict lockdown that some nations have used to stop the spread of Covid.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/north-korea-covid-surge-accelerates-as-unvaccinated-population-keeps-working-11652710861>