

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Lockdown Exit

Independent review planned for New York's COVID-19 response

A third-party auditor will review the New York state government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including efforts by the administration of the previous governor to downplay the number of deaths of nursing home residents. The state plans to select an auditor, who would have until late 2023 to deliver a final report, under a timeline released Tuesday by the office of current Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat. Initial findings are expected in May. The report will include a planning guide for future emergencies and will explore issues from the transfer of nursing home patients to the reopening of schools and businesses to efforts to purchase needed medical supplies.

<https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-covid-health-nursing-homes-new-york-state-government-57dbc3d112ecd8c227f324ff26105711>

How Moderna's Covid Vaccine Boosted Boston's Real-Estate Market

Things started well when a Pfizer employee agreed on the spot to purchase a 16th-floor condo with views of Boston Harbor for \$4.85 million, she said. Two hours later, a Moderna executive honed in on the same unit. When she remarked on the coincidence, Ms. Angelini said, "He just looked at me, completely serious and said, 'I want the same home, but I need to be one floor higher than Pfizer.'" He reserved the option to buy a 17th-floor unit for \$4.95 million that day, she said. Ms. Angelini's buyer is just one in a flurry of Moderna employees who have descended on the Boston-area real-estate market since the company's blockbuster Covid vaccine helped drive the company to its first profitable year in 2021, more than a decade after its founding in 2010.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-modernas-covid-vaccine-boosted-bostons-real-estate-market-11658404871>

Biden Contracts Covid as Pandemic Shows Its Staying Power

President Joe Biden tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday, finally contracting the virus whose control and ultimate defeat he had made a centerpiece of his campaign for the White House. Biden's illness, coming after a five-day trip to the Middle East during which he made few efforts to avoid infection, highlights the endurance of a pandemic that has killed millions of people worldwide and upturned the global economy. Biden, 79, is experiencing mild symptoms and has begun taking Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid treatment for the disease, White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain said in a memo to staff obtained by Bloomberg. He will isolate at the White House while continuing his duties via phone and Zoom until he tests negative.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-21/biden-is-positive-for-covid-has-mild-symptoms-white-house-says>

Australia battles fresh Omicron outbreak as COVID deaths rise

Australia reported one of its highest daily death tolls from the novel coronavirus on Thursday while hospital admissions hovered near record levels, as authorities struggle to get ahead of highly contagious Omicron variants. The BA.4/5 variants are good at evading immune protection from vaccination or prior infection and have been driving a surge of new infections globally. Australia is reporting the highest daily numbers since the first Omicron wave earlier this year, with 89 deaths from the coronavirus on Thursday and 90 on Wednesday. Just over 55,600 new cases were recorded on Thursday, the highest since May 18.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/australia-battles-fresh-omicron-outbreak-covid-deaths->

[rise-2022-07-21/](#)

Tokyo hits pandemic record on rise of new Covid-19 subvariants

The numbers show a resurgence has taken hold in the Japanese capital ahead of the summer holidays, when travel and activity levels typically soar. Rising cases are forcing leaders to reconsider what steps might be needed to contain the outbreak - may add pressure to slow the pace of reopening to tourists

https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/3186100/coronavirus-tokyo-hits-pandemic-record-rise-new-covid-19?module=feature_package_2_2&pgtype=homepage

Exit Strategies

China Perspective Podcast: Is China back to square one in fight against Covid?

The Straits Times' China bureau chief Tan Dawn Wei chats with Money FM 89.3's Elliott Danker. They discuss the Covid-19 situation in China, with case numbers increasing once again. Also, highlights from Chinese Premier Xi Jinping visit to Xinjiang last week and the possibility of China stumbling into its own mortgage crisis.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/china-perspective-podcast-is-china-back-to-square-one-with-their-fight-against-covid>

Tokyo Covid-19 cases top 30000 for 1st time, Japan urges high vigilance

Japan's top government spokesman on Thursday (July 21) called for the highest vigilance against Covid-19 infections as the nation's capital, Tokyo, reported 31,878 cases of daily infections, surpassing the 30,000 mark for the first time. "Nationwide, new infections have reached the highest level ever," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told a regular news conference. "We need to keep a close eye on the infection situation going forward, including the issue of access to medical services, with the highest vigilance." In response to the surge of infection cases, the Tokyo metropolitan government on Thursday raised the alert level for the medical system to the most serious on its four-level scale.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/tokyo-covid-19-cases-top-30000-for-1st-time-japan-urges-high-vigilance>

China's top Covid official denies authorities are easing controls

Some moves by Beijing in recent weeks - including shorter quarantine requirements for inbound travellers and allowing more international flights - have raised hopes that the country will move away from its zero-Covid approach. But Vice-Premier Sun Chunlan said: "The latest Covid-19 control playbook is not about relaxing rules, but about precision, which requires greater efforts to grasp prevention and close loopholes." Speaking on a visit to Hebei province earlier this week, she warned officials they need to act swiftly to stop outbreaks spreading in the run up to the Communist Party congress, the country's main political event of the year.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2350986/chinas-top-covid-official-denies-authorities-are-easing-controls>

Ontario to open pediatric COVID-19 vaccine bookings starting July 28

Ontario parents will be able to book COVID-19 vaccinations for infants and preschoolers starting next Thursday. Health Minister Sylvia Jones said the lower-dose Moderna shot for children aged six months to under five will give young family members protection against COVID-19. "Getting vaccinated remains the best defence against COVID-19," she said in a written statement. "I encourage parents with questions to reach out to their health care provider, the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre or the SickKids COVID-19 Vaccine Consult Service to make an informed choice for their family."

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ontario-to-open-pediatric-covid-19-vaccine-bookings-starting-july-28/>

COVID-19 vaccine bookings for children under five opening in Ontario next week

Just a week ago, Health Canada approved Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine for infants and preschoolers, marking the first vaccine approval for the age group in the country. The child-sized vaccine dose is one-quarter the size of the adult quantity. Over the next several days, pediatric vaccines will be distributed across the province and will be available through public health unit clinics, as well as participating pediatricians, primary care providers and pharmacies.

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/covid-19-vaccine-bookings-for-children-under-five-opening-in-ontario-next-week-1.5996665>

Partisan Exits

China investors call it quits as Xi, 'zero COVID' sap confidence

Once a regular investor in Chinese tech companies, Lian now views China as an increasingly risky bet as the country's autocratic turn under Xi Jinping and ongoing "zero COVID" lockdowns cast a cloud over the economy. Overseas investors shed more than \$150bn in China-based yuan-denominated assets in the first quarter of this year, the largest decline on record. Chinese bonds alone saw a \$61bn sell-off between February and May. Roughly \$300bn could exit the country this year, more than double last year's outflow of \$129bn, according to forecasts by the Washington-based Institute of International Finance

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/7/21/china-investors-call-it-quits-as-xi-zero-covid-rattle-markets>

President Biden Tests Positive for Covid-19

President Biden, the oldest president in U.S. history, tested positive on Thursday for Covid-19, as new variants keep case numbers high after 2½ years of pandemic disruptions. The White House said Thursday the president, 79 years old, has mild symptoms and has begun taking the antiviral drug Paxlovid. He plans to isolate at the White House residence and continue to carry out his duties during that time. Dr. Kevin O'Connor, Mr. Biden's physician, wrote in a letter released by the White House that the president was experiencing a runny nose and fatigue "with an occasional dry cough," which began Wednesday evening.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/president-biden-tests-positive-for-covid-19-11658413867>

Biden Tests Positive: We've Come a Long Way Since Trump's Covid

Biden's treatment has been a much more straightforward affair. He's isolating while continuing to work from the White House and taking Pfizer Inc.'s antiviral pill Paxlovid, a standard treatment for higher-risk patients. His wife said he was doing fine. The different therapies reflect the evolving course of the virus and medical countermeasures against it. Back when Trump got sick there were no vaccines or FDA-authorized pills against the coronavirus. Earlier versions spreading at the time were associated with higher rates of severe complications. "Trump was unvaccinated, and that was in the pre-vaccine era," says infectious disease specialist Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-21/biden-s-covid-diagnosis-we-ve-come-a-long-way-since-trump-s>

COVID puts a stop to Froome's encouraging Tour de France

Four-time champion Chris Froome's encouraging Tour de France came to a frustrating halt on Thursday when the Briton pulled out of the race after contracting COVID-19. The Israel Premier Tech rider took third place on stage 12 atop L'Alpe d'Huez, which was his best performance since a career-threatening crash three years ago. "A test has revealed that I have contracted COVID so I am not going to be taking the start today," Froome said in a video on Twitter just as stage 18 was beginning.

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/froome-pulls-out-tour-de-france-due-covid-2022-07-21/>

Public inquiry into UK Covid-19 response opens

Ministers will have a year to prepare before cross-examination at the UK's Covid-19 public inquiry,

its chair, Heather Hallett, announced, as she opened what is likely be one of the broadest statutory investigations in the country's history. The first cross-examinations of the government response to the pandemic, including decisions on lockdowns, maintaining public confidence and handling of scientific advice, will begin in summer 2023, three and a half years after the arrival of coronavirus, which has claimed more than 200,000 lives in the UK. Hearings on the UK's preparedness will start in late spring 2023, as Lady Hallett said she wanted to move as "speedily as possible so lessons are learned before another pandemic strikes". Boris Johnson had been repeatedly criticised by campaigners for the bereaved and Labour for delaying the launch of the inquiry. Hallett said it would scrutinise the "performance and effectiveness" of central government decision-making and its messaging - topics likely to expose current and former ministers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/21/public-inquiry-into-uk-covid-19-response-opens?amp;amp;amp>

Californian sentenced for \$27M phony COVID aid attempt

A Southern California man who tried to obtain \$27 million in unemployment benefits by falsely claiming his business was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic was sentenced Tuesday to more than 11 years in federal prison. Robert Benlevi, 53, of the Encino area of Los Angeles received a 135-month sentence following his March conviction for bank fraud, money laundering and making false statements to a financial institution, the U.S. Department of Justice said in a statement. In 2020, Benlevi submitted 27 applications for forgivable loans under the Paycheck Protection Program, prosecutors said.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-california-los-angeles-ecf2c5897604fd18e1caabb0d8ac9121>

Scientific Viewpoint

Antigen tests show more than 20,000 new Covid infections per day

The country registered 23 more Covid-19 fatalities and 2,607 new cases admitted to hospital during the previous 24 hours, the Public Health Ministry announced on Thursday morning, but government data showed an average of more than 20,000 positive antigen tests over the past week.

<https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/antigen-tests-show-more-than-20000-new-covid-infections-per-day/ar-AAZOgs1>

COVID-19 Vaccine Linked to Short-Term Changes in Menstrual Cycle Length, Study Suggests

A new study shows that women may experience short-term changes in their menstrual cycles after COVID-19 vaccination. The researchers found that these changes were associated with all COVID-19 vaccine types.

<https://www.prevention.com/health/health-conditions/a40531124/covid-19-vaccine-linked-to-short-term-changes-in-menstrual-cycle-length-study-suggests/>

CDC endorses more traditional Novavax COVID shot for adults

U.S. adults who haven't gotten any COVID-19 shots yet should consider a new option from Novavax - a more traditional kind of vaccine, health officials said Tuesday. Regulators authorized the nation's first so-called protein vaccine against COVID-19 last week, but the final hurdle was a recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "If you have been waiting for a COVID-19 vaccine built on a different technology than those previously available, now is the time to join the millions of Americans who have been vaccinated," Dr. Rochelle Walensky, CDC's director, said in a statement, endorsing an earlier decision from an influential advisory panel.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention-29202c59952b4454079c36ce589eaa7b>

COVID-19 tied to new-onset, short-term heart disease, diabetes

COVID-19 patients are six times more likely than uninfected people to develop cardiovascular

disease (CVD) and nearly twice as likely to receive a new diabetes diagnosis, but the risk begins to recede at 5 weeks and 12 weeks, respectively, concludes a UK study published yesterday in PLOS Medicine.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/07/covid-19-tied-new-onset-short-term-heart-disease-diabetes>

BLOOM Shionogi Covid Pill Xocova Fails to Win Japan Panel Backing

Shionogi & Co.'s experimental Covid-19 treatment Xocova failed to win the backing of health experts in Japan who said there wasn't enough data to show the medicine's efficacy. The panel members didn't recommend that Japan's health ministry authorize emergency use of the therapy as there was a need to continue discussion on it, Hiroshi Kiyota, chairman of the expert committee said in a briefing Wednesday. The health ministry relies on the panel's decision to give the approval.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-20/shionogi-covid-pill-fails-to-win-japan-s-panel-backing?srnd=premiu-uk>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Active COVID-19 cases hit 5-month high in West Virginia

Active cases of COVID-19 hit their highest levels in West Virginia in five months Thursday. There were at least 3,221 ongoing cases in the state, the highest since 3,339 on Feb. 24, according to the Department of Health and Human Resources' COVID-19 dashboard. Active cases statewide had plunged to 263 on April 4 after surpassing 21,000 in January. Confirmed daily cases in West Virginia surpassed 480 on Tuesday and Wednesday after falling below 400 on each of the previous four days.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-west-virginia-00acaab70b952bbeb7efb9fea543a977>

China Covid Latest: Macau Now Targets Filipino Workers as High-Risk Group

Macau ordered any resident who holds a Philippine passport to take a daily nucleic acid test, with officials singling them out as more at risk for infection even though they account for a small number of cases in a Covid-19 wave that's abating. The testing regimen will start Friday, health official Leong Iek Hou said at a briefing Thursday. Government data show Filipinos have accounted for 9.5% of the city's total Covid cases this outbreak, Leong said. "Our epidemiology research found they tend to have more gatherings, like meetings among friends," Leong said. "It's likely that they have more interactions within their own ethnicity, so we need to find out whether there are hidden sources of infections among them via frequent testing."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-21/macau-s-covid-zero-plan-now-targets-city-s-filipino-workers>

Rise in Covid-19 hospital patients in England levels off

The latest rise in the number of hospital patients in England testing positive for Covid-19 looks to have come to a halt, with figures levelling off slightly below the previous peak. A total of 13,375 people with coronavirus were in hospital as of 8am on July 21, down 3% on the previous week. It is the second day in a row the total has shown a week-on-week fall. The rate of increase has been slowing steadily since the start of July, after rising as high as 39%. The figures suggest the impact of the current wave of Covid-19 may be starting to ease – and that patient levels will not reach the sort of levels seen during the surge in infections earlier this year.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/rise-in-covid-19-hospital-patients-in-england-levels-off/ar-AAZPhEM>

Mask and sanitiser plea as Covid-19 cases rise in Walsall

People living in Walsall in the West Midlands are being urged to wear masks and use sanitiser due to a rise in Covid cases. Latest figures show there were 608 positive cases recorded in the seven days up to 10 July, a 4.6 per cent increase on the previous week. The current rate in the town is 221 per 100,000 population, lower than the national rate of 309.4. People must do all they can to protect themselves, public health bosses said. The total number of cases in the town is 96,296. Nearly 3.5

million people, or one in 18, has the virus - up from 2.7m, or one in 25, the week before. "We continue to see a weekly increase in the number of positive cases in Walsall," Stephen Gunther, Walsall's Director of Public Health said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-62240396>

BA.5 is causing more Covid-19 reinfections, data suggests, but they don't appear to be more frequent

It's not your imagination: As the rapidly spreading BA.5 coronavirus subvariant causes a surge in infections across the United States, more people are catching Covid-19 for the second or third time. But on average, these reinfections do not seem to be happening more rapidly, according to a new analysis from the gene sequencing company Helix. BA.5, another offshoot of the Omicron variant, is now causing about 80% of new Covid-19 infections in the United States, according to the latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Helix, which sequences Covid-19 tests to monitor variants, recently plumbed its data to find out how many times the same person tested positive for Covid-19 and whether there are more reinfections now compared to earlier waves.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/07/21/health/ba-5-more-reinfections/index.html>

Biden tests positive for the coronavirus.

President Biden tested positive on Thursday for the coronavirus, raising health concerns for the 79-year-old president and underscoring how the virus remains a persistent, if muted, threat in a country trying to put the pandemic in the past. Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, said in a statement that Mr. Biden had "tested positive for Covid-19. He is fully vaccinated and twice boosted and experiencing very mild symptoms." The president will "continue to carry out all of his duties fully" during this time, she said. Dr. Kevin O'Connor, the president's physician, said in a letter released by the White House Thursday morning that Mr. Biden felt fatigued, had a runny nose and an occasional dry cough and that his symptoms began on Wednesday evening.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/21/us/politics/biden-covid-positive.html>

Australia battles fresh Omicron outbreak as COVID deaths rise

Australia reported one of its highest daily death tolls from the novel coronavirus on Thursday while hospital admissions hovered near record levels, as authorities struggle to get ahead of highly contagious Omicron variants. The BA.4/5 variants are good at evading immune protection from vaccination or prior infection and have been driving a surge of new infections globally. Australia is reporting the highest daily numbers since the first Omicron wave earlier this year, with 89 deaths from the coronavirus on Thursday and 90 on Wednesday. Just over 55,600 new cases were recorded on Thursday, the highest since May 18. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said state leaders and federal health officials have not recommended making masks mandatory in indoor venues, despite calls by some doctors to do so.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/australia-battles-fresh-omicron-outbreak-042441055.html>

China's Shenzhen vows to 'mobilise all resources' to curb COVID spread

China's southern megacity of Shenzhen vowed to "mobilise all resources" to curb a slowly spreading COVID-19 outbreak, ordering strict implementation of testing and temperature checks, and lockdowns for COVID-affected buildings.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-943-new-covid-cases-july-20-vs-1012-day-earlier-2022-07-21/>

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days.

<https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-west-virginia-00acaab70b952bbeb7efb9fea543a977>

Oregon urges return to mask wearing as hospitals feel strain

Oregon health officials are urging people in 21 counties with high COVID-19 cases — including the three Portland-area counties — to return to mask wearing because the hospital system is again under extreme strain. While COVID-19 hospitalizations are lower than past surges, staff shortages, patients who delayed care and elevated COVID-19 infections have substantially reduced hospital systems' capacity to care for patients, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-oregon-portland-aa2f753777c21ab75a6fb5fdb9943ae3>

Micronesia last of bigger nations to have COVID-19 outbreak

Micronesia has likely become the final nation in the world with a population of more than 100,000 to experience an outbreak of COVID-19. For more than two-and-a-half years, the Pacific archipelago managed to avoid any outbreaks thanks to its geographic isolation and border controls. Those people who flew into the country with the disease didn't spread it because all new arrivals were required to quarantine. But as has been the case in several other Pacific nations this year, those defenses couldn't keep out the more transmissible omicron variant forever.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-new-zealand-micronesia-99151c153e05d9528777c9b832dbd66c>

Global COVID-19 cases plateau, but deaths rise

Global COVID-19 activity stayed high and largely even last week, as deaths rose, the World Health Organization (WHO) said today in its latest weekly update on the pandemic. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) yesterday signed off on its advisory committee's recommendation for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine primary series in those ages 18 years and older.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/07/global-covid-19-cases-plateau-deaths-rise>

New Lockdown

Chinese tennis events for 2022 called off because of Covid-19 restrictions

The Shanghai Masters is one of four 2022 men's tennis tournaments cancelled in China as the country continues its strict Covid-19 restrictions. China hosted the Winter Olympics in February but most other international sporting events in the country have been cancelled or postponed in 2022. The women's tennis tour has no events scheduled in China this year as it seeks a resolution over Peng Shuai. Chinese authorities remain committed to a zero-Covid policy. As a result, men's tennis' governing body the ATP said events in China, typically held in September and October, would be cancelled for a third year. As well as the Shanghai Masters, the Chengdu Open, Zhuhai Championships and China Open will not take place, with six ATP 250 tournaments elsewhere filling the gap in the 2022 calendar.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/tennis/62254326>

ATP cancels 2022 events in China due to COVID restrictions

The Shanghai Masters and three other men's tournaments in China will not be held this year due to COVID-19 restrictions in the country, the ATP Tour said on Thursday. China hosted the Winter Olympics under strict health protocols in February but almost every other international sporting event in the country this year has been cancelled or postponed. ATP Chairman Andrea Gaudenzi told Reuters last month that the prospects of the 2022 China swing were bleak

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/atp-cancels-2022-events-china-due-covid-restrictions-2022-07-21/>