

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

24th Jul 2020

News Highlights

Cinema lovers continue to wait as Hollywood postpones releases

Sequels of 'Avatar' and 'Star Wars,' two of the biggest franchises of Walt Disney Co, have been postponed for a year because of production delays attributed to the ongoing global pandemic. [Disney has also now indefinitely postponed the release of its film 'Mulan,' which was initially set to be released in March and then pushed back to August 21.](#)

Belgium tightens measures amidst spike; France dispatches free masks to needy

[Belgian citizens, who endured lockdown from mid March to early May, will have to wear masks in crowded outdoor public spaces as health authorities again scramble to contain a spike in infections.](#) France also made wearing masks mandatory in closed public spaces from Monday, [with President Macron promising free masks to the poorest.](#)

Steady rise in U.S. coronavirus deaths as cases pass 4 million

[The U.S. recorded more than 1,100 Covid-19 deaths for the fourth day in a row, as total cases passed the 4 million mark, the highest in the world.](#) The southern and western states are hardest hit, currently, but daily deaths are still lesser than the numbers were in April, when more than 2,000 people on average were succumbing to the virus daily.

Britons decry 'confusing' new rules as face masks now compulsory in shops

[A new law in Britain, applicable from today, makes it compulsory for people to wear face masks in shops and supermarkets in England.](#) However, masks will not be required in restaurants, pubs, hairdressers and gyms and while masks are required to enter sandwich shops and takeaways, customers can remove their masks to eat and drink on site. The rules have been criticised by many Brits as being confusing.

Lockdown Exit

One third of UK workers 'reluctant to return' to offices post-lockdown

Employee research from e-days, the absence management company used by companies like ASOS and Monster Energy, has revealed that one third of employees are 'reluctant to return' to offices as lockdown eases in the UK. A survey of UK workers showed that 60% were reluctant or unsure about returning to the office on grounds of safety. Just over a third felt they were ready to go back to their offices.

<https://www.realwire.com/releases/One-third-of-UK-workers-reluctant-to-return-to-offices-post-lockdown>

Russia's Coronavirus Cases Approach 800K Amid Lifted Lockdown

Russia confirmed 5,848 new coronavirus infections Thursday, bringing the country's official number of cases to 795,038. Over the past 24 hours 147 people have died, bringing the total toll to 12,892 — a rate considerably lower than in many other countries hit hard by the pandemic. A total of 8,277

people recovered over the last 24 hours, bringing the overall number of recoveries to 580,330.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/07/23/russias-coronavirus-cases-approach-800k-amid-lifted-lockdown-a69710>

COVID -19: As lockdown eases, Saudi Arabia gets ready to welcome Hajj pilgrims

Saudi Arabia is gearing up for a scaled-down Hajj season amid fears of the new pandemic

<https://gulfnnews.com/photos/news/covid--19-as-lockdown-eases-saudi-arabia-gets-ready-to-welcome-haj-pilgrims-1.1595487757549>

Disney postpones 'Mulan' indefinitely, delays 'Avatar' and 'Star Wars'

Walt Disney Co on Thursday postponed the debut of its movie “Mulan” indefinitely, dealing a new blow to theater operators that were counting on the live-action epic to help attract audiences during a pandemic. “Mulan” was scheduled to reach theaters in March but its release has been postponed several times as many cinemas remain closed. The film had most recently been set to debut on Aug. 21 and theater operators had hoped it would help spark a late-summer rebound for movie-going. Disney also said it had delayed the next film installments from two of its biggest franchises, “Avatar” and “Star Wars,” by one year as the novel coronavirus has disrupted production. The “Avatar” sequel is now set to debut in theaters in December 2022, and the next “Star Wars” movie in December 2023.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-walt-disney/disney-postpones-mulan-indefinitely-delays-avatar-and-star-wars-films-by-a-year-idUKKCN24030B>

U.S. coronavirus deaths top 1,100 for a third day in a row

The United States on Thursday recorded more than 1,100 deaths from COVID-19, marking the third straight day the nation passed that grim milestone as the pandemic escalates in southern and western U.S. states. Fatalities nationwide were recorded at 1,118 on Thursday. Deaths were 1,135 on Wednesday and 1,141 on Tuesday. Even though deaths are rising in the United States for a second week in a row, they remain well below levels seen in April, when 2,000 people a day on average died from the virus. The United States on Thursday also passed a total of more than 4 million coronavirus infections since the first U.S. case was documented in January, according to a Reuters tally, reflecting a nationwide escalation of the pandemic.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/u-coronavirus-cases-pass-four-155615558.html>

New Zealand beat Covid-19 by trusting leaders and following advice - study

The secrets to New Zealand’s success at eliminating coronavirus has been revealed by university researchers, who have found compliance with basic hygiene practices and trust in authorities was at nearly 100%. Researchers at Massey University interviewed more than 1,000 people post-lockdown, to investigate how New Zealanders responded to the pandemic. “We came together as a country, in part because we believed in our political and health experts to deliver and they did,” said Dr Jagadish Thaker, a senior lecturer at the school of communication, journalism & marketing at Massey University. “Simple, clear health messages, communicated with kindness and empathy, resonate with people, even when they are demanding tough changes.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/24/new-zealand-beat-covid-19-by-trusting-leaders-and-following-advice-study>

United Airlines sees weak demand until coronavirus vaccine found

United Airlines Holdings Inc has warned that travel demand will remain suppressed until there is a widely accepted treatment or vaccine against the coronavirus, which plunged the carrier into a deep quarterly loss. Coronavirus infections are surging in the United States, causing some regions to scale back reopening plans and reinstate quarantines in a fresh blow to airlines. United, which is not blocking middle seats, plans to fly about 35 percent of its 2019 summer schedule in the third quarter and is expecting its planes to be about 45 percent full in July. They were about one-third full in the

second quarter.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/united-airlines-sees-weak-demand-coronavirus-vaccine-200722024910671.html>

Coronavirus map: Just 3 states meet criteria to reopen and stay safe

With these metrics, states can gauge if they have repressed the coronavirus while building the capacity to contain future outbreaks should they come. In other words, the benchmarks show how ready states are for the next phase of the fight. So far, most states are not there. As of July 22, just three states — Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York — met four or five of the goals, which demonstrates strong progress. Twenty-two states and Washington, DC, hit two or three of the benchmarks. The other 25 achieved zero or one. (South Dakota and Wyoming didn't report ICU data, but it wouldn't be enough to change their rankings.)

<https://www.vox.com/2020/5/28/21270515/coronavirus-covid-reopen-economy-social-distancing-states-map-data>

Exit Strategies

After spreading covid-19, a huge European abattoir vows reforms

Clemens Tönnies used to be a local hero in eastern Westphalia. One of six children of a butcher from the town of Rheda-Wiedenbrück, he grew Tönnies, the family meat-wholesaling business which he took over after his brother Bernd's death in 1994, into one of the biggest meat-processing companies in the world, with annual sales of €7bn (\$8bn). For almost two decades the bratwurst billionaire was chairman of Schalke 04, a beloved local football team. He built the Tönnies arena, a 3,600-seat stadium for a women's football club, next to his company's headquarters. He donates to the local shooting club, and owns hotels, a gym, a real-estate agency and even a kindergarten in Rheda.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2020/07/25/after-spreading-covid-19-a-huge-european-abattoir-vows-reforms>

South Africa Shuts State Schools Amid Virus Concerns

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that state schools will close for four weeks after labor unions raised concerns that they lacked proper protocols and sufficient protective equipment to keep teachers and pupils safe in the face of a surge in coronavirus cases. He spoke Thursday in a televised address.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2020-07-24/south-africa-shuts-state-schools-amid-virus-concerns-video>

U.K. Plans Biggest Ever Flu Vaccine Program as Covid Buffer

The U.K. announced its biggest ever flu vaccination program for the coming winter as it seeks to protect the National Health Service from a possible second wave of coronavirus. Authorities aim to vaccinate more than 30 million people, almost twice the 15.3 million inoculated in England last season, the Department for Health and Social Care said in a statement on Friday. Free vaccines -- normally available to the over-65s, young schoolchildren, pregnant women and other at-risk groups -- will also be made available to all people over the age of 50. The beefed-up program, together with an additional 3 billion pounds (\$3.8 billion) of funding for hospitals recently announced by Health Secretary Matt Hancock, is designed to help hospitals weather an expected surge of coronavirus cases when temperatures drop. Typically, hospitals are under the most strain in winter as seasonal flu spreads.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-23/u-k-plans-biggest-ever-flu-vaccine-program-as-covid-buffer>

UK spends £100m on new Covid-19 vaccine facility

The UK government has spent £100m on a manufacturing facility in Essex to scale up production of a Covid-19 vaccine, as a growing number of pharmaceutical companies report promising results in early-stage trials. The money will be used to accelerate production of a successful Covid-19 vaccine

<https://www.ft.com/content/0d724afc-5f7a-48ce-9495-196d984651fd>

Covid-19 Test Shortages Prompt Health Authorities to Narrow Access

Some health authorities in the U.S. have started narrowing recommendations for who should undergo coronavirus testing due to short supplies of testing materials and delays getting results. Health departments such as California's are once again trying to focus testing on hospitalized patients, people with Covid-19-like symptoms, close contacts and those at high risk, as surging cases and demand outpace test capacity. Some public-health authorities and doctors are now advising people who worry they might have been exposed on a plane or at a restaurant, for instance, or are simply curious to stay home as much as possible and seek testing if symptoms do develop.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-test-shortages-prompt-health-authorities-to-narrow-access-11595515592>

France dispatches free Covid-19 face masks to 7 million amid hardship concerns

Face masks are mandatory in France as of Monday in closed public spaces with offenders subject to a €135 fine. And while the fact of donning a mask to stymie the spread of coronavirus isn't the political issue in France that it has become in some countries, the new and sudden financial burden of stocking up on the basic protective equipment has come up for debate. As a result, 40 million masks are in the mail for seven million whom the state considers most in need. Consumer groups, anti-poverty associations and left-wing political parties alike sounded the alarm this week over the high cost of masking up in France as closed public spaces like shops became inaccessible to anyone unequipped. Emmanuel Macron addressed the matter on Tuesday, pledging the state would come to the aid of the poorest, but stopping short of footing the bill for everybody. "It is not up to the State — and the French taxpayer — to pay for masks... for everyone, all the time," the French president told TF1 on Tuesday. "So I think it should remain a social-aid policy," he added.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/france-dispatches-free-covid-19-130746122.html>

Test and trace fails to contact more than 30000 potential Covid-19 carriers - follow live

Face masks will have to be worn in shops and supermarkets in England from Friday under new government rules which have been criticised as "confusing". The Department of Health and Social Care confirmed face coverings will be required in shops and takeaways, such as Pret A Manger, if people intend to take their food and coffee away - however customers will be allowed to remove them if sitting down to consume food or drink bought on site. Meanwhile Luton and Blackburn with Darwen were added to Public Health England's coronavirus watchlist as "areas of intervention" due to high infection rates. It means further lockdown-easing measures such as the reopening of sports centres has been postponed in both areas.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-uk-news-live-vaccine-who-update-today-cases-a9633576.html>

Data collection in new Covid-19 app 'troubling'

Ireland's new Covid-19 contact tracing app has been dealt a blow after researchers criticised its "intrusive data collection", describing it as "troubling". Privacy experts have raised concerns over the app, which has been downloaded more than 1.4 million times since it was launched a number of weeks ago. Now, researchers at Trinity College Dublin have said that user privacy is not adequately protected. They examined the data transmitted to backend servers by contact tracing apps deployed by health authorities in a number of countries, including Ireland. Their report described the Google Play Services component of these apps as "extremely troubling from a privacy viewpoint"

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/data-collection-in-new-covid-19-app-troubling-39391485.html>

Coronavirus Northern Ireland: Eight new cases of Covid-19 as Executive meets to discuss face coverings

Swimming pools, spas, bowling alleys and community centres in Northern Ireland are among the venues that will be allowed reopen from Friday in further moves agreed by ministers to ease

lockdown. It comes as the Stormont Executive agreed it will give the Health Minister Robin Swann legal powers to make wearing face masks mandatory from August 20 if the level of compliance remains low after a publicity campaign. The number of people permitted to gather in a private home will also rise to 10, with the group allowed to consist of four different households. Overnight stays in other households will also be permitted. Spectators will also be allowed to attend outdoor sporting venues "where the operator can control access and ensure adherence to social distancing".

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-northern-ireland-eight-new-cases-of-covid-19-as-executive-meets-to-discuss-face-coverings-39390963.html>

Paris Sewage Reveals COVID Still Not Flushed Away

Samples of wastewater from the Paris sewage system have been showing traces of COVID-19 again since the end of June, having vanished when France imposed a lockdown, according to the head of the laboratory leading the research. Infection rates in France are subsiding, but officials this week made the wearing of masks in enclosed public spaces compulsory after a series of localised flare-ups. To date COVID-19 has killed over 30,000 people in France. Early studies by scientists in The Netherlands, France, Australia and elsewhere suggest sewage sampling for signs of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus could help estimate the number of infections in a geographic area, without having to test every person. Laurent Moulin, who heads the research laboratory run by public water utility company Eau de Paris, cautioned the findings on their own did not mean a resurgence of the virus in the population since France eased its lockdown restrictions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/07/23/world/europe/23reuters-health-coronavirus-france-water.html>

6 months pass since Wuhan lockdown, original epicenter of COVID-19

Thursday marked 6 months since a drastic lockdown was imposed in Wuhan, the original epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, with the number of new symptomatic patients remaining at zero for more than 2 months in the central Chinese city. After the 76-day lockdown was lifted on April 8, municipal authorities carried out virus tests for almost all residents at a cost of about 900 million yuan (\$128.6 million) in the city with a population of some 11 million. As citizens in Wuhan have been already allowed to travel to other regions in China, the local government has been stepping up efforts to revitalize the economy in the capital of Hubei province, known as a business and transportation hub in the region.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/07/23/20/6-months-pass-since-wuhan-lockdown-original-epicenter-of-covid-19>

French President Macron discusses COVID-19 situation with Australian PM

French President Emmanuel Macron discussed the COVID-19 pandemic situation during a phone briefing on Thursday with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Macron's office said, as leaders around the world prepare for a possible new wave of the virus. "The President of the Republic and the Prime Minister of Australia shared their analyses on the evolution of the COVID-19 epidemic in the world and on measures being taken to prevent its resurgence," said a statement from the French Presidency. Australia's second most populous state of Victoria reported on Thursday five deaths from COVID-19 in the last 24 hours and the third-highest daily rise in coronavirus cases.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-australia/french-president-macron-discusses-covid-19-situation-with-australian-pm-idUKKCN24O1ST>

Welcome back, but wear a mask: French resort tells tourists amid Covid-19 crisis

In total, France has recorded over 30,000 deaths linked to COVID-19. Months of strict lockdown have resulted in a big drop in the numbers of people getting infected, and the numbers in hospital with the virus.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/travel/welcome-back-but-wear-a-mask-french-resort-tells-tourists-amid-covid-19-crisis/story-jsSebnLAAVcYI6YgutnviL.html>

Partisan Exits

Florida reports record one-day increase in COVID-19 deaths

Florida reported a record one-day increase in deaths from COVID-19 on Thursday with 173 lives lost, according to the state health department. Florida also reported that cases rose by 10,249, bringing its total cases to nearly 390,000. Total deaths rose to 5,632. Florida has the third-largest outbreak in the nation, behind only California and New York.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-florida/florida-reports-record-one-day-increase-in-covid-19-deaths-idUKKCN240240>

The U.S. Is on the Verge of Lockdown 2.0

The key to restarting the recovery, therefore, is to suppress the virus. For cities and states where the epidemic has subsided, the best tools for preventing new outbreaks are universal mask usage, plentiful testing, prompt contact tracing and isolation of the infected. But President Donald Trump, apparently subscribing to the theory that ignoring the virus will make it go away, is attempting to block funding for testing and tracing. And for states such as Texas, Florida and Arizona that have been overwhelmed with new infections, this approach -- although still useful -- won't be enough.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2020-07-22/u-s-heads-into-second-round-of-lockdowns-as-coronavirus-surgeries>

UK could learn from Scottish response to Covid-19, Sturgeon suggests

The UK could learn lessons from Scotland's more cautious response to Covid-19, Nicola Sturgeon has said. The Scottish First Minister spoke as different approaches to the pandemic north and south of the border appeared to highlight a growing divide between Scotland and England. As Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited Scotland, Ms Sturgeon said: "Do I think there are things the UK Government could learn from Scotland? Yes I do." She added: "An approach that is very much driven by elimination I think is one thing they could learn.

<https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/national/18602893.uk-learn-scottish-response-covid-19-sturgeon-suggests/>

Israel: Anger over Netanyahu's virus response, corruption charges

Public anger has been compounded by corruption allegations against the long-serving prime minister, who went on trial in May for bribery, fraud and breach of trust - charges he denies. Demonstrations outside the prime minister's official residence have become a weekly occurrence, with police increasingly taking harsher measures against demonstrators. Last month, they arrested a retired Israeli air force general, setting off an uproar. The protests have since drawn a younger crowd and have grown more defiant. In the past week, thousands of Israelis have participated in some of the largest anti-government demonstrations in nearly 10 years.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/israel-anger-netanyahu-virus-response-corruption-charges-200722091639610.html>

Why Armed Groups in Latin America Are Enforcing COVID-19 Lockdowns

In spring, as Colombia settled into a nationwide COVID-19 lockdown, some Colombians received troubling new guidelines—and not from the government. In remote parts of 11 of the country's 32 states, armed groups began enforcing their own quarantine measures, according to a report published July 15 by Human Rights Watch. Through pamphlets and WhatsApp messages, the groups laid out curfews, restrictions on movement, categories of essential work, and more. These restrictions were sometimes stricter than government rules, and punishments for breaking them far more serious. One pamphlet seen by HRW, released in early April by Marxist guerrillas the National Liberation Army (ELN) in the northern Bolívar department, warned that fighters would be "forced to kill people in order to preserve lives" because residents had not "respected the orders to prevent Covid-19."

<https://time.com/5870054/coronavirus-latin-america-armed-groups/>

Covid-19 unmask weaknesses of English public health agency

Matt Hancock is ready to reform Public Health England as criticism of its response to the coronavirus crisis mounts. Interviews with 15 people familiar with the workings of PHE reveal an array of issues: impulse to centralise, a wariness of engaging with industry, impact of a decade of fiscal austerity, agency's budget cut 40% since its inception

<https://www.ft.com/content/e149101a-1c93-4b0a-bc12-14ca8bf11b0e>

Continued Lockdown

Coronavirus: Domestic abuse helpline sees lockdown surge

More than 40,000 calls and contacts were made to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline during the first three months of lockdown, most by women seeking help, new figures show. In June, calls and contacts were nearly 80% higher than usual, says the charity Refuge, which runs the helpline. And as restrictions ease, there is a surge in women seeking refuge places to escape their abusers, the charity says. The government says it prioritised help for domestic-abuse victims in lockdown.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53498675>

Women did majority of childcare in UK lockdown, study finds

Women did significantly more in terms of childcare during lockdown compared to men, new figures reveal. According to a study from the Office for National Statistics, women in households with children under 18 carried out an average of more than three hours a day of childcare compared to just two hours for men. The research also found that one in three women home-schooling their children in lockdown said their mental health had suffered as a result.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/women/childcare-lockdown-women-bulk-ons-report-a9633551.html>

Ukraine extends lockdown until Aug. 31

Ukraine's government on Wednesday extended a nationwide lockdown to contain the coronavirus pandemic until Aug. 31, but it will allow separate regions to ease the regime if warranted. Ukraine imposed strict restrictions in March and partially eased them in May to help an economic recovery. The government extends the lockdown monthly, requiring people to wear masks and adhere to strict norms in restaurants and public places. But there have been worryingly high levels of new infections in recent weeks, which authorities attribute to a reluctance to wear masks and observe social distancing.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-ukraine-lockdown/ukraine-extends-lockdown-until-aug-31-idUKL5N2ET32V>

Turkish parliament gives Erdogan authority to extend layoff ban for a year

Turkey's parliament on Thursday approved a law allowing President Tayyip Erdogan to extend a layoff ban imposed to combat the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic until July 2021. The layoff ban was first imposed in April for three months. With the new law, Erdogan will be allowed to extend the ban by three months each time until June 30, 2021.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-economy-unemployment/turkish-parliament-gives-erdogan-authority-to-extend-layoff-ban-for-a-year-idUSKCN24032X>

Scientific Viewpoint

Covid-19 threatens access to abortions and contraceptives, experts warn

Rates of unplanned pregnancies have fallen around the world, according to new data published by health research organisation the Guttmacher Institute and the UN Human Reproduction Programme (HRP) on Wednesday. Global rates of unintended pregnancies have fallen from 79 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 49 in 1990 to 64 in 2019, thanks in part to a concerted effort to increase access to contraceptives, but there are concerns that decades of progress in reducing the numbers risk being undone by Covid-19, as lockdown restrictions hamper health services. Zara Ahmed, a senior policy

manager at Gutmacher, warned : "Covid-19 could reverse those declines due to challenges with the supply chain, diversion of providers to the response and lack of access to health facilities during lockdown."

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/23/covid-19-threatens-access-to-abortions-and-contraceptives-experts-warn>

Covid-19 cases in Britain are still plateauing, data shows

King's College London 's COVID Symptom Tracker app monitors cases in the UK. Experts said the number of people being infected has hardly changing for weeks. Cases may be increasing in the North, but it's too early to say for definite Data also shows there are an estimated 28,048 people currently symptomatic

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8552159/Covid-19-cases-Britain-plateauing-data-shows.html>

Why do asymptomatic COVID-19 cases even happen?

Health officials are concerned about why some people who test positive for the coronavirus never feel sick. Could it be the luck of genetics? The blessings of youth? Or something else?

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/science-and-technology/2020/07/why-do-asymptomatic-covid-19-cases-even-happen>

Key Immune System Genes Identified to Explain High COVID Deaths and Spread in Northern Italy Versus Fewer Cases and Deaths in the South

"The identification of HLA alleles that are permissive or protective towards coronavirus infection could inform priorities in disease management and future vaccination campaigns in an easy, cost-effective manner," says Prof. Luciano Mutti, MD, from the Sbarro Institute in Philadelphia, co-first author of the study. "Despite the intrinsic limits of the ecological approaches, such types of studies have the advantage of considering a large number of cases that are readily available through public datasets. Indeed, geographical studies are often the first to identify risk factors for a variety of diseases. Case-control studies will be then necessary to confirm these findings in Covid-19 patient cohorts," says Giovanni Baglio, coauthor of the study, epidemiologist from the Ministry of Health. "We hope that this will be feasible in a reasonable timeframe because the research setting in Italy still presents many hurdles," concludes Giordano.

<https://www.newswise.com/articles/key-immune-system-genes-identified-to-explain-high-covid-deaths-and-spread-in-northern-italy-versus-fewer-cases-and-deaths-in-the-south>

'We're out of the storm': Health minister says Italy is past the worst of the Covid-19 crisis

Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said Italy is now past the worst of the crisis, but stressed that caution is still needed. "I believe Italy has made it," Speranza said in a speech on Tuesday to the Coldiretti agricultural group's general assembly. "I'm not thinking of the government but of the country as a whole." "We were the first to be hit in the world after China, we didn't have an instruction manual. We had to learn about the virus," he added. Italy was the first European country to be hit by the Covid-19 outbreak, which has now claimed more than 35,000 lives in Italy according to government figures. "We're out of the storm," the minister added, "even if not yet in a safe port." "I think we need to be honest with each other: these have been the most difficult months in the history of the country since the Second World War".

<https://www.thelocal.it/20200723/were-out-of-the-storm-health-minister-says-italy-is-past-the-worst-of-the-crisis>

Russia's Coronavirus Cases Approach 800K Amid Lifted Lockdown

Russia confirmed 5,848 new coronavirus infections Thursday, bringing the country's official number of cases to 795,038. Over the past 24 hours 147 people have died, bringing the total toll to 12,892 — a rate considerably lower than in many other countries hit hard by the pandemic. A total of 8,277 people recovered over the last 24 hours, bringing the overall number of recoveries to 580,330.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/07/23/russias-coronavirus-cases-approach-800k-amid-lifted-lockdown-a6971>

Can Widespread Mask Use Prevent Lockdowns Where The Virus Is Surging? : Shots - Health News

Now prominent scientists are proposing a radical — and hopeful — possibility: Even as coronavirus cases spiral upward across the United States to levels surpassing this spring's surge, these experts argue that if Americans start wearing masks en masse, the U.S. may yet avoid a return to lockdown measures. "Look, we've never tried to use masks as our primary strategy when outbreaks are this bad," says Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute. "But I do believe that if we want to avoid a complete lockdown, we've got to at least give it a shot."

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/07/23/894425483/can-masks-save-us-from-more-lockdowns-heres-what-the-science-says>

Study finds lockdown having biggest impact on three specific patient groups

New research has found that women, young people, and those living with young children have experienced the greatest rise in mental distress.

<https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/clinical/study-finds-lockdown-having-biggest-impact-on-three>

Flu deaths drop in Australia as coronavirus restrictions save hundreds of lives

That compares to 430 deaths in the same period for 2019. Ian Barr, deputy director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza, said it was "great news" as influenza was very hard to combat. "I think if we could get this sort of effect every year, we'd be very happy," Professor Barr said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-23/coronavirus-restrictions-cause-flu-cases-to-drop-australia/12480190>

Victoria lockdown: State's coronavirus restrictions aren't harsh enough

Lockdown restrictions in Victoria have now been in place for 14 days. By this point, we should be starting to see the benefits of lockdown reflected in the state's day-on-day cases. But Victoria has just recorded another 403 coronavirus cases, and yesterday recorded Australia's highest-ever 24-hour increase with 484 cases. Victoria University coronavirus researchers Vasso Apostolopoulos, Maja Husaric and Maximilian de Courten say there are several reasons the case numbers haven't tapered off, including lax restrictions, people not taking the pandemic seriously, and the nature of the virus itself.

<https://www.news.com.au/national/victoria/news/coronavirus-victorias-lockdown-isnt-harsh-enough-experts-say/news-story/46944ecaccaffafe81499c728227ad87>

Victoria should have had full lockdown a week ago - Australian Medical Association president

Victoria should have gone into a New Zealand-style lockdown at least a week ago, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) President Professor Julian Rait says. Public health messages are not getting through to people in the state, and stricter messages need to be adopted before the virus gets out of control, Rait told Checkpoint. He wants masks to be compulsory throughout the state and construction sites and workplaces shut down except for essential workers.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/australia/300064702/victoria-should-have-had-full-lockdown-a-week-ago--australian-medical-association-president>

Armed with social media, Zimbabwean youth fight coronavirus 'infodemic'

To stem the spread of the disease, Zimbabwean youth working with development charity Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) have taken to Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook and radio to comb through online comments, identify and correct COVID-19 misinformation. The spread of coronavirus misinformation has been a global issue, with the World Health Organization describing it as an "infodemic". While tech giants WhatsApp and Facebook have teamed up with African governments

to tackle fake news through interactive bots, adverts and push notifications, VSO volunteers are leading the battle within their communities.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-zimbabwe-socialmed/armed-with-social-media-zimbabwean-youth-fight-coronavirus-infodemic-idUSKCN2400FD>

First COVID-19, now bugs: US states brace for illness outbreaks

"It's been a rough year," said David Garabedian, her father. "With any brain injury, it's hard to tell. The damage is there. How she works through it is anyone's guess." As the coronavirus pandemic subsides for now in the hard-hit northeast United States, public health officials in the region are warning about another potentially bad summer for EEE and other insect-borne illnesses. EEE saw an unexpected resurgence last summer across 10 states: Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Tennessee. There were 38 human cases and 15 deaths from the virus, with many of the cases in Massachusetts and Michigan, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most years, the country sees just half a dozen cases of the virus in humans, the agency said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/covid-19-bugs-states-brace-illness-outbreaks-200720153541896.html>

A coronavirus vaccine will NOT be available this year, World Health Organization warns in blow to hopes of a jab getting the pandemic under control

Mike Ryan, head of WHO's emergencies programme, said the first use of a Covid-19 vaccine cannot be expected until early 2021.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8551985/A-coronavirus-vaccine-NOT-available-year-World-Health-Organization-warns.html>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Chinese city of 6million imposes emergency quarantine measures after recording three COVID-19 cases

Dalian in north-eastern China recorded three new COVID-19 cases in two days. Officials urged its 6million residents to not leave the city unless for emergency. Authorities also ordered 190,000 people to receive testing for coronavirus. Comes as China is grappled with local outbreaks in Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8552405/Chinese-city-6million-imposes-emergency-quarantine-measures-recording-three-COVID-19-cases.html>

Victoria's aged care system on verge of collapse amid Covid-19 surge, doctors warn

Doctors are warning the aged care system in Victoria is on the verge of collapse – a situation that will be worsened by the federal government's impending announcement that the state's part-time and casual aged care workers will be banned from working across multiple facilities to help contain the spread of Covid-19 through the sector. The president of the Victorian branch of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Julian Rait, said he had received numerous messages from health workers in aged care warning that with so many aged care workers furloughed due to virus exposure and with cooks, cleaners, health and administration staff fearful of going to work, there would soon not be enough staff to care for residents.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jul/23/victorias-aged-care-system-on-verge-of-collapse-amid-covid-19-surge-doctors-warn>

France's neighbour, Belgium, tightens COVID-19 measures as infections spike

Belgium is to tighten measures to contain the spread of Covid-19 after a spike in infections, introducing compulsory face masks in crowded outdoor public spaces. Brussels imposed a lockdown on 18 March in an attempt to contain the coronavirus epidemic, which has claimed 9,808 lives to date. With a population of just 11.5 million, Belgium is one of the nations per capita that has been

hardest hit by the virus, although it has said that was partly due to its transparency . The government eased the lockdown in early May, and it had planned to loosen restrictions further on Thursday. But a series of localised outbreaks and a 91 percent spike in nationwide infections last week forced the government to think again. "The latest figures should not throw us into panic but have to be taken seriously," Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes told a news conference on Thursday

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/france-neighbour-belgium-tightens-covid-153006915.html>

Coronavirus UK: Areas in England where infections are rising

Areas in the north and midlands have seen the biggest weekly jump in the number of coronavirus cases, according to fresh data which shows where the infection rate is rising and falling. The figures, for the seven days to July 19, are based on tests carried out in laboratories (pillar one of the government's testing programme) and in the wider community (pillar two). The rate is expressed as the number of new cases per 100,000 people. Wednesday's update showed that in Blackburn with Darwen, in Lancashire, the rate has jumped from 48.3 cases per 100,000 people to 79.9, with 119 new cases recorded.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/07/23/areas-england-risk-local-lockdown-where-infections-are-rising-13027710/>

Rome could face 2nd lockdown after COVID-19 cases spike

Authorities in the Lazio warned on Wednesday that restrictions to curb the spread of the virus may be reintroduced if cases continued to increase in the region, reports the Metro newspaper.

<https://telanganatoday.com/rome-could-face-2nd-lockdown-after-covid-19-cases-spike>

British tourists in Spain dismiss coronavirus second wave fears despite surge in infections

British holidaymakers basking in the Spanish sun appeared to brush off fears of a second coronavirus wave in the country, with one declaring: "We work in ASDA — we are used to Covid". Spain has seen a rapid rise in coronavirus infections in recent weeks, leading to some lockdown restrictions being reimposed in parts of the country. New cases jumped by nearly 4,600 on Monday. The spike has prompted fears that Spain could soon be taken off the list of places Britons can visit without needing to quarantine for 14 days on their return.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/british-tourists-spain-coronavirus-fears-a4506206.html>

Tourist town in Spain is first to be closed in country due to coronavirus outbreak

Spain has closed off a town banning anybody from leaving or entering due to a coronavirus outbreak. The town of Totana in Murcia, southeastern Spain has been shut after 55 people tested positive. All 32,000 residents have been ordered not to leave the town and people are not allowed to enter. Care homes and health centres will be closed. This is while authorities test all 300 people that were at a bar at the time of the outbreak.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/travel/news/breaking-spain-closes-town-banning-22404276>

Victoria Adds 403 Cases as Australian State Fights Second Wave

Australia's Victoria state recorded 403 new coronavirus cases as it struggles to stem a second wave that has put the city of Melbourne into lockdown. The daily tally announced Thursday followed a record 484 new cases announced the previous day in Victoria. There were five additional fatalities, State Premier Daniel Andrews said at a press conference. The spike in Victoria has forced around 5 million people in Melbourne back into a six-week lockdown. The shutdown of the nation's second-biggest city, which contributes about one-quarter of gross domestic product, could prolong the nation's first recession in almost three decades. Andrews on Thursday announced plans for a A\$300 (\$214) payment to encourage those feeling unwell to get tested and self-isolate.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-23/victoria-adds-403-cases-as-australian-state-fights-second-wave>

Australia sees record number of new coronavirus cases with 501

Most new cases were reported in Victoria despite the lockdown in Melbourne New South Wales is also on 'high alert' because of community spread of the virus Infections previously peaked in March before lockdown restrictions were eased

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8547661/Australia-sees-record-number-new-coronavirus-cases-501.html>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Victoria border could be closed for two years if cases continue to rise

An epidemiologist has warned Victoria could be facing up to two years in isolation from the rest of Australia if it doesn't control the outbreak soon. Victoria could face up to two years in isolation from the rest of the country if it doesn't bring its Covid-19 outbreak under control, one epidemiologist has warned. Speaking to the ABC on Wednesday, Professor Tony Blakely said Australia is facing a "real dilemma" with the current coronavirus situation.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=12350421

Australia's Victoria records third-highest daily rise in COVID-19 cases

Australia's second most populous state of Victoria reported on Thursday five deaths from the coronavirus in the last 24 hours and logged the third-highest daily rise in coronavirus cases. Victoria recorded 403 new cases overnight, Premier Daniel Andrews told a media briefing in Melbourne, a day after posting its biggest one-day spike of 484 cases. Melbourne, the state's largest city, has seen a flare-up in infections in recent weeks, prompting the government to enforce a six-week partial lockdown and make face masks mandatory for its residents or risk a A\$200 (\$142.74) fine.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia-state/australias-victoria-records-third-highest-daily-rise-in-covid-19-cases-idUSKCN24O047>

New Lockdown

French President Macron discusses COVID-19 situation with Australian PM

French President Emmanuel Macron discussed the COVID-19 pandemic situation during a phone briefing on Thursday with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Macron's office said, as leaders around the world prepare for a possible new wave of the virus. "The President of the Republic and the Prime Minister of Australia shared their analyses on the evolution of the COVID-19 epidemic in the world and on measures being taken to prevent its resurgence," said a statement from the French Presidency. Australia's second most populous state of Victoria reported on Thursday five deaths from COVID-19 in the last 24 hours and the third-highest daily rise in coronavirus cases.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-australia/french-president-macron-discusses-covid-19-situation-with-australian-pm-idUKKCN24O1ST>

Australia's Covid-19 border restrictions: where you can travel to and from

After several months of lockdown, Australians everywhere are itching to travel. With international borders closed for the foreseeable future, domestic tourism is becoming an increasingly attractive option. But as Victoria and New South Wales try to contain a second wave of coronavirus cases, different Australian states and territories have imposed varying restrictions on travel. Here's what we know about where you can go and where you can't based on where you're coming from. And beware that those caught breaching border rules could face stiff fines in some states.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jul/23/australias-covid-19-border-restrictions-where-you-can-travel-to-and-from>

If coronavirus spreads despite lockdowns, the economic hit would prove a 'big waste'

The Australian's Economics Editor Adam Creighton says if COVID-19 spreads around the country then the lockdowns, and the economic damage they caused, would be a "big waste." Treasurer Josh Frydenberg announced on Thursday Australia's gross debt is forecast to hit \$851.9 billion with this

year's budget deficit expected to reach \$184.5 billion due to the novel coronavirus. Mr Creighton said he projected the federal debt will go beyond 1 trillion by 2022. "We are seeing further outbreaks around the world now - we're seeing them in countries that have had lockdown, haven't had lockdowns, it's kind of irrelevant," Mr Creighton told Sky News

https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6174255142001

Australia coronavirus cases surge as 'nine in ten ignore isolation rules'

Australia reported 502 new coronavirus infections over a single 24-hour period yesterday — the largest daily number of cases since the pandemic began. The figure was well ahead of the previous single-day record of 469, recorded in March. Australia also reported its highest daily number of coronavirus-related deaths in three months today, with five deaths in the past 24 hours taking the nationwide total to 128. "This demonstrates the growing toll this terrible virus is taking on our community," Jenny Mikakos, the health minister, said. The increase prompted Daniel Andrews, the Victoria premier, to threaten a longer lockdown in Melbourne, Australia's second largest city, which has been hardest hit by the resurgence. The city, which has a population of 4.9 million, is in the throes of a second six-week lockdown aimed at slowing the spread of Covid-19.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/australia-coronavirus-cases-surge-as-nine-in-ten-ignore-isolation-rules-lxpj02djp>

Victoria state premier lambasts Australians for 'still going out while sick' with coronavirus as country suffers worst day of new infections

Victoria's state premier has berated people sick with Covid-19 for "still shopping and going to work" as Australia suffered its worst day for new infections. Daniel Andrews spoke out as new figures showed 90 per cent of recent cases failed to isolate between falling sick and getting tested. Just over half had failed to self-isolate while waiting for the result. "That means people have felt unwell and just gone about their business. They have gone out shopping. They have gone to work. They have been at the height of their infectivity and they have just continued on as usual," he said.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/australians-still-going-out-while-sick-with-virus-a4505521.html>