

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

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Isolation Tips

Beijing, Shanghai Reopenings Speed Up: China Lockdown Tracker

China's worst Covid-19 outbreak is ending, with cases continuing to fall, all major cities loosening restrictions and daily life mostly returning to normal. Infections are trending down nationwide, thanks to the ebbing outbreaks in Shanghai and Beijing. Of China's top 50 cities by economic size, none currently have widespread restrictions in place. Tianjin hasn't reported any local cases for the past 3 days and most public transport has resumed, while Beijing is resuming dine-in services and reopening parks and entertainment venues.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-06/beijing-shanghai-reopenings-speed-up-china-lockdown-tracker>

Hygiene Helpers

Japan to open to tourists after COVID, with masks, insurance and chaperones required

Foreign tourists visiting Japan will be required to wear masks, take out private medical insurance and be chaperoned throughout their stay, the government said on Tuesday, as it plans a gradual opening from two years of COVID-19 restrictions. Only visitors on package tours will be allowed in during the first phase of reopening, from June 10, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) said, adding that travel agency guides accompanying visitors will have to ensure they wear their masks. "Tour guides should frequently remind tour participants of necessary infection prevention measures, including wearing and removing masks, at each stage of the tour," the JTA said in its guidelines.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-open-tourists-after-two-years-only-with-masks-insurance-guides-2022-06-07/>

Long Covid patients face lottery over treatment

Patients with long Covid are facing a postcode lottery across the UK when it comes to getting care, nurses say. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) said treatment varied hugely with some services treating it as a physical condition, but others as psychological. The union also highlighted long waits in parts of England, which has a network of specialist clinics. It warned that patients in Scotland and Wales may be missing out because of a lack of dedicated clinics. But officials there say patients are getting support via core NHS services.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-61711913>

U.S. CDC removes mask recommendation from monkeypox travel notice to avoid confusion

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday it had removed a mask recommendation from its monkeypox travel notice to avoid "confusion" over the disease, which primarily spreads through direct contact. "Late yesterday, CDC removed the mask recommendation from the monkeypox Travel Health Notice because it caused confusion," a CDC spokesperson said on Tuesday. The agency had earlier suggested that travellers wear masks as it can help protect against "many diseases, including monkeypox"

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-removes-mask-recommendation-monkeypox-travel-notice-avoid-confusion-2022-06-07/>

Community Activities

US has thrown out more than 82m Covid vaccine doses

The United States has thrown out 82.1m Covid vaccine doses from December 2020 to the middle of last month, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control. That number of wasted vaccines accounts for more than 11 per cent of the doses distributed by the federal government during the pandemic, reports NBC News. Retail pharmacy chains CVS and Walmart were responsible for more than a quarter of the discarded doses in the US during the time period. This is a reflection of the volume of doses each company handled, said the report. The wasted vaccines were caused by a variety of factors, including doses that expired at pharmacies before they could be used, power cuts, broken freezer storage and open vials being thrown out at the end of business days unused. CVS wasted nearly 11.8m doses, or about 13 per cent of the 89.9m it received.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-covid-vaccine-doses-thrown-away-b2095123.html>

Reasons behind COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and efficient strategies to address it

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<https://europeansting.com/2022/06/07/reasons-behind-covid-19-vaccine-hesitancy-and-efficient-strategies-to-address-it/>

China offers Covid vaccine insurance to win over job sceptics

China has devised a new incentive to boost elderly vaccinations to levels that could finally allow the country to relax its zero-Covid strategy and revive the economy: insurance packages for people worried about job-related side effects. Dozens of cities across the country have begun offering people aged 60 and older free insurance that pays out up to Rmb500,000 (\$75,000) if they fall ill — or worse — because of Covid-19 vaccines. The packages also promise payouts to families if it can be proven that a loved one's death was related to receiving a jab. In Beijing alone, about 60,000 seniors have signed up for the coverage since April.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a191cbdf-218c-4968-a494-36082e350018>

Universal Beijing Resort to reopen on June 15 as COVID curbs ease

The Universal Beijing Resort said on Tuesday it will reopen on June 15 after being closed more than a month to comply with China's COVID-19 prevention measures, but it will cap the number of visitors at no more than 75% of capacity. The resort, which includes a retail district, two hotels and the Universal Studios theme park, was shut on May 1. After it reopens, all visitors must show a negative PCR test taken within the past 72 hours and wear masks at all times, in line with city-wide measures. The resort will also test its employees daily and carry out regular disinfection, it added.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/universal-beijing-resort-reopen-june-15-2022-06-07/>

U.S. Treasury approves first state projects from \$10 bln COVID broadband fund

The U.S. Treasury on Tuesday announced the first state awards from a \$10 billion COVID-19 aid program aimed at boosting broadband internet access in underserved communities, funding \$583 million worth of projects in Virginia, West Virginia, Louisiana and New Hampshire. The Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund, a relatively unheralded portion of President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act, provides money for broadband infrastructure and other projects that enable work, education and healthcare monitoring.

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/us-treasury-approves-first-state-projects-10-bln-covid-broadband-fund-2022-06-07/>

[Working Remotely](#)

Remote workers may soon be able to live and work tax-free in Bali, under a 5-year 'digital nomad' visa

As companies like Airbnb adopt a “work-from-anywhere” model, prospective “digital nomads” need to think about where they want to base themselves. Perhaps the sun-drenched vineyards of Tuscany? The gleaming skyscrapers of Dubai? Or how about the sandy tropical beaches of Bali? Remote workers hoping to log in from the seaside villas lining the coast of the Indonesian island may soon get their chance, as Indonesia's tourism minister Sandiaga Uno told Bloomberg on Monday the country is developing a new “digital nomad” visa to attract higher-spending visitors.

<https://fortune.com/2022/06/07/bali-indonesia-digital-nomad-visa-remote-work/>

Here's where most Brits are working remotely, according to Airbnb

Lots of people are still working from home, while others have tested the limits of remote working. So-called ‘digital nomads’ have been more ambitious, taking their jobs to new places (sometimes even abroad) and working from exotic locales. A lot of those nomads are using Airbnb to work their way between remote working spots. In fact, so far this year one in five Airbnb users has said they're using the site for remote working, while the platform has reported a third increase in long term bookings - indicating that travellers are more frequently fusing work and leisure.

<https://www.timeout.com/news/heres-where-most-brits-are-working-remotely-according-to-airbnb-060622>

Virtual Classrooms

How to screen remote-learning apps for privacy

Educational apps are supposed to help children learn how to add, subtract, spell and read. Behind the scenes, they're doing a whole lot more including gathering data about students that can be used to target them with ads, privacy experts say. A new study from advocacy group Human Rights Watch found that 90 percent of educational tools are collecting data that they then send on to advertising tech companies.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/06/07/education-apps-screening/>

Zoom School Was No Education for My Math Students

It is obvious that all math courses have a prequel and a sequel. Academic year 2020-21 placed nearly all students in a remote-learning setting. That year, I taught—and I use the term loosely—algebra-I, the prerequisite for geometry and algebra-II. Each day I kept track of the number of students who were actively engaged. All students had the option of clicking on the appropriate Zoom link, then tuning in or tuning out. On average, 20% were active, attentive participants. These 20% got a mediocre math education via distance learning. The 80% who opted out got virtually no math education along with a year's worth of backsliding.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/zoom-school-remote-learning-teacher-student-math-education-return-to-work-office-covid-11654296075>

Public Policies

EI-Sisi launches initiative to provide 30 million coronavirus vaccines to African countries

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has announced an Egyptian initiative to provide 30 million doses of coronavirus vaccine to African countries, in coordination with the African Union. During his participation in the dialogue session of the African health medical conference and exhibition “African Health ExCon,” El-Sisi said that “the capabilities of Egypt are available to the African brothers.” El-Sisi was speaking at the launch of the conference, held at the Egypt International Exhibition Center (Al-Manara Center for International Conferences) in the Fifth Settlement in New Cairo.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2097856/middle-east>

Novavax COVID shot, aimed at vaccine skeptics, overwhelmingly backed by FDA panel

Advisers to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to recommend

that the agency authorize Novavax Inc's COVID-19 vaccine for use in adults, which the drugmaker hopes can become the shot of choice among some American vaccine skeptics. The panel of outside vaccine experts voted 21-0 with one abstention in favor of the vaccine for those 18 and older after discussing whether the shot's benefits outweigh risks, including rare occurrences of heart inflammation that may be associated with the vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/novavax-covid-vaccine-heads-us-fda-advisory-committee-2022-06-07/>

FDA advisers back Novavax COVID shots as 4th US option

American adults who haven't yet gotten vaccinated against COVID-19 may soon get another choice, as advisers to the Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday backed a more traditional type of shot. Next, the FDA must decide whether to authorize the protein vaccine made by latecomer Novavax as the nation's fourth coronavirus shot for adults. It's made with more conventional technology than today's dominant Pfizer and Moderna shots and the lesser-used Johnson & Johnson option. Novavax shots are already available in Australia, Canada, parts of Europe and multiple other countries, either for initial vaccinations or as mix-and-match boosters. But U.S. clearance is a key hurdle for the Maryland-based company. FDA's vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks said another choice in the U.S. may entice at least some vaccine holdouts -- whatever their reason -- to consider rolling up their sleeves.

<https://apnews.com/99366fca038e009d7b73a453db39c565>

Novavax coronavirus vaccine would be fourth authorized in United States

More than a year after people began rolling up their sleeves for cutting-edge coronavirus shots, a new vaccine, this one based on a classic decades-old technology, is expected to begin rolling out in the United States this summer. Advisers to the Food and Drug Administration are scheduled to debate Tuesday whether a shot developed by the Maryland biotechnology company Novavax, an underdog in the vaccine race, is safe and effective. If the shot gets the green light, it will become the fourth coronavirus vaccine in the nation. For most people, some already on their third or fourth messenger RNA coronavirus shot from Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech, it looks like a puzzle: A new vaccine? Why bother? But for a small contingent of holdouts who have closely tracked the progress of the Novavax vaccine, this is a moment of truth.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/06/05/novavax-coronavirus-vaccine-fda/>

Maintaining Services

French medics protest hospital crisis, deepened by COVID

Health workers protested Tuesday around France to demand more hiring and better salaries in public hospitals, after years of cost cuts that left medics submerged when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and are now forcing emergency rooms to cut services. Nine unions and collectives organized a day of protest, including a demonstration outside the Health Ministry in Paris and in dozens of other towns and cities, to call the government's attention to growing concerns about staff shortages. President Emmanuel Macron has promised a rethink of the public hospital system and commissioned an urgent review by July 1. Protesters hope to pressure the government as France heads into two rounds of legislative elections starting Sunday.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/emmanuel-macron-ap-protesters-covid-french-b2095940.html>

Flu cases rise in Canada amid eased COVID-19 restrictions

The easing of public health restrictions that were aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 has led to a surge in cases of another virus, experts say. Since the start of April, Canada has seen a sharp increase in cases of influenza, something not typically seen in the spring. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) most recent FluWatch report, there were 1,580 laboratory-confirmed cases of the flu between May 22 and May 28. This is down from the peak of 2,121 flu cases seen during the week of May 8 to 14, but PHAC warns that the number of flu cases "remains above the epidemic threshold." Last year, the period between May 23 and June 19 saw just one

laboratory-confirmed flu case. Prior to the pandemic, a five-week period in May and June 2019 saw 864 laboratory-confirmed cases, an average of 172.8 cases per week.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/influenza-cases-in-canada-see-rare-spring-surge-amid-eased-covid-19-restrictions-1.5936226>

Washington hospitals again strained by COVID-19 spread

Hospital officials in Washington are warning that facilities are heading toward another COVID-19 case peak amid high spread in the community. Washington State Hospital Association CEO Cassie Sauer on Monday said at the end of last week, almost 600 people with COVID-19 were in hospitals across the state with about 20-25 patients a day on ventilators, The News Tribune reported. That compares with an average of around 230 hospitalized cases in the daily census in April and 1,700 in February during the Omicron wave. In response to the rising hospitalizations, officials on a media briefing call Monday implored people to wear high-quality masks indoors in crowded, public spaces, and to get COVID-19 booster shots on top of vaccinations. "It's still something you don't want to get and we want to urge you to do everything you can to protect yourself," said Cassie Sauer, Washington State Hospital Association CEO. Community spread is also affecting health care workers and straining hospital staffing levels, officials said.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-washington-e6aa4e7cd230eb8ae11c961854edff30>

Healthcare Innovations

Study: Ineffective blood oxygen readers have endangered Black and Latino Covid-19 patients

Black and Latino patients experienced significant delays in obtaining life-saving Covid-19 treatments due to a popular medical device that inaccurately reads darker skin tones, according to a study released last week in JAMA Internal Medicine. The report shows that pulse oximeters, a device that clips onto a person's fingertips and reads oxygen levels, is more likely to produce inaccurate results in Black, Latino and Asian Americans than in white patients. The device can make patients of color appear healthier than they actually are, researchers said. "Not only less accurate, but in particular, more optimistic," Tianshi David Wu, a co-lead author of the study and assistant professor of pulmonary medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, told NBC News. "In this study we found that minority patients appeared healthier than they really were based on this bias in pulse oximetry."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/study-ineffective-blood-oxygen-readers-endangered-black-latino-covid-1-rcna31498>

Imatinib yields sustained clinical benefit in patients with hypoxemic COVID-19

Treatment with imatinib resulted in a sustained clinical benefit after 90 days in hospitalized patients with hypoxemic COVID-19, according to results of the CounterCOVID study. At the American Thoracic Society International Conference, Job R. Schippers, MD-PhD candidate for pulmonary medicine at Amsterdam University Medical Center, presented long-term clinical outcomes at 90 days after treatment with imatinib.

<https://www.healio.com/news/pulmonology/20220607/imatinib-yields-sustained-clinical-benefit-in-patients-with-hypoxemic-covid19>