



Current Situation: COVID-19

May 18th,
2020 Update

WHO Hosts 73rd Annual Assembly

The WHO is hosting its 73rd Annual Assembly virtually for the first time due to the ongoing pandemic.

Spotlight on China

Chinese President Xi Jinping gave an address on Monday, amid rising bitterness over China's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, where he pledged \$2 billion to help fight the coronavirus.

Independent Investigation

Various nations along with the EU have pushed for an inquiry into the handling of the pandemic. WHO Director Tedros says they will initiate an independent review into its handling of the coronavirus "at the earliest appropriate moment".



Monitoring the Virus

Cases Rise in Africa

New hotspots emerging across the African continent with [outbreaks in Nigeria's second largest city, Somalia's capital city, Mogadishu and in Tanzania.](#)

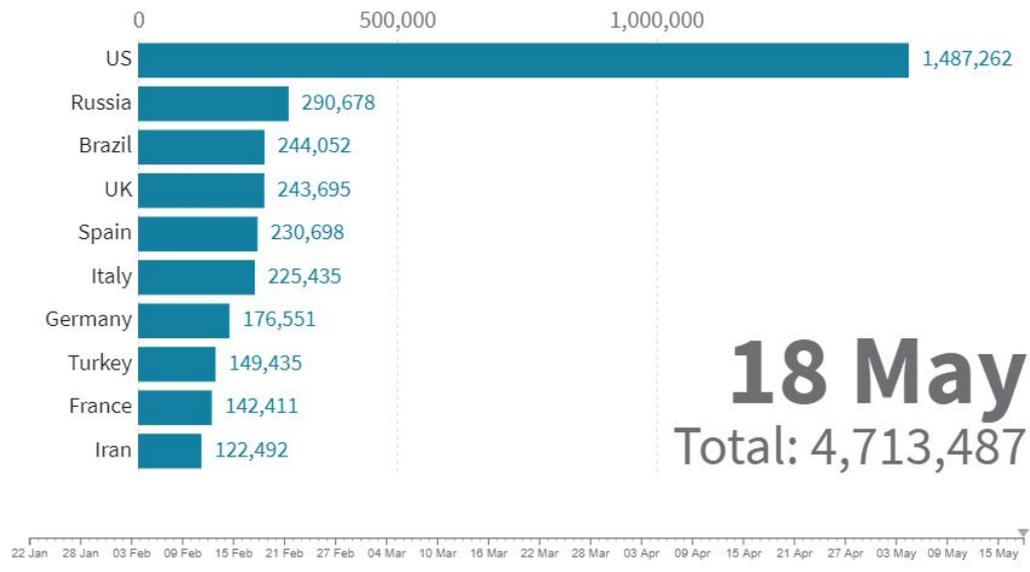
India Continues Lockdown

Nationwide lockdown in India has been [extended to May 31st](#) as the number of cases exceeded 90,000.

Virus in Nicaragua

'Express burials' raise fears that [Nicaraguan authorities are hiding the true extent](#) of the coronavirus outbreak.

How confirmed cases of coronavirus have spread



Mapping the Spread

Brazil reported 14,919 new coronavirus cases in the 24-hour period between Friday and Saturday making it the fourth-highest number of infections globally, after the U.S., Russia and the U.K., with 233,142 confirmed cases.



COVID-19 in the U.S.

Task Force Reassembled

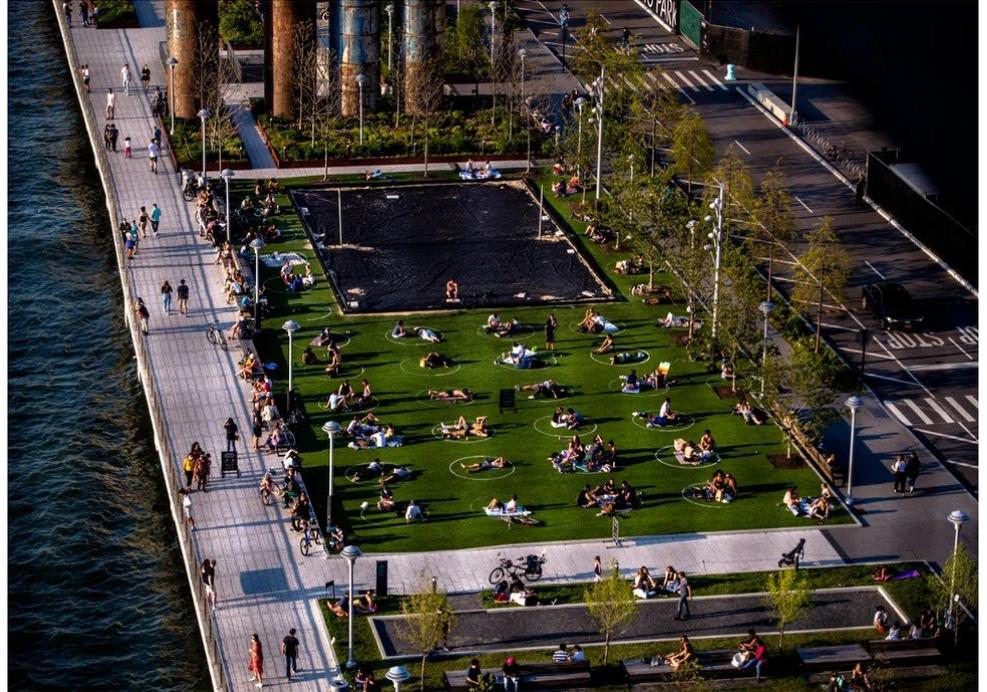
White House announces [new members of the coronavirus task force](#) including Secretary of Labor Gene Scalia and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

New Stimulus Bill in Gridlock

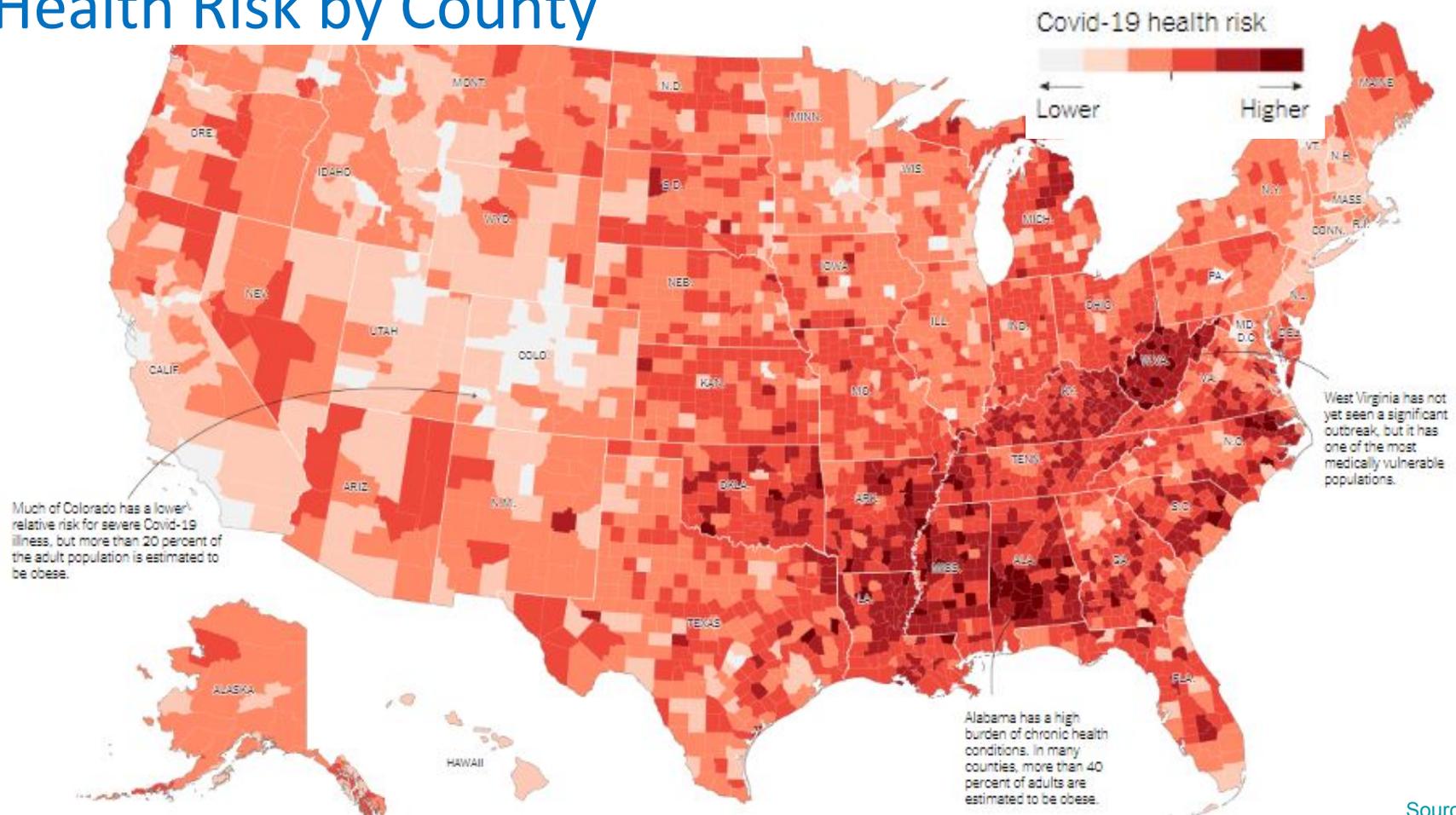
House approves [\\$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill](#) despite [lack of support in Senate and threat of veto](#) from President.

Summer Drawing People Outside

[New research has bolstered the hypothesis](#) that summer's heat, humidity, sunshine and opportunities to get outside could inhibit the spread, but experts warn to continue practicing social distancing measures to not lose any gains from the weather.



Health Risk by County



Reopening Continues Slowly

Italy Gradually Reopens

[Italian government takes "calculated risk"](#) as Italy continues to reopen further with shops, restaurants and salons.

Mosques Reopen for Ramadan

Fears of spread grow as [mosques reopen in West Africa](#) with precautions.

Laos Reports No New Deaths

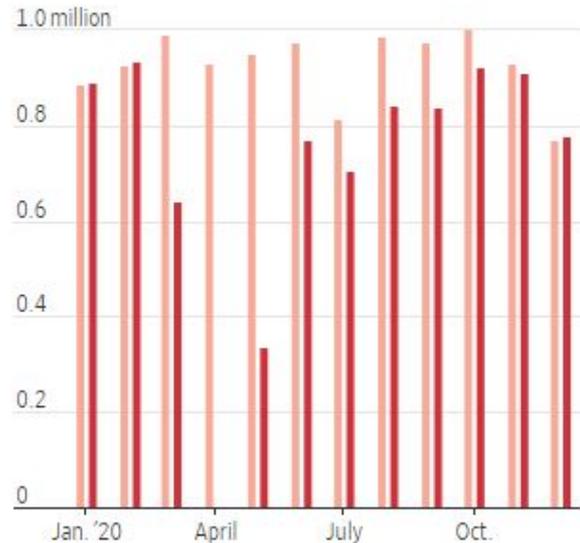
Lockdown restrictions continue to loosen in Laos as the [number of deaths have remained steady at 19](#) for over a month.



Economic Updates

U.S. monthly light-vehicle production

■ 2020 Pre-Covid-19 projections
■ Estimates/ revised projections*



Optimistic Start

[Global stocks rose on Monday](#) as Europe gradually reopens and promising news on [potential vaccine from biotech company Moderna](#).

Japan's GDP Shrinks 3.4%

Japan's economy becomes the largest to [officially enter a recession](#) for the first time since 2015.

Auto Industry Returns

[Auto industry set to reopen](#) with added precautions in place and anticipate a slow-going process before returning to full capacity.

Legal Challenges & New Measures



Presidential Powers Checked

El Salvadoran president [declares emergency without approval from congress](#), sparking backlash and the Attorney General filing a suit alleging it was unconstitutional.

Investigation of Cover-up in Austria

Criminal probe set to look into Austrian ski villages and [whether Austrian authorities were intentionally staying quiet](#) about local outbreaks to not deter visitors from coming.

Not Wearing Face-Masks Punishable

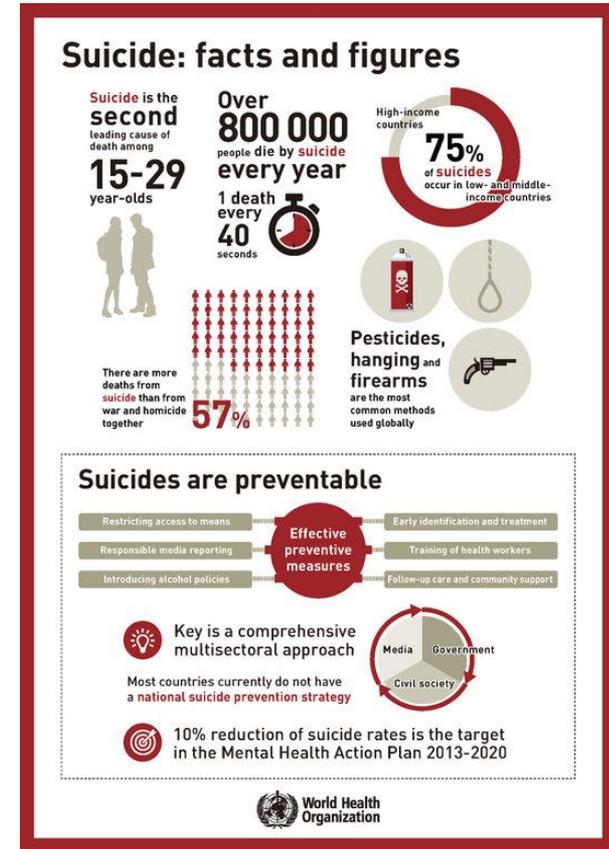
Authorities in [Kuwait and Qatar have both announced](#) that they would begin issuing fines or jail time for anyone caught not wearing face covering.

UN Calls for Action on Mental Health

UN Secretary-General Guterres calls on all nations to address mental health within pandemic responses especially for vulnerable communities and frontline workers.

“I urge governments, civil society, health authorities and others to come together urgently to address the mental health dimension of this pandemic.”

- UN Secretary-General Guterres states in the [policy brief on COVID-19 and Mental Health](#)



This information is current as of May 18, 2020. Further updates will be sent in future briefings.



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