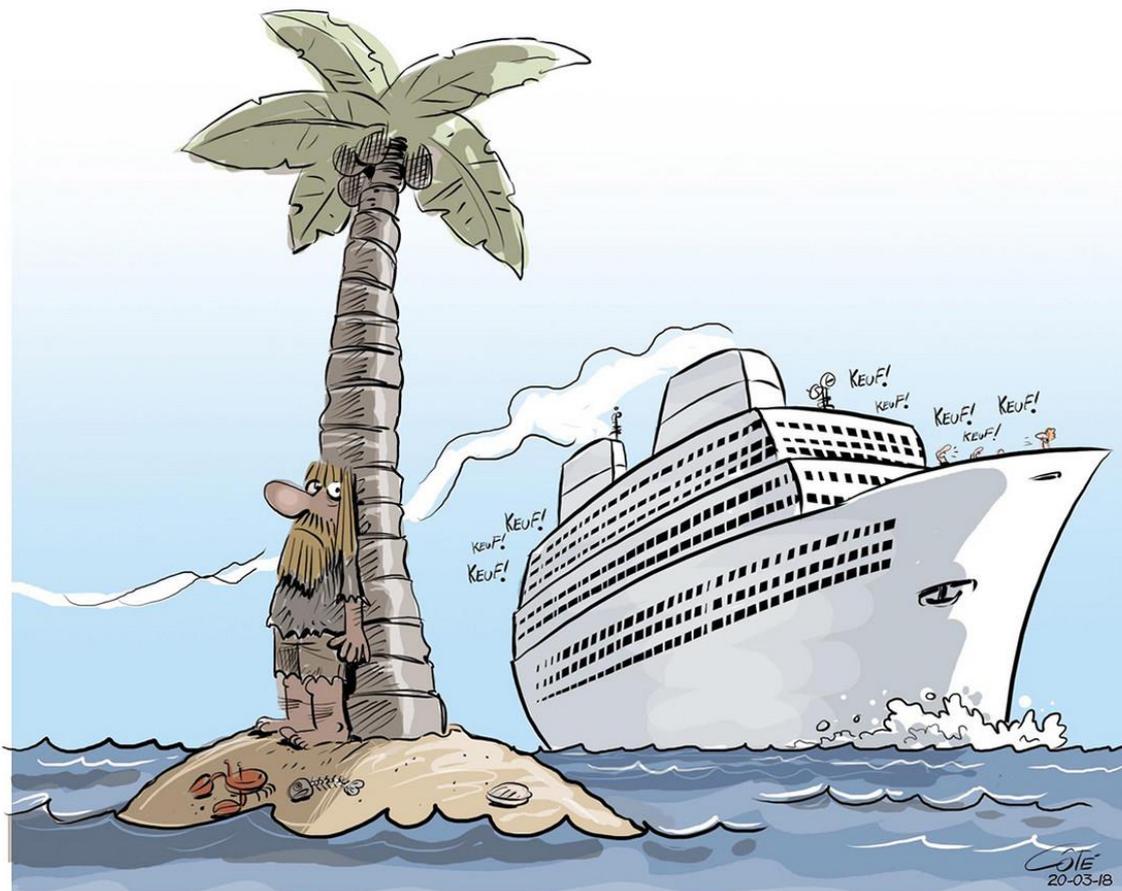


## One year timeline of COVID-19 pandemic impacting islands worldwide

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Published February 10, 2021 | Updated May 4, 2021



**Cite as:** Robertson, G. (2021). *One year timeline of COVID-19 pandemic impacting islands worldwide*. Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island. <http://islandstudies.com/research/timeline-of-covid-on-islands-robertson/>

## One year timeline of COVID-19 pandemic impacting islands worldwide

It is the world's most pressing scientific puzzle, but experts warn there may never be conclusive answers over the source of the coronavirus. January 11, 2021 marked the anniversary of China confirming its first death from COVID-19, a 61-year-old man who was a regular at the now-notorious Wuhan wet market where wildlife was sold as food and the pathogen is believed to have originated, or carried, by an undetermined bat and/or pangolin species. But the trail ends there, clouded by a mishmash of subsequent clues that suggest its origins may predate Wuhan as well as theories – amplified by former US President Donald Trump – it leaked from a laboratory at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Lily Kuo, the Guardian's Beijing bureau chief, wrote an article on April 10, 'Birth of a pandemic: Inside the first weeks of the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan'<sup>1</sup> that is as good as any in describing events during this period.

China won early kudos for reporting the virus and releasing its gene sequence in a timely manner, compared with its cover-up of the 2002-03 SARS outbreak. But there has also been secrecy and shifting stories. Wuhan authorities initially tried to cover up the outbreak and later spent precious weeks denying human-to-human transmission. Early on, Chinese officials declared flatly that the outbreak began at the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan. But Chinese data in January 2020 showed that several of the first cases had no known links to the now-shuttered market, suggesting a source elsewhere. China's story morphed again last March when top Chinese disease control official Gao Fu said the market was not the source, but a "victim", a place where the pathogen was merely amplified. But China has since failed to publicly connect any dots, releasing scant information on animal and environmental samples taken at the market that could aid investigators. The pandemic has now claimed over three million lives in an unrelenting march across the world, leaving a pulverised global economy and recriminations flying between nations. After a rare rebuke from the head of the World Health Organization just after New Year, the delayed mission of ten international experts was finally given the green light by Beijing and flew into Wuhan on January 14 to start their investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From January 2020, the Global Islands Network (GIN) website<sup>2</sup> began to source and feature articles on how COVID-19 was having numerous different impacts on islands worldwide. Over the course of the next sixteen months, 800 articles were posted on the GIN News Desk covering 200 different islands. These individual islands are highlighted in **bold**, as are regions (e.g., Caribbean, Pacific, SIDS), so that readers can quickly identify them. However, the main purpose of this report is merely to act as a resource enabling all those who are interested to undertake further research. As you would expect, the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 upon islands predominate throughout this series of press articles. Whilst the repercussions for island tourism are manifest, there is an [Appendix](#) at the end of this document that spotlights other thematic areas that are less well known.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/10/birth-of-a-pandemic-inside-the-first-weeks-of-the-coronavirus-outbreak-in-wuhan>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.globalislands.net>

1) *January 24.* The Pacific is stepping up defences against the coronavirus, with many countries introducing health screenings at airports and seaports. The **MARSHALL ISLANDS** was the first country in the world to impose a travel ban.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/408119/pacific-steps-up-defences-against-coronavirus>

2) *January 29.* While authorities and the WHO maintain the risk of an outbreak in the Pacific is low, little is being left to chance in countries like **SAMOA** that have battled some of the largest outbreaks of either measles, dengue fever, influenza or polio seen in generations.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/408402/pacific-countries-already-hard-hit-by-epidemics-take-extreme-coronavirus-measures>

3) *January 31.* The pandemic was confirmed as having spread to the **CANARY ISLANDS** when a German tourist was tested positive in La Gomera. The second confirmed case of the disease in the islands was found on 24 February, following the outbreak in Italy, when a medical doctor from Lombardy who was vacationing in Tenerife was tested positive.

[https://elpais.com/sociedad/2020/01/31/actualidad/1580509404\\_469734.html](https://elpais.com/sociedad/2020/01/31/actualidad/1580509404_469734.html)

4) *February 4.* Australia began evacuating its citizens trapped by the coronavirus outbreak in China to an immigration detention centre on **CHRISTMAS ISLAND**.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-51352145>

5) *February 6.* **CHRISTMAS ISLAND** is furious over Australia's coronavirus plans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/06/hysterical-and-ruinous-christmas-island-faces-its-coronavirus-moment>

6) *February 12.* It was reported bats, rats and snakes were still being sold at the Tomohon meat market on the Indonesian island of **SULAWESI**, despite a government request to take them off the stalls over fears of a link to the deadly virus.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200212-bat-for-sale-at-indonesia-s-wildlife-market-despite-virus-warning>

7) *February 20.* **BALI** tourism industry hit by the ripple effect of the coronavirus crisis, with hotel bookings plummeting and suggestions it “does not have the capacity” to treat patients if they become sick.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/feb/20/balis-been-through-a-lot-holiday-islands-tourism-industry-hit-by-coronavirus-fears>

8) *February 25.* Indonesian government temporarily restricted trade with China in the wake of virus. The move has hit the shrimp-fishing community in **SUMATRA** Jambi province, which is highly reliant on the Chinese market.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/02/coronavirus-covid-19-trawl-shrimp-fishing-indonesia-jambi/>

9) *February 28*. Is the **PACIFIC** ready for coronavirus? No cases yet but country plans and responses are being implemented to prevent the virus from being imported and to deliver a rapid response if it is.

<https://www.devex.com/news/is-the-pacific-ready-for-coronavirus-96658>

10) *March 6*. Coronavirus fears knock back Pacific tourism. The **NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS** tourism-dependent economy has crumbled. **COOK ISLANDS** prohibit cruise ships and **SAMOA** has strictest entry measures.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/411132/huge-crisis-coronavirus-fears-knock-back-pacific-tourism>

11) *March 12*. Pacific Islands hit by first coronavirus case after **FRENCH POLYNESIA** MP infected on Paris trip.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/12/pacific-islands-hit-by-first-coronavirus-case-after-mp-met-infected-french-minister-french-polynesia>

12) *March 14*. The cruise industry pressured **CARIBBEAN ISLANDS** to allow tourists onto their shores despite coronavirus concerns.

<https://theintercept.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-cruise-ships-caribbean/>

<https://globalvoices.org/2020/02/12/a-rash-of-travel-bans-as-the-caribbean-gets-serious-about-coronavirus/>

<https://globalvoices.org/2020/03/04/caribbean-tourism-threatened-by-the-regions-first-cases-of-covid-19/>

13) *March 15*. Life on Maine island (**CHEBEAGUE**) in the age of coronavirus.

<https://www.pressherald.com/2020/03/15/preparing-for-a-pandemic-a-maine-island-community-finds-strengths-and-vulnerabilities/>

14) *March 16*. Coronavirus concern finally washes ashore B.C.'s remote islands (**QUADRA & CORTES**).

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/03/16/news/coronavirus-concern-finally-washes-ashore-bcs-remote-islands>

15) *March 16*. President Rodrigo Duterte has put the entire Philippine island of **LUZON** under “enhanced community quarantine” until April 12 to stop the spread of coronavirus infections.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/3/16/coronavirus-philippines-quarantines-island-of-57-million-people>

16) *March 17*. Islands in the U.S. (**NORTH HAVEN**, Maine & North Carolina **OUTER BANKS**) are barring all outsiders to keep coronavirus at bay.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/us/north-carolina-and-maine-coronavirus.html>

17) *March 17*. Coronavirus fears on **NORFOLK ISLAND** prompt travel ban as state of emergency declared.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-17/norfolk-island-stops-tourists-to-stop-coronavirus-outbreak/12064666>

18) *March 18*. Is our destruction of nature responsible for Covid-19? As habitat and biodiversity loss increase globally, the coronavirus outbreak may be just the beginning of mass pandemics.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/18/tip-of-the-iceberg-is-our-destruction-of-nature-responsible-for-covid-19-aoe>

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/rapid-deforestation-of-brazilian-amazon-could-bring-next-pandemic-experts/>

<https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/2020/04/24/deforestation-amazon-next-pandemic-covid-coronavirus/>

19) *March 19*. Ireland's offshore islands (three **ARAN ISLANDS** and **INISHBOFIN**) go into lockdown in bid to beat coronavirus.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30988869.html>

20) *March 20*. COVID-19 prompts temporary closure of dozens of national parks and conservation sites in **INDONESIA** in an effort to slow the spread of virus.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/03/indonesia-national-parks-covid19-environment-komodo-rinjani-way-kambas-leuser/>

21) *March 21*. Fears of catastrophe as Greece puts migrant camps on **LESBOS**, **LEROS**, **KOS**, **CHIOS** and **SAMOS** into lockdown as doctors say coronavirus outbreak could be disastrous amid 'horrific' conditions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/mar/21/fears-catastrophe-greece-migrant-camps-lockdown-coronavirus>

22) *March 23*. First Minister has declared **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** a no-go area for visitors amid the coronavirus crisis, saying ferry companies have been told not to take "non-essential travellers".

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/18326000.nicola-sturgeon-warns-scotlands-islands-no-go-area/>

23) *March 25*. Cruise ship passengers to be quarantined on **ROTTNEST ISLAND** in Western Australia.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/mar/25/cruise-ship-passengers-to-be-quarantined-on-rotnest-island-in-western-australia>

24) *March 25.* Shutting Down **HAWAII**: A historical perspective on epidemics in the islands.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/shutting-down-hawaii-historical-perspective-epidemics-islands-180974506/>

25) *March 27.* **IRISH ISLANDS** aren't smiling as tourists threaten to bring coronavirus onshore.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/27/irish-islands-arent-smiling-as-tourists-threaten-to-bring-coronavirus-onshore>

26) *March 27.* **BLOCK ISLAND** (about 10 miles off the coast of US mainland Rhode Island) untouched by COVID-19 scrambles to keep it that way.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/tiny-east-coast-island-untouched-by-covid-19-scrambles-to-keep-it-that-way/ar-BB11NAWW>

27) *March 27.* Isolation helped the **FALKLAND ISLANDS** delay a COVID-19 outbreak. Now, being remote could be their biggest problem.

<https://time.com/5811309/coronavirus-falklands/>

28) *March 28.* **NORTH HAVEN**, Maine, tries to shut out the virus and that means barring the wealthy who vacation there.

<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/03/28/a-tiny-island-tries-to-shut-out-the-virus-152382>

29) *March 28.* Painting a picture of an island in crisis - **MARTHA'S VINEYARD** - Empty streets, shuttered stores, masked faces; locals find hope amid despair.

<https://www.mvtimes.com/2020/03/28/painting-picture-island-crisis/>

30) *March 28.* Coronavirus has been confirmed in **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**, **FIJI**, as well as in the French territories of **FRENCH POLYNESIA** and **NEW CALEDONIA**. The U.S. territory of **GUAM** has had one death from the disease and 51 confirmed cases of infection, believed to be the highest total of the small Pacific island jurisdictions.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/28/822048523/small-far-flung-pacific-islands-are-combating-covid-19-just-like-the-rest-of-us>

31) *March 29.* As coronavirus trickled its way into the Americas, **GRAND CAYMAN** began what has come to be recognized as one of the most proactive and decisive disease containment strategies in the hemisphere - a policy regime that has put its people first at the expense of everything else, including the highly influential cruise industry.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/daphneewingchow/2020/03/29/how-a-little-island-in-the-caribbean-sea-is-standing-up-to-the-goliath-of-coronavirus/>

32) *March 29*. The sale of alcohol has been banned in the **GREENLAND** capital, Nuuk, in an attempt to reduce violence against children during the period of confinement caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/29/alcohol-sales-banned-in-greenland-capital-during-lockdown>

33) *March 30*. What self isolation is like when you live on **WELSH ISLANDS**.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/skokholm-skomer-ramsey-closed-coronavirus-18003186>

34) *March 30*. What will COVID-19 mean for the **PACIFIC**: a problem in four parts.

<https://devpolicy.org/what-will-covid-19-mean-for-the-pacific-a-problem-in-four-parts-20200330/>

35) *March 30*. **TAIWAN** is seen as one of the few places in the world which has successfully stemmed the spread of the coronavirus without resorting to draconian measures. But despite its efforts, it is still effectively locked out of membership in the World Health Organization (WHO) due to its complex relationship with China.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-52088167>

36) *March 31*. Scott Morrison calls the **PACIFIC** our 'family'. Covid-19 is Australia's chance to prove that.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2020/mar/31/scott-morrison-calls-the-pacific-our-family-the-covid-crisis-is-australias-chance-to-prove-that>

37) *March 31*. Mining activity in **INDONESIA** takes a hit from COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/03/covid19-mining-indonesia-pandemic-coal-nickel-tin-china/>

38) *April 1*. **GUAM** is to allow entry to sailors from Covid stricken aircraft carrier.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/413186/guam-to-allow-entry-to-sailors-from-covid-stricken-aircraft-carrier>

39) *April 1*. Indonesia will by next week open a new coronavirus emergency hospital on the uninhabited island of **GALANG**, where authorities have repurposed a former Vietnam war era refugee camp as part of efforts to rapidly augment healthcare capacities. Indonesia has recorded 1,677 cases of coronavirus as of April 1, and 157 deaths - the highest mortality rate in Southeast Asia.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-indonesia-hospital/indonesia-set-to-open-emergency-coronavirus-hospital-on-uninhabited-island-idUSKBN21J52B>

40) *April 1.* The Caribbean, as well as **BERMUDA**, is facing a new reality of social distancing and restrictions on movement as they battle their fears during the Covid-19 pandemic. The **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** has been hit the hardest of the 28 countries in the region with 1,109 cases, 1,053 active, and 51 deaths and **CUBA** has suffered 186 cases, with 172 active, and six deaths. Bermuda, in comparison, has 32 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and no deaths.

<https://www.royalgazette.com/other/news/article/20200401/caribbean-braces-for-more-covid-19-cases/>

41) *April 1.* Will the coronavirus kill the oil industry and help save the climate?

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/01/the-fossil-fuel-industry-is-broken-will-a-cleaner-climate-be-the-result>

42) *April 2.* **PACIFIC** economies will suffer a sharp fall as resource prices collapse and tourism numbers plummet to zero, but their remoteness could provide something of a buffer in what a World Bank economist called a 'double-edged sword' effect.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/413261/pacific-economies-hit-hard-unlike-anything-we-have-seen>

43) *April 3.* Where will be the last place to catch Covid-19? The 18 countries without include Comoros; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Micronesia; Nauru; Palau; Samoa; Sao Tome and Principe; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; & Vanuatu.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-52120439>

44) *April 4.* As the coronavirus crisis deepens, the plight of people crossing the Mediterranean to escape conflict has been all but forgotten. According to the UN refugee agency, the UNHCR, almost 800 migrants departed from Libya in March. A total of 43 disembarked in Italy, in the Sicilian island of **LAMPEDUSA**, while about 155 have landed in **MALTA** and thousands are still stuck on the **GREEK ISLANDS**.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/04/migrants-never-disappeared-the-lone-rescue-ship-braving-a-pandemic-coronavirus>

45) *April 4.* A British serviceperson has become the first confirmed case of coronavirus in the **FALKLAND ISLANDS**.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-british-serviceperson-is-falkland-islands-first-case-of-covid-19-11968338>

46) *April 4.* **INDONESIA** grapples with fear of a hidden virus surge.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-52124193>

47) *April 4.* South Korea's **JEJU ISLAND** is suing two tourists who visited while having coronavirus symptoms.

[South Korea's Jeju Island suing two tourists who visited while having coronavirus symptoms | CNN Travel](#)

48) *April 4.* Inhabitants of **EASTER ISLAND** are leaning on a traditional form of ancestral discipline to overcome a coronavirus-imposed lockdown that threatens the Pacific island's vital tourism sector, and consequently their livelihoods.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200403-easter-island-inhabitants-turn-to-tradition-to-tackle-virus-troubles>

49) *April 6.* With no Covid-19 cases and its economy desperate to restart, the **CHATHAM ISLANDS** are hoping for early release from lockdown.

<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/chatham-islands-hoping-for-early-release-from-lockdown>

50) *April 6.* Mayors of 12 small **GREEK ISLANDS** are demanding a ban on all arrivals, especially over Easter, to prevent the spread of Covid-19 as they are not equipped with the necessary medical infrastructure to cope.

[https://www.thenationalherald.com/archive\\_coronavirus/arthro/fearing\\_coronavirus\\_1\\_2\\_greek\\_islands\\_don\\_t\\_want\\_easter\\_arrivals-266211/](https://www.thenationalherald.com/archive_coronavirus/arthro/fearing_coronavirus_1_2_greek_islands_don_t_want_easter_arrivals-266211/)

51) *April 6.* How **SAAREMAA** became the epicenter of Estonia's COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://news.err.ee/1073140/timeline-how-saaremaa-became-the-epicenter-of-estonia-s-covid-19-outbreak>

52) *April 6.* A **CHANNEL ISLANDS** freight shipping company collapses blaming "very difficult trading conditions" caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-52181908>

53) *April 6.* Lawmakers in **INDONESIA** plan to pass a deregulation bill by May and a mining bill by August, prompting criticism of their timing as the country deals with the COVID-19 pandemic. Activists say it appears parliament wants to use the cover of the outbreak, including physical distancing measures, to rush through the legislation with minimal public oversight or pushback.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/indonesia-parliament-dpr-omnibus-bill-mining-covid19/>

54) *April 6.* The ongoing lockdown in the **PHILIPPINES** due to the coronavirus pandemic has failed to defuse a standoff between a local community and OceanaGold Philippines Inc over a controversial gold and copper mine in the province of Nueva Vizcaya.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/standoff-over-philippines-didipio-mines-escalates-despite-covid-19-lockdown/>

55) *April 6.* The outbreak of coronavirus has prompted authorities in **INDONESIA PAPUA** region to shut down air and sea traffic and lockdown villages. There are fears that a COVID-19 outbreak here, particularly among the more than 300 indigenous tribes, could have a disastrous impact.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/indigenous-papuans-initiate-own-lockdowns-in-face-of-covid-19/>

56) *April 6.* How is **TUVALU** securing against COVID-19?

<https://devpolicy.org/how-is-tuvalu-securing-against-covid-19-20200406/>

<https://devpolicy.org/how-is-tuvalu-securing-against-covid-19-a-response-from-funafuti-20200422-3/>

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/covid-response-plan-tuvalu.pdf>

57) *April 7.* **VANUATU** is one of the few places that is coronavirus-free, but efforts to stop its arrival have been hampered by a category five cyclone.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/08/if-it-comes-it-will-be-a-disaster-life-in-vanuatu-one-of-the-only-countries-without-coronavirus>

58) *April 7.* Sinking feeling for fishermen of **INDONESIA** as COVID-19 hits seafood sales.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/sinking-feeling-for-indonesian-fishers-as-covid-19-hits-seafood-sales/>

59) *April 8.* How the coronavirus is affecting life on Sweden's tourism island **GOTLAND**.

<https://www.thelocal.se/20200408/how-the-coronavirus-is-affecting-life-on-swedens-tourism-island-gotland>

60) *April 8.* Veterinary scientist hailed for **FAROE ISLANDS** lack of COVID-19 deaths.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/08/vetinary-scientist-hailed-faroe-islands-lack-covid-19-deaths>

61) *April 8.* Life on Northern Ireland's only inhabited off-shore island, **RATHLIN**, during coronavirus lockdown.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52216177>

62) *April 8.* The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable our modern societies are, particularly in an isolated island state like **HAWAII**. A call for resiliency and sustainability plans for the Big Island, working with stakeholders every step of the way.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/04/a-call-for-resiliency-and-sustainability-on-the-big-island/>

63) *April 8.* A mayor in **HAWAII** has a choice word for the Florida man accused of trying to flout Hawaii's traveler quarantine: "covidiot."

<https://nypost.com/2020/04/08/hawaii-mayor-to-arrested-florida-man-youre-a-covidiot/>

64) *April 10.* The **ST. MAARTEN** Tourism Bureau together with the **ST. MARTIN** Tourism Office jointly launched a Digital Postcard Social Media campaign to bring positive awareness to the destination by showcasing inspiring photos of the island together with thoughtful messages, while encouraging persons to stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.thedailyherald.sx/islands/tourist-offices-launch-digital-postcards-showing-beauty-of-island>

65) *April 10.* New York City ramps up mass burials on **HART ISLAND** as the death toll from the coronavirus continues to rise.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52241221>

66) *April 10.* **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** broken health system braces for COVID-19. In a country where nurses are forced to use rice packets as gloves and laundry detergent as disinfectant, there is terror at the arrival of coronavirus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/11/we-have-nothing-papua-new-guineas-broken-health-system-braces-for-covid-19>

67) *April 11.* An outbreak of coronavirus aboard the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt has left local officials in **GUAM** to contend with the arrival of hundreds of infected sailors, while they also try to protect the island's population.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/11/magazine/guam-theodore-roosevelt-navy-coronavirus.html>

68) *April 12.* A year on from the Easter bombs that killed more than 250 people, **SRI LANKA** is now under pandemic lockdown and facing rising pressure.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/12/its-a-very-worrying-time-sri-lankas-recovery-interrupted-by-coronavirus>

69) *April 12.* As the rest of the UK resists the temptation to head outside during a hot Easter bank holiday, a music label on the tiny Hebridean **ISLE OF EIGG** is making a virtue of the lockdown by releasing songs recorded by artists in isolation and reinvigorating its remote community in the process.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/apr/12/indie-label-on-isle-of-eigg-turns-lockdown-into-source-of-inspiration>

70) *April 13.* As COVID-19 rages, **SRI LANKA** indigenous communities find solace in traditional practices and have relied on herbal remedies and rituals seeking blessings from deities to prevent illness.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/as-covid-19-rages-sri-lankans-find-solace-in-traditional-practices/>

71) *April 14*. The central government in the **PHILIPPINES** has overturned a decision by local authorities to ban a foreign ship from docking and taking on chromite ore on the island of Homonhon. Local community officials had imposed the block as part of efforts to lock down the province in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/philippine-government-flips-local-officials-entry-ban-for-mining-ship/>

72) *April 14*. The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and Hawaii Green Growth Local2030 Hub have launched a virtual platform to connect islands during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Shared Island Platform on COVID-19 Response enables island stakeholders to hear challenges, ideas, solutions from each other, beginning with a series of webinars on the economic and social effects of the crisis.

<https://www.islands2030.org/virtual-platform>

73) *April 14*. Life on Estonia's 'corona island', **SAAREMAA**.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-52282118>

74) *April 15*. After a deadly cyclone slammed through several countries in the **PACIFIC**, there is growing concern that the pandemic could disrupt efforts to help the survivors undo early work to protect vulnerable communities from infection.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-52268119>

75) *April 15*. The **INDONESIA** government's plan to relocate the country's capital from Java to Borneo has hit a wall amid the COVID-19 pandemic, with a top official saying they would "evaluate it or something" after the crisis passes.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/indonesias-new-capital-in-the-bornean-jungle-on-hold-amid-covid-19-crisis/>

76) *April 15*. The **FAROE ISLANDS** launch a new tourism marketing campaign. This year should have seen tourism revenues double in these remote north Atlantic islands from a base of around £60m five years ago. Coronavirus has ended that ambition, but to combat at least some of those losses and keep the destination fresh in people's minds, mobile phone users from anywhere in the world can command a camera-wearing local to show them round their isles.

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/apr/15/remote-control-person-guide-you-round-the-faroe-islands>

77) *April 15*. Companies embroiled in land disputes with rural communities in **INDONESIA** appear to be using the lull in oversight during the COVID-19 outbreak to strengthen their claims. Since the first confirmed cases of the disease were reported in the country on March 2, two local land defenders have been killed and four arrested in connection with land disputes in Sumatra and Borneo.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/land-conflicts-escalate-with-spread-of-covid-19-in-indonesia/>

78) *April 15*. The forestry service in **ICELAND** has come up with a novel way to overcome the sense of isolation many people suffer because of Covid-19 preventative measures – get out and hug a tree.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-52280134>

79) *April 15*. Keeping COVID-19 at bay in the **MARSHALL ISLANDS**.

<https://devpolicy.org/keeping-covid-19-at-bay-in-the-marshall-islands-20200416/>

80) *April 15*. **FIJI** colossal tourism sector devastated by coronavirus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/16/its-catastrophic-fijis-colossal-tourism-sector-devastated-by-coronavirus>

81) *April 15*. Coronavirus response: why **CUBA** is such an interesting case.

<https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-response-why-cuba-is-such-an-interesting-case-135749>

82) *April 16*. **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** (Orkney & Western Isles) communities should become “test beds” for the country’s exit strategy in lifting lockdown restrictions.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18382158.coronavirus-scotland-islands-should-test-beds-exit-strategy/>

83) *April 16*. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services announced the first confirmed case of COVID-19 on **KODIAK ISLAND**.

<https://www.ktoo.org/2020/04/16/kodiak-island-has-its-first-confirmed-case-of-coronavirus/>

84) *April 16*. **SRI LANKA** COVID-19 lockdown sets wildlife free but raises poaching threat.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/sri-lankas-covid-19-lockdown-sets-wildlife-free-but-raises-poaching-threat/>

85) *April 16*. It was once seen as something of a success story - a region that worked to contain, trace and isolate the virus - leading to a huge drop in numbers. But **HOKKAIDO** is in the spotlight again as it struggles to deal with a second wave of infections.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-52305055>

86) *April 17*. Coronavirus crisis underscores SIDS climate vulnerability. For example, **THE BAHAMAS** was devastated by Hurricane Dorian in September 2019, resulting in damages of over US\$3.4 billion and the displacement of thousands of people. Impacts were widespread, with the government anticipating that it would take at least five budget cycles to return to pre-Dorian levels of debt. This left the nation at a disadvantage when it came to addressing the pandemic as financial resources were already low and communities are still in early stages of recovery.

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/04/17/coronavirus-crisis-underscores-small-islands-climate-vulnerability/>

87) *April 17*. Irish Donegal islands (**TORY & ARRANMORE**) among few areas to remain coronavirus-free.

<https://www.irishnews.com/coronavirus/2020/04/17/news/donegal-islands-among-few-areas-to-remain-coronavirus-free-1905021/>

88) *April 17*. UN warns of deadly effect of Covid-19 misinformation in **PACIFIC**.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/17/un-warns-of-deadly-effect-of-covid-19-misinformation-in-pacific>

89) *April 18*. **FALKLAND ISLANDS** government announced a suite of new measures to assist businesses, private sector employees and households as they adjust to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/04/18/falklands-government-unveils-comprehensive-covid-19-support-package>

90) *April 18*. How America's richest ZIP code (**FISHER ISLAND**) off the coast of Miami got coronavirus antibody tests while the rest of the US struggles to obtain any tests at all.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-richest-zip-code-fisher-island-got-coronavirus-tests-2020-4>

91) *April 18*. COVID-19 – a blessing for pangolins? They **are one of the most heavily trafficked animals in the world, and as a result they are endangered. But in the past few weeks they have been linked to the initial outbreak of the Covid-19 disease in China. The evidence is inconclusive, but it has already prompted the Chinese government to take action. If more actions against the wildlife trade follow, the incident could prove to be a turning point for pangolin conservation.**

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/18/covid-19-a-blessing-for-pangolins>

92) *April 18*. **SEYCHELLES** Tourism Board has launched online campaign entitled: 'Dream Now, Experience Seychelles Later' to ensure that the country remains at the forefront of potential visitors' mind during this difficult time while the pandemic continues to cause havoc globally.

<https://www.seychellestourismboard.travel/news-media/press-releases/418-seychelles-tourism-board-invites-tourism-trade-partners-to-join-in-online-campaign>

<https://voyagesafriq.com/2020/09/22/seychelles-tourism-board-rolls-out-our-home-your-sanctuary-digital-campaign/>

93) *April 19*. With barely 60 ventilators for 11 million people, **HAITI** is the most vulnerable nation in the Americas to the coronavirus. While many countries would

struggle to cope with a serious spread of Covid-19, Haiti might never recover from one.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-52324225>

94) *April 19.* ‘Turn Around, Go Back’: **SUMMER ISLANDS** don’t want coronavirus, or you. With few medical resources to fight the virus, residents of the island havens east of New York City have fiercely protected their secluded hometowns.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/19/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-islands-protection.html>

95) *April 20.* **THAILAND** has discovered the largest number of nests of rare leatherback sea turtles in two decades on beaches bereft of tourists because of the coronavirus pandemic, said the director of the Phuket Marine Biological Centre.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/20/coronavirus-lockdown-boosts-numbers-of-thailands-rare-sea-turtles>

96) *April 20.* **MADAGASCAR** president, Andry Rajoelina, unveiled an unproven cure for COVID-19 that is derived from a plant, *Artemisia annua*, or sweet wormwood, a green leafy plant that emits a striking odor. Dried leaves from the plant are considered to have medicinal properties in Madagascar. But there is no evidence from any clinical trials to back up the claims.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/madagascars-president-promotes-unproven-herbal-cure-for-covid-19/>

97) *April 20.* While the coronavirus emergency restrictions have led to a major shift in day-to-day living on the islands of **SAAREMAA** and **MUHU**, as well as the rest of the country, for residents of **OSMUSSAAR**, a small island off the northwest coast of Estonia, little has changed, as the time of year is generally very quiet and requires stocking up on stores for often months in advance.

<https://news.err.ee/1079479/emergency-situation-so-far-had-little-effect-on-small-island-of-osmuσσαar>

98) *April 20.* Women in the South Pacific island nation of **VANUATU** are dealing with six crises currently – COVID-19, drought, scarcity of potable water, and volcanic ash, acid rain and sulphur gas as there are several active volcanoes on the island.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/04/pacific-women-responding-climate-change-natural-disasters/>

99) *April 20.* Tensions peak as **HAWAII** locals urge tourists to stay out.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/apr/20/hawaii-coronavirus-covid-19-tourists>

100) *April 20*. Nearly 1,000 coronavirus testing kits are being flown to the British overseas territory of **ST. HELENA**, which has so far avoided an outbreak of the disease.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/people/virus-testing-kits-flown-out-britons-remote-overseas-territory-2543750>

101) *April 21*. With **SRI LANKA** under lockdown to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, panic buying has resulted in an artificial shortage of several herbs, popular as home remedies.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/panic-buying-amid-pandemic-drives-scarcity-in-medicinal-herbs-in-sri-lanka/>

102) *April 22*. In South Korea Doosan Mobility Innovation distributed protective masks to residents on Gapa, Mara, and Biyang Islands with its hydrogen fuel cell drone. The event was executed in collaboration with **JEJU** Special Self-Governing Province. A total of 15,000 masks were sent to these local islands, a three-month supply for 490 residents, presuming two masks per week. The drone flew 8.8 kilometers from Jeju to reach ports on Mara Island.

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200422005402/en/Doosan-Mobility-Innovation-Completed-Contactless-Drone-Delivery-to-Remote-Islands-Without-a-Proper-Mask-Supplier>

103) *April 22*. Greek **AEGEAN ISLAND** camps not prepared for COVID-19.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/22/greece-island-camps-not-prepared-covid-19>

104) *April 22*. Coronavirus and the Arctic: **SVALBARD**, Norway.

<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/irdr/2020/04/22/coronavirus-and-the-arctic-svalbard-norway/>

105) *April 23*. Forest fires have flared up in **INDONESIA**, marking the start of the dry season and threatening to aggravate respiratory ailments amid the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/forest-fires-in-indonesia-look-set-to-add-toxic-haze-to-covid-19-woes/>

106) *April 23*. Manila's lockdown, a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, is easing the **PHILIPPINES** capital's notorious air pollution levels.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/manila-gets-its-skyline-back-as-air-quality-improves-amid-covid-19-lockdown/>

107) *April 23*. China's coronavirus aid to **PACIFIC** islands is part of geopolitical game.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/China-s-coronavirus-aid-to-Pacific-islands-is-part-of-geopolitical-game>

108) *April 23*. The North Estonia Medical Center (PERH) and the technology company Thred Systems made history when it comes to Estonian medicine by flying samples taken from patients in the hospital of **HIUMAA** from the island to the mainland using a drone.

<http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/Technology/?doc=155389>

109) *April 24*. How **OUTER HEBRIDES** were perfectly primed to tackle coronavirus. Residents of Western Isles, which have yet to record a Covid-19 death, have plenty experience of isolation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/apr/24/how-outer-hebrides-scotland-perfectly-primed-tackle-coronavirus>

110) *April 24*. Soap and solace scarce as **SRI LANKA** tea pickers toil on amid lockdown. Workers in a sector with a history of exploitation face hazards including a lack of masks and overcrowded accommodation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/24/soap-and-solace-scarce-as-sri-lankas-tea-pickers-toil-on-amid-lockdown>

111) *April 24*. There is growing concern that the COVID-19 crisis will enfeeble conservation efforts across the globe, particularly in developing countries. The concern is acute for **MADAGASCAR**, one of the poorest nations in the world, which relies heavily on foreign funds to implement conservation programs. The disappearance of tourism revenue in the short term and the possible drying up of international funding and deepening impoverishment in the coming months and years could grievously endanger Madagascar's unique biodiversity.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/covid-19-will-hurt-madagascars-conservation-funding-qa-with-minister-vahinala-raharinirina/>

112) *April 24*. The impact of COVID-19 on tourism in **SIDS**.

<https://unctad.org/news/impact-covid-19-tourism-small-island-developing-states>

<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284421916>

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid-19\\_tourism\\_august\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_tourism_august_2020.pdf)

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-des-a-policy-brief-64-the-covid-19-pandemic-puts-small-island-developing-economies-in-dire-straits/>

113) *April 25*. Are female leaders more successful at managing the coronavirus crisis? On 1 April, the prime minister of **SINT MAARTEN** addressed her nation's 41,500 people. Coronavirus cases were rising, and Silveria Jacobs knew the small island country, which welcomes 500,000 tourists a year, was at great risk: it had two ICU beds. Jacobs did not want to impose a strict lockdown, but she did want physical distancing observed. So she spelled it out: "Simply. Stop. Moving," she said. "If you don't have the bread you like in your house, eat crackers. Eat cereal. Eat oats. Eat ... sardines." **TAIWAN** president Tsai Ing-wen responded equally fast, activating the

country's central epidemic command centre in early January and introducing travel restrictions and quarantine measures. Mass public hygiene measures were rolled out, including disinfecting public areas and buildings.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/25/why-do-female-leaders-seem-to-be-more-successful-at-managing-the-coronavirus-crisis>

114) *April 25.* Drones capable of carrying 220lb (100kg) loads more than 620 miles (1,000km) are to be used to ensure the **ISLE OF WIGHT** hospital can maintain essential medical supplies in the fight against Covid-19.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/drones-capable-of-carrying-220lb-loads-to-take-vital-supplies-to-island-hospital/>

115) *April 26.* A protest took place in **SAAREMAA** against the restrictions in place on the island to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. Islanders do not think it is fair to loosen restrictions on the mainland but not on the islands. As public gatherings are banned during the emergency situation people are sitting on their own in public or outside their houses to join in with the protest.

<https://news.err.ee/1082492/islanders-protest-emergency-situation-restrictions-in-saaremaa>

116) *April 26.* **CARIBBEAN** countries are in for a 'bloodbath' if a major hurricane hits during COVID-19 crisis.

<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20200426/perfect-storm-caribbean-countries-bloodbath-if-major-hurricane-hits>

117) *April 27.* In the Philippines **BORACAY** flying foxes are going, going, gone. Bats around the world have recently gotten a bad reputation as potential carriers of disease following the COVID-19 outbreak. But in Boracay, cave-dwelling bats are known to help reduce outbreaks by feasting on the mosquitos that spread dengue to humans. They also help disperse fruit seeds across Boracay and nearby islands, helping keep the ecology of the province in balance.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/in-the-philippines-boracay-flying-foxes-are-going-going-gone/>

118) *April 27.* Call for **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** to test, trace, isolate in order to help "snuff out" coronavirus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-52441255>

119) *April 27.* COVID-19 shocks too big to handle for **SIDS**, UN warns.

<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/covid-19-shocks-too-big-handle-small-island-nations-un-warns>

120) *April 27.* No one has seen a wild bear on **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**, Canada's smallest province, since the 1930s. Now, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of islanders are hunting teddy bears from the safety of their cars.

They're popping up by the hundreds on front porches, mailboxes, lawn chairs, and windowsills.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/prince-edward-island-bear-hunt>

121) *April 28*. There is an 'eerie' atmosphere on **ISLE OF SKYE** without tourists due to coronavirus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-52415316>

122) *April 28*. On the tourism-dependent Spanish island of **MALLORCA**, a total shutdown of hotels due to the coronavirus outbreak has destroyed livelihoods across the sector, from reception staff to farmers who provide food for restaurants.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-spain-tourism-idUKKCN22A1DO>

123) *April 28*. The COVID-19 response in **SRI LANKA** should prioritize the introduction of special mechanisms to address the needs of marginalized communities, women and children, says a leading water management expert from the Indian Ocean island. Catchment conservation, prevention of river pollution and water conservation are key to fighting the pandemic as water is essential for improving sanitation and hygiene.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/fighting-covid-19-with-a-precious-resource-qa-with-kusum-athukorala-sri-lankas-woman-in-water/>

124) *April 29*. Fear and illness stalk packed jails in **INDONESIA** as riots break out. Political activists are among those waiting to find out if they will be included in government pardon scheme to stop the spread of Covid-19.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/29/fear-and-illness-stalk-indonesias-packed-jails-as-prisoners-hope-for-early-release-coronavirus>

125) *April 29*. **JERSEY** should look to market itself as a 'staycation' destination for UK tourists who will be looking for open, safe and clean environments post-crisis, a spokesman for the tourism industry has said.

<https://jerseyeveningpost.com/news/2020/04/29/island-could-be-staycation-choice-after-the-pandemic/>

126) *April 30*. Scientists have called for all projects in the only known habitat of the Tapanuli orangutan in **SUMATRA** to be halted to prevent the possible transmission of COVID-19 to the great apes. The orangutans wouldn't necessarily have to come into direct contact with humans to catch the virus; they could catch it indirectly via other primate species.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/tapanuli-orangutan-covid19-indonesia-sumatra-conservation-ape-dam/>

127) *April 30*. Residents on a remote island in **BELIZE** (Caye Caulker) will use solar-powered hydropanels to harvest drinking water from the air after coronavirus shutdowns delayed shipments of bottled water from the mainland.

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/technology/residents-on-a-remote-island-in-belize-will-use-solar-powered-hydropanels-to-harvest-drinking-water-from-the-air-after-coronavirus-shutdowns-delayed-shipments-of-bottled-water-from-the-mainland/ar-BB13ryHJ>

128) *April 30*. Communities in the biodiversity haven of **PALAWAN** in the Philippines earn millions in tourism-related services annually, but the industry has been paralyzed due to a lockdown aimed at suppressing the spread of COVID-19. Despite this, these communities continue to look after their protected areas, making sure that illegal logging and fishing activities do not proliferate during the lockdown period.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/no-tourism-income-but-this-philippine-community-still-guards-its-environment/>

129) *May 1*. An “armada” of more than 100 fishing vessels are illegally plundering south Atlantic waters close to Argentina, environmental groups say, raising concerns that the coronavirus lockdown has weakened already fragile marine protections.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/01/stealth-plunder-of-argentinian-waters-raises-fears-over-marine-monitoring>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08920753.2020.1766937>

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/covid-19-sea-impacts-blue-economy-ocean-health-and-ocean-security>

130) *May 1*. **INDONESIA** authorities say they’re remaining vigilant for illegal fishing practices as poachers and blast fishers anticipate a dip in enforcement activity amid COVID-19 restrictions.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/covid-19-no-excuse-for-dropping-guard-against-illegal-fishing-indonesia-says/>

131) *May 1*. Australia and New Zealand tentatively celebrate successes in their battles to bring Covid-19 under control, Winston Peters, New Zealand’s deputy prime minister, has raised the possibility of the two nations opening up travel to one another. The mooted “trans-Tasman bubble” would allow travel between these two countries, which seem – for now – to have brought infection rates under control, while keeping their borders with the rest of the world closed or tightly managed. While this seems like an excellent idea, it is one that needs go further. Specifically this spirit of neighbourliness needs to be extended to the small island states of the **PACIFIC**. Aside from giving real substance to Canberra’s talk of a “step-up” in the region, if managed carefully, medically there is little to lose and economically there is much to gain from this approach.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2020/may/01/if-australia-and-new-zealand-restart-travel-they-should-include-the-pacific-in-their-bubble>

132) *May 2.* **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** bristle at idea of being used as UK test site to end lockdown.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/02/islanders-bristle-at-idea-of-being-used-as-uk-test-site-to-end-lockdown>

133) *May 4.* The shark and ray fishery in **INDONESIA** has largely ground to a halt as a result of plummeting demand due to COVID-19-related export restrictions and a domestic lockdown that has hit the restaurant industry.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/as-covid-19-response-batters-sales-indonesias-shark-fishery-gets-a-respite/>

134) *May 4.* UK contact-tracing app is ready for **ISLE OF WIGHT** downloads.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52532435>

135) *May 4.* **HAWAII** has some of the lowest coronavirus infection and mortality rates in the U.S. As cases rose in March, the governor did something no other state can - effectively seal the borders. People who do come face a two-week quarantine. That's cut off the flow of tens of thousands of tourists a day. But it's walloped an economy that relies on tourism, and officials say travel restrictions will be among the last to end.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2020-05-04/isolated-by-oceans-hawaii-other-islands-tamp-down-virus>

136) *May 5.* **SRI LANKA** popular national parks have been closed since March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting tour guides, jeep drivers, guesthouse owners, and many others dependent on the tourism industry for their livelihood.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/wildlife-tourism-workers-in-limbo-as-sri-lankas-covid-19-shutdown-continues/>

137) *May 5.* As the Covid-19 death toll grows, Italy's organised crime gangs have been looking to make millions. Many Italians feel they have no option but to accept the lifeline the mob is offering. On the island of **SICILY**, the brother of a mafioso - a member of a mafia group - has been distributing food to the poor in a neighbourhood of Palermo.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-52537573>

138) *May 5.* From the vast plains of the Masai Mara in Kenya to the delicate corals of the Aldabra atoll in the **SEYCHELLES**, conservation work to protect some of the world's most important ecosystems is facing crisis following a collapse in ecotourism during the Covid-19 pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/05/conservation-in-crisis-covid-19-coronavirus-ecotourism-collapse-threatens-communities-and-wildlife-aoe>

139) *May 5.* After 33 coronavirus cases were reported in India's **ANDAMAN** and **NICOBAR ISLANDS**, a remote crescent of 572 islands in the Bay of Bengal, experts

began worrying about the indigenous people who live there. Three indigenous groups, the Great Andamanese, Jarawas and Onges, who live in the Andaman island chain are vulnerable to COVID-19 because of their contact with the outside world. The fourth group in the islands, the Sentinelese, who killed an intruding American missionary in 2018, is said to be safe because their land remains off-limits to most outsiders. The Andaman Islands are within easy range of poachers from neighboring Myanmar. This puts the indigenous population at risk of contracting the disease.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-threatens-first-residents-of-India-s-Andaman-Islands>

140) *May 5.* **SICILY** regional government is offering to subsidise holidays on the island for both domestic and international visitors in an effort to kickstart tourism after the coronavirus pandemic. News of the scheme came days before a statement from the Italian government that it expects borders to be open to tourists this summer.

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/may/05/sicily-to-subsidise-post-covid-holidays-as-italy-considers-reopening-to-tourists>

141) *May 5.* Tourism tide goes out for **CLARE ISLAND** as well as other Irish islands.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/tourism-tide-goes-out-for-clare-island-1.4244858>

142) *May 5.* With the coronavirus outbreak steadily receding in China, the country's resort island **HAINAN**, hopes the development of sports tourism will become a new economic growth point as the island province opens its arms to tourists again.

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-05/05/c\\_139032383.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-05/05/c_139032383.htm)

143) *May 5.* **MADAGASCAR** has lost half a billion dollars in much-needed tourism revenue since the start of 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis, according to official estimates. Tourism contributes toward funding conservation efforts in Madagascar's network of protected areas; those protected areas that rely heavily on foreign visitors have been hit worst by the crisis.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/as-visitors-vanish-madagascars-protected-areas-suffer-a-devastating-blow/>

144) *May 6.* **IBIZA** welcomes more than three million visitors during the summer months, pumping billions into its economy. Close to 75% of the island's 147,000-plus population get their income from tourism, directly and indirectly – besides the fabled nightclub scene, there's the hotels, Airbnbs, restaurants, bars, shops, taxis, and other businesses that exist because of the pull of the clubs. But a huge question mark hangs over them all, with the clubs beginning to cancel their summer seasons due to coronavirus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/may/06/its-a-tough-island-to-live-on-why-coronavirus-spells-doom-for-ibiza>

145) *May 6.* Countries across the **ASIA-PACIFIC** region have announced plans to cautiously reopen for business as governments around the world race to reboot economies devastated by the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/06/global-report-several-asia-pacific-nations-pass-covid-19-peak-and-plot-return-to-work>

146) *May 6.* **CUBA** seeks to make its mark in Europe amid Covid-19 crisis by sending medical “brigades” to bolster struggling health services in countries like Italy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/06/doctor-diplomacy-cuba-seeks-to-make-its-mark-in-europe-amid-covid-19-crisis>

147) *May 6.* The **FALKLAND ISLANDS** government has looked at other countries to see the best way to ensure the safety of the community and reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading around the islands. The best match to Falklands circumstances apparently is the approach being used in New Zealand. The main idea being used in NZ, – which FIG have adapted –, is the advice provided to help people get together as groups in what are being called “Bubbles.” “Bubbles” help people make decisions about who they meet with socially and how they mix.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/05/06/falklands-the-bubbles-system-socially-connected-physically-protected>

148) *May 6.* Geopolitics meets pandemic in the **PACIFIC**.

<https://insidestory.org.au/geopolitics-meets-pandemic-in-the-pacific/>

149) *May 6.* The coronavirus death toll in the United States is climbing past 70,000, with thousands of new cases every day. But there is still one part of the country without a single confirmed case, much less a fatality: **AMERICAN SAMOA**, a palm-fringed Polynesian archipelago that has sealed itself off for nearly two months from the outside world.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/us/coronavirus-american-samoa.html>

150) *May 7.* The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved a US\$15 million Development Policy Operation for **SOLOMON ISLANDS** that will seek to strengthen public financial management while enabling the government to meet the costs of COVID-19 preparedness. Solomon Islands are expected to be one of the most affected Pacific economies from COVID-19. Travel restrictions, and demand shocks, particularly to logging, are predicted to lead to considerable reductions in GDP growth and tax revenue for the country.

<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/business/1040115-world-bank-approves-us15m-development-policy-operation-for-solomon-islands>

151) *May 7.* **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND** potato farmers will likely be planting less crop this season because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of social distancing restrictions, islanders are eating more meals at home instead of dining out. This in turn is impacting not only the potato industry, but other industries like shellfish, and dairy as well.

[https://www.peicanada.com/uncertainty-surrounds-island-potato-season/article\\_7ac8745c-8f0c-11ea-a821-47ed9481987e.html](https://www.peicanada.com/uncertainty-surrounds-island-potato-season/article_7ac8745c-8f0c-11ea-a821-47ed9481987e.html)

152) *May 7.* Humanity's "promiscuous treatment of nature" needs to change or there will be more deadly pandemics such as Covid-19, warn scientists who have analysed the link between viruses, wildlife and habitat destruction.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/07/promiscuous-treatment-of-nature-will-lead-to-more-pandemics-scientists>

153) *May 7.* It was initially predicted **TAIWAN** would be one of the hardest-hit countries in the world by COVID-19. But aggressive measures seem to have paid off and it is providing aid to several Pacific countries.

<https://devpolicy.org/taiwans-experience-with-covid-19-and-aid-to-the-pacific-20200507-1/>

154) *May 7.* A surge in poverty as tourism jobs in **SAMOA** disappear in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/416094/a-surge-in-poverty-as-tourism-jobs-in-samoa-disappear>

155) *May 7.* The **PACIFIC** region has seen the fewest cases of COVID-19 - at least 14 Pacific countries and territories report no single case of the coronavirus, despite 3.5 million cases confirmed globally. Excluding Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii, there have been fewer than 270 confirmed cases across the entire region. **AMERICAN SAMOA** is currently the only U.S. state or territory without a single positive case.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/many-pacific-islands-are-untouched-by-covid-19-its-arrival-could-be-disastrous>

156) *May 7.* Farmers in the Bicol region in the **PHILIPPINES** are experiencing the brunt of the lockdown, imposed since March 16 to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation is especially hard for rice farmers, most of them still reeling from the impacts of successive typhoons, drought, and cheap imported rice.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/for-philippine-farmers-reeling-from-disasters-lockdown-is-another-pain-point/>

157) *May 7.* With plexiglass barriers, Greece's **SANTORINI ISLAND** wants visitors to return.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-greece-santorini/with-plexiglass-barriers-greeces-santorini-island-wants-visitors-to-return-idUSKBN22J2YY>

158) *May 8.* **ICELAND** has all but eliminated the coronavirus outbreak as 97% of infected patients have recovered and only two new cases have been confirmed in the last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-iceland/iceland-close-to-full-recovery-from-coronavirus-govt-idUSKBN22I2S2>

159) *May 8.* **FIJI** returns to barter system as Covid-19 hits economy. Two piglets for a pre-loved kayak, a taxi fare in exchange for fresh produce, hot cross buns for online tutoring, an old carpet for a professional photography session, vegetable seedlings for homemade pies, and offers to have backyards cleaned for prayers. These are just a few examples of the hundreds of barter trades that are taking place across Fiji since a Facebook page “Barter for Better Fiji” was created a few weeks ago in response to sharp falls in employment due to coronavirus. The page now has more than 100,000 members, in a country of just under 900,000 people. The barter system is experiencing a resurgence across the Pacific with similar Facebook pages in Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/08/two-piglets-for-a-kayak-fiji-returns-to-barter-system-as-covid-19-hits-economy>

160) *May 8.* Virus-free **PACIFIC** islands weigh risks of re-opening to tourists.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/1914836/virus-free-pacific-islands-weigh-risks-of-re-opening-to-tourists>

161) *May 8.* U.S.-based miner Freeport McMoRan is continuing operations at its Grasberg mine in the Indonesian province of **PAPUA**, despite 56 of its employees testing positive for COVID-19. Workers say that if they opt to leave the site over health concerns, they won't get paid and risk losing their job.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/get-sick-or-go-hungry-workers-face-dilemma-at-freeports-grasberg-mine/>

162) *May 8.* Activists in **INDONESIA** have filed a legal challenge to stop legislation rushed through during the pandemic that would dismantle environmental protections in favour of facilitating business.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/indonesia-deregulation-omnibus-environment/>

163) *May 8.* Visitors told to stay away from **IRISH ISLANDS** until at least August due to the current pandemic.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/offshore-islands-travel-covid-19-5094335-May2020/>

164) *May 8.* In a significant boost to the **CANARY ISLANDS** bid to present the archipelago as a safe holiday choice, the region will be the first destination for a coronavirus-free flight in a digital health passport pilot project, which has the backing of the World Health Organisation.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/05/08/spains-canary-islands-first-destination-for-coronavirus-free-flight-in-digital-health-passport-pilot-project/>

165) *May 9.* The **ISLE OF WIGHT** is coming to terms with unexpected publicity from the NHS coronavirus contact-tracing app.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/09/coronavirus-app-has-changed-the-way-the-isle-of-wight-sees-itself>

166) *May 9*. The government of **MAURITIUS** responded early to the COVID-19 pandemic with stringent lockdown measures and saw a drastic reduction in new cases.

<https://voxeu.org/article/mauritian-response-covid-19>

167) *May 10*. In a major milestone for the wider Caribbean region, the island of **NEVIS** says it is “free” of the coronavirus. The announcement comes after the island, which has a population of around 12,000 people, launched a series of aggressive measures to prevent the spread of the virus. It’s another strong sign for the region, following a similar revelation by the island of **ANGUILLA** at the end of last month.

<https://www.caribjournal.com/2020/05/10/nevis-coronavirus-free/>

168) *May 10*. A landmark vote on dividing the biodiverse Philippine province of **PALAWAN** into three smaller provinces has been put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic. That’s given critics of the move a chance to press their case that splitting up the province could prove harmful to natural resources management and the welfare of indigenous groups.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/pandemic-lockdown-gives-philippine-province-time-to-rethink-planned-split-up/>

169) *May 11*. Bukit Lawang (North **SUMATRA**, Indonesia) is a prominent ecotourism town on the fringes of the Gunung Leuser National Park. The town is devoid of tourists amid the Covid-19 crisis and the high season is supposed to start soon. Many people are entirely reliant on tourists and you can sense the despair in the air as it is uncertain when planes will take off again and people will start traveling to distant places. However, market-based solutions cannot solely fund community-level conservation. Schemes like ecotourism and payment for ecosystem services should be paired with programs like sustainable local agriculture to prevent the re-emergence of poaching and illegal logging, and to ensure that conservation-oriented behaviours persist when markets fail.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/market-based-solutions-cannot-solely-fund-community-level-conservation-commentary/>

170) *May 11*. Football returns to Covid-19-free **FAROE ISLANDS** albeit with no more than 50 people allowed into the stadium including the 22 players on the field.

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/may/11/faroe-islands-welcome-football-back-to-europe-with-fans-staying-home>

171) *May 11*. Pandemic upends life on the **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS**. For seven weeks now, not a single tourist has arrived. Before the coronavirus, sudden life-threatening ailments among tourists, fishermen and others on the Galapagos Islands were considered so rare that hospitals didn’t have a single intensive care unit bed. Now, officials are racing to equip medical teams on the remote islands with breathing machines while also trying to stanch an economic crisis that has left many of the 30,000 residents jobless.

<https://apnews.com/article/2f8778a3b1e7fed210544e039a54cabd>

172) *May 11*. Some Caribbean nations appear to be handling the COVID-19 pandemic relatively efficiently, but despite lockdowns, curfews, and the closure of nonessential businesses, **JAMAICA** has not been faring as well.

<https://globalvoices.org/2020/05/11/covid-19-regulations-and-the-issue-of-overcrowding-in-jamaicas-markets/>

173) *May 12*. Late in April, in the middle of a global pandemic and slow-boiling domestic economic crisis, the government of **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** made the surprising announcement not to extend the mining lease on a goldmine that contributes roughly 10% of the country's total exports.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/12/politics-and-porgera-why-papua-new-guinea-cancelled-the-lease-on-one-of-its-biggest-mines>

174) *May 12*. The **AZORES** have been a beacon of light in the Atlantic during this crisis. The archipelago, about 800 nautical miles off the coast of Portugal, is of huge strategic importance for boats crossing west to east. Countries along the Atlantic's eastern shores – Morocco, Senegal, Spain, Portugal, France – have been turning away boats looking for shelter. Island nations such as Cape Verde, off the coast of Africa, lack infrastructure and healthcare to deal with Covid-19, so are more understandably off limits. But grateful sailors have been reporting that they could anchor in Horta, the Azores' port, with access to fuel and water. The islands have a long history of welcoming boats on transatlantic passages, and maritime institution Peter Cafe Sport has been taking food, medical supplies and marine parts to anchored boats.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/12/long-journey-home-the-stranded-sailboats-in-a-race-to-beat-the-hurricanes>

175) *May 12*. With the coronavirus pandemic continuing to spread and its impacts upon human health and the economy intensifying daily, **PACIFIC** governments are urged to treat waste management, including of medical, household and other hazardous waste, as an urgent and essential public service in order to minimise possible secondary impacts upon health and the environment.

<https://www.sprep.org/news/pacwastepplus-engages-with-countries-using-innovative-resources>

176) *May 13*. Boat clinics in **ASSAM** have become the primary access to healthcare for almost three million inhabitants of the 2500 saporis (river islands) where construction of permanent structures for healthcare is almost impossible due to recurring flooding events. The boat clinics have pitched in to deal with the novel coronavirus disease by carrying out door-to-door community surveillance in the river islands.

<https://india.mongabay.com/2020/05/assams-boat-clinics-scan-remote-islands-for-covid-19/>

177) *May 13*. To curtail the COVID-19 pandemic, countries around the world have constrained people's movements, which have taken a toll on marine fisheries. Supply

chains fragmented, markets closed, fish imports declined, sales dwindled and fewer fishing vessels are reportedly out at sea. For fishing communities like those in **INDONESIA** and the industry as a whole, this is an exceptional crisis. But could the fishing slowdown give marine life a chance to recover?

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/will-fish-boom-amid-pandemic-driven-fishing-bust/>

178) *May 13*. In February, as the coronavirus victim count rose steadily in countries like Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, **INDONESIA** maintained that there was not a single case within its borders. As the government steadfastly refused to instate social distancing, cancel events, or start mass testing, local communities started to feel differently and local quarantines sprung up throughout the island nation, but the end of Ramadan posed a severe test.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/05/indonesia-government-slow-lock-down-people-took-charge/>

179) *May 13*. COVID-19 puts women working in **SIDS** tourism industry at risk.

<https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-puts-women-working-sids-tourism-industry-risk>

180) *May 14*. Premier Oil suspends **FALKLAND ISLANDS** Sea Lion oil project due to coronavirus uncertainty.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/05/14/premier-oil-suspends-falklands-sea-lion-project-navitas-remains-interested-in-farm-out-project>

181) *May 15*. There is no doubting the importance of tourism and labour mobility to the **PACIFIC**. With few and falling COVID-19 cases, no wonder the idea of including the Pacific in the proposed Australia-New Zealand travel ‘bubble’ has gained prominence.

<https://devpolicy.org/the-pacific-bubble-takes-shape-20200514-2/>

182) *May 15*. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is a global environmental agreement of great consequence: it regulates the global trade in some of the most threatened species on Earth. While many conservation groups jumped at the chance the COVID-19 pandemic offered to highlight the link between pandemics and wildlife exploitation, the CITES Secretariat appeared to distance itself from the crisis, drawing criticism and scrutiny.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/as-covid-19-pandemic-deepens-global-wildlife-treaty-faces-an-identity-crisis/>

183) *May 15*. On April 22, **SRI LANKA** eased its nationwide lockdown that was imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That sparked a buying rush for essential goods, primarily food. But another type of commodity was also high on shoppers’ lists: organic fertilizers, seeds, and clay pots. Demand was so strong that people lined up in queues with little regard for physical distancing guidelines as they sought out home gardening essentials.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/amid-lockdown-sri-lankans-nurture-their-own-oases-through-home-gardening/>

184) *May 16*. For the first time since the coronavirus pandemic began, health officials will come together (virtually) next week at the World Health Assembly to decide how the world should tackle the crisis. But one of the places seen as most successful at protecting its people from the disease will not be invited to this meeting of the decision-making body of the WHO. **TAIWAN** has been applauded internationally for quickly and effectively stemming the spread of the virus, and says it should have a platform to share its experiences with the world. But China - which says Taiwan is part of its territory - has blocked Taiwan's attendance since 2016.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-52661181>

185) *May 17*. Like all our other **IRISH ISLANDS**, there's no Covid-19 on Inishbofin which is a great credit to the islanders including those who run businesses and which are sorely in need of customers.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/property/homeandoutdoors/arid-31000017.html>

186) *May 17*. Germans with holiday homes in **MALLORCA** are clamouring to return to the sun-soaked island as the coronavirus lockdowns ease, but Spanish authorities are pushing back.

<https://www.thelocal.com/20200517/tensions-rise-as-germans-eager-to-return-to-holiday-homes-in-spain>

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JTF-06-2020-0090/full/pdf?title=stay-at-which-home-second-homes-during-and-after-the-covid-19-pandemic>

187) *May 18*. With **COOK ISLANDS** tourism in tatters, small operators are struggling to service the loans that funded a pre-Covid-19 development boom. With fears many locals could lose their businesses to wealthy foreign investors, the government is looking at all the options - including a deal with NZ's Reserve Bank.

<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2020/05/18/1177034/an-island-in-debt>

188) *May 18*. SIDS, such as the Caribbean island of **GRENADA**, faced a double exposure to external economic and environmental shocks. This has been made painfully clear by the economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that has, among other things, crippled the tourism industry upon which many SIDS depends. Tourism accounts for almost 30% of SIDS' gross domestic product.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/small-island-developing-states-building-resilience-sustainable-trade-tourism>

189) *May 18*. Activists, clergy and politicians have demanded an investigation into the continued coal-mining activity on the **PHILIPPINES** island of Semirara while the region was supposed to be under strict quarantine.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/a-philippine-island-locked-down-but-its-mine-didnt-and-infections-mounted/>

190) *May 19.* Zoos have been shuttered and wildlife rehabilitation centers barred from releasing animals into the wild as a result of measures imposed in **INDONESIA** to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/for-indonesias-captive-wildlife-lockdown-measures-may-prove-deadly/>

191) *May 19.* In **FIJI**, pristine bungalows sit empty, sparkling resort pools have no-one swimming in them and thousands of employees who would usually be on hand to greet tourists with wide smiles have been left without work. While COVID-19 has shut down the Pacific Island country's biggest industry, Fiji hopes it won't be for too much longer. The Government wants to see Australian and New Zealand tourists return "as soon as possible" and is pushing hard to become part of the "travel bubble" the two countries are planning.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-20/coronavirus-pacific-islands-tourism-plan-nz-fiji-travel-bubble/12259532>

192) *May 19.* Climate breakdown is causing the Gulf of Maine to heat up and that effect – in addition to the pandemic – is being felt across the lobster industry. Some veteran lobstermen on **MAINE ISLANDS** like Hewett are now applying their hard-earned expertise to kelp farming. Bob Baines is one of the 24 “partner farmers” working with Atlantic Sea Farms, which was founded in 2009 under the name Ocean Approved as the first commercial seaweed farm and nursery in North America.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/19/im-not-a-quitter-lobstermen-turn-to-kelp-farming-in-the-face-of-global-crises>

193) *May 19.* While the rest of the world has struggled to control the coronavirus outbreak, the isolated islands of the **PACIFIC** have managed to keep their populations safe - in part due to lessons learned from previous health crises.

<https://www.dw.com/en/zero-cases-how-pacific-islands-kept-coronavirus-at-bay/a-53495263>

194) *May 19.* As the Pacific Islands battle to keep Covid-19 out, and continues to reel from the aftermath of the Tropical Cyclone Harold, they are fighting another battle; Dengue Fever. More than 4,000 cases of dengue fever have been reported in both **FIJI** and the **MARSHALL ISLANDS**, but several more islands are at risk.

<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/2020/05/19/dengue-fever-another-blow-pacific-islands/>

195) *May 20.* Following her re-election the **TAIWAN** president Tsai Ing-wen hits back at China after the self-governing island's successful fight against coronavirus and would not accept attempts by China to “downgrade” its status and pledged to stand up to pressure from Beijing.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/20/taiwan-president-hits-back-at-china-amid-covid-19-success>

196) *May 20*. The **CHATHAM ISLANDS** is the closest most New Zealanders can get to international travel without packing their passport. With the country's border heavily restricted due to the Covid-19 crisis, Chatham Islands tourism operators are hoping they'll see more Kiwis take a trip "overseas" to visit their archipelago.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/business/417083/chatham-islands-offers-overseas-holiday-during-covid-crisis>

197) *May 20*. The 2020 summer cruise season, from June to August, was supposed to be an all-time high for expedition cruising to Norway's **SVALBARD** archipelago, some of the busiest waters for high-end tourism in the circumpolar Arctic, but now all voyages have been cancelled until 2021.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/svalbard-entire-expedition-cruise-season-could-be-in-jeopardy/>

198) *May 20*. The remote island of **TRISTAN DA CUNHA** has reported no COVID-19 cases to date but all future cruise and cargo vessels have been banned from landing. At the moment, food security is not a concern. Both **ASCENSION** and **ST HELENA** have also no confirmed cases of COVID-19.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/travel/tristan-da-cunha.html>

<https://www.tristandc.com/coronavirusnews.php>

<https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/coronavirus-covid-19/>

199) *May 20*. **MADAGASCAR** tourism drought brought about by coronavirus could fuel another crisis.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/2020/05/madagascar-coronavirus-tourism-drought-could-fuel-another-crisis/>

200) *May 21*. Air pollution in **SRI LANKA** urban areas has decreased by up to 75% during the lockdown imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while plastic pollution and other forms of marine pollution have decreased by up to 40% along the island's coastline, authorities say. But the environmental respite is likely to be temporary, while the lockdown period threatens to see a surge in another type of waste - face masks - washing out to sea and on beaches if no proper waste management mechanisms are introduced.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/aided-by-weather-sri-lankas-lockdown-leads-to-decline-in-air-sea-pollution/>

201) *May 21*. The **PHILIPPINES** COVID-19 lockdown has exacerbated threats to activists fighting for their lands and their environment, with least 10 land defenders swept up in a series of arrests by security forces during the two-month lockdown period. Another defender, who was providing relief aid, was shot and killed by unknown assailants.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/deaths-arrests-and-protests-as-philippines-re-emerges-from-lockdown/>

202) *May 23*. Thanks to its geographic isolation, a stay-at-home order and a mandatory 14-day quarantine for all arrivals, **HAWAII** as had some of the lowest rates of Covid-19 in the US. But the quarantine essentially halted tourism in Hawaii, which accounts for a quarter of the economy. As a result, nearly one-third of the state's working population has applied for unemployment.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/may/23/hawaii-coronavirus-reopening-tourism>

203) *May 23*. **CANARY ISLANDS** gear up to reopen for tourists by early July. Since the start of this month, the region's tourism ministry has led a team of more than 200 people, including health and industry professionals, to hammer out protocols for everything from hotels to restaurants and museums. The aim is to rebrand the islands, which include Lanzarote and Tenerife, as tourist destinations that offer safety along with the usual sun, sand and sea. The new protocols embrace physical distancing: hotel common areas are set to be enlarged and sunbeds moved apart; buffet breakfasts will be served, making use of partitions to separate guests from the food and extra serving staff; and all-inclusive vacations will rely on either automated machines or extra staff to serve drinks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/23/canary-islands-reopen-to-tourists-offering-sun-sea-sand-and-safety>

204) *May 23*. The reopening of traveling to and from all **GREEK ISLANDS** is taking place on Monday, as citizens had so far only been able to travel to Crete, due to the coronavirus travel bans.

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/252996/article/ekathimerini/news/traveling-to-and-from-all-greek-islands-resumes-on-monday>

205) *May 25*. The **MALDIVES** authorities announced their strategy to revive the tourism sector after the coronavirus lockdown. However, this has little to do with sensible measures and much to do with taking advantage of the situation.

<https://www.tourism-review.com/maldives-criticized-of-government-enrichment-plans-news11555>

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2020/the-choices-we-make-will-determine-the-future-of-the-maldives.html>

<https://www.timesnownews.com/business-economy/economy/article/india-to-fund-500-million-6-7-km-bridge-project-in-maldives-starts-air-travel-bubble-with-island-nation/636490>

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/rapid-livelihood-assessment-impact-of-the-covid-19-crisis-in-the-maldives.html>

[https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/MDV\\_Socioeconomic-Response-Plan\\_2020.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/MDV_Socioeconomic-Response-Plan_2020.pdf)

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/maldives-economy-hit-hard-by-covid-19-pandemic/>

206) *May 25*. Caribbean tourism struggles as visitors stay home. The absence of holidaymakers due to the Covid-19 pandemic is keenly felt on **ANTIGUA** for which, like many of its counterparts, tourism has long been its breadbasket. Often dubbed the "most tourism-dependent region in the world", the Caribbean attracted more than 31 million visitors last year. For some islands, the sector accounts to a colossal two-thirds of gross domestic product.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-52723056>

207) *May 26*. Drone technology is to be used to deliver protective equipment to a hospital on a **SCOTTISH ISLAND**. Over the next two weeks, masks and a dummy cargo will be flown between Oban in mainland Argyll and the Isle of Mull. The 10-mile journey, normally involving a road trip and a 45-minute ferry sailing, should take only 15 minutes. The trial could pave the way for drones to be used in the transport of medical test samples and other supplies.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-52796907>

208) *May 26*. Doctors and medical professionals from around the globe have called on world leaders to ensure a green recovery from the coronavirus crisis that takes account of air pollution and climate breakdown. More than 200 organisations representing at least 40 million health workers – making up about half of the global medical workforce – have signed an open letter to the G20 leaders and their chief medical advisers, pointing to the 7 million premature deaths to which air pollution contributes each year around the world.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/26/world-health-leaders-urge-green-recovery-from-coronavirus-crisis>

209) *May 26*. **ICELAND** eased its national alert against the coronavirus on Monday, allowing for public gatherings of up to 200 people and night clubs and gyms to reopen as the country nears complete recovery from the outbreak. The North Atlantic nation, which limited the virus spread through a meticulous test and trace strategy and a full lockdown, has confirmed 1,804 infections and 10 deaths. But there have been only five reported new cases in May, and more than 99% of infected persons have recovered.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-iceland/bars-gyms-reopen-as-iceland-exits-emergency-coronavirus-alert-idUSKBN2311EI>

210) *May 27*. Using dinghies, GPS and a portable refrigerator, doctors deployed by Greece's national public health agency have launched a coronavirus testing drive on the country's **AEGEAN SEA ISLANDS** ahead of the summer vacation season. Ferry service for visitors to the islands resumed Monday, and Greece plans to start welcoming international travelers again on June 15. The government hopes the comparatively low number of confirmed coronavirus cases and deaths in Greece - just under 2,900 cases with 173 deaths – will attract foreign tourists and ease the effects of an expected recession.

<https://apnews.com/article/5f2fe3f51807aa6943009e465fd5727a>

211) *May 27.* **CYPRUS** has pledged to cover the holiday costs of anyone who tests positive for the virus after travelling there. In a letter made public on Wednesday, the government said it would pay for accommodation, medicine and food for patients and their families. Tourists "will only need to bear the cost of their airport transfer and repatriation flight". It is part of a package of measures aimed at drawing visitors back to the island, which has reported few cases. According to Johns Hopkins University data, the country has confirmed 939 infections and 17 deaths.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-52818749>

212) *May 27.* Already among the most remote countries on earth, **PACIFIC** island states saw their vital economic links weakened in recent months with the evaporation of tourism, severe disruptions to international trade, and a reduction in remittances. For these countries, the COVID-19 pandemic may cut deeper than even some of the worst cyclones from years past. The International Monetary Fund provides detailed reports.

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/05/27/na-05272020-pacific-islands-threatened-by-covid-19>

[https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/news/article.cfm?mnarticle\\_uid=3FD4B555-7D65-4101-B30C-4DFA74E09BA1](https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/news/article.cfm?mnarticle_uid=3FD4B555-7D65-4101-B30C-4DFA74E09BA1)

[https://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0036/1197189/Pacific-islands-tourism-during-COVID-19.pdf](https://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0036/1197189/Pacific-islands-tourism-during-COVID-19.pdf)

213) *May 28.* **SCOTTISH ISLANDS:** Guinea pigs for post-lockdown measures?

<https://www.dw.com/en/scottish-islands-guinea-pigs-for-post-lockdown-measures/a-53595580>

214) *May 28.* EU pledges coronavirus recovery plan will not harm climate goals. Following the unveiling of a €750bn (£671bn) recovery plan to pull EU economies out of the deep economic downturn caused by coronavirus, the European commission announced further details of green spending on Thursday. The commission argues it can raise €150bn in public and private money, up from a pre-crisis goal of €100bn, to help fund greener transport, cleaner industry and renovated homes. At the heart of the plan, the EU proposes to more than quadruple to €40bn a "just transition fund" aimed at moving coal-dependent regions away from fossil fuels.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/28/eu-pledges-coronavirus-recovery-plan-will-not-harm-climate-goals>

215) *May 28.* With commercial flights resuming operations on Monday next week, the **SEYCHELLES** government has set out guidelines and strict measures to welcome back tourists and give a well-needed boost to the floundering tourism industry.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/4802/government-sets-out-guidelines-to-kick-start-tourism-recovery>

216) *May 30*. The killing of a young forest ranger by suspected poachers has underscored that illegal hunting in **SRI LANKA**, and the bushmeat trade it feeds, hasn't stopped during the lockdown imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/in-sri-lanka-bushmeat-poachers-havent-let-up-during-lockdown/>

217) *May 31*. Residents on **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** explain how they've kept coronavirus at bay, how lockdown has changed their communities, and why they're reluctant to ease restrictions too soon.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/life-under-lockdown-scotlands-remote-islands-2866992>

218) *May 31*. Early in the Covid-19 outbreak, the **SHETLAND ISLANDS** were one of the worst-hit areas of the UK by head of population. Now, no new cases have been detected there for six weeks. Some experts say it offers the rest of the country a route map out of lockdown - but for the first family on the islands to test positive, it hasn't been easy.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-52823510>

219) *June 1*. For 143 **PALAU** citizens trapped overseas by coronavirus travel restrictions, the journey home, always long, will be especially tortuous. To reach their Pacific island home they face six long weeks of quarantine – two in Guam, two in a hotel in Palau, and then another two weeks of self-isolation at home. They will also face at least five Covid-19 tests. But some Palauans fear that even these measures will not be enough. Palau, in the north Pacific, is one of a handful of countries globally with zero cases of coronavirus. Having closed its borders on 22 March, the country has grappled with how to bring home its citizens, trapped abroad, particularly in the US, without importing the virus. The topic has proven hugely divisive as the government has sought to balance the rights of citizens to return with the need to keep its small population safe.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/02/fear-will-always-be-there-covid-free-island-prepares-to-bring-home-stranded-citizens>

220) *June 1*. How **ICELAND** beat the coronavirus – a detailed article how the country didn't just manage to flatten the curve; it virtually eliminated it.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/06/08/how-iceland-beat-the-coronavirus>

221) *June 2*. Locked down afloat in the **PHILIPPINES** - why dozens of cruise ships have ended up stranded in Manila Bay. Before the pandemic, the vessels would have been welcomed for the dollars their passengers brought. These days, the ships only bring potential coronavirus carriers. Two of the most notorious ships, the Diamond Princess and Ruby Princess, are among the fleet in Manila Bay. They've been turned away by other countries but the Philippines, which provide most of the world's maritime workers, allowed them to dock and disembark its citizens. But the scale overwhelmed the government, which was testing not just returning cruise ship crews but tens of thousands of other overseas workers who arrived in airports.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/02/locked-down-afloat-why-dozens-of-cruise-ships-ended-up-stranded-in-manila-bay>

222) *June 2.* Puffins breeding off the Northumberland coast on the **FARNE ISLANDS** may expand their usual nesting grounds as tourists stay away because of coronavirus, experts have predicted.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-52882553>

223) *June 2.* Fears for **SHETLAND** economy after multimillion pound Islands Growth Deal reportedly 'parked' due to Covid-19.

<https://www.shetlandtimes.co.uk/2020/06/02/fears-for-shetlands-economy-after-multimillion-pound-islands-deal-reportedly-parked-due-to-covid-19>

224) *June 3.* Is the **CARIBBEAN** winning the war against COVID-19? The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in the Caribbean on March 1, 2020, when an Italian tourist in the Dominican Republic fell ill. On March 19, that country, which shares a border with Haiti, declared a state of emergency and to date, still has the highest number of positive cases in the region. But how is the rest of the Caribbean faring? Are there signs of steady management of the virus? Is the Caribbean past the worst - or simply enjoying a quieter period before the much-feared second wave? What restrictions remain in place, and how are Caribbean nations working toward opening up, especially with regard to travel and tourism, both mainstays of regional economies? In this, the first of a two-part series, we will offer a quick overview of how various Caribbean nations have been dealing with COVID-19. In the second part, we will examine the need to reopen regional economies - the majority of which are tourism-dependent - and the threat that this may pose.

<https://globalvoices.org/2020/06/03/is-the-caribbean-winning-the-fight-against-covid-19/>

<https://globalvoices.org/2020/06/03/restarting-caribbean-economies-under-threat-of-covid-19/>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590051X20300083>

225) *June 3.* The **CARIBBEAN** islands have laid out their plans for a "new normal" among locals as well as welcoming back visitors after being forced to take a pause as the coronavirus pandemic swept across the globe. In the interim, many islands - like **ARUBA** and **ST LUCIA** - took the virtual alternative and provided dreamy beach island vibes online, but we all know that nothing can replace the real thing. Below is each island's reopening plan along with the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus each has recorded since the beginning of the outbreak, according to Johns Hopkins University.

<https://people.com/travel/caribbean-islands-opening-travel-coronavirus/>

226) *June 4.* Following its launch in April, the **FAROE ISLANDS** Remote Tourism Tool has allowed 700,000 people from 197 countries to explore the island remotely. Of the 700,000, over 1,000 people have had the chance to explore the nation with a Faroese guide via a live video camera and a remote control. The virtual visitors were

able to 'control' the exploration by transforming their PC, tablet or phone into a joypad, and requesting their guide to turn, walk, jump or run across the island within a 60-minute-long tour. The top five countries providing visitors to the Remote Tourism website are: the USA (54,983 visits); Russia (38,830 visits); Italy (19,360 visits); Ukraine (15,597 visits; and the UK (12,385 visits).

<https://www.c-mw.net/faroe-islands-welcome-700000-virtual-visitors/>

227) *June 4.* The particular problems island nations have in the Covid-19 crisis. **ANTIGUA & BARBUDA** imports at least 80 per cent of its food, according to estimates by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The government is now providing its citizens with seedlings to try to lower the country's reliance on food imports and feed itself. It is also distributing food to tourism sector workers, as Covid-19 puts a halt to activity in this sector.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2020/06/trouble-paradise-particular-problems-island-nations-covid-19-crisis>

228) *June 4.* The Swedish island of **GOTLAND** is almost entirely dependent on summer tourism for its economy, so business-owners here are waiting even more eagerly than most for a delayed decision on domestic travel over summer. Earlier in the outbreak, there was especially strict advice to avoid non-essential travel to lesser populated areas like Gotland, due to fears that the healthcare system would not have capacity to handle any sharp rise in illness. In one Facebook video from Gotland shared widely ahead of Easter, healthcare workers stood outside a field hospital with signs reading: "We go to work for you. Please stay at home for us even if home is on the mainland". The video asked people not to travel there, saying that the region's healthcare was designed to take care of numbers based on permanent residents. But as the outbreak drags on, struggling businesses are calling for a compromise that allows some travel and assistance to the affected companies. If tourists are not allowed to travel from mainland Sweden to the eastern island, it's likely that bankruptcies and growing unemployment will follow.

<https://www.thelocal.se/20200604/swedens-summer-island-of-gotland-waits-anxiously-for-domestic-travel-decision>

229) *June 4.* As the **PACIFIC** islands assess ways to build back economies severely struck by the COVID-19 crisis, the environmental impacts faced worldwide highlight the opportunity we now have in our hands to build back a 'Bluer Pacific'. Key to this is an environmental component in all post COVID-19 recovery plans across our Pacific islands region.

<https://www.sprep.org/news/aiming-for-a-bluer-pacific-in-post-covid-19-recovery-plans>

230) *June 5.* In the **PHILIPPINES**, May has long been a month of joy when farmers harvest their rice crop and celebrate the Pahiyas harvest festival. But this year, the mood was sombre. The food production and supply system also affected, thanks to the coronavirus lockdown, and the economy frozen. As a result, millions of Filipinos, especially senior citizens, are now looking at an uncertain future.

[http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/06/philippines\\_senior\\_citizens\\_vulnerabilities\\_increase/](http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/06/philippines_senior_citizens_vulnerabilities_increase/)

231) *June 5.* Unleashing the potential of local community enterprises in the **CARIBBEAN** will help to ensure that COVID-19 economic recovery is fair, environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and resilient. This effort is supported by the release of *The Local Green-Blue Enterprise Radar: A tool for community enterprises* by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in collaboration with the Green Economy Coalition (GEC).

<https://canari.org/uncategorized/canari-releases-the-lge-radar-toolkit/>

232) *June 5.* **MADAGASCAR** education minister has been fired over plans to order more than \$2m (£1.6m) worth of sweets for schoolchildren. Rijasoa Andriamanana said pupils would be given three lollipops each to mask the "bitter" aftertaste of an untested herbal remedy for coronavirus. The plan was called off after objections from Madagascar's president who is promoting the herbal tonic Covid-Organics as a coronavirus cure. Several African countries continue to import Covid-Organics believing it will help combat the virus, but the World Health Organization has warned that no proven cure exists.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-52929925>

233) *June 5.* **GALAPAGOS** girds for life without tourism. As much of Ecuador went into lockdown against the coronavirus, scientists shipped out of the Galapagos, leaving important research activity frozen and the Pacific archipelago's tourism in deep crisis. Authorities are desperately hoping for a revival of the vital tourism industry - the main engine of the local economy - once visitors are allowed to fly in again from July 1. In the meantime, local officials say they have to take a leaf out of English naturalist Charles Darwin's book and "adapt to survive."

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200605-adapt-and-survive-as-galapagos-girds-for-life-without-tourism>

234) *June 6.* Surgical masks are washing up in growing quantities on the shores of **HONG KONG**, a city that has overwhelmingly embraced face coverings to fight the coronavirus.

<https://hongkongfp.com/2020/06/06/anti-virus-face-masks-plague-hong-kongs-beaches/>

235) *June 6.* The failure of governments and central banks to set out a green recovery from the coronavirus crisis is threatening to derail vital UN climate talks aimed at staving off global catastrophe, campaigners have warned. The vast majority of the stimulus money so far announced by governments around the world is set to prop up the fossil fuel economy, according to analyst company Bloomberg New Energy Finance. More than half a trillion dollars worldwide – \$509bn (£395bn) – is to be poured into high-carbon industries, with no conditions to ensure they reduce their carbon output. Only about \$12.3bn is to go towards low-carbon industries, such as renewable energy, and a further \$18.5bn into high-carbon industries provided they achieve climate targets.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/06/covid-19-relief-for-fossil-fuel-industries-risks-green-recovery-plans>

236) *June 6.* Fears for future of **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** life amid online deliveries boom.

<https://www.scotsman.com/regions/inverness-highlands-and-islands/fears-future-scottish-island-life-amid-online-deliveries-boom-2876707>

237) *June 7.* **CUBA** sets example with successful programme to contain coronavirus. The World Health Organization has identified Latin America as the new centre for coronavirus pandemic, but over the last two months, cases in Cuba have fallen. Cubans are now 24 times less likely to catch the virus than Dominicans, 27 times less likely to catch it than Mexicans, and more than 70 times less likely to be infected than Brazilians. Desperate for tourist revenue, Cuba closed its border later than most other countries in the region. But ever since the communist-ruled island shut out the outside world in late March, it has thrown everything but the kitchen sink at the virus. The state has commanded tens of thousands of family doctors, nurses and medical students to “actively screen” all homes on the island for cases Covid-19 – every single day. That means that from Monday to Sunday, Dr Liz Caballero, and her medical students from El Vedado polyclinic in Havana must walk for miles, monitoring the 328 families on her beat.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/07/cuba-coronavirus-success-contact-tracing-isolation>

238) *June 7.* At the outset, Arranmore decided to shut down early as many of the **IRISH ISLANDS** did, worried about Covid-19 spreading like wildfire through a confined population. The islanders are now reaping the benefit of that policy now with no Covid infections, though there is still a way to go. Over 47% of Arranmore’s population is over 65 so if it did come in it would be a major threat to those with underlying health conditions.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/property/homeandoutdoors/arid-31003867.html>

239) *June 7.* Illegal fishing appeared to spike during the **PHILIPPINES** lockdown period as commercial fishers took advantage of reduced patrols to ply coastal waters that they’re prohibited from fishing in, satellite tracking data indicate.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/lockdown-allowed-illegal-fishing-to-spike-in-philippines-satellite-data-suggest/>

240) *June 8.* More than 16,000 **PACIFIC** people work in the maritime sector, many of whom remain stranded in foreign countries or on vessels as a result of COVID-19. Across the Pacific, local restrictions have severely curtailed access to supplies like fuel for local fishing boats, bringing to the fore the issue of food security and the need for longer term, sustainable solutions. In **FIJI**, traditional boatbuilding is making a resurgence as some communities are discovering the benefits of wind-powered canoes over outboard engines for inter-island transport over short distances. Due to COVID-19 the communities of Moturiki relied on wind-powered transport to provide food and

to access the local health centre as they were unable to access fuel supplies during the lockdown period.

<https://www.globalissues.org/news/2020/06/08/26496>

241) *June 8.* **NEW ZEALAND** lifts almost all Covid restrictions, declaring the nation virus-free.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-52961539>

242) *June 8.* **KAUAI** is Hawaii's fourth largest island and is sometimes called the "Garden Island" thanks to the tropical rainforest covering much of its surface. This is the first installment of an eight-part series diving into the island's efforts for economic recovery. Broadband infrastructure, cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and implementing a new model for visitor travel are among the ideas that can leverage Kauai's future post-coronavirus.

<https://www.thegardenisland.com/2020/06/08/hawaii-news/restarting-kauai/>

243) *June 8.* The COVID-19 pandemic has yielded unexpected environmental benefits, as wildlife explore urban streets and 2020 carbon emissions drop by the largest amount since World War II. But now researchers are wondering if a record hot and sunny start to the Arctic sea ice melt season could be linked to the coronavirus lockdown.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/climate-conundrum-could-covid-19-be-linked-to-early-arctic-ice-melt/>

244) *June 10.* **PACIFIC** island nations are urging Australia and New Zealand to include them in a planned travel "bubble", as flights across the region resume. The region has had very low numbers of Covid-19 infections – just 305 confirmed cases to date – due to its geographic isolation and the strict enforcement of border closures. Fiji and New Zealand this week declared themselves free of Covid-19, while other Pacific nations, including Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Tonga, have successfully kept the virus from their shores altogether.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/11/pacific-countries-plead-for-inclusion-in-trans-tasman-bubble-as-travel-restrictions-ease>

245) *June 10.* An organisation representing 900 west coast tourism businesses has told Scottish ministers that ferry services having to keep to two-metre social distancing rules "wipes out any tourism season for 2020" - warning that the "restrictions are completely unsustainable for **SCOTTISH ISLAND** life."

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18506580.coronavirus-social-distancing-ferry-restrictions-completely-unsustainable-island-life/>

246) *June 12.* With just over 1,200 cases and ten deaths, it may appear that **MADAGASCAR** has been spared the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic. But in the deep south of the country, the crisis is casting a shadow of despair over a drought-stricken land, pushing people deeper into destitution. The hunger crisis created by the

drought and compounded by the pandemic could force people to lean even more heavily on nature; to impinge on forests and consume more wild meat to survive.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/one-two-punch-of-drought-pandemic-hits-madagascars-poor-and-its-wildlife/>

247) *June 13.* Island isolation over as Greece lets tourists back. The halt to global travel has proved devastating to a Mediterranean country such as Greece, where tourism makes up as much as 30% of economic output and commands up to one in five jobs. It welcomed a record 33 million visitors last year, and for many **GREEK ISLANDS** tourism is the main source of private sector employment. However, some island residents are now wondering if this could be an opportunity to move to a more sustainable tourism model.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53006794>

248) *June 14.* As coronavirus kicked mass tourism so many island destinations, including **HAWAII**, are looking at dozens of ideas for a green post-pandemic recovery. In some places, the shift away from mass tourism may be out of necessity rather than choice. On the **PHILIPPINES** island of Siargao, farmers quit the fields to become tour guides when visitor numbers surged about three years ago but since coronavirus hit, the government has encouraged people to return to farming, and many are doing so. The state has provided seeds and is buying up locally grown rice to distribute it back to the population.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-tourism-environment/as-pandemic-kicks-mass-tourism-islands-look-to-mend-ties-with-nature-idUSKBN23L01W>

249) *June 14.* Almost 11,000 German holidaymakers will begin arriving in the **BALEARIC ISLANDS** from Monday as part of a pilot scheme to help Spain reactivate its tourism sector, following the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The “safe tourist corridors” initiative will serve as a trial run as Spain prepares to reopen its borders to EU countries and those in the Schengen area on 21 June. At the request of the Portuguese government, the land border with Spain will not open until 1 July.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/14/balearic-islands-prepare-to-welcome-11000-german-tourists>

250) *June 15.* The **INDONESIA** government has announced a list of 89 priority projects, tagged at \$100 billion, to jump-start the economy out of the current COVID-19-induced slump. To speed up the projects, the government has issued a new regulation on eminent domain that will make it easier to take over community lands, including those of indigenous groups, and degazette forests to allow them to be cleared, experts warn. The new regulation is the latest in a slate of deregulatory policies that conservationists, environmental activists and indigenous rights defenders say will harm the country’s biodiversity, its climate commitments, and most vulnerable communities. Among the projects are nickel smelters that are applying to dump their toxic waste into the sea; a high-speed railway line that’s part of the China-

backed Belt and Road Initiative; and a rice estate spanning 900,000 hectares (2.2 million acres) on carbon-dense peatlands.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/indonesia-national-strategic-project-infrastructure-road-railway-dam-smelter-nickel-peatland/>

251) *June 15*. The **ISLE OF MAN** has become the first place in the British Isles to scrap social distancing and embrace what the chief minister called the "new normal". The island has seen no new cases of coronavirus since 20 May, leading the government to dispense with most of its lockdown restrictions.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-53049117>

252) *June 16*. The coronavirus pandemic is "just a fire drill" for what is likely to follow from the climate crisis and the protests over racial injustice around the world show the need to tie together social equality, environmental sustainability and health, the UN's sustainable business chief has said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/15/covid-19-pandemic-is-fire-drill-for-effects-of-climate-crisis-says-un-official>

253) *June 16*. Arctic tourism, such as cruise ship voyages off **SVBALBARD**, has been hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic. But officials in Russia are optimistic about the prospects of a post-pandemic jump in Arctic tourism.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/moscow-aims-for-a-massive-post-covid-boost-in-arctic-tourism/>

254) *June 17*. Pandemics such as coronavirus are the result of humanity's destruction of nature, according to leaders at the UN, WHO and WWF International, and the world has been ignoring this stark reality for decades. The illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade as well as the devastation of forests, and other wild places were still the driving forces behind the increasing number of diseases leaping from wildlife to humans. The leaders are calling for a green and healthy recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular by reforming destructive farming and unsustainable diets.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/17/pandemics-destruction-nature-un-who-legislation-trade-green-recovery>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/17/coronavirus-warning-broken-relationship-nature>

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/covid19-urgent-call-to-protect-people-and-nature>

255) *June 17*. With the COVID-19 pandemic contained following a strict two-month lockdown, **SRI LANKA** relaxed restrictions in late May 2020. But now, several farming communities are facing a second crisis in the form of hungry grasshoppers destroying their crops.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/in-sri-lanka-crop-destroying-insects-follow-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

256) June 17. Farmers help save **PACIFIC** economies as Covid-19 brings tourism to halt. Pacific Islanders have been receiving seeds and encouraged to start their own backyard gardens to be food self-sufficient. A barter system was put in place in Fiji, so residents could keep eating a wide variety of foods. And, an unintended consequence of border closures, reliance on imported foods fell in favour of fresh, local foods, a welcome development in a region with some of the world's highest rates of Type 2 diabetes and heart diseases.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/419193/opinion-farmers-help-save-pacific-economies-as-covid-19-brings-tourism-to-halt>

[http://www.fao.org/uploads/pics/COVID-19\\_impacts\\_on\\_food\\_systems\\_in\\_PICs\\_CRFS\\_.pdf](http://www.fao.org/uploads/pics/COVID-19_impacts_on_food_systems_in_PICs_CRFS_.pdf)

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/food-for-cities-programme/news/detail/en/c/1278570/>

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8994en/CA8994EN.pdf>

257) *June 17.* Of all the calamities that befell tourists as the coronavirus took hold, those involving cruise ships stood apart. Contagion at sea inspired a special horror, as pleasure palaces turned into prison hulks, and rumours of infection on board spread between fetid cabins via WhatsApp. Trapped in close proximity to their fellow passengers, holidaymakers experienced the distress of being both victims and agents of infection, as a succession of ports refused them entry. Besides the cruise industry this detailed article also covered nature-based tourism with reference to **INDONESIA**.

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/jun/18/end-of-tourism-coronavirus-pandemic-travel-industry>

258) *June 18.* The confirmation of new Covid-19 cases in New Zealand and the associated administrative bungles has dampened some enthusiasm for a travel bubble with the **PACIFIC**.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/419340/enthusiasm-for-nz-travel-bubble-into-pacific-dampens>

259) *June 19.* **MALLORCA** welcomes a more sedate breed of German tourist following a pilot programme to reactivate Spain's tourism sector.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/19/mallorca-welcomes-a-more-sedate-breed-of-german-tourist>

260) *June 19.* Women in **MALTA** seeking an abortion during the pandemic are being forced to procure their own miscarriage or keep an unwanted pregnancy, even when the child has a severe abnormality. It is estimated that between 300 and 400 women from Malta travel abroad for an abortion each year, with the UK often their country of choice. But with flights restricted and quarantine rules in place, women have been unable to leave the country and some have taken illegal abortion pills at home in lockdown.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/19/charities-report-rise-in-maltese-requests-for-abortion-pills-during-lockdown>

261) *June 19*. After a three-month-long closure in an effort to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, **SRI LANKA** opened its key national parks to the public on June 15 under strict health guidelines. Vehicle numbers entering parks have been restricted to prevent overcrowding of popular wilderness areas, and e-ticketing has been introduced to reduce physical contact. Experts have also called for urgent revision in visitation procedures to improve visitor behavior and limit numbers to minimize disturbances to park animals.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/sri-lanka-reopens-national-parks-post-lockdown-with-strict-guidelines/>

262) *June 19*. The air quality in the **PHILIPPINES** capital region is returning to its usual noxious levels as COVID-19 lockdown measures are loosened up. But this backslide into business-as-usual can be preempted if local governments adapt existing measures and transition to cleaner energy technologies, a new report says.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/as-lockdown-ends-manilas-dirty-air-is-back-it-doesnt-have-to-stay/>

263) *June 19*. Entire season in jeopardy for **SVALBARD** expedition cruising.

<https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/travel/2020/05/entire-season-jeopardy-svalbard-expedition-cruising>

264) *June 19*. It had been a triumphant story of national unity and political leadership combining to vanquish a virus that still plagues most nations on the planet. But just a week after **NEW ZEALAND** celebrated having rid the country of COVID-19 and the government lifted all restrictions on daily life except controls on entering the country, the one vulnerability in its defences – its borders – was dramatically laid bare. The failure to test returning travellers before they left quarantine, and reports of slipshod standards at the hotels where they are placed in government-managed isolation, threatened political fallout for Jacinda Ardern's government, which was heralded worldwide for having flattened the Covid-19 infection curve with a swift, early lockdown of the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/19/from-celebration-to-dismay-the-week-covid-19-re-emerged-in-new-zealand>

265) *June 19*. Students and healthcare services on **MAINE ISLAND** communities stay connected. One of the elements of this adaptation has been through the use distance learning technology and telemedicine also depends on quality broadband connections.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2020/06/19/students-and-healthcare-services-maines-island-communities-stay-connected>

266) *June 21*. The **INDONESIA** government has lifted a moratorium on the release of captive wild animals, imposed earlier this year as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus into wildlife populations. Orangutan

rescue centers have welcomed the decision as they struggle with crowded facilities and rising operational costs but say they won't release any orangutans anytime soon, as the great apes are likely vulnerable to the coronavirus.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/indonesia-resumes-release-of-captive-wildlife-amid-covid-19/>

267) *June 23.* Cabinet to examine Covid-19 visitor restrictions to offshore **IRISH ISLANDS** but it is understood that while many businesses are happy with the early opening, there is resistance from residents who want to stay closed for a longer period.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/cabinet-to-examine-covid-19-visitor-restrictions-to-offshore-islands-1.4285684>

268) *June 24.* As Spain welcomes back tourists, the tiny Balearic island of **FORMENTERA**, sometimes called Ibiza's sister island, finds 'hearts divided' between hope and anxiety.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/as-spain-welcomes-back-tourists-this-tiny-island-finds-hearts-divided-with-hope-and-anxiety-2020-06-24>

269) *June 24.* In April and May, Malama **KAUAI** helped deliver 6,000 bags of local produce to families in need. The money from those purchases went to local farmers. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, many nonprofits and organizations have centered their responses on helping the community.

<https://www.thegardenisland.com/2020/06/24/hawaii-news/malama-kauai-connecting-farmers-to-the-community/>

270) *June 25.* Tourists who test positive for coronavirus while on holiday on **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** will be expected to travel home, potentially using special isolation facilities on board ferries to stop the further spread of the virus.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/island-ferry-operators-asked-provide-isolation-facilities-positive-covid-19-tourists-2894859>

271) *June 25.* Though **MADAGASCAR** officially has just under 1,800 reported infections and 16 deaths from COVID-19, the pandemic's socioeconomic effects will be catastrophic for the country, the U.N. has warned. One tangible impact has been the fire season, which has started early and is likely to be fiercer this year as rural residents deprived of tourism revenue, employment opportunities and access to food markets turn to the forest to survive. The environment ministry registered 52,000 forest fire incidents from January until the start of June, with the western flank of the country, which hosts its unique dry forests, being the worst-affected.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/06/in-madagascars-dry-forests-covid-19-sparks-an-intense-early-fire-season/>

272) *June 25.* While the coronavirus continues its deadly progress in countries and cities around the world, some **SIDS** in the Commonwealth are cautiously lifting lockdowns and relaxing their preventive measures. In these uncertain times, it is more

critical than ever for SIDS - more appropriately labeled as “big ocean states” due to their huge marine territories - to manage their greatest natural resource sustainably and strategically. As pointed by Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, this means reforming national development strategies to support robust blue and green economies that will deliver a lasting shift to sustainability and resilience in the long term. The post-coronavirus era is a time for big ocean states to “build back bluer” and put into action innovative and resilient solutions that utilize their vast resources in a way that will benefit generations to come.

<https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-now-is-the-time-for-big-ocean-states-to-build-back-bluer-97553>

[https://oceanpanel.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/20\\_HLP\\_Report\\_COVID\\_Blue\\_Recovery.pdf](https://oceanpanel.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/20_HLP_Report_COVID_Blue_Recovery.pdf)

<https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/THT%20163%20FINAL.pdf>

273) *June 25.* A cautious approach is required to reopening the **WESTERN ISLES** of Scotland to tourists as lockdown eases, some islanders have warned. The islands have seen just eight confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the outbreak began - the latest just this week. Health chiefs have credited lockdown restrictions and islanders' adherence to social distancing measures for there being so few cases. But with tourism due to resume in the coming weeks, and staycations expected to be popular, some in the isles are urging further caution in the days and weeks ahead.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-53177039>

274) *June 26.* **HAWAII** residents are facing economic devastation not seen since the Great Depression. Federal stimulus funds are helping to soften the blow but the \$1,200 payments to individuals, and the \$600 weekly increase in unemployment benefits are set to run dry by the end of July. What would a Green New Deal look like on the Big Island, led by local people and the county government? What would it mean to “think B.I.G.” (Big Island Green)?

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/06/think-b-i-g-think-big-island-green/>

275) *June 26.* Outgoing Gaeltacht minister Sean Kyne has expressed disappointment at the Government decision to approve early re-opening of offshore **IRISH ISLANDS** to visitors from Monday. Two Aran islands – Inis Oírr and Inis Mór – held surveys which overwhelmingly rejected an early reopening. A number of other islands have limited health facilities, lack of provision for public toilets, and limited scope for social distancing on piers during busy ferry berthing periods.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-31007740.html>

<https://www.rte.ie/news/connacht/2020/0708/1152161-aran-islands/>

276) *June 27.* The **ALAND ISLANDS** in northern Europe may come into its own in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Cruise-ferry companies -whose revenue models are heavily-reliant on shopping and restaurant sales - are looking to this archipelago in the Baltic Sea to refloat their duty-free business thanks of the islands' unique tax treatment within the European Union. Aland is a province of Finland lying

to its west, with a population of less than 30,000. For historical reasons the official language is Swedish but, more importantly, it is autonomous.

277) *June 27.* **KANGAROO ISLAND** struggles to recover amid bushfire grief and COVID-19. To date, \$14m in government money has been distributed to help those on Kangaroo Island rebuild farms and business or cover loss of income. Another \$2.29m in donations to the SA Bushfire Appeal has been distributed to 645 people. Meanwhile, what was left of the 119 homes and 106 other structures that burned have only just been pulled down and hauled away in recent weeks. The process was delayed when 106 sites were identified as containing asbestos – a problem on an island where everything has to come in by boat. Now that is done the island has a clean slate, giving the community the chance to make plans for the future while coming to terms with grief, loss and survivor’s guilt. Those in the tourism business are watching as interstate travel begins to open back up and authorities talk about setting up intra-regional flights to places like New Zealand.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jun/28/shell-shock-kangaroo-island-struggles-to-recover-amid-bushfire-grief-and-covid-19>

278) *June 28.* After months of strict Covid-19 lockdowns and resolutely closed borders, **FIJI** is open – for billionaires. The Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama, has announced the country is looking to attract “VIPs” to help restore Fiji’s paralysed tourism-dependent economy. He also said the country would welcome travellers arriving by yacht who were prepared to spend 14 days at sea – or make up the balance in quarantine in Fiji.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/28/escape-the-pandemic-in-paradise-fiji-opens-its-borders-seeking-billionaires>

279) *June 29.* Without strong support, the sudden and unexpected fall in tourism could devastate the economies of **SIDS**, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has warned. Since tourism is a strong socio-economic pillar of many SIDS, the impact that COVID-19 is having on the sector places millions of jobs and businesses at risk, with women and informal workers the most vulnerable. In the second of its Briefing Note series on Tourism and COVID-19, UNWTO has highlighted the severe impact the pandemic could have on livelihoods in these destinations. According to the latest data from the United Nations specialized agency, tourism accounts for more than 30% of total exports in the majority of the 38 SIDS. In some countries, this proportion is as high as 90%, making them especially vulnerable to falling tourist numbers. Such a major shock translates into a massive loss of jobs and a sharp decline in foreign exchange and tax revenues, which curbs public spending capacity and the ability to deploy necessary measures to support livelihoods through the crisis, UNWTO further warns.

<https://www.unwto.org/news/small-island-destinations-in-critical-need-of-urgent-support-as-tourism-plunges>

280) *June 30.* The latest figures are a wake-up call: the global Covid-19 crisis isn’t close to over. It took more than three months for the world to record 1 million cases of Covid-19. The latest 1 million cases were clocked up in a week, taking the total to more than 10 million. On Sunday 28 June, the world recorded more than 190,000 new

cases in a single day, a new record. It is time to look again at the numbers and face the facts. South Korea and **TAIWAN** are no longer “emerging”. They have emerged. Indeed, they have overtaken much of the west in terms of affluence, technological sophistication and the basic public security they offer their fortunate citizens.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/30/covid-19-global-health-crisis-solutions-america-india-africa>

281) *June 30.* Despite the tourism and fisheries sectors’ susceptibility to shocks, ESCAP’s latest report, the Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report: Leveraging Ocean Resources for the Sustainable Development of **SIDS**, emphasizes fisheries and tourism will remain drivers of sustainable development. They are among the most important sectors in their contribution to output and their importance for livelihoods. In the short term, addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic must take priority, but the long-term global context will usher in an era supportive of tourism development in Asia-Pacific **SIDS**. This is due to an increasing demand from the emerging middle class of developing Asia and the ageing society in the developed countries on the Pacific Rim.

<https://www.unescap.org/op-ed/sustainable-tourism-and-fisheries-key-growth-post-covid-pacific>

282) *July 1.* **INDONESIA** is reopening dozens of conservation areas to local and foreign tourists after months of closure, even as the number of COVID-19 infections in the country continues to climb. The authorities earlier this year closed all such areas in a bid to prevent coronavirus from spreading to wildlife. But the closure has had a devastating financial impact on local communities that depend on tourism business linked to the parks.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/07/indonesia-reopens-national-parks-to-tourists-as-covid-19-cases-rise/>

283) *July 1.* **INDONESIA** government is allocating \$195 million from the state budget to subsidize producers of palm oil biodiesel, justifying the move as necessary to boosting the economy out of a pandemic-induced slump. Campaigners have blasted the move, noting that the fund through which the money will be channeled is meant to empower small oil palm farmers and not subsidize the giant multinationals that produce biodiesel.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/07/indonesia-subsidy-palm-oil-biodiesel-producers-smallholders-b30/>

284) *July 2.* 'Civil war' breaks out over arrival of tourists to **SCOTTISH ISLANDS**.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18554927.civil-war-breaks-arrival-tourists-islands/>

285) *July 2.* **SEYCHELLES** promotes safe travel in effort to restart tourism.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/5240/seychelles-promotes-safe-travel-in-effort-to-restart-tourism>

286) *July 5.* **SRI LANKA** authorities are insisting on cremation for coronavirus victims - a practice forbidden by Islam. The nation's minority Muslim community argue it's the latest step in a pattern of discrimination by the majority Sinhalese population. A petition against the cremation rule has been accepted by the country's Supreme Court, which will begin hearing the case on 13 July. Many Muslims in Sri Lanka feel they have been demonised since April 2019, when Islamists linked to little-known local groups targeted high-end hotels and churches in Colombo and in the east of the country, killing more than 250 people in a spate of devastating attacks.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-53295551>

287) *July 5.* Calls for ferry clarity as **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** prepare to welcome visitors. There are islands and then there are double islands. The leader of Orkney Islands Council has to figure out how to maintain lifeline services to what he calls “our double insular places, the ones that take two journeys to get to”. His concern is that the need for social distancing has reduced capacity on the ferries which dart between Orkney’s outer islands. And that means tourists who book could take the seats of locals who do not.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18562192.calls-ferry-clarity-islands-prepare-welcome-visitors/>

288) *July 6.* The world is treating the health and economic symptoms of the coronavirus pandemic but not the environmental cause, according to the authors of a UN report. As a result, a steady stream of diseases can be expected to jump from animals to humans in coming years, they say.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/06/coronavirus-world-treating-symptoms-not-cause-pandemics-un-report>

289) *July 6.* Milder weather is expected to bring about a less severe forest fire season across **INDONESIA** this year compared to 2019. But cutbacks to fire-prevention measures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and deregulation could still see large amounts of haze generated, threatening an already precarious public health situation in the region.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/07/covid-19-indonesia-forest-fire-haze-dry-season/>

290) *July 6.* Like most countries around the world, **BERMUDA** has been struck by the catastrophic impact of Covid-19. Bermuda's only daily newspaper, The Royal Gazette, published a 22-point plan to economic recovery written by Cole Simons in his capacity as the Shadow Minister of Economic Development that he hopes the government will consider.

<https://www.royalgazette.com/other/article/20200706/a-22-point-plan-to-economic-recovery/>

291) *July 7.* **INDONESIA** agriculture minister has been condemned by health experts for claiming that a necklace made from eucalyptus can help prevent transmission of Covid-19.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/07/indonesia-minister-in-row-over-eucalyptus-necklace-covid-19-claim>

292) *July 7.* Ambassador Lois M Young, who is Belize's Permanent Representative at the United Nations and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), writes that 'Innovative Financial Approaches Key to Unleash **SIDS** Economic Potential'.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/07/innovative-financial-approaches-key-unleash-sids-economic-potential/>

293) *July 8.* As Spain scrambles to save its vital tourism industry from the threat of a blank year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some sense an opportunity to change perceptions about Spanish holidays and start a move upmarket that has been long on the agenda. If tourism is vitally important to the Spanish economy, accounting for 12% of GDP, nowhere is it more crucial than in the **BALEARIC ISLANDS**, where it represents 35% of the region's economic output. Not everyone is sighing in relief at the return of tourists to Majorca and the other islands. Local environmentalists criticise the over-dependence on a sector that has transformed the archipelago's landscape, while creating employment that is largely low-paid and seasonal in nature as property prices and even rents skyrocket beyond the means of most employees.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53248728>

294) *July 8.* **CHATHAM ISLANDS** tourism on the rise as Covid travel restrictions change Kiwis' plans.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/go-nz-chathams-islands-tourism-on-the-rise-as-covid-travel-restrictions-change-kiwis-plans/44T2VQVA3SY6FMY3DX4LHYTXGU/>

295) *July 8.* **PUERTO RICO**, still reeling from old disasters, is slammed by COVID-19. Gov. Wanda Vázquez was the first governor in the nation to order businesses to close and people to stay home. Experts say that her quick action helped stave off an even worse medical crisis on the island. But the pandemic has nonetheless plunged Puerto Rico into its fifth dire emergency in three years, one that the government has struggled to manage.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/coronavirus-puerto-rico-economy-unemployment.html>

296) *July 8.* With COVID-19 lockdowns, Brazil's capacity to monitor for illegal fishing has plummeted. Many on the ground say people have been quick to take advantage of the situation such as in the **ABROLHOS ARCHIPELAGO** Marine National Park, one of the most biodiverse zones in the South Atlantic.

<https://www.hakaimagazine.com/news/in-covids-shadow-illegal-fishing-flourishes/>

297) *July 8.* The **SEYCHELLES** National Park Authority goes traditional as part of its covid response by allowing a local farmer on La Digue to harvest pig yam (a confirmed invasive species) for animal feed, so its removal is assisting SNPA with its restoration work of the reserve; and elsewhere to utilise timber that would otherwise go to waste for charcoal burning thus cutting down on importation of such products.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/5302/snpa-goes-traditional-as-part-of-its-covid-response>

298) *July 8*. Youth resilience to COVID-19: indigenous knowledge in **TUVALU**.

<https://devpolicy.org/youth-resilience-to-covid-19-indigenous-knowledge-in-tuvalu-20200708/>

<https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/blogs/reducing-covid-19-risk-through-population-relocation-and-closed-borders-effects-pandemic>

299) *July 9*. How a single doctor fights to keep COVID-19 from reaching his rural town. Anthony Cortez protects the 56,000 residents of Bambang, **PHILIPPINES**, through contact tracing, quarantine -and gossip.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/07/how-single-doctor-fights-covid-19-reaching-his-rural-town-philippines/>

300) *July 9*. For many Marshallese, the pandemic poses a tragic irony. Thousands of them left the **MARSHALL ISLANDS** - a string of 1,156 islands and islets spread across 750,000 square miles of ocean - to seek better jobs and a healthier life in the United States, where they can work without visas. Now they find themselves facing a lethal crisis while their distant homeland so far remains free of COVID-19.

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/coronavirus-clobbers-marshall-island-communities-120045272.html?>

301) *July 10*. A test project using powerful drones to fly urgent medical samples from isolated **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** is being expanded this winter after successful recent trials. The tests will involve flying blood and fluid samples from Hebridean islands such as Coll and Tiree to hospital labs on the mainland in a fraction of the time needed to take them by road and ferry.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jul/10/nhs-expands-drone-transport-of-samples-from-scottish-islands>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-55733908>

302) *July 10*. It's the typical wet, winter in New Zealand that should bring peak season for the **COOK ISLANDS**. Instead, Rarotonga resorts are on the brink of collapse and in danger of taking the islands' tourism-reliant economy with them. Travel restrictions from New Zealand - the Cooks Islands' only air link - are strangling the country's tourism sector. Operators and residents on the Covid-free islands say this is being done needlessly. An end to wage subsidies looms at the end of September, and the tourism sector is begging for an exception to New Zealand's overseas travel restrictions.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/to-deny-cook-islands-travel-bubble-is-criminal-tourism-operators/SOP5RQYODA2CB4SBEQ2G2E25AM/>

303) *July 10*. The Covid-19 pandemic is the “job-killer of the century”, Fiji’s prime minister has said, as economies across the **PACIFIC** face collapse from economic

and travel shutdowns, exacerbating existing illnesses, and potentially driving people into hunger.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/11/job-killer-of-the-century-economies-of-pacific-islands-face-collapse-over-covid-19>

304) *July 12.* Swept in by the tide, heaps of plastic bottles, styrofoam and broken fishing gear accumulate on **MAINE ISLANDS** each year. To clean up this mess, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) usually organizes annual trips, filling boats with volunteers armed with trash bags. But this year, COVID-19 put a halt to that program, and MITA - like many nonprofit conservation organizations - has had to rethink how it operates. As a solution, the organization launched the new Call to Oars initiative this spring, inviting all recreational boaters to adopt Maine islands for the season and clean them up. So far, dozens of boaters have answered the call, logging more than 100 island cleanups.

<https://bangordailynews.com/2020/07/12/act-out/with-annual-clean-ups-canceled-island-group-recruited-boaters-to-keep-maine-islands-clean-this-summer/>

305) *July 12.* Attempts to control a growing coronavirus outbreak in **INDONESIA**, the worst-hit country in south-east Asia, are being hampered by a lack of testing, poor communication from the government and the promotion of bogus cures, health experts have warned. The country has so far recorded more than 74,000 cases and 3,535 deaths from the virus, though it is feared that this could be a vast underestimate. While testing rates have improved, they remain among the lowest in the world.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/12/indonesia-is-failing-to-control-coronavirus-outbreak-warn-experts-testing-government-messages-bogus-cures>

306) *July 12.* The governor of **OKINAWA ISLAND** in Japan has demanded that a United States military commander take tougher prevention measures and have more transparency after officials were told more than 60 marines at two bases have been infected with the coronavirus over the past few days.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/12/okinawa-demands-answers-from-us-after-61-marines-contrast-coronavirus>

307) *July 13.* Investing in the marine environment offers many coastal states the possibility of a “blue recovery” from the coronavirus crisis, according to a report setting out substantial economic benefits from ocean conservation. Ending over fishing and allowing stocks to recover while ensuring fish farms operate on a sustainable basis would generate benefits of about \$6.7tn (£5.3tn) over the next 30 years, according to an assessment of ocean economics by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. The panel is made up of 14 serving world leaders, co-chaired by Norway and **PALAU**, and is supported by the UN.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/13/oceans-panel-presses-coastal-states-to-invest-in-blue-recovery>

308) *July 13.* While most of the UK grapples with the gradual easing of the lockdown restrictions while still tackling the coronavirus outbreak, the three Crown

Dependencies, the **ISLE OF MAN**, and Bailiwicks of **JERSEY** and **GUERNSEY** are experiencing near to normal life. The three self-administering islands have been free to take their own approach to subduing the outbreak since the first cases hit in March, spelling out a different kind of lockdown for its residents – and frictions between some of the islands.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/coronavirus-jersey-guernsey-isle-of-man-air-bridge-quarantine-rules-519805>

309) *July 14*. New Zealand's first travel bubble could be on its way after the **COOK ISLANDS** deputy prime minister said his country was ready to welcome tourist flights as early as next week.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/14/new-zealand-and-cook-islands-work-on-travel-bridge-to-beat-tourism-slump>

310) *July 14*. When Europeans retreated into their homes to observe strict stay-at-home rules to contain the coronavirus, dolphins and whales on the Mediterranean coast basked and thrived in a hitherto unknown calm. But the return of tourists, noisy boats and heavy sea transport with the end of lockdowns in France and other Mediterranean littoral countries has signalled the return of danger and harm caused by human activity for underwater creatures. The lockdown brought maritime traffic to an almost complete standstill, giving dolphins and whales the opportunity to explore areas from which they are normally kept at bay by tourists. All scientific studies were put on hold in the Mediterranean during lockdown, but marine drone manufacturer Sea Proven got the necessary authorisation and funds from Prince Albert II of Monaco to continue observations in the **PELAGOS SANCTUARY**, a marine area protected by Italy, Monaco and France. The sanctuary covers an area of 87,500 sq. km and 2,022 km of coast. It extends across the waters of a number of islands, including Corsica and northern Sardinia as well as smaller islands such as the islands of Hyères, Liguria, the Tuscan Archipelago and the Strait of Bonifacio.

<https://phys.org/news/2020-07-paradise-regained-lost-med-mammals.html>

311) *July 15*. Tackling the global nature crisis could create 400m jobs and \$10tn (£8tn) in business value each year by 2030, according to a report published by the World Economic Forum. The report warns that when the world recovers from the coronavirus pandemic there can be no business-as-usual, with today's destruction of the natural world threatening over half of global GDP.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/15/nature-led-coronavirus-recovery-could-create-10tn-a-year-says-wef>

312) *July 15*. "You've been through a lot this year and it looks like you need the perfect place to let your frustrations out. Somewhere big, vast, and untouched: It looks like you need Iceland." These are the words of a new advertising campaign from Promote **ICELAND** that invites people around the world to scream out their lockdown frustrations. The screams are recorded via the campaign's website and "released" into Iceland's landscapes via speakers set up across the country.

<https://www.icelandreview.com/travel/iceland-invites-you-to-scream-out-your-lockdown-frustrations/>

313) *July 16*. Businesses on the **SCOTTISH ISLAND** of Arran have warned about the impact on tourism if travel to and from the island remains difficult for visitors. The ferries, operated by CalMac, cannot carry as many passengers as normal due to rules on physical distancing.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-53430330>

314) *July 16*. The High Level Political Forum 2020 at the UN finishes up this week, and the chair of the Alliance of Small Island States has called on leaders to address “debt sustainability” to help us survive climate and covid shocks. Specifically, we are calling on the international financial institutions and community to work with us to:

- re-examine their eligibility criteria for **SIDS** access to concessional loans and grants.
- suspend debt service on public external debt – or extend temporary standstills on external public debt for at least a two-year period, for those that request it.
- allow private creditors to join in debt suspension initiatives to ease the strain on official sources of debt relief and provide a more holistic management of the crisis.
- negotiate in the medium term, a multilateral debt workout mechanism to reduce external debt to a sustainable level.
- address the pressing challenges of de-risking and maintaining critical correspondent banking relationships in SIDS. In our efforts to bolster future economic stability, it is imperative that SIDS can effectively engage in the global financial system.
- in the longer term, undertake a comprehensive SIDS vulnerability assessment.
- design a toolkit of alternative solutions which explores innovative financial instruments such as debt swap mechanisms, to contribute to long-term and comprehensive solutions towards debt sustainability.

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/07/16/small-islands-need-debt-shakeup-survive-climate-covid-shocks/>

315) *July 16*. As coronavirus cases climb in California and many U.S. states, some Pacific Island nations have safely ridden out the storm. The **MARSHALL ISLANDS** is still COVID-19 free. “We saw the threat and took action early,” said Jack Niedenthal, secretary of Health for the mid-Pacific island nation, describing the island nation’s March 3 travel ban, which prevented incoming travelers from across the globe. The Marshallese government had banned travelers from China several weeks earlier.

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-07-16/as-covid-19-cases-climb-in-the-u-s-there-are-still-none-in-the-marshall-islands>

316) *July 17*. The economic impact of coronavirus is a “tinderbox” that will drive civil unrest and instability in developing countries in the second half of 2020, according to new analysis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/17/protests-predicted-to-surge-globally-as-covid-19-drives-unrest>

317) *July 17*. The **LAKSHADWEEP** archipelago, with a total land area of 32 sq km and home to about 70,000 people, has not reported a single COVID-19 case so far though cases are rising in other parts of the country. Since the lockdown came into effect on March 23, no one had been allowed to reach the islands without a seven-day quarantine followed by a COVID-19 test, all at the expense of the island administration.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/an-island-that-has-kept-coronavirus-at-bay/article32116812.ece>

318) *July 17*. For anyone tired of dodging coronavirus, sick of arguments over masks or just fed up with the home office grind, **BERMUDA** has an offer: a year at the beach. The British Overseas Territory of 64,000, known for its pink sand shorelines and balmy climate, is offering one-year, renewable residency certificates for remote workers and post-secondary students. It’s pitching itself as a refuge as Covid-19 cases continue to climb in other countries and upend rules about where people can work.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-17/bermuda-pitches-island-life-as-escape-from-pandemic-madness>

319) *July 18*. Residents on the **ISLE OF EIGG** have asked visitors not to come to the island until September. Tourism has been opened up across the rest of Scotland, but islanders said they wanted to protect “elderly and vulnerable” residents. The ferry also has reduced capacity and the islanders say priority must be given to trades people and islanders wishing to visit loved ones.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-53458547>

320) *July 18*. As the world reels from the impact of COVID-19, evidence from the Amazon shows that the pandemic disproportionately affects remote indigenous people. Given this, a grave danger looms over the **ANDAMAN ISLANDS**, which are home to four historically isolated communities, and all of them belong to particularly vulnerable tribal groups.

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/as-covid-19-reaches-the-andaman-islands-the-story-of-the-great-andamanese-tribe-should-be-a-wake-up-call-for-administrators/article32122699.ece>

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/environment/covid-19-threatens-indigenous-peoples-of-andaman-and-nicobar-70633>

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/covid-19.html>

321) *July 19*. Social distancing during a pandemic is not so much of a problem if you have your own private island to escape to. The sale of an **IRISH ISLAND** attracted

interest "from all corners of the globe," according to the agents who helped seal the deal. The buyer was not alone in shopping for a private island during the pandemic. The coronavirus outbreak appears to have sparked international interest in this very niche market, according to German businessman Farhad Vladi who has been in the trade for more than 50 years.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-53430666>

322) *July 19.* The number of new cases of coronavirus rose by almost 260,000 in 24 hours - the largest single-day increase since the pandemic began, the World Health Organization said on Saturday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-53454558>

323) *July 20.* Some 11.8 million visitors flooded **MALLORCA** in 2019, dwarfing the local population of under a million. The cost of living has skyrocketed, a trend aggravated by the conversion of family homes into vacation rentals. Environmental impacts have been grave. Tourism pushed water usage to the brink. Developments chewed into fragile hillsides, and planes plus vast fleets of rental cars generated air pollution that left some locals in masks long before the pandemic began. For now, Mallorca has largely escaped the worst of the virus, with under 2,300 confirmed cases as of July 17. And despite the terrible toll of the pandemic on both lives and livelihoods globally, some residents are wondering if it might also present a chance to remake tourism on a smaller scale that favours meaningful encounters over the masses.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/photography/2020/07/mass-tourism-has-troubled-mallorca-for-decades-can-it-change-0>

324) *July 21.* Local authorities on the Swedish island of **GOTLAND** have recruited knights from regional medieval re-enactment group Torneamentum to help curb the risk of the coronavirus spreading. The so-called 'Covid Knights' are set to visit some of Gotland's most popular sites this summer, including beaches and the medieval town of Visby, carrying signs with messages such as "keep your distance", "stay at home if you have symptoms" and "wash your hands often".

<https://www.thelocal.se/20200721/swedish-island-recruits-medieval-knights-to-help-people-keep-a-distance>

325) *July 22.* On **FIJI** locals are adapting a communal kava drinking ceremony to prevent coronavirus transmission by hosting virtual events on Facebook Live. Participants traditionally sit in a circle, close to each other, and one after the other, they take turns to drink the beverage. Fijians scoop the kava from a large communal bowl, tanoa, into bowls made from coconut shells, called bilo. They may use their own individual bilo or pass one bilo around, rinsing it in a water bowl in between participants.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/food/article/2020/07/22/how-pandemic-changed-kava-drink-sharing-among-fijians>

326) *July 22*. Hospitals in **MADAGASCAR** have warned they are overwhelmed after a spike in coronavirus cases in a country where the president has been promoting a herbal drink to treat the virus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-53499803>

327) *July 23*. Deserted beaches, empty bars: Covid-19 devastates **THAILAND** tourist islands like Koh Samui. About 40 million tourists flocked to Thailand last year, drawn by its spectacular coastlines, ornate temples and famous cuisine. Yet in 2020, the country will struggle to attract even a quarter of that number, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/23/deserted-beaches-empty-bars-covid-19-devastates-thailands-tourist-islands>

328) *July 23*. A **MAINE ISLAND** lobsterwoman Julie Eaton fights for her livelihood. Today, in the spring of 2020, Maine's lobstermen – and women – face pronounced challenges: an ageing fleet, a bait shortage, regulations that restrict vertical fishing lines in order to protect endangered right whales, and a decrease in trade with China after Trump's trade war. "The pandemic is killing us," Eaton who lives on Deer Isle, and fishes Penobscot Bay tells me. "It's a terrible thing. We have no market, but lots of lobsters." Maine fishers confront other hurdles: working docks are disappearing, and the opioid crisis has reduced the reliability of crew. Climate change – the great accelerant – is warming the Gulf of Maine and shifting lobster populations north.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/23/maine-lobsterwoman-coronavirus-climate-change>

329) *July 23*. Most countries in the Caribbean have done a great job of containing the COVID-19 pandemic, with a few notable exceptions, namely, **HAITI** and the **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**. A University of Oxford study highlighted **TRINIDAD** as being among the most successful. However, management of wildlife and illegal hunting in that country remains ineffective and might lead to an outbreak of another zoonotic disease.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/07/trinidad-skilfully-handles-covid-19-falls-short-wildlife/>

<https://www.looptt.com/content/deyalsingh-oxford-university-report-puts-tt-excellent-light>

330) *July 23*. The cost of preventing further pandemics over the next decade by protecting wildlife and forests would equate to just 2% of the estimated financial damage caused by Covid-19, according to a new analysis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/23/preventing-next-pandemic-fraction-cost-covid-19-economic-fallout>

331) *July 23*. The rumble generated by humanity took a big dive during the Covid lockdowns. Everything we do - from driving our cars to operating our factories - produces ground motions that can be detected by seismometers. An international team

of researchers says this noise fell by up to half when coronavirus restrictions were enforced.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-53518751>

332) *July 23.* COVID-19 cases worldwide have surpassed 15 million, and nearly 620,000 deaths. On Thursday, the World Health Organization urged people everywhere to play a part in preventing further spread of the disease, warning that there will be no return to “the old normal”.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068941>

333) *July 24.* Eco-tourism is the way of the post-covid future for the ‘blue’ **PACIFIC**.

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL2007/S00153/eco-tourism-is-the-way-of-the-post-covid-future-for-the-blue-pacific.htm>

334) *July 24.* **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** Covid-19 outbreak could overwhelm its health system within days, the country’s pandemic chief has warned, as masks have been made compulsory in the capital, and the government has called in the World Health Organization and the military for help.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/25/we-dont-have-enough-beds-png-hospitals-braces-for-covid-19-surge>

335) *July 24.* Free ferry scheme swamps **DANISH ISLANDS** with extra tourists. Islanders on Fanø, which is close to west coast city Esbjerg, say they are tired of the spike in tourism this year, a result of the increase in Danes holidaying domestically as the coronavirus crisis curbs international travel.

<https://www.thelocal.dk/20200724/free-ferry-scheme-swamps-danish-islands-with-extra-tourists>

336) *July 25.* Spain is taking new measures to cut a spike in coronavirus cases, amid fears of a more widespread “second wave”. The UK says all those returning from Spain must self-isolate for 14 days from Sunday. This includes the **CANARY ISLANDS** and **BALEARIC ISLANDS**, although those destinations are not included in the UK's new general warning to avoid all but essential travel to mainland Spain.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53539015>

337) *July 25.* The **BARBADOS** Welcome Stamp, which has just started taking applications, gives international visitors the opportunity to work remotely on the island for up to a year. Palm trees, sun, and blue skies sound like a dream to many, but even stunning locations have their pros and cons, especially during a pandemic. So what can remote workers expect if they take up the tempting offer?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-53385227>

<https://barbadoswelcomestamp.bb/>

338) *July 26.* **HAWAII** avoided a coronavirus spike – but its tourist economy is shattered. While other states in the US, such as Florida and Texas, saw huge spikes in Covid-19 cases as state governments worked to reopen economies, Hawaii instead rolled out a policy that deliberately stopped tourism to ensure the health of its residents. People who break quarantine are subject to arrest and a fine of up to \$5,000. Hawaii has been strict in enforcing the rules, arresting nearly 200 people, visitors and residents, since March.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/26/hawaii-coronavirus-tourism-economy-impact>

339) *July 26.* Luck? Genetics? The tiny Italian island of **GIGLIO** spared from covid outbreak.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/luck-genetics-italian-island-spared-from-covid-outbreak/2020/07/26/fa6ca25a-cf17-11ea-99b0-8426e26d203b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/luck-genetics-italian-island-spared-from-covid-outbreak/2020/07/26/fa6ca25a-cf17-11ea-99b0-8426e26d203b_story.html)

340) *July 26.* Pete Lingard is the senior ranger with Parks and Wildlife Service on the 115 square-kilometre **MARIA ISLAND**, which sits off the east coast of Tasmania. COVID-19 meant the island, popular with tourists and locals alike, was closed to visitors for several months, creating unique circumstances for the rangers left behind to caretake. Mr Lingard said as the island sat (mostly) uninhabited by humans, the wildlife changed its behaviour and became more "chill", and grass returned to places usually kept down by foot traffic.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-26/meet-maria-island-ranger-in-isolation-during-covid-19-pandemic/12483794>

341) *July 28.* In wake of the COVID-19, BirdLife is adapting its conservation programmes in **SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE** islands to address the economic and social crisis caused by the pandemic, seeking to herald a green future in this island state.

<https://www.birdlife.org/africa/news/anchoring-green-recovery-sao-tome-and-principe>

342) *July 28.* **PACIFIC** Small Island Developing States have health care systems with a limited capacity to deal with pandemics, making them especially vulnerable to the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus. This paper examines the introduction, transmission, and incidence of COVID-19 into Pacific SIDS.

<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/15/5409>

343) *July 29.* In a parallel universe, festival season is in full swing, while flights to Mallorca and Ibiza are filled with Brits ready to hit the clubs. But most of those clubs are closed. And while the coronavirus pandemic has ruined many plans for the summer, one country has spotted an opportunity. Four music festivals are planned in **MALTA** over the next few months. Malta has a population of 450,000 and has had 701 coronavirus cases and nine deaths. The country relies heavily on tourism, with about half a million Brits visiting every year. It's now on the government's green light

travel list. But unsurprisingly, there are concerns about what might happen if loads of people pile onto the island.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-53395609>

344) *July 29*. When the MV *Tustumena* departed the seaside community of Homer, Alaska, in early June, it carried hopes that the state's beleaguered ferry system might be returning to life. Like most Alaska ferries, the "Trusty Tusty" had been out of service for months, so when the ship eased from Homer's dock, goods and people were once again moving along the coast. But that optimism was fleeting. Four days later, when the MV *Tustumena* reached Dutch Harbor in the **ALEUTIAN ISLANDS**, a crew member tested positive for COVID-19. Most passengers were evacuated - others quarantined - and when the ship reached Homer, six more crew members tested positive. In response, Alaska's Department of Transportation decided to cancel MV *Tustumena* sailings indefinitely.

<https://www.hakaimagazine.com/news/covid-19-is-taxing-alaskas-beleaguered-ferry-system/>

345) *July 30*. **NAURU** remains COVID-19 free by ensuring testing systems work well.

<https://www.loopnauru.com/coronavirus/nauru-remains-covid-19-free-ensures-testing-systems-work-well-93725>

346) *July 30*. **PACIFIC** islands: The cost to tomorrow of the crisis today. The brunt of the Covid-19 recession will be borne by developing nations, where youth populations are dominant.

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/pacific-islands-cost-tomorrow-crisis-today>

347) *July 30*. For many islands in the Caribbean, the coronavirus presents an impossible dilemma. Some islands have closed to visitors to protect their citizens but severed a key economic lifeline. Others have remained open to tourism and risked exposing a populace to a pandemic that has overwhelmed the capabilities of far richer countries. **CUBA**, the largest island in the Caribbean, is a good example of what the entire region faces. Some countries are already witnessing the peril of reopening too soon. The **BAHAMAS** reopened to tourism on July 1 after a two-month lockdown, confident the islands had the spread of coronavirus under control. Almost immediately, the number of cases in the Bahamas spiked. Many tourists came from Florida, which has had more than 430,000 coronavirus cases, a figure larger than the entire population of the Bahamas.

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/caribbean-reopening-dilemma-pandemic/index.html>

348) *July 30*. Last month, a small collection of islands in **HAWAII** made history. Two of its four counties have committed to using a feminist recovery plan - entitled "Building Bridges, Not Walking on Backs: A Feminist Economic Recovery Plan for Covid-19" - as a guide for their strategies. Both voted to do so unanimously,

and have already started using it as a guide for where to allocate their share of federal recovery money. A third county is voting to do the same soon. The state is also working on a universal basic income bill, with a feminist framing, one of the key policies in the document.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/women-and-girls/one-place-planning-feminist-economic-recovery-covid-19/>

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/4.13.20-Final-Cover-D2-Feminist-Economic-Recovery-D1.pdf>

349) *July 30*. Until recently, **HONG KONG** was considered a poster child in its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite sharing a border with mainland China, where the first cases were reported, Hong Kong kept its infection numbers down and was able to avoid the extreme lockdown measures introduced in parts of China, Europe and the US. But now, it's been hit by not even a second, but a third, wave of infections. The government has warned its hospital system could face collapse, and it's just had a record high number of new infections in a day. What went wrong, and what lessons are there for countries juggling both the pandemic, and the economic pain caused by lockdown?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-53596299>

350) *July 31*. A daily high of 3,954 cases was recorded in the **PHILIPPINES** on Thursday, bringing the total number of cases to 89,374. There have been just under 2,000 confirmed Covid-related deaths. Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte announced on Friday that restrictions in the capital Manila would remain until mid-August. Manila is currently under a general community quarantine - which limits the movement of the elderly and children, and imposes other restrictions. The president also promised that free vaccines would be given out - when one is eventually released - with lower-income Filipinos prioritised. Somewhat bizarrely, the president once again told people to disinfect their face masks with petrol - insisting he was "not joking". He had made similar remarks last week - but officials were quick to correct him, and suggested it was a joke. Health officials also said cloths masks should be washed normally, and surgical masks replaced after use. But on Friday, the president doubled down - saying "what I've said was true... go to a gasoline station". There is no evidence that gasoline can disinfect masks; having prolonged contact with it can be harmful; and pouring flammable liquids can be a fire risk.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-53605108>

351) *July 31*. In a fresh blow to refugees and migrants experiencing dire conditions in Greece, frontline medical charity Médecins San Frontières on Thursday announced it has been forced to close its Covid-19 isolation centre on **LESBOS** after authorities imposed fines and potential charges.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/31/greece-refugee-healthcare-crisis-island-camps-lesbos-moria-coronavirus>

352) *July 31*. The **GREEK ISLANDS** in July and August are not for the faint-hearted - and not just because of the heat. On a typical high season day, the tiny winding

streets and cafes of the must-see Greek islands such as Mykonos and Santorini will be so crowded with tourists that you'll get caught up in people jams. Not so this year, when the lack of flights up until mid-July and the almost complete absence of cruise ships has meant the islands have almost been transported back in time, to a place before mass tourism.

<https://www.cruisecritic.co.uk/news/5496/>

353) *July 31*. The possibility of lemurs contracting COVID-19 is worrying the **MADAGASCAR** scientific and conservation community. Members sounded the alarm in the days following the country's state of health emergency declaration in March, setting up an emergency unit designed to strengthen the protection of these animals, which are national emblems.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/07/endangered-and-endemic-madagascars-lemurs-susceptible-to-coronavirus-infection/>

354) *July 31*. NHS **WESTERN ISLES** joined forces with local folk rock band Peat and Diesel to relaunch the music video, 'My Island', with some key health messages on how to keep our islands safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://vimeo.com/443407921>

355) *July 31*. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a vulnerable landscape in the **PACIFIC** islands which transnational criminal organisations and local crime actors have been quick to capitalise on. As economies falter, criminal actors are seeking to take advantage of the vacuum with significant implications for human security.

<https://www.policyforum.net/profiteering-from-the-pandemic/>

356) *August 1*. Senior doctors in the **PHILIPPINES** have pleaded with the government to impose a strict lockdown in the capital Manila or risk losing the battle to contain the spread of coronavirus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/01/global-report-philippines-losing-battle-as-who-records-biggest-jump-in-covid-19-cases>

357) *August 1*. **BALI** is not only about tourism: Covid-19 prompts rethink for island's residents. With tourism devastated by the pandemic, many have returned to work the rice fields. Some believe they will never go back to the tourism industry and its reliance on foreign visitors.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/aug/01/bali-is-not-only-about-tourism-covid-19-prompts-rethink-for-islands-residents>

358) *August 2*. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the **CHATHAM ISLANDS**, first through the halting of crayfish and blue cod exports and then through the drying up of livestock and wool sales. Fishing and farming are the islands' main sources of economic revenue. This, coupled with a lack of tourism, has resulted in an estimated of \$20m in lost revenue to the island and unemployment of up to 30 per cent. The Government has agreed to provide \$36 million for an infrastructure project to lengthen and strengthen the runway at Tuuta Airport, on

Chatham Island as well as additional funding to develop a shellfish aquaculture industry and to help establish a dedicated tourism manager for the Chathams to grow the tourism sector. Through the One Billion Trees Programme, the islands will also receive more than \$1 million for two projects. Manukau Land Trust will receive \$856,635 to help restore indigenous flora and fauna to a coastal area that has been cleared and grazed for more than 100 years. Chatham Islands Taiko Trust will receive up to \$163,505 to build and upgrade nine micro-nurseries, and training eight nursery owners that will help realise their goal of producing an additional 62,500 seedlings per year.

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/big-boost-chatham-islands%E2%80%99-economy>

359) *August 2*. “Never let a good crisis go to waste.” Across the **PACIFIC**, leaders are holding fast to the old political maxim. Some, even, seem happy to have the Covid-19 crisis around. Even in countries where there is no actual public health emergency, governments are using the threat of the virus as cover for overriding or diluting basic democratic principles. Rather than pulling out all the stops to save their flailing economies, leaders are exploiting extraordinary emergency powers to secure themselves in positions of increasing impunity. In June this year, **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** government railroaded the National Pandemic Act 2020 through parliament. The provisions it contains make scant reference to actual public health issues. But it begins with a list of constitutional rights and freedoms it may constrain, including freedom of expression, freedom of association, and protection from arbitrary search and seizure. It also removes checks and balances on government spending, raising concerns that funds given to the government will not receive necessary scrutiny. Police Minister Bryan Kramer recently received a report of an audit investigation relating to claims that 23m Kina (AU\$9.2m), allocated for the country’s Covid-19 response, had been misspent on hire cars and media consultants.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global/2020/aug/03/we-cant-allow-pacific-leaders-to-use-coronavirus-as-a-cover-for-authoritarianism>

360) *August 3*. Covid-19 has been detected on at least two cruise ships – one in the Arctic and one in the Pacific – just weeks after cruising holidays restarted. Outbreaks of Covid-19 recorded on MS Roald Amundsen in **NORWAY** and the Paul Gauguin in **TAHITI**.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/03/two-cruise-ships-hit-by-coronavirus-weeks-after-industry-restarts>

361) *August 3*. If necessity is the mother of invention, then COVID-19 has been the ultimate catalyst for a period of accelerated adoption of technology in the **CAYMAN ISLANDS**. For example, over the next few months, tourists will report their health status through a BioButton affixed to their chests, ‘geo fencing’ will be used to ensure COVID-positive patients comply with quarantine measures, and smartphone apps will likely play a role in tracking and tracing contacts if there is a second wave of the pandemic locally. The Cayman Compass series of articles exploring Cayman's post-COVID future written by James Whittaker over several weeks are probably the best from any island.

<https://www.caymancompass.com/2020/08/03/smart-island-tech-investment-could-drive-new-economy/>

<https://www.caymancompass.com/2020/07/06/cayman-2-0-rethinking-the-vision-for-our-islands-post-covid-19/>

362) *August 3*. Four festivals scheduled to take place in **MALTA** this month have been cancelled due to a rise in Covid-19 cases on the island. (*See article 343*).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53642430>

363) *August 4*. How has COVID-19 impacted **PACIFIC** women and girls? As some Pacific island nations reverse COVID-19 related restrictions, states are beginning to shift their focus on rejuvenating their economies. This focus will need to recognize the disproportionate way women and girls are experiencing this global crisis, including impacts such as the increased rates of domestic violence and job losses. A COVID-19 Response Gender Working group formed by **FIJI** Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation recently undertook a rapid gender analysis with multiple development stakeholders.

<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/08/surviving-in-the-market-space>

[http://www.fwrm.org.fj/images/Gender\\_and\\_COVID\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_-\\_Rapid\\_Gender\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.fwrm.org.fj/images/Gender_and_COVID_Guidance_Note_-_Rapid_Gender_Analysis.pdf)

364) *August 4*. Tens of millions of people in the **PHILIPPINES** are back in lockdown, after doctors warned a surge in new coronavirus cases could push the healthcare system to collapse. Stay-at-home orders are now in place in Manila and four surrounding provinces on the island of Luzon for two weeks. The country only just emerged from one of the strictest lockdowns in June.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-53646149>

365) *August 4*. An audacious drug smuggling attempt and a coronavirus outbreak put pressure on **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** police chief.

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/covid-and-crime-twin-tests-papua-new-guinea>

366) *August 4*. Lockdown puts wildlife conservation on Devon's **LUNDY ISLAND** at risk as coronavirus has kept away day trippers that it relies on for funds.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/04/lockdown-puts-wildlife-conservation-on-devon-lundy-island-at-risk-coronavirus>

367) *August 5*. The Australian government will reopen the detention facility on the remote territory of **CHRISTMAS ISLAND** to house people currently in immigration detention on the Australian mainland. The Australian Border Force confirmed on Tuesday evening that people currently in immigration detention would be “temporarily” transferred to the centre at North West Point on Christmas Island,

where Australians returning from Wuhan were held in the first weeks of the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/aug/04/australian-government-to-reopen-christmas-island-detention-centre-during-covid-19-crisis>

368) *August 5.* Hundreds of miles from its nearest neighbour, the remote **FAROE ISLANDS** are surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. Fishing has always been a way of life, and fish accounts for 90% of all exported goods. But coronavirus is hitting efforts to increase tourism. To protect its population and economy from coronavirus, the Faroe Islands has one of the highest testing rates worldwide, with a strong track and trace and quarantine strategy. And every person is tested on arrival in the country. This preparedness was partly thanks to its fisheries. A veterinary laboratory established years ago to monitor disease, was adapted early in January, ready to help test human samples. This has no doubt contributed to the fact that the territory has reported not a single death from Covid-19. And it has seen only 227 confirmed cases in total.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53593137>

369) *August 6.* Cases of Covid-19 in **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** have spread to new provinces, forcing the closure of the massive Ok Tedi mine, and sparking warnings that a surge in infections, potentially in the thousands, could strike the country in the next few months. Ok Tedi mine – a hugely profitable gold and copper mine worth billions to the PNG government’s already-parlous finances – will be shut for “at least 14 days to limit further transmission and allow contact tracing, isolation and testing procedures to be implemented”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/06/papua-new-guineas-massive-ok-tedi-mine-closes-as-covid-cases-spread-to-new-areas>

370) *August 6.* **MAURITIUS** was the first African country to get the coronavirus under control. Now its challenge is how to let the tourists that are its economic lifeblood back in. The Indian Ocean island success in quelling the outbreak is unique in Africa and comes as the disease is spreading across the continent, with countries from Kenya to South Africa battling a surge in cases since movement restrictions were eased. Mauritius is one of the few places in the world that hasn’t had a locally transmitted infection in over three months. It recorded its last Covid-19 death on April 27 and has managed to keep the total number of confirmed cases to just 344. But in a country that relies heavily on tourism, the government is under increasing pressure to reopen its airport and rescue an industry that employs almost a fifth of its workforce.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-06/the-african-island-that-stamped-out-the-virus-now-needs-tourists>

371) *August 7.* A case of coronavirus in a remote **PHILIPPINES** tribe has highlighted the threats that the pandemic poses to a group that already suffers poor access to health care. The Mangyans, a group of eight tribal communities on Mindoro, have a long history of being discriminated against and being forced off their land by business interests and security forces. During the pandemic and lockdown, they have also reportedly been denied government aid, prompting calls for all governments to

ensure Indigenous rights are respected and adequate resources are allocated to Indigenous communities throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/08/for-the-philippines-mangyans-covid-19-extends-a-long-history-of-discrimination/>

372) *August 7.* The British **ANTARCTIC** Survey is scaling back its research in the polar south because of coronavirus. Only essential teams will head back to the continent as it emerges from winter and virtually all science in the deep field has been postponed for a year. BAS says it doesn't have the capacity to treat people if they get sick. And in consultation with international partners this past week, very strict procedures will now be put in place to keep the virus out of Antarctica.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-53699681>

373) *August 7.* The **FALKLAND ISLANDS** with 2,256 coronavirus tests processed, and no positive results for over 100 days, is leading among countries with small populations that have tested well over half of its population. The Falklands population in 2020 is estimated at 3,500, and has imposed very strict regulations regarding Visitor Policy. The Islands' health authorities together with the well equipped King Edward Memorial Hospital, and the community collaboration have been crucial to keep the virus at bay.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2020/08/07/falkland-islands-has-coronavirus-test-processed-some-65-of-its-population>

374) *August 8.* Three months after easing nationwide restrictions to stem the spread of the coronavirus, the government in Athens has placed the tiny Greek island of **POROS** into fresh lockdown following a sudden flare-up of infections in scores of locals and tourists. The lockdown comes as the coronavirus pandemic spreads rapidly in Greece, tripling infections in the past 10 days alone and marring the country's image as a near virus-free summer retreat. With a population of about 3,000, Poros, a one-hour jaunt from the Greek capital, has been a favorite destination this summer, attracting record numbers of tourists seeking a safe summer hideout from the coronavirus. But on Friday, most of Poros visitors were seen scrambling onto ferries bound for Athens or other islands.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greek-island-locks-down-covid-19-infections-soar-across-country>

375) *August 10.* US health secretary praises **TAIWAN** Covid-19 response in the highest-level US visit in more than four decades, as China flew fighter jets into the Taiwan strait just before the meeting.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/10/us-health-secretary-praises-taiwans-covid-19-response-during-rare-high-level-visit>

376) *August 10.* Beyond the health and economic crises of Covid-19, the global pandemic has the potential to cause political instability and undermine state security across the **PACIFIC**, the region's chief diplomat has warned. Dame Meg Taylor, secretary general of the Pacific Islands Forum, said the region's economies were

struggling with the virus-induced shocks, and a prolonged crisis could worsen existing problems of hunger, poor healthcare, and state fragility. Among the hardest-hit are tourism-reliant countries such as the **COOK ISLANDS**, **FIJI** and **VANUATU** because of border closures and lockdowns, described as “catastrophic”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/11/pacific-states-face-instability-hunger-and-slow-road-to-covid-recovery-dame-meg-taylor>

377) *August 11*. Nearly five months to the day since the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, Covid-19 infections have passed 20 million cases. In acknowledging the milestone, the health body’s chief warned against despair, saying if the virus could be suppressed effectively, “we can safely open up societies”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/11/global-report-coronavirus-cases-pass-20m-as-who-points-to-green-shoots-of-hope>

378) *August 11*. The pace of progress towards opening a travel bubble with coronavirus free Pacific countries has been frustrating for many, but with the pandemic still raging, there is reason for caution and several hurdles to clear. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday announced a travel bubble could be open with the **COOK ISLANDS** by the end of the year, with more assessments needed before any final decision could be made.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/423285/analysis-the-frustrating-pace-of-a-cooks-travel-bubble>

379) *August 11*. **FRENCH POLYNESIA** has recorded another 43 Covid-19 cases since Friday, in a fresh infection spike coinciding with last month's abolition of quarantine requirements. The latest cases were detected in Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora and Rangiroa.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/423280/french-polynesia-s-second-wave-of-covid-19-reaches-50-cases>

380) *August 11*. Employees from the tourism industry who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 are joining in an ambitious project to plant 500,000 trees in a bid to reforest **SEYCHELLES** second-most populated island. The project initiated by Seychelles Employee Transition Scheme will be implemented by the Terrestrial Restoration Action Society of Seychelles, a Praslin-based environmental group committed to the restoration of degraded terrestrial sites of the islands of Seychelles.

<http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/13342/%2C+trees+to+be+planted+in+Seychelles+by+Xmas+with+help+from+jobless+tourism+workers>

381) *August 11*. The **PALAU** Bureau of Tourism, Sustainable Travel International, and Slow Food have launched a new project in Palau that aims to mitigate the tourism sector’s carbon footprint and establish Palau as the world’s first “Carbon Neutral Tourism Destination.” The project is taking an innovative destination-level approach that includes promoting local food production within tourism and developing a carbon management program for tourists. In recent years, Palau has taken extensive measures to further environmental protection and responsible tourism. This includes

establishing one of the world's largest marine sanctuaries; creating the world's first mandatory eco-pledge (Palau Pledge) that all visitors are required to sign upon entry; banning tour operators from utilizing single-use plastics and styrofoam; and protecting its marine environment through the adoption of the world's strictest national sunscreen standard. If the current COVID-19 crisis has taught us anything, it's that we must strengthen our nation's resilience to external threats – the greatest of which is climate change," said Kevin Mesebeluu, Director of the Palau Bureau of Tourism. Palau embraces sustainable tourism as the only path forward in the new era of travel, and we believe that our destination can and must be carbon neutral.

<https://sustainabletravel.org/project-to-make-palau-a-carbon-neutral-destination-launched/>

382) *August 12*. The Republic of the **MARSHALL ISLANDS** remains one of only 11 nations in the world to have zero confirmed cases of COVID-19. Hawaii holds a special place in the hearts of RMI citizens, for whom the Aloha State is a second home to the thousands of Marshallese living and working across all four of the state's counties, for our student scholars attending local universities, and for whom Hawaii is the portal between the RMI and all eastbound ports of call. In the wake of this global pandemic, the Consulate of the Marshall Islands and Marshallese community members and organizations throughout Hawaii went above and beyond the call to support county, state, and federal efforts aimed at flattening the state's COVID-19 curve.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/08/covid-free-marshall-islands-works-to-blunt-hawaiis-curve/>

383) *August 14*. As the pandemic dries up traditional revenue sources, some **PACIFIC** island governments are considering diving into the unknown waters of deep sea mining. Mining advocates say the world badly needs polymetallic nodules on the seabed for materials to make batteries that will drive the carbon-free societies of the future, but it's a gamble which Pacific countries are being warned is too risky. One of the key players claiming to have the technology and finance to do the work is a Canada-based seabed mining company which has explorations contracts with Nauru, Tonga and Kiribati.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/423537/warning-for-pacific-governments-gambling-on-deepsea-mining>

384) *August 16*. Island nations have an advantage when it comes to stopping travellers importing disease, be it Covid or other infections. Seas are usually harder to cross than land, and beaches are easier to police. There are no cross-border towns, and fewer ways to sneak over frontiers. These advantages, combined with strict quarantine policies, have made island nations some of the most successful at containing Covid. But the ones that did best (like **NEW ZEALAND, TAIWAN, MAURITIUS, CUBA**) had shut themselves off from the world to varying degrees. And a fresh outbreak of cases in New Zealand last week suggests coronavirus can evade even tight controls.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/16/island-nations-have-the-edge-in-keeping-covid-away-or-most-do>

385) *August 16*. The **FAROE ISLANDS** has the highest frequency of COVID-19 in Europe. But why? The government reported its first confirmed case in March, after a man contracted the disease while on a visit to Paris, with other arrivals helping the virus to spread. After Denmark announced strict social measures to halt the disease's spread in early March, the Faroese followed suit. Despite having one of the highest frequency of cases in the world for a time in April, through mass testing and self-quarantine guidelines, the government were able to announce on 9 May that there were no longer any active cases on the islands. But after nearly four months of no new cases, COVID-19 returned to the islands in July. This is in part thanks to the country opening up its borders – first to Denmark, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, and Germany – and later to other EU and Schengen countries. Despite mandatory testing for visitors taking place from June onwards, the disease managed to spread through the islands. While there have been no deaths to date, and most incidences have been largely asymptomatic, the number of confirmed cases jumped from 191 on 18 July – with all but three recovered – to 365 on 13 August. Faroese police commissioner Michael Boolsen, who also heads the islands' epidemic commission, told CGTN Europe that the reason for the spike wasn't completely clear, but that it could have happened during the islands' biggest summer festival, St. Olaf's Day, on 29 July. The Faroe Islands' epidemic laws prevent major interventions seen in other European countries. The government has ordered the closure of restaurants and pubs from 11:00pm onwards, but commissioner Boolsen says, "that's the only thing that is actually possible at the moment within the legislation that we have." Instead, the government is relying on mass testing. According to the police chief, more than 2,000 people are being tested a day. "Considering that the population is 52,000 people, it's quite a lot," he says. The prime minister told CGTN Europe that while the Faroe Islands currently has a high percentage of coronavirus infections, by the end of next week, some 75,000 people would have been tested. That's around 150 percent of the Faroese population. "You could say that we have a huge world record for the number of tests," said Nielsen.

<https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2020-08-16/Faroe-Islands-has-highest-frequency-of-COVID-19-in-Europe-But-why--SXxTgFmQX6/index.html>

386) *August 17*. As countries around the world recalibrate their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **FIJI** Government is stepping up its strategies for a nature-based recovery. Among the financial allocations to various agencies towards environment-friendly and sustainable measures is a two million dollar budget for the Reforestation of Degraded Forests (RDF) programme which is coordinated by the Ministry of Forestry. "This money will enable the scaling up of efforts towards Fiji's tree-planting revolution which now has a target of 30 million trees in 15 years," says the Minister responsible for Forestry, Honourable Osea Naiqamu. He said that Fiji's tree-planting initiative which was launched by the President His Excellency Major-General (Retired) Jioji Konrote in January 2019 is gaining traction. "With the support of communities, private sector, civil society organisations, sporting bodies and development partners, Fiji was able to plant a million trees and mangroves in just 10 months last year." Minister Naiqamu said the new budget allocation will also enable the Ministry to continue the implementation of the 'Cash for Tree Planting' programme which provides the opportunity for Fijians who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 to earn some cash by planting trees in their communities. Additionally, the Ministry has helped establish more than 150 community nurseries. It intends to

double the number of nurseries which are managed mainly by women and youth groups.

<https://www.forestry.gov.fj/pressdetail.php?id=26>

387) *August 18*. Dollar back in **CUBA** as pandemic and US sanctions hammer economy. The communist government has been forced to allow citizens to spend US currency at special shops, formalising a split between haves and have-nots.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/cuba-dollar-stores-coronavirus?>

388) *August 18*. When you live on an island and tourism is your economic lifeline, do you keep letting visitors come or do you play it safe and call a halt so as to protect residents from the scourge of the new coronavirus pandemic? That's the dilemma facing authorities in the far-flung **IZU** and **OGASAWARA** island chains south of Tokyo as local fears mount about COVID-19 infections. While island life allows for a measure of isolation from the frantic pace of Japanese cities, other factors come into play in such situations. For example, about 25,000 people reside on the 11 inhabited islands in the two chains, but there are only two beds at a hospital on one of the 11 islands in the entire region capable of caring for COVID-19 patients. While medical clinics operate in the other inhabited islands, anyone who becomes infected would have to be airlifted to Tokyo to receive proper medical treatment. The Hachijojima Tourism Association posted a message on its website calling on potential visitors to refrain from coming if they feel unwell.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13646197>

389) *August 18*. **WESTERN ISLES** council has appealed to tourists visiting by campervan, caravan or motorhome to pre-book at an official campsite before travelling. Earlier pleas to visitors had been ignored by some and communities have raised concerns about rubbish and human waste being left at roadsides. Not all campsites and facilities on the isles have opened after closing due to the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-53819001>

390) *August 20*. Rangers tasked to protect the critically endangered **PHILIPPINE** tamaraw are facing a different kind of threat: hunger, as budget cuts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic bite into their already meager salaries. The tamaraw, also known as the dwarf buffalo, is a critically endangered species found only on the island of Mindoro, with an estimated population of just 480.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/08/rangers-protecting-philippine-tamaraws-go-hungry-as-pandemic-bites/>

391) *August 21*. A planeload of Chinese mine workers have been barred from entering **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**, over concerns they had been subjected to an unapproved Covid-19 vaccination trial before they left. For many in PNG, Covid-19's "Niupela Pasin" – new normal – is a return to the old ways. As the country wrestles with a nascent but potentially crippling new outbreak of coronavirus infections, emanating out from the crowded capital, Port Moresby, to the highlands and the river valleys of

the sprawling archipelago, many in PNG's villages are returning to traditional economies. When **EAST NEW BRITAIN** province faced lockdown in April, public transport came to a halt, people's access to services was restricted and basic goods began to run short. So too did hard currency. As barter and informal exchange were revived, the province also saw traditional shell money being traded outside of its customary uses. An existing currency among the Tolai people of East New Britain, tabu is made from the shell of a marine snail known locally as *palakanoara*. Traditionally it's used in mortuary ceremonies or bride price exchange, but can also be used to pay school fees, local fines and even local government taxes. Aunty Minia Tolik from Kerevat district says that during the lockdown period, more people were using their tabu collections to buy every day items because they simply had no money. "We couldn't travel to town to sell our produce at the markets or buy things from the shop, so we started to use our tabu more." Vanessa Mulas, a resident of Kuradui village, says those who were able to circumvent the cancellation of public buses brought back store goods and exchanged them with neighbours for tabu. Tabu is measured by arm length: one-and-a-half arm lengths equals a packet of rice. Mulas explains that 10 to 12 small shells used to equal about 10 toea (US\$0.03) but that with Covid, tabu has increased in value.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/21/papua-new-guinea-bans-chinese-mine-staff-given-experimental-covid-19-vaccine>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/22/the-return-of-shell-money-png-revives-old-ways-after-covids-blow-to-economy>

392) *August 21*. Last year, global remittances overtook foreign direct investment as the biggest inflow of money into developing countries. COVID-19 is expected to reduce the amount of global remittances in 2020 by 20 per cent. This sharp decrease will be a serious problem for countries like Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, Fiji and Tuvalu, where remittances represent one of the main sources of hard currencies needed for international trade. In Tonga, remittances represent some 40 per cent of GDP – the highest proportion in the world. Many families rely on those remittances for basic living expenses such as housing, food, school fees and medical care. Reduced remittances also have a knock-on effect on local economies through decreased spending. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, economies throughout the **PACIFIC** are already suffering from the global slowdown or shutdown of industries, particularly tourism. This is why, in the past few weeks, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the governments of Vanuatu, Tonga and Fiji joined a global call to action to policymakers, regulators and remittance service providers to improve migrants' access to sending and receiving remittances, and to reduce transfer costs during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://weblog.iom.int/now-time-reduce-remittance-costs>

393) *August 21*. Shortly after July 4, a video emerged online showing crowds of revellers dancing at a party on one of **OKINAWA** beaches. The event to celebrate American Independence Day was hosted by a former US marine and not one person in the video was wearing a face mask. To ordinary Japanese watching on social media - who had spent four months in self-restrained voluntary lockdown - it was a stunning snub to the nation's efforts to keep coronavirus under control. The virus outbreaks since, which have made Okinawa the hotspot of Japan's second wave of Covid-19,

may not have been directly linked to the party - or the others like it held on the island that evening - but in the court of public opinion, it was the smoking gun. It has stoked anger within Okinawa, where the heavy presence of US military bases and the behaviour of the 20,000 marines and other military personnel stationed there have been a longstanding source of tension.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c04caf13-654c-441a-8ef9-d940339bde88>

394) *August 22*. A genetic scientist and tropical root and tuber crops expert says the Covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity for **PACIFIC** countries to return to traditional food sources.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/424168/covid-19-is-an-opportunity-for-pacific-to-return-to-traditional-foods-scientist>

395) *August 23*. The **PALAU** Hotel opened in 1982, before mass tourism arrived here. But since then, this tiny nation, surrounded by the sky-blue Pacific Ocean, has enjoyed something of a boom. In 2019, 90,000 tourists came to Palau, five times the total population. In 2017, IMF figures showed, tourism made up 40% of the country's GDP. But that was pre-Covid. Palau's borders have been, in effect, closed since late March. It is one of the only 10 countries in the world (all Pacific islands) with no confirmed cases (counting only countries that are full UN members, and excluding North Korea and Turkmenistan). Yet, without infecting a single person, the virus has ravaged the country. The Palau Hotel has been closed since March, and it's not alone. The restaurants are empty, the souvenir shops are shut, and the only hotel guests are returning residents in quarantine.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-53831063>

396) *August 25*. The Indonesian island of **BALI** will not open to foreign tourists again this year, due to coronavirus concerns. Authorities of the popular holiday destination had earlier said foreign visitors would be allowed to return from next month. But the plan has been scrapped over concerns about Indonesia's mounting Covid-19 cases. The move has renewed worries about the impact on residents in an economy heavily dependent on tourism.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-53900565>

397) *August 25*. The **U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS** is halting tourism for a month, hoping against hope to keep out new cases of the coronavirus. **PUERTO RICO** Senate is closed after several high-ranking officials came down with Covid-19. Hawaii is facing a surge in new infections. **GUAM** enduring its most restrictive lockdown since the pandemic began. For months, United States islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific avoided much of the agony unleashed by the coronavirus across parts of the mainland, due in part to their early mitigation efforts and relative ease in sealing off borders. But now the state of Hawaii and these territories are emerging as some of the most alarming virus hot spots in the United States, revealing how the coronavirus can spike and then rapidly spread in places with relaxed restrictions, sluggish contact tracing and widespread pressure to end the economic pain that comes with lockdowns.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/25/us/coronavirus-guam-virgin-islands-hawaii-puerto-rico.html>

398) *August 26*. At least five members of the Great Andamanese tribe in India's **ANDAMAN ISLANDS** are reported to have tested positive for Covid-19. Two have been admitted to hospital. The Andaman Islands have had a total of almost 3000 confirmed Covid cases and 37 deaths, out of a population of approximately 400,000. The Great Andamanese are a small group of just over 50 survivors, down from more than 5000 when the British colonized the islands in the 1850s. They suffer from the long term impacts of diseases introduced by this brutal occupation. Tuberculosis and alcoholism are widespread, making them particularly vulnerable to Covid-19.

<https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/12447>

399) *August 26*. The sharp rise in domestic violence in **FIJI** has been linked by victims to the Covid-19 pandemic. Fiji has one of the highest statistics in the world on domestic violence. As a society 72% of all Fijian women have faced some form of violence in their lifetime, and 64% of women who have been in intimate relationships have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner, including 61% who were physically attacked and 34% who were sexually abused.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/424522/fiji-s-domestic-violence-surge-tied-to-pandemic-minister>

400) *August 26*. Despite remaining Covid-19 free, Palau's tourism industry - its primary source of revenue - has come to a standstill. However, **PALAU** is now reportedly planning to open up for tourism next month, initially with just Taiwan.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/424502/palau-plans-to-open-up-to-taiwan-tourism-market>

401) *August 27*. To date, just 14 of **GREENLAND** 56,000 residents have been infected with the coronavirus, and none of those infected have required hospitalization, nor have any coronavirus-related deaths been recorded. That, in large part, is due to the fact that Greenland is an island and was able seal itself off from the rest of the world effectively. As the situation improved in many parts of the world, Greenland began opening its borders again, but the threat of an outbreak is likely to be with the country for the foreseeable future and it must find ways to prevent COVID-19 from spreading there without again closing its borders or re-imposing strict social-distancing measures. Most of Greenland's COVID-19 cases have been registered in Nuuk, where Greenland's national hospital is located. That allowed the health service to keep a close eye on the situation. Were the virus to crop up in one of Greenland's remote communities, health authorities would likely only be able to react too late.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/greenland-taking-long-term-approach-to-covid-19/>

402) *August 28*. Locals in **MAJORCA** rediscover streets and beaches in resorts absent of foreign tourists.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/28/europe-holiday-resorts-foreign-tourists-magaluf-staycationers>

403) *August 28.* **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** battle against a climbing rate of Covid-19 infections is being hampered by the most basic of shortages – access to clean water – public health experts have warned.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/29/pacifics-fight-against-covid-19-hamstrung-by-lack-of-clean-water>

404) *August 29.* Surging Covid-19 cases in **GUAM** are threatening to overwhelm the island's healthcare system, while rapidly spreading infections across **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** and new clusters in **FRENCH POLYNESIA** following the resumption of tourism have sparked fears of uncontrolled outbreaks in the Pacific. The Pacific region is still the least-infected in the world – several countries remain Covid-19 free – but there are troubling surges across countries with fragile health systems ill-equipped for large numbers of infections. Emerging too, is an early trend of 'vaccine diplomacy', with regional powers seeking to exert political influence through promises to help Pacific nations - otherwise likely at the back of the queue - secure access to a vaccine when one becomes available.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/30/we-are-in-dire-straits-pacific-stands-on-covid-brink-amid-surg-ing-infections>

405) *August 30.* One of Brazil's most celebrated tourist destinations, the archipelago of **FERNANDO DE NORONHA**, has announced it is reopening to outsiders – as long as they have had Covid-19. Tourists have been banned from the UNESCO World Heritage site, which Charles Darwin visited in 1832, since late March when the pandemic forced many parts of Brazil into partial shutdown. Since then more than 120,000 Brazilians have died, the world's second highest death toll, and President Jair Bolsonaro faces accusations of catastrophically mismanaging the crisis by undermining containment measures. But from Tuesday visitors will be allowed into Fernando de Noronha, 211 miles off Brazil's north-eastern coast, if they can prove they have been infected and recovered. The results of two types of test – PCR virus tests and IgG antibody tests – will be accepted if conducted at least 20 days before arrival.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/30/brazil-island-fernando-de-noronha-reopens-tourists-covid-19>

406) *August 30.* A UN summit on biodiversity, scheduled to be held in New York next month, will be told by conservationists and biologists there is now clear evidence of a strong link between environmental destruction and the increased emergence of deadly new diseases such as Covid-19. Rampant deforestation, uncontrolled expansion of farming and the building of mines in remote regions – as well as the exploitation of wild animals as sources of food, traditional medicines and exotic pets – are creating a "perfect storm" for the spillover of diseases from wildlife to people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/30/rampant-destruction-of-forests-will-unleash-more-pandemics>

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/08/communities-conservation-and-development-in-the-age-of-covid-time-for-rethinking-approaches-commentary/>

407) *August 31*. The COVID-19 pandemic has pitted economic interests against public health guidance across the United States. **PUERTO RICO** and the **U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS** feel this tension acutely, as both territories rely on tourism to generate revenue and provide jobs. Increasingly, locals have begun to wonder now whether welcoming visitors to these islands is worth the risk. Tourism represents more than half of the Virgin Islands gross domestic product. In Puerto Rico, the industry accounts for 80,000 jobs and about 6.5% of the island's total economy. But islanders are not vulnerable only to COVID-19's economic disruptions. Residents of both Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are diagnosed with chronic health conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular illness at higher rates than in most U.S. states, which puts them at higher risk for the virus' complications. In short, the very industry that represents an economic lifeline for islanders threatens their ability to protect their health.

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2020/08/31/puerto-rico-travel-us-virgin-islands-travel-economy-covid-19/5638122002/>

408) *August 31*. The US has now surpassed six million cases of Covid-19 - almost a quarter of the world's total, according to data collated by Johns Hopkins University. It said the country added one million new infections in less than a month. More than 183,000 people have now died. The total number of confirmed cases globally has now surpassed 25 million, with more than 846,000 Covid-19 related deaths. The true number of cases is likely to be significantly higher, because many people who have had the infection but did not show symptoms have not been tested.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-53976793>

409) *August 31*. **CARIBBEAN** countries heavily hit by the covid crisis. After a 3-month lockdown in most of the small Caribbean states, the region finally reopened at the beginning of July, and in a few weeks, the measure resulted in a disproportionate increase in coronavirus cases, which forced local authorities to go back to lockdowns.

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-caribbean-countries-count-the-losses-article2757>

410) *September 3*. The number of known, active COVID-19 cases being monitored by authorities in **HAWAII** on July 30 stood at just one, but that didn't last. Now, a rapid recent growth in the number of infections has many residents wondering exactly what is driving the surge. But while the state Department of Health says it is aware of a series of large gatherings in East Hawaii in late July and early August, so far investigators have been unable to link any coronavirus cases to the group events. The surge has been quite fast - and worrisome. By Aug. 15, the number of active cases on Hawaii island had climbed to 16, and by Aug. 30 there were 151 active cases, according to daily bulletins generated by the Hawaii County Civil Defense.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/09/doh-struggles-to-trace-surge-in-big-island-cases-to-large-gatherings/>

411) *September 4*. As part of the recovery plan for the **ISLE OF WIGHT** in wake of COVID-19, the council has released first draft edition of its 'A Better Island' strategy - including facing housing challenges and providing improvement schemes for

businesses and residents. Some of the proposals include a new Island Card gift card scheme to encourage local shopping, while also creating co-working space for digital companies, the Wight Innovation Hub, alongside the plans for the Branstone Farm rural business hub.

<https://www.islandecho.co.uk/council-release-first-draft-of-islands-a-better-island-strategy/>

412) *September 4.* The first recorded coronavirus case in Moria refugee camp on **LESBOS**, where just under 13,000 people are living in a space designed for 3,000, has led to fears that the government will use the pandemic as a pretext to create closed camps.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/04/refugee-covid-case-sparks-closed-camps-fears-on-lesbos>

413) *September 4.* As the world heads towards 2021 with COVID-19 still raging overhead, it might be easy to forget about the other global crises. But a new app, debuted today, aims to light the way to a brighter future, showing how we can stop global warming, halt extinctions and prevent pandemics – all in one fell swoop.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/09/how-do-we-avert-global-warming-extinctions-and-pandemics-new-app-has-answers/>

<https://www.globalsafetynet.app/>

414) *September 5.* With the help of a local fishing boat, hundreds of migrants were transferred on Saturday to a ferry from the Italian island of **LAMPEDUSA** to relieve severe overcrowding during the pandemic at a residence for asylum-seekers. After their transfer on Saturday, they must spend 14 days in precautionary quarantine on the ferry. The vessel was one of several chartered by the Italian government, after Lampedusa's mayor and Sicily's governor complained about the risk of spreading COVID-19. After so many migrants arrived this summer, some of them rescued at sea, others reaching the island's shores without help, Lampedusa's migrant center held 2,000 people despite a capacity of less than 200.

<https://apnews.com/article/12855e22624a8ba62ba00608ec26f31c>

415) *September 6.* The port of Civitavecchia, located about 50 miles from Rome, would ordinarily be bustling with cruise passengers. Today, the most salient feature is a Covid-19 drive-through centre, where people travelling by ferry to or from the island of **SARDINIA** and Spain can voluntarily be tested for the virus. The facility was quickly established after a surge in cases in the Lazio region, which have mostly been linked to young people who holidayed on Sardinia's Costa Smeralda, a stretch of coastline in the north-east of the island to where the wealthy gravitate. Now, amid a rise in cancelled trips to Sardinia, the regional governor, Christian Solinas, has pledged to take legal action against the media for its depiction of the island, which was relatively Covid-free at the end of July, as Italy's new epicentre.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/06/how-sardinia-went-from-safe-haven-to-covid-19-hotspot>

416) *September 6.* **FRENCH POLYNESIA** has registered another 26 Covid-19 cases, raising the tally in the latest outbreak to 658. The first outbreak between March and June affected 62 people and was brought under control with a lockdown and border closures. For the past week, the territory has recorded a double-digit number of new cases every day. Most active cases are now in urban areas of Tahiti, but there are also some in Bora Bora, Moorea and Raiatea. The other main French Pacific territory, **NEW CALEDONIA**, which is largely sealed off, recorded 26 cases in managed isolation this year while **WALLIS & FATUNA** has been free of the coronavirus.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/425371/covid-19-case-total-in-french-polynesia-passes-650>

417) *September 9.* Climate change has not stopped for COVID-19. Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are at record levels and continue to increase. Emissions are heading in the direction of pre-pandemic levels following a temporary decline caused by the lockdown and economic slowdown. The world is set to see its warmest five years on record – in a trend which is likely to continue - and is not on track to meet agreed targets to keep global temperature increase well below 2 °C or at 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. This is according to a new multi-agency report from leading science organizations, *United in Science 2020*. It highlights the increasing and irreversible impacts of climate change, which affects glaciers, oceans, nature, economies and human living conditions and is often felt through water-related hazards like drought or flooding. It also documents how COVID-19 has impeded our ability to monitor these changes through the global observing system.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/united-science-report-climate-change-has-not-stopped-covid19>

418) *September 11.* Coronavirus closures threaten future of **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** only animal rescue centre. The coronavirus lockdowns of PNG's capital have slashed visitor numbers by three-quarters, jeopardising the park's ability to continue running and keep the animals fed and safe. The park has been forced to retrench some staff and move others to live onsite in makeshift accommodation to help stop Covid spread and care for the animals.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/12/coronavirus-closures-threaten-future-of-papua-new-guineas-only-animal-rescue-centre>

419) *September 12.* **CHRISTMAS ISLAND** is most often thought of in connection to its detention centre, which became a quarantine location for evacuees from Wuhan earlier this year. But there's a lot more to the island. Australia has recorded more than 26,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases in total, but none of them have been detected on Christmas Island. Some restrictions are still in place and the island's borders have been closed to all states and territories except Western Australia.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-13/covid-free-christmas-island-one-of-australias-most-diverse/12645476>

420) *September 13.* **SCOTTISH ISLAND** communities will benefit from a £2 million programme of locally-led green projects designed to help support their economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Islands Green Recovery

Programme is split into four strands and managed by four partners, delivering investment in low carbon transport, food sustainability and zero waste projects. Part of the funding will be used to help independent food retailers and businesses introduce packaging-free shops and remove the need for disposable packaging. Sustainable travel initiatives, climate change projects and projects to improve local supply chains can also apply for funding. The initial 12 successful initiatives were announced in December 2020.

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/our-funds/islands-green-recovery-programme/>

421) *September 13.* With all **HAWAII** County beaches closed until Friday as part of statewide anti-COVID measures, an increasing number of revelers on Hawaii island have been camping on remote areas of the Ka'u coast, where the Hawaii County Police have no jurisdiction and enforcement is lax. Local residents are acting to keep their community safe from what they see as the dual threats of the ongoing pandemic and campfires during a time of extreme fire danger. As there are no designated camping areas nor amenities anywhere in the South Point area, residents note an increasing amount of waste that campers and visitors are leaving along the shoreline, including widespread evidence of many spots used as one-time toilets. In response, local families have set up an information station on South Point Road, which provides the only access to the area. They have been talking to everyone heading for South Point, trying to dissuade them from coming down, especially for camping, during the current state of emergency.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/09/these-big-island-residents-are-trying-to-keep-remote-beaches-safe-and-sanitary/>

422) *September 14.* Officials in the **PHILIPPINES** say the coronavirus pandemic is fuelling a new problem: a surge in plant poaching. The country's lockdown earlier this year, one of the strictest in the world, helped drive demand for greenery among Filipinos who were longing for nature. Though restrictions have eased, the craze for gardening has continued, and officials say sellers are digging up endangered species in the mountains and forests. Carnivorous pitcher plants and bantigue trees, used to cultivate bonsai, had become especially popular. Officials have vowed to crack down on poachers, promising to step up patrols of forests and warning that people could face hefty fines, and jail sentences of up to 12 years if they collect wild plants that are classified as critically endangered.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/14/coronavirus-pandemic-fuelling-plant-poaching-philippines>

423) *September 14.* A 10-year-old boy has become Covid-19's latest fatality on **GUAM**, as the island struggles to rein in an outbreak that threatens to overwhelm its public health system. The boy, who had underlying health conditions, died on Sunday night at the US Naval Hospital, 10 days after contracting the virus. He is the 26th person to die from Covid on Guam. More than 1,890 infections have been confirmed – 249 of them US military service members – on an island of just 166,000 people. Testing has found Guam's Covid-positive rate at 10%.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/14/guam-boy-10-dies-as-covid-outbreak-threatens-countrys-health-system>

424) *September 14.* **NORFOLK ISLAND** pitched as quarantine-free 'overseas' holiday destination for Queenslanders amid coronavirus. The island went into lockdown when a state of emergency was declared on March 16. It reopened on July 10. While Norfolk is yet to record any cases of COVID-19, measures to prevent the virus reaching the island have come at a cost. Tourism is a major economic driver on Norfolk Island, which 1,750 people call home.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-14/norfolk-island-overseas-holidays-for-queenslanders-coronavirus/12660502>

425) *September 14.* Ahead of this month's U.N. General Assembly, the Alliance of Small Island States (**AOSIS**) has stepped up diplomatic pressure, calling on donor governments and development banks to provide debt relief, aid and climate finance for its members, which include 44 small island and low-lying coastal developing states. Lois Young, Belize's permanent representative to the United Nations and chairwoman of AOSIS, told journalists island nations were already weighed down by unsustainably high debt levels before the COVID-19 crisis, and now the situation was worse. "SIDS are sinking, and it's not due to just the sea level rise and climate change. We are actually sinking in debt," she said. "COVID and the collapse of the tourism sector - basically, they just pushed us over the edge." In a statement on debt, released in late June, AOSIS members said their economies - many of them reliant on tourism for up to 40% of GDP - were "in freefall". Some would see their gross domestic product contract by 8-15% or more in the second half of 2020, it predicted. The crunch would reverse development "by decades", and without action to relieve the financial pressure, SIDS risked "a protracted debt crisis", it warned. The document, which is the basis for ongoing diplomatic negotiations, noted that SIDS' external debt reached \$50.4 trillion in 2019, up from \$29.3 trillion in 2009. The island states' external debt rose from 51% of their combined GDP in 2009 to 61% a decade later, before the pandemic hit.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20200914163706-oqc36>

[https://www.aosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/AOSIS-Statement-on-Debt\\_verJune-29.pdf](https://www.aosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/AOSIS-Statement-on-Debt_verJune-29.pdf)

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/ga12271.doc.htm>

426) *September 15.* The COVID-19 pandemic has upended a world embroiled in chaos, unleashing catastrophic health, social and economic consequences along with irreparable harm to humanity, according to an UN-backed report. *A World in Disorder*, issued by the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB), an independent monitoring and accountability body which prepares for global health crises, notes that the coronavirus has killed close to a million people, impacting health systems, food supplies, and economies. The new report provides a harsh assessment of the global COVID-19 response, calling it "a collective failure to take pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response seriously and prioritize it accordingly".

<https://www.developmentaid.org/#!/news-stream/post/74086/countries-must-get-their-hands-dirty-to-stem-covid-and-prevent-future-pandemics>

[https://www.developmentaid.org/api/frontend/cms/file/2020/09/GPMB\\_AR\\_2020\\_EN.pdf](https://www.developmentaid.org/api/frontend/cms/file/2020/09/GPMB_AR_2020_EN.pdf)

427) *September 15*. Restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic mean there are hardly any boats and ferries around **HONG KONG**. The vulnerable Chinese white dolphin is making a comeback as a result, with sightings up about 30%.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-china-54157254>

428) *September 16*. Across the world, coronavirus lockdowns have transformed city streets into eerie ghost towns, empty of noise and disruption. But in the **PHILIPPINES** province of Cavite, an unbearable din has been echoing through some areas, as residents turn to karaoke to pass away the hours spent under curfew. The racket caused by karaoke, a favourite pastime in the country, has prompted the governor of the province to urge residents to report noisy neighbours through a special hotline.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/16/cut-out-karaoke-to-help-covid-fight-urges-philippines-governor>

429) *September 17*. The Colombian Caribbean island of **SAN ANDRES** is experiencing a spike in coronavirus, with total cases more than doubling from 115 to 293 between August 30 and September 15. Bodies are now stacked up in the morgue because the island's sole funeral home was forced to close when staff fell seriously ill.

<https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/world-news/coronavirus-bodies-piling-up-caribbean-22699477>

430) *September 17*. The Greek island of **CHIOS** has had about 30 confirmed coronavirus cases since the outbreak began, and no deaths. When someone tests positive in a small, close-knit community on a Greek island, privacy is the first thing to go. Even though the gossip and loss of privacy upset people on the island, its small size, and close social and familial ties, have made one vital part of curbing infections easier - contact tracing. While some countries have set up anonymous, remote call centers operated by hundreds of students and part-time workers to do the arduous task of contact tracing, on Chios, the job is done quickly by five police officers.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/world/europe/greece-chios-coronavirus.html>

431) *September 17*. In Tasmania the first regular passenger flights between Hobart and **KING & FLINDERS ISLANDS** will start operating by the end of the month to help businesses struggling with COVID-19 border closures. The State Government has reached an agreement with the flight operator Sharp Airlines to underwrite flights at less than 70 per cent capacity.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-17/tasmania-island-flights-for-covid-19-affected-tourism-business/12674212>

432) *September 17*. Hobbled by the COVID-19 pandemic since March, **MADAGASCAR** tourism industry took its first step toward recovery. On Sept. 5, the quasi-governmental agency Madagascar National Parks reopened all 43 protected areas under its direct responsibility. The government authorized the reopening of all natural areas and cultural sites starting the following day.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/09/madagascar-reopens-national-parks-shuttered-by-covid-19/>

433) *September 18*. New fear grips Europe as cases top 30m worldwide. More than 940,000 have died with Covid-19 since the outbreak began in China late last year. The US, India and Brazil have the most confirmed cases, but there is a renewed spike in infections across Europe and many countries are now bracing for a second wave of the pandemic as winter approaches. Outside Europe, Israel brings in a second nationwide lockdown later on Friday - the first nation to do so.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54199825>

434) *September 18*. As the cruise and travel industry works to regain its footing while the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic continues its global march, limited cruises quietly restarted in the **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS** in August. This remote, bucket-list destination could very well provide a framework for cruises to restart in other parts of the world. Located roughly 621 miles (1,000 kilometers) off the Pacific coast of Ecuador, the Galapagos is no stranger to cruise tourism. Roughly 70 ships ply these waters on a regular basis, serving as the easiest and most direct way to experience some of the 19 islands that make up the collective known as the Galapagos. These ships, though, are mostly small vessels carrying fewer than 50 passengers. Only a handful of ships are certified to carry 100 passengers, the maximum allowable under Galapagos regulations.

<https://www.cruisecritic.co.uk/news/5605/>

435) *September 20*. The World Health Organization (WHO) has agreed rules for the testing of African herbal remedies to fight Covid-19. Sound science would be the sole basis for safe and effective traditional therapies to be adopted, it said. Any traditional remedies that are judged effective could be fast-tracked for large-scale manufacturing. The president of **MADAGASCAR** has been promoting an untested product he says can cure the disease despite the WHO warning against using untested remedies. The WHO said the new rules were aimed at helping and empowering scientists in Africa to conduct proper clinical trials.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-54225118>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-53484298>

436) *September 21*. From mass tourism to a deserted destination: the island paradise of **BALI** has to reinvent itself in the Corona crisis. Well known Kuta Beach is hardly recognizable. Where the sun worshippers from all over the world usually cavort, masseuses offer their services and vendor's trays sell sarongs and ice-cold Bintang beer, there has been a tough lull since March. More than half of Bali's economy depends on the tourism sector, most Balinese work here, directly or indirectly. No

wonder, according to the local statistics office, more than six million international guests visited the "Island of Gods" last year, which is only about 5700 square kilometers in size - that is about one and a half times the size of Mallorca. The Vice-Governor, Cok Ace, already calculated in early summer that Bali would lose 9.7 trillion Indonesian Rupees every month due to the pandemic - more than 550 million euros. June, July and August are usually considered the high season for sun, culture and party lovers from Australia, China or Europe. In a direct comparison: While 600,000 foreign guests were counted in June 2019, this June the figure was 32. Plans to reopen Bali to foreign tourists after September 11th had to be rejected in August. Until at least the beginning of 2021, the border will remain sealed. Precaution is better than indulgence: "Bali must not fail in the revival of tourism, because this could damage Indonesia's image in the world," warned Bali Governor Wayan Koster.

At the same time, demands are growing louder that Bali must become more independent of tourism. This would also be a chance for a more sustainable new beginning. Because the boom also had a flip side: Mass tourism and garbage, commerce and binge drinking. Apart from a few idyllic places off the tourist trail, Bali was no longer the tranquil hippie and surfer paradise of the 1970s. Many have turned to agriculture. Governor Koster also pointed out the great potential of Balinese agricultural products already in July - especially with regard to tropical fruits. "Salak (snakeskin fruit) is already in great demand, and we are also preparing a market for dragon fruit." In general, after so many setbacks, Koster wants to put Bali's economy on more pillars in the future than just tourism, including the innovation sector and the manufacturing industry.

<https://www.tourism-review.com/bali-is-not-a-mass-tourism-destination-anymore-news11684>

437) *September 21*. A coalition of 156 countries has agreed a "landmark" deal to enable the rapid and equitable global distribution of any new coronavirus vaccines to 3% of participating countries' populations, to protect vulnerable healthcare systems, frontline health workers and those in social care settings. The Covid-19 vaccine allocation plan – co-led by the World Health Organization and known as Covax – has been set up to ensure that the research, purchase and distribution of any new vaccine is shared equally between the world's richest countries and those in the developing world.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/21/landmark-moment-156-countries-agree-to-covid-vaccine-allocation-deal>

438) *September 22*. **RATHLIN ISLAND**, a small L-shaped bit of land off the coast of Northern Ireland, hasn't had any cases of coronavirus since going into lockdown in March.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-54229679>

439) *September 22*. Just a dozen countries have recorded no cases of COVID-19. Ten of them are **PACIFIC** island nations. How did they do it? One strategy has been central to their virus-free status: each country's government quickly closed borders to international travel at the start of the pandemic.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/oceania/only-12-countries-are-free-of-covid-10-of-them-in-the-pacific-20200919-p55x7u.html>

440) *September 23*. Despite being at opposite ends of the Earth, **ICELAND** and **NEW ZEALAND** have many similarities. Both are small island nations, heavily reliant on tourism and currently led by young female prime ministers. Both have also been commended for their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, characterised by science-informed policy and a high degree of public trust. At the moment, Iceland and New Zealand have some of the lowest COVID-19 deaths per capita among OECD countries (2.83 and 0.51 per 100,000 population, respectively, compared with an OECD average of 24.01 per 100,000). Both have been rated in the top 14 safest countries in the world for COVID-19. But since the first cases were identified in each country in late February 2020, the two nations have taken different pathways in their COVID-19 responses. What lessons can we learn from their journeys so far?

<https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/73736>

441) *September 23*. With the coronavirus devastating jobs across **INDONESIA**, desperate workers in the restive Papua region are flocking to illegal gold mines as the soaring price of the precious metal overrides the risk to their lives and the environment.

<https://www.24matins.uk/topnews/int/pandemic-panners-indonesians-hunt-for-gold-in-desperate-times-245170>

442) *September 24*. Few countries are living up to their promises of a “green recovery” from the coronavirus crisis, with hundreds of billions of dollars likely to be spent on economic rescue packages that increase greenhouse gas emissions, research has found.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/23/few-countries-living-up-to-green-recovery-promises-analysis>

443) *September 24*. The **SHETLAND**, **ORKNEY** and **WESTERN ISLES** councils have teamed up to seek talks with the Scottish Government over the possibility of a more localised approach to coronavirus restrictions for the islands. There is a feeling that some of the new restrictions imposed in Scotland earlier this week in response to a rise in infections are unfair for areas of the country where there are fewer cases of Covid-19. This is particularly relevant for the ban on people visiting homes for social purposes. Generally people can now only socialise outside or in public indoor places like cafes, restaurants and pubs.

<https://www.shetnews.co.uk/2020/09/24/island-councils-want-local-approach-to-covid-restrictions/>

444) *September 24*. The subtropical island of **MAURITIUS**, with a multiethnic population of about 1.3 million people, also has one of the highest prevalences of diabetes worldwide, a condition linked to the severity of COVID-19. Despite the challenges in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic, Mauritius scored a very high mark on the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Stringency Index in the middle of

April, 2020. In part, this success was due to a prompt and consistent governmental strategy.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587\(20\)30336-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587(20)30336-3/fulltext)

445) *September 25*. Three new cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed in the **WESTERN ISLES**, the first positive test results since June. The islands have the lowest cumulative total of cases in Scotland, currently 10 once three false positive results are removed from the figures.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-54295032>

446) *September 25*. The global coronavirus death toll could hit two million before an effective vaccine is widely used, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned. Dr Mike Ryan, the WHO's emergencies head, said the figure could be higher without concerted international action. Almost one million people have died with Covid-19 worldwide since the disease first emerged in China late last year. Virus infections continue to rise, with 32 million cases confirmed globally. The start of a second surge of coronavirus infections has been seen in many countries in the northern hemisphere as winter approaches.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54303628>

447) *September 26*. Leaders from the **CARIBBEAN**, in pre-recorded addresses to the UN General Assembly, stressed that their small economies are largely dependent on one or just a few industries, and called for strengthened global cooperation and financing mechanisms to overcome the health crisis sparked by the coronavirus pandemic and recover from its massive socio-economic fallout.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1073932>

448) *September 28*. What was meant to be the first in a new post-lockdown era of cruises around the **GREEK ISLANDS** has fallen victim to the reality of travel in the coronavirus age after crew members tested positive for the virus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/crew-first-post-lockdown-greek-cruise-contract-coronavirus-maltese>

449) *September 29*. The full scale of the economic impact of Covid-19 on the **SCOTTISH ISLAND** of Arran has been revealed in a new independent report by the Fraser of Allander Institute, commissioned by North Ayrshire Council.

<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/news/New-report-shows-Arran-requires-national-support-to-combat-%27long-term-scarring%27-of-Covid-19.aspx>

450) *September 29*. Ministers of Health from seven small **AFRICAN** island states today signed an agreement to jointly procure drugs and vaccines in a bid to improve quality and access to medicines and other health products.

<https://www.afro.who.int/news/african-island-states-launch-joint-medicines-procurement-initiative>

451) *September 30*. The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged **MAINE ISLANDS** fishermen and coastal communities in an unprecedented way. Diminished demand for seafood has left Maine's marine economy at risk. The Island Institute and Luke's Lobster have formed a strategic partnership and are leveraging more than \$2.5 million in funding and shared financial resources to build new markets for Maine's premium seafood that will drive economic activity in coastal communities.

<https://www.islandinstitute.org/2020/09/30/island-institute-and-lukes-lobster-partner-to-energize-maines-marine-economy/>

452) *September 30*. The socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is heavy and multi-sectoral, marked by an increase in inequality, with the brunt of the pandemic borne mostly by the poorest and most vulnerable. Under the most severe projection, coronavirus would increase Indonesia's poverty rate from 9.2% in September 2019 to 12.4% by the end of 2020, implying that 8.5 million more people will be pushed into poverty by the end of 2020. With the failure of ecotourism in the wake of Covid-19, safeguarding community well-being requires more focus on diversification of sustainable livelihoods, and a sound strategy for the prevention of human-wildlife conflict. Forest-edge communities in **NORTH SUMATRA** are on the front lines when it comes to nature conservation efforts, and require greater support and social protection from the government and NGOs.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/09/in-sumatra-forest-edge-communities-must-be-at-center-of-conservation-efforts-commentary/>

453) *October 1*. When Covid-19 hit, the **FLORIDA KEYS** national marine sanctuary was locked down for six months and not a single cruise ship has plowed its shallow and heavily used channel, leaving locals in relative peace and with clear waters many say they have not seen in decades. A group of local residents would like to keep it this way and formed the Key West Committee for Safer Cleaner Ships, with the goal of shrinking the footprint of cruise ship tourism in Key West. They wanted to limit the community's exposure to Covid-19 and, frankly, to what they saw as destructive tourism. They collected enough signatures to get three referendum questions on the November ballot. One limits the size of ships to much smaller vessels, another limits the number of passengers who can disembark in Key West, and a third prioritizes ships with good environmental records.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/01/florida-keys-cruise-ship-ban-covid-19>

454) *October 1*. Five welders visiting the **ISLE OF MAN** from England for work have been jailed after breaking the island's coronavirus quarantine rules. The men, from Doncaster in South Yorkshire, were permitted to visit the island to work on the Manx Electric Railway. Under quarantine rules, they were permitted to travel between their hotel accommodation and workplace only. But the group were reported to police for buying alcohol from a supermarket. The island's border remains closed to non-residents unless they have been given special permission.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-54360825>

455) *October 2.* For **ALASKA**, summertime means cruise ships. Lots of cruise ships. The 2020 season was expected to commence with a record-breaking deluge of 1.4 million tourists and glacier gazers that would effectively triple the state's scant population of 730,000. Once the pandemic hit, that number effectively dropped to zero. Yet although the economy is being decimated by the reduction in tourist vessels, the state's humpback whales are some of the few locals actually enjoying the silence. Dr Michelle Fournet, director of the Sound Science Research Collective and research fellow at Cornell University, has been listening in on whale conversations for 10 years, but never before has she seen a summer like this.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/02/humpback-whales-sing-alaska-covid-summer-researchers>

456) *October 2.* In **GREENLAND**, the tourism season - for what it was this year - is essentially over. That made this week's decision to re-implement a mandatory quarantine for people entering the country abroad less painful than it otherwise would have been. The new rules, which took effect on Wednesday, require anyone entering the country to quarantine for up to 14 days. They may end their isolation after as few as five days if they test negative for COVID-19. During quarantine, people may shop for food and other essentials provided they wear a face mask and observe social distancing measures. That will make the situation less of a bother for residents, but losing even five days is likely to be unacceptable for vacationers.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/greenland-reimposes-traveler-quarantines-in-a-bid-to-remain-coronavirus-free/>

457) *October 3.* **SOLOMON ISLANDS** have recorded their first case of Covid-19. The case was a student who had been repatriated from the Philippines earlier in the week.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/427539/solomon-islands-has-first-case-of-covid-19>

458) *October 4.* **LORD HOWE ISLAND**, 600 kilometres off the east coast of Australia, has been closed to tourists since March 21 to keep coronavirus out. And its 350 residents have been taking advantage of having the pristine waters and sub-tropical forest hiking trails all to themselves. With only one doctor on the island and limited medical facilities, the NSW Government made the public health order to protect elderly residents, the oldest of whom is 98. But with infections in NSW flatlining, the island paradise has opened up again, with the first visitors flying in on private plane on Friday. The curator of the Lord Howe Island Museum Ian Hutton said the long period of isolation had been good for the island - and for many residents.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-04/lord-howe-island-reopens-after-six-month-covid-closure/12723306>

459) *October 7.* Even as they gradually began tiptoeing out of months-long lockdowns earlier this year, many countries – fearing travellers might fuel new COVID-19 outbreaks – opted to keep border restrictions in place. However, the **MALDIVES** decided to take a different path and on July 15 threw open its borders to everyone. Visitors would not need negative results for entry, the tourism-dependent

island nation declared, and would not be subject to quarantine measures of any kind – a policy some in the tourism sector called “courageous” and also “a little bit crazy”. To prepare for the new arrivals, the government built intensive care units and scaled up testing facilities in several regions. For their part, the resorts established unprecedented safety and hygiene measures. Some even conducted PCR tests for their guests on arrival, until the government – alarmed by minor outbreaks on a few resorts – made a U-turn in August and said that visitors would need to have a negative test taken within 72 hours before they would be allowed in. On September 15, the World Travel and Tourism Council certified the Maldives – a country of 450,000 people that has so far recorded more than 10,000 cases but only 34 deaths – a safe destination. Even so, some islands continued to conduct tests for their guests on arrival.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/7/the-maldives-opened-its-borders-to>

460) *October 8.* Researchers have found a surprising correlation in Brazil, the U.S. and Germany: areas with more pigs also have higher COVID-19 infection rates. The widespread theory that the SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, spread from a wet market in Wuhan, China, was challenged in research published in May. According to that study, the virus had been circulating in China before that, and the first animal-to-human transmission occurred before the outbreak linked to the Huanan market. Experts from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) also said the initial transmission of SARS-CoV-2 did not occur at the Huanan market, which served instead as the site where it was further disseminated. Scientists have also discounted the theory that the virus was genetically engineered in a lab and then somehow got out. What many experts do believe, though, is that there was likely an intermediary host between bats, where the virus is suspected to originate from, and humans. China is the world’s largest pork producer, and Hubei province, where Wuhan is located, is one of China’s five largest pork producers.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/10/research-links-industrial-pig-farming-and-virus-outbreaks/>

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.02.25.20027953v1.full.pdf>

461) *October 9.* Last year, more than nine million tourists visited **PHUKET**, Thailand’s second-most popular destination after Bangkok. Today, nearly all the island’s 3,000 hotels are closed and the main town of Patong has become a “ghost town”, says local tycoon Preechawut Keesin, who owns five nightclubs and around 600 hotel rooms. Swimming pools are empty, chairs are stacked high in deserted restaurants and normally packed beaches are so quiet they are even seeing rare species of sea turtles arriving to nest. Thailand has so far remained relatively unscathed from the global outbreak with around 3,600 confirmed cases and just a few dozen deaths. But the kingdom’s decision to concentrate on beating the virus has dealt a brutal blow to the economy, which is expected to contract 7-9% this year and leave millions unemployed.

<https://www.thephuketnews.com/ghost-island-phuket-hunkers-down-in-tourist-free-thailand-77597.php>

462) *October 9.* Many communities have been hit hard by the coronavirus crisis, but for some, such as the Chao Lay, the global slowdown in travel and tourism has also

given them some breathing space. The positive side effects of the pandemic for such communities are, however, few and far between. The term Chao Lay is used to refer to three Indigenous groups (the Moken, Moklen and Urak Lawoi) who live on the popular Andaman Sea coast and islands of southern **THAILAND**. Unlike the other groups, the Moken, or 'sea gypsies', did not use to live in the coastal villages but on their boats, maintaining a semi-nomadic lifestyle for generations, sailing the seas during the dry season and returning to their settlements on the Surin Islands of Thailand during the monsoon season. But over the years, successive laws passed by the Thai authorities have increasingly encroached on their territories and restricted their ability to travel by sea, impacting both their way of life and their livelihoods, as they are no longer able to fish where they please.

<https://www.equaltimes.org/the-coronavirus-pandemic-has-put#.YA1xxWdCeUk>

463) *October 10*. Three **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** that produce whisky - Arran, Islay, and Jura - were completely sealed off during the British lockdown. The only ferries that arrived were delivering supplies and the only people allowed off-island were those with medical emergencies. As a result there were no cases of Covid-19 on the whisky islands, even though Glasgow and Cumbria on the mainland nearby were badly hit. That is not to say the islands didn't suffer. As non-essential industries, all distilleries in Scotland were obliged to close by March 29, 2020. This inevitably affected the local economy. Another post-lockdown problem is an actual shortage of whisky on some of these islands this autumn. Although all aspects of production are required by law to take place on the home island, the filled whisky barrels are always sent to bottling plants on the mainland. So islanders are finding themselves in the bizarre situation of having millions of litres of whisky sitting in casks in island warehouses and yet cannot buy a bottle in local supermarket.

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/scotland-whisky-islands-covid/index.html>

464) *October 12*. A year ago, the **BALI** environmentalist community was cautiously celebrating the cancellation of a massive land reclamation project planned for Benoa Bay. The permit for the 30 trillion rupiah (\$2 billion) development plan to build 12 artificial islands - complete with a golf course, theme park, and even a Formula One race course - expired before the project could obtain government approval. On Oct. 10, 2019, the Bali governor designated Benoa Bay a conservation area for religious and cultural activities and artisanal fisheries, protected from reclamation of any kind. For a brief moment after five years of relentless protests, it appeared that Benoa Bay would remain untouched. Barely 11 months later, the Balinese legislature gathered discreetly during the COVID-19 pandemic and approved a zoning plan for the area that would permit sand mining and an expansion of the harbor and airport.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/10/in-bali-the-pandemic-unravels-a-hard-won-campaign-to-save-benoa-bay/>

465) *October 12*. A billionaire tech entrepreneur with a home on **HAWAII** island has coordinated a donation of 1 million face masks to slow the spread of the coronavirus there.

<https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-san-francisco-hawaii-marc-benioff-california-52c0a5fb7abf1110a8b64cb60e713c3f>

466) *October 12*. With less than 72 hours to go before tourists start arriving in **HAWAII** under the new COVID-19 test protocol, the state's process of figuring out how to proceed seemed more like a demolition derby than an organized policy review.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/10/what-the-heck-is-going-on-with-neighbor-island-travel-rules/>

467) *October 12*. Bat experts have launched a campaign, Don't Blame Bats, to dispel unfounded fears and myths about bats, which are threatening conservation. They say bats are some of the most misunderstood and undervalued animals on the planet. Long the target of disdain, persecution and cultural prejudice, they have been blamed for a host of evils visited upon humans. And fears and myths about bats have only intensified in the time of Covid. The precise origin of the virus that has wreaked such havoc across the world has not been pinned down. But the vast majority of scientists agree that it crossed into humans from an animal species, most likely a bat. That doesn't mean bats are to blame; it's our increasing interference with these wild creatures that's at the root of the problem.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54246473>

468) *October 13*. **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** will fit all foreign workers coming into the country with an electronic ankle monitor for the duration of their Covid-19 quarantine. PNG has struggled to control outbreaks in the capital, Port Moresby, and western province, and charter flights carrying foreign workers run the risk of spreading the virus across the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/13/papua-new-guinea-to-fit-ankle-monitors-to-arrivals-in-covid-quarantine>

469) *October 13*. Coastal fisheries in the **PACIFIC** islands have become a food and livelihood lifeline to many people who have lost jobs, especially in urban centres and tourism, following COVID-19 lockdowns and border closures. Now governments and development organisations are trying to meet the crisis-driven survival needs of here and now, while also considering the long-term consequences on near shore marine resources and habitats.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/10/how-the-pacific-islands-are-balancing-covid-19-survival-demands-on-coastal-fisheries-with-sustainable-management/>

470) *October 13*. There have been many proposals made to deal with the fallout of the Covid-19 on the **PACIFIC** islands and for how 'big brothers' Australia and New Zealand could assist in the recovery. The suggestions include a stimulus package from Australia and New Zealand, an increase in the number of seasonal workers from the Pacific to these countries and supplies of the Covid-19 related medical resources such as testing kits and vaccines when they become available. These were part of renewed calls to strengthen regional cooperation to deal with the socio-economic effects of the pandemic and to minimise its immediate and future impacts.

<https://devpolicy.org/responding-to-covid-19-time-for-pacific-governments-and-donors-to-refocus-on-governance-20201013-2/>

471) *October 13*. Car-sharing has been a factor in the spread of Covid-19 during an outbreak in the **WESTERN ISLES**, the local health board has said. Cases on the islands have risen to more than 50 in recent weeks, with the majority linked to Uist.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-54522374>

472) *October 14*. In this new Covid-19 world, environmental and climate crisis defenders in the **PACIFIC** are developing new ways to cope and operate under the pandemic constraints.

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL2010/S00069/how-pacific-environmental-defenders-are-coping-with-the-covid-pandemic.htm>

473) *October 14*. All the locals knew **FURTADA ISLAND** just west of Rio de Janeiro was teeming with cats. They left food and even brought tourists. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit, and human support dried up, resulting in a gruesome scene witnessed by fishermen: a group of cats devouring others' corpses.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/on-brazils-tropical-island-of-cats-virus-led-to-starvation-island-virus-island-cats-cats-b1039609.html>

474) *October 15*. Island states like the **MARSHALL ISLANDS** are drowning in debt and banking on an international lifeline. Marshallese are resilient people and we have thrived for thousands of years on low-lying atolls, drawing strength from close-knit communities to face innumerable challenges – an exacting environment, colonialism, World War II, nuclear testing, and climate change. After months battling a climate-related dengue fever outbreak in 2019, we closed our borders early in the pandemic to protect our overstretched frontline workers and our most vulnerable. The global pandemic underscored a lesson my people learned long ago: we are only as strong as the most vulnerable in our society. Today, our borders remain closed and the country COVID-free, though at great cost. The projected impact on tax revenues, employment and job loss alongside a gutting of fisheries revenues leaves the Republic of the Marshall Islands facing a fiscal shock larger than any experienced before.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201015145531-rlot1/>

475) *October 18*. **SCOTTISH ISLAND** communities could be given special treatment from the mainland to allow isolated communities return to some form of normality – with locals pointing to testing on arrival as a potential solution.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18802742.coronavirus-scotland-orkney-plea-exempt-lockdown/>

476) *October 18*. Charles Darwin documented the rich biota of the **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS** in the early 1800s. In more recent times, an unofficial network of local tour boats and fishing vessels has worked to protect it, by keeping an eye out for those who might harm the marine bounty. But the pandemic has grounded this surveillance fleet, creating an opening for outsiders. Earlier this summer, more than 300 Chinese fishing vessels - many designed to hold 1,000 tons of catch - waited at the marine preserve's border, ready to snatch up sea life as it migrated south toward the waters off Peru and Chile.

<https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2020-10-18/galapagos-islands-threats-illegal-fishing-pandemic>

477) *October 20.* The British Crown Dependency of **JERSEY**, which had banned all but essential travel to the island in late March due to the coronavirus pandemic, decided to reopen its borders by July 3 to accommodate airlines' schedules. Ongoing travel restrictions could have had potentially devastating effects on the island's economy, which relies heavily on financial services, agriculture and tourism, and created additional hardships for residents, many of whom had been separated from loved ones for months. To reopen safely, the island needed to find a way to test incoming travellers for COVID-19 and isolate those who tested positive, as well as anyone they were in direct contact with. Jersey government officials decided in early June that the island would have a booking and testing system in place by the beginning of July - less than a month away. Jersey had an existing system designed for booking patients for tests in a medical setting, but it wasn't geared for customers to input their own information or to handle large numbers of people quickly. So they designed a solution and turned to Microsoft for help to deliver it. They needed a mobile solution that was fast, easy to use, able to process large numbers of travellers quickly and adaptable to any testing scenario. Microsoft sprung into action, quickly mobilizing a team of about half a dozen people from across four continents, to provide the needed expertise and enable a round-the-clock work schedule to meet the tight deadline. Using Microsoft Teams to communicate and share work, the team put together a demo in four days, and within two weeks built an end-to-end solution for registering, booking, testing and tracking travellers coming into Jersey.

<https://news.microsoft.com/en-gb/2020/10/20/on-the-island-of-jersey-a-race-to-safely-reopen-the-border-and-protect-a-community/>

478) *October 20.* The **HAWAII** state Health Department reported four COVID-19 cases on Lanai, the first confirmed infections diagnosed on the island since the pandemic began. Last week, the governor approved Maui County mayor's request to allow unrestricted travel between Maui, Molokai and Lanai because the three islands are in the same county. Lanai residents say that was a huge mistake.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2020/10/20/coronavirus-cases-reported-lanai-first-confirmed-infections-island/>

479) *October 21.* Amid the recent spread of the new coronavirus on the Japanese island of **MIYAKOJIMA**, part of Okinawa Prefecture, the prefectural government called on residents to refrain from the *otori* practice, in which participants drink *awamori* distilled liquor, a specialty of the prefecture, in turn from the same glass at ceremonies and gatherings, saying that such a practice poses an infection risk. This traditional drinking custom is believed to date back to the age of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which ruled the region between the 15th and 19th centuries.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/10/21/national/okinawa-traditional-drinking-custom-coronavirus/>

480) *October 22.* **SPAIN** and **FRANCE** became the first European countries to record more than one million coronavirus cases, as the continent's outbreak continues

to spiral. The new spikes have caused governments across the continent to reintroduce harsh restrictions on cities, regions, and entire countries.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/spain-france-first-european-countries-more-than-million-coronavirus-cases-2020-10?r=US&IR=T>

481) *October 22*. The questions are asked quietly, but urgently: “Kava, do you have any? Do you know where to get any? Have you heard what they are paying for it in Sydney?” When Pasifika meet in **AUSTRALIA**, it is often kava that dominates: now, it is the absence of it. The traditional brew, made from the kava plant and central to so many of the Pacific’s social interactions, is in vanishingly short supply, an unlikely, unhappy, corollary of Covid shutdowns. And the shortage is harming businesses across the region. In Pacific island nations with little Covid spread, but strict lockdowns and curfews, the traditional late-night sessions have been dramatically curtailed. In **FIJI**, where the drink is known as *yaqona*, there was even a temporary ban on sharing the *bilo*, the communal cup from which the kava is traditionally sipped.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/23/calls-for-a-covid-kava-bubble-as-supply-from-pacific-to-australia-dries-up>

482) *October 22*. Tourism is reduced, but turtle nesting success may be up, or down, on certain islands as a consequence of pandemic lockdowns. The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Sea Turtle program surveys 18 miles of beach between **SANIBEL ISLAND** and Redfish Pass. This year, staff documented record loggerhead nest counts, totaling 926. During the month of May, the false crawl rate was 23 percent lower than the same time last year. While the beaches they monitor weren’t closed, beach parking was prohibited from March 18 through June 1 and there were state-issued stay-at-home orders. In Costa Rica, where hundreds of thousands of nests appear annually along its beaches, the lack of tourism has had a big impact, says Jimena Gutiérrrez, a Sea Turtle Conservancy biologist living in Tortuguero National Park. “Because of COVID, one of the biggest observations that we have is the increasing levels of poaching on the beach,” she says. “[Normally] the turtles are conserved because we have people that come to see them. Maybe in the long run, we will see good numbers because there is less boat traffic in the ocean, but right now reduced tourism is a downside for the turtles here.” In the **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**, Parque Nacional Jaragua and Isla Saona attract hundreds of nests every year. Yolanda León, a biologist and research professor at Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, notes that spots like Isla Saona have doubled their nests in recent years thanks to beach patrollers who help deter poachers. But with fewer tourism dollars supporting local workers amid the pandemic, she worries for the conservationists as well as the turtles.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/2020/10/florida-could-see-a-sea-turtle-baby-boom-thanks-to-pandemic/>

483) *October 24*. The population of **GALAPAGOS** penguins and flightless cormorants, two species endemic to the islands, has seen a record increase, according to study carried out by the park and the Charles Darwin Foundation in September. The park said the presence of the La Nina climatic phenomenon, which helps to provide more food for the birds, has contributed to the increase in their populations.

Another factor was the coronavirus pandemic, which has limited disturbances to nesting areas because of the drop in tourism.

<https://phys.org/news/2020-10-galapagos-penguins-flightless-cormorants.html>

484) *October 24.* **FRENCH POLYNESIA** has recorded almost 700 new Covid-19 cases in the past two days, raising the total to 5859. The authorities said 2154 cases were active as the pandemic showed no sign of slowing. 20 people died while 78 were in hospital, including 17 in intensive care. All but 62 cases were detected after the borders were reopened in July and mandatory quarantine requirements were abolished to boost tourism. A nine-hour curfew is being reintroduced on order from Paris, but it has been adjusted by the French High Commission to apply to only Tahiti and Moorea.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/429103/tahiti-closes-in-on-6000-covid-19-cases>

485) *October 24.* Is **HAWAII** ready for visitors? Since Oct. 15, when state officials eased quarantine restrictions to allow visitors with recent negative COVID-19 test results, new arrivals have found emptier beaches, tidier parks and easier traffic. They have also encountered an island population that pays close attention to pandemic restrictions - perhaps because their state's economy is at stake, perhaps because of painful history.

<https://www.latimes.com/travel/story/2020-10-24/heres-oahu-after-6-months-without-tourists>

486) *October 26.* Western Australia's hard border has prompted an unprecedented tourism bonanza for **CHRISTMAS** and **COCOS ISLANDS** and reignited the debate over their tourism potential. The duty-free tropical Indian Ocean destinations are a four hour flight from Perth but included in WA's travel zone, which means people don't have to quarantine when returning to the mainland. Christmas Island Tourism Association chairperson Lisa Preston said the demands on the island's accommodation and infrastructure are a challenge, but no one is complaining. But the surge in tourism has also rekindled debate about Christmas Island's once premier resort and casino, which is now crumbling on the edge of a cliff above the crystal-clear waters, which surround the 60 million-year-old extinct volcano. Shut in 1998, the resort's accommodation has only been used intermittently to house federal government workers dealing with asylum seekers arriving by boat.

<https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/christmas-and-cocos-islands-covid-driven-booms-reignite-casino-debate-20201026-p568u1.html>

487) *October 26.* By harnessing the ancient practice of tapu, the Rapa Nui people of **EASTER ISLAND** were able to ward off the coronavirus soon after it penetrated their territory. It was sometime in early March when a passenger with Covid-19 landed at the world's most remote commercial airport, disembarked into Easter Island's sticky air and subsequently infected members of the small volcanic outcrop's indigenous Rapa Nui community. This 164-sq-km speck in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean is a Chilean territory famed for its 887 monolithic human figures, known as moai. But with just three ventilators to serve a population of 7,750, Mayor

Pedro Edmunds Paoa made the tough decision to cancel all incoming flights beginning 16 March, effectively terminating the 2020 tourism season. Cases on the island grew to a total of just five thereafter, and by the end of April, the virus had been completely eradicated. While Easter Island's isolation 3,500km west of the Chilean coast certainly helped, Edmunds Paoa credits the island's success to one key containment measure: tapu, an ancient Polynesian tradition that's been passed down through generations. "Tapu is a sacred order to protect our health, to protect our life and to protect our elders and their ancient wisdom," he explained. "It's a form of discipline rooted in Polynesian culture that has to do with restrictions, but also respect." The mayor says that when he shut Easter Island off from the outside world, residents were divided between those who trusted him and others who knew it would ruin the tourism-based economy. "I had to come up with a way to unite us because the only enemy was the virus and the only way to confront that was to bring up the ancient concept of tapu."

<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20201026-the-origin-of-the-word-taboo>

488) *October 26.* **MACKINAC ISLAND** is located in Lake Huron in the U.S. state of Michigan. A popular destination, which draws more than a million visitors a year, it locked down its 2020 tourism season on Sunday under steely cold skies. After skirting large outbreaks through the heart of summer, COVID-19 cases climbed to 53 Friday among the island's 500 year-round residents and what's left of its seasonal workforce.

<https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-health-watch/mackinac-island-empties-winter-covid-arrives-stay>

489) *October 29.* One of the last coronavirus-free sanctuaries in the world has been breached, with the US military base on Kwajalein Atoll importing two cases of Covid-19 into the remote **MARSHALL ISLANDS**.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/29/remote-marshall-islands-records-its-first-coronavirus-cases>

490) *October 29.* **TAIWAN** has reached a record 200 days without any domestically transmitted cases of Covid-19, underlining its success in keeping the virus under control as cases rise across much of the world.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/29/taiwan-domestic-covid-19-infection>

491) *October 29.* The world is in an "era of pandemics" and unless the destruction of the natural world is halted they will emerge more often, spread more rapidly, kill more people and affect the global economy with more devastating impact than ever before, according to a report from some of the world's leading scientists. The emergence of diseases such as Covid-19, bird flu and HIV from animals was entirely driven by the razing of wild places for farming and the trade in wild species, which brought people into contact with the dangerous microbes, the experts said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/29/protecting-nature-vital-pandemics-report-outbreaks-wild>

<https://www.ipbes.net/pandemics>

492) *October 30*. The first major Covid-19 outbreak in the **WESTERN ISLES** has been declared over by the local health board. More than 50 people were infected, one person died and more than 280 contacts were asked to self-isolate in the outbreak that affected South Uist, Eriskay and Benbecula and saw the temporary closure of schools.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-54747817?>

493) *October 30*. The DreamWorks version of **MADAGASCAR** is exactly that, a fantasy. The island nation is no unpeopled paradise teeming with dancing lemurs, as depicted in the animated *Madagascar* film. On the contrary, almost all of its lemur species are being driven to extinction by humans. This World Lemur's Day, it is worth pointing out that the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis has emerged as a moment of reckoning for conservation efforts, exposing the risks of relying heavily on foreign revenue and not focusing enough on communities at the frontline of safeguarding biodiversity.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/10/lemurs-might-never-recover-from-covid-19-commentary/>

494) *October 31*. At the entrance to Taipei's Pride march on Saturday, Pearl Jain and Lance Xie held up a sign offering free hugs. Similar placards were waved above the pulsating crowd of 100,000 sweaty and bedazzled party goers along the parade route as **TAIWAN** enjoys victory over coronavirus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/31/hugs-sequins-and-rainbows-as-taiwan-enjoys-victory-over-virus>

495) *November 1*. **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** has approved nearly \$US3m from its threadbare budget for an as-yet-unidentified Covid-19 treatment – allocating the money to an unknown biomedical company that was formed in August. The prime minister, James Marape, has insisted the national executive council had not completed its approval process to engage a PNG company to find a treatment, but leaked cabinet documents appear to show 10.2m Kina (US\$2.85m) being awarded to Niugini BioMed Ltd for research into discovering a new treatment for Covid-19 infections from existing drugs.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/01/png-government-to-give-3m-to-unknown-firm-for-covid-treatment>

496) *November 1*. **ANTARCTICA** is Earth's one virus-free continent. This week, 40 men and women will emerge from quarantine and board the Royal Research Ship James Clark Ross as it prepares to sail from Harwich in Essex to the South Atlantic. Their mission is straightforward. They will attempt to salvage scientific operations in Antarctica while also keeping it Covid-free.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/01/next-stop-antarctica-british-team-covid-free-coronavirus>

497) *November 1*. Traditional skills help people on the tourism-deprived **PACIFIC** islands survive the pandemic. Tourism normally provides one in four jobs in Vanuatu

and one in three jobs in Cook Islands. It contributes between 20% and 70% of the GDP of countries spanning from Samoa and Vanuatu to Fiji and Cook Islands. But our research shows how people are surviving - and in some cases, thriving - in the face of significant loss of income. This is due in part to their reliance on customary knowledge, systems and practices.

<https://theconversation.com/traditional-skills-help-people-on-the-tourism-deprived-pacific-islands-survive-the-pandemic-148987>

<https://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/15742>

498) *November 4.* In the **PACIFIC** region, COVID-19 has placed a magnifying glass on pre-existing environmental and social challenges. It has highlighted flaws in government policy, partnerships, and delivery of development and humanitarian services - including those of international NGOs.

<https://www.devex.com/news/covid-19-is-just-part-of-the-story-for-ngos-in-the-pacific-98454>

499) *November 5.* **INDONESIA** has fallen into its first recession in 22 years as the coronavirus pandemic continues to take its toll. South East Asia's biggest economy saw growth fall 3.49% in the third quarter of the year, compared to the same period in 2019.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-54819898>

500) *November 6.* Hermit crab numbers in southern **THAILAND** have boomed as foreign tourists have stayed away – so much so that the national park authority is appealing for the public to donate extra shells for them to live in. The population of the crustaceans, which protect themselves by wearing and living inside the discarded shells of other animals, has exploded on some islands in the Mu Koh Lanta national park, and marine biologists believe the lack of tourists could be a factor.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/06/call-shell-donations-thailand-hermit-crabs-housing-crisis>

501) *November 6.* Ten months have passed since health officials cited Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market as ground zero for the COVID-19 pandemic - and a global debate over how the pandemic began has existed for nearly as long. But the public may soon learn answers as the World Health Organisation embarks on the final stages of a search for the coronavirus's origins.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/science-and-technology/2020/11/the-who-is-hunting-for-the-coronaviruss-origins-here-are-the-new>

502) *November 6.* The **MAINE ISLAND** of North Haven, which has a year-round population of just 357 people, has reported 5 cases of COVID-19. The island made national headlines in March when town officials passed an unprecedented ban on visitors and seasonal residents in a bid to protect the community from the spread of the virus. The short-lived ban lasted less than a week, and was enacted as town officials heard people who were not full-time residents were traveling there to ride out the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://bangordailynews.com/2020/11/06/news/midcoast/5-cases-of-covid-19-detected-on-small-maine-island/>

503) *November 8.* When the mayor of Roccafiiorita on the island of **SICILY** received a phone call in October informing him that an employee in his office had tested positive for Covid-19, his heart sank. Set among the forests at the foot of Mount Kalfa, Roccafiiorita is the smallest village in southern Italy. The average age of its 187 inhabitants is over 60. If Covid were to spread among the population, the village could disappear. Last week, the Italian government introduced a semi-lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus, after an average of over 30,000 new cases a day. Most attention has been directed towards large cities like Milan and Naples, but across the country thousands of small villages are fighting to stay alive.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/08/italy-tiny-villages-covid-threat>

504) *November 9.* Mutations in coronavirus have triggered culls of millions of farmed mink in **DENMARK**. Part of the country has been put under lockdown after Danish authorities found genetic changes they say might undermine the effectiveness of future Covid-19 vaccines. More than 200 people have been infected with mink-related coronavirus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54842643>

505) *November 9.* The first effective coronavirus vaccine can prevent more than 90% of people from getting Covid-19, a preliminary analysis shows. The developers - Pfizer and BioNTech - described it as a "great day for science and humanity". Their vaccine has been tested on 43,500 people in six countries and no safety concerns have been raised. The companies plan to apply for emergency approval to use the vaccine by the end of the month. No vaccine has gone from the drawing board to being proven highly effective in such a short period of time.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54873105>

506) *November 9.* The prospect of a global green recovery from the coronavirus pandemic is hanging in the balance, as countries pour money into the fossil fuel economy to stave off a devastating recession. Meanwhile, promises of a low-carbon boost are failing to materialise. Only a handful of major countries are pumping rescue funds into low-carbon efforts such as renewable power, electric vehicles and energy efficiency.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/09/revealed-covid-recovery-plans-threaten-global-climate-hopes>

507) *November 9.* New Zealand's **CHATHAM ISLANDS** might be the only place in the world experiencing overtourism right now. In a typical year, the Chathams - whose two main populated islands are Chatham Island and Pitt Island - get about 2,000 tourists. That compares to about 700 full-time residents, most of who live on Chatham Island, the largest of the archipelago. As New Zealand's borders remain mostly closed and locals are advised to not travel overseas at this time, the Chathams - about 500 miles east of the country's South Island - have become 2020's hottest getaway for Kiwis. Demand, though, is far outstripping supply. The islands' tourism

manager estimates that there are 150 beds on the islands in a mix of hotels, lodges, guesthouses and local residences that list themselves on sites like Airbnb. Most property is privately owned, and camping is forbidden.

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/chatham-islands-new-zealand-overtourism-intl-hnk/index.html>

508) *November 9.* New Zealand is inching closer towards establishing its first travel bubble, with the prime minister announcing a reconnaissance team will be heading to the **COOK ISLANDS** on Saturday. The Cook Islands has been declared Covid-19 free, and has been pleading for a travel bubble for months, saying its economy is being decimated by the complete lack of tourism – the main driver of its small economy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/09/new-zealand-to-send-team-to-investigate-cook-islands-travel-bubble>

509) *November 9.* The UNDP says the introduction of a Temporary Basic Income (TBI) for the world's poorest people including those in the **PACIFIC** could help slow the current surge in Covid-19 cases in the region. **TUVALU** is Covid-free but it was among first to adopt TBI as an incentive through a monthly payment to help 11,000 of its people to stay home for the duration of the partial lockdown or containment of the pandemic.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/430222/pacific-s-poorest-targetted-by-un-covid-19-relief-plan>

510) *November 9.* For residents of the tiny **MAINE ISLAND** of North Haven, the increase in virus cases is a sudden wake-up call. The extent of the disease on the island and the speed with which it has spread from person to person has been frightening for many.

<https://bangordailynews.com/2020/11/11/news/midcoast/how-the-tiny-island-of-north-haven-is-grappling-with-growing-covid-19-numbers/>

511) *November 11.* The Pacific nation of **VANUATU** has recorded its first case of coronavirus, after a citizen who was repatriated from the United States tested positive while in quarantine. Vanuatu had been among the last handful of countries in the world to have avoided the virus. Authorities have introduced a lockdown in the main island of Efate, banning travel to and from the island while contact tracing is underway. Vanuatu has also extended its mandatory quarantine period for international travellers from 14 days to 28 days.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-11/covid-free-pacific-nation-vanuatu-first-case-coronavirus/12871860>

512) *November 11.* The world's publicly financed development banks have pledged to tie together their efforts to rescue the global economy from the Covid-19 crisis and the climate emergency, using their financial muscle to assist a green recovery for poor countries. But the banks stopped short of pledging an end to fossil fuel finance, and

did not set out firm targets for how much funding they would devote to a green recovery in a declaration signed on Thursday by 450 development banks worldwide.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/nov/11/banks-around-world-in-joint-pledge-on-green-recovery-after-covid>

513) *November 12.* New infections and hospital admissions have surged in **SWEDEN** as the country battles a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic that officials had hoped its light-touch, anti-lockdown approach would mitigate. Anders Tegnell, the country's chief epidemiologist, has always denied the aim was rapid herd immunity, but to slow the virus enough for health services to cope. He has also, however, repeatedly said he expected Sweden's second wave to involve relatively fewer cases than countries that locked down, because of an expected higher level of immunity. In fact, all studies carried out so far suggest immunity in and around Stockholm is significantly lower than the national health agency predicted. Twenty per cent of Covid-19 tests in the capital last week were positive, compared with 16% and 8.4% in previous weeks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/12/covid-infections-in-sweden-surge-dashing-hopes-of-herd-immunity>

514) *November 13.* One of the first cruise ships to ply through **CARIBBEAN** waters since the pandemic began ended its trip early after five passengers tested positive for Covid-19.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/12/caribbean-cruise-ship-coronavirus-seadream>

515) *November 17.* News that the Moderna vaccine – which still has to receive formal approval – has nearly 95% efficacy sent global stock markets higher and, coming on top of the similar recent announcement from the German/US collaboration BioNTech/Pfizer, injected some much-needed optimism about the possibility of a return to normal life.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/16/covid-vaccine-who-is-behind-the-moderna-breakthrough>

516) *November 18.* In the **PHILIPPINES**, a majority Catholic country, festive preparations are well and truly under way already. The country has one of the longest Christmas periods in the world, with celebrations beginning at the start of September and, for some, lasting as late as Valentine's Day. This year festivities will inevitably be different. On top of a ban on gatherings, and restrictions on church attendance, the economic impact of the coronavirus has left millions without work. The country has also faced three strong typhoons over recent weeks, including Vamco, which has killed at least 67 people as well as causing devastating flooding. Some are torn over whether to put up their decor or "tone down" celebrations given the difficulties facing the country, according to Ambeth Ocampo, a historian and author.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/philippine-tradition-of-long-christmas-survives-covid-and-typhoons>

517) *November 18.* **ST. PAUL ISLAND** in the Pribilofs has no confirmed cases of COVID-19, but the community isn't letting down its guard. The school year started with roughly 25% of students doing home-based education even though the school was open to students. As the year has progressed, most of those students have returned. But as in many remote areas in Alaska, St. Paul remains on high alert because the effects of returning to distance-based education in the small community of just 397 people could be particularly devastating.

<https://www.alaskapublic.org/2020/11/18/st-paul-island-has-no-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-but-the-community-isnt-letting-down-its-guard/>

518) *November 18.* The **UNITED STATES** has seen more than 250,000 deaths due to Covid-19 as a new swath of data was released that pushed the stricken country over the grim landmark on Wednesday. The news comes amid record infections across the US, with the Trump administration repeatedly failing to get a grip on the Covid-19 crisis. Most recently Trump has refused to concede he lost the presidential election to Joe Biden who this week said "more people may die" if he continues to hamper his transition.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/us-passes-250000-deaths-from-coronavirus>

519) *November 19.* **CARIBBEAN** experts assessed the coronavirus's impact on the region in a webinar hosted by the University of Miami Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas. Owing in part to its geographic terrain, the Caribbean has fared relatively well from a health standpoint in managing the COVID-19 virus, yet the region has suffered economic devastation due to its historic dependence on trade and tourism, according to experts from the University of the West Indies (UWI), one of 14 member colleges of the Hemispheric University Consortium.

<https://news.miami.edu/stories/2020/11/caribbean-nations-explore-new-ideas,-directions-to-recover-from-pandemic.html>

520) *November 19.* The welfare of **MAURITIUS** households during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from three rounds of high-frequency surveys undertaken by the country's national statistical agency.

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/african/welfare-mauritian-households-during-covid-19-pandemic-evidence-three-rounds-high>

521) *November 20.* The sharply rising number of deaths from coronavirus in **FRENCH POLYNESIA** has triggered a corrosive war of words with a pro-independence party lawmaker, Éline Tevahitua, accusing President Édouard Fritch of mismanagement of the crisis. All the archipelagos of the Polynesian territory have now been hit by the out of control COVID-19 – even the most isolated, Mangareva – since the borders were opened four months ago. This takes the number of people carrying the virus to 12,587 since it was first detected on March 13.

<https://asiapacificreport.nz/2020/11/20/covid-19-politicians-row-over-out-of-control-pandemic-in-maohi-nui/>

522) *November 20.* Larry Ellison, the billionaire co-founder of Oracle, owns 98 percent of the Hawaiian island of **LANAI**. As Covid-19 swept across the U.S. mainland in the spring and summer, Lanai didn't have a single case. Its 3,000 residents avoided mass layoffs while tourism plunged but now the island is confronting a tough reality. Ellison's two Four Seasons resorts, which employ nearly a quarter of the island's residents, laid off or furloughed almost all workers in August. Some employees returned last month for a reopening to tourists - which was then followed by a wave of virus infections. More than 100 people tested positive for Covid-19 in the last two weeks of October. Four have been helicoptered off because Lanai's lone hospital isn't equipped with a critical care unit.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/11/20/shelter-island-larry-ellison-battles-covid-on-his-hawaiian-isle>

523) *November 20.* How Canada's northernmost community located on **ELLESMERE ISLAND** is handling COVID-19. In Grise Fiord, about 1,500 kilometers north of the nearest COVID-19 infection, the 150 or so residents in town are living under the same two-week lockdown as everyone else in Nunavut. The pandemic has brought some financial assistance to Grise Fiord to help residents with the high cost of food, which can be as much as a third or more priced than elsewhere in Nunavut. Pandemic subsidies from the federal government's Indigenous Community Support Fund and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association recently brought in \$1,000 per family - an expansion of a \$2-million emergency initiative that the QIA rolled out last April at the height of the pandemic's first wave. The money is to help with harvesting country food, buying groceries and cleaning products, and buying sewing supplies to make warm winter clothes.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/how-canadas-northernmost-community-is-handling-nunavuts-new-covid-19-lockdown/>

524) *November 21.* With traditional tourism hammered by the pandemic and many in Europe and North America working from home amid shorter days and dropping temperatures, islands in the **CARIBBEAN** and North Atlantic are trying to attract longer-term visitors. It's the sun-kissed version of the road-tripping and temporary-rental trend seen over the summer. Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Aruba, Puerto Rico and St. Kitts and Nevis are among those wooing homebound toilers from abroad. This is distinct from pandemic promotions by some islands to sell second passports at a discount. Attracting workers involves a delicate balancing act. Now, as the U.S. and Europe are seeing a second surge, islands are struggling with how to welcome back visitors without rolling out the red carpet for COVID-19. Travelers entering **BERMUDA** must present a negative coronavirus test upon boarding the airplane and are retested four more times over two weeks before they're allowed to move about freely. That makes it one of the most rigorous testing schemes in the world, a hassle for tourists but a perk for remote workers. Since launching its remote-worker visa program in July, Bermuda has received almost 600 applications. It's a drop in the economic bucket - but every drop counts.

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/nov/21/tourist-starved-caribbean-islands-woo-homebound-wo/>

525) *November 21*. In the 1800s, thousands of infectious disease patients were forced to isolate from the outside world in a newly formed settlement in Kalawao County, **HAWAII**. Today, Kalawao is the last county in the United States without a single documented [coronavirus](#) case. Call it poetic justice.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/covid-free-county-us-now/story?id=74315801>

526) *November 21*. Covid-19 effect is pricing out locals from Scotland's rugged **WESTERN ISLES**. Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, a surge of buyers have bought up many of the available houses, far from Covid-19 hot spots on the British mainland such as Glasgow or London. Local leaders say new arrivals could be a lifeline for the fragile communities that have long struggled to reverse declining populations. But younger islanders worry the influx is pricing them out of the market - and, ultimately, the places where they grew up and their families still live.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-covid-effect-is-pricing-out-locals-from-scotlands-rugged-western-isles-11605970802>

527) *November 23*. The global response to the Covid-19 crisis has had little impact on the continued rise in atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>, says the World Meteorological Organization. This year carbon emissions have fallen dramatically due to lockdowns that have cut transport and industry severely. But this has only marginally slowed the overall rise in concentrations, the scientists say.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55018581>

528) *November 23*. Pandemic offers respite for Thai 'sea gypsies' threatened by mass tourism. Since the pandemic began, life has been easier for Sanan Changnam and his people. There's an abundance of fish to eat, and real estate projects on their ancestral land in the tourist hotspot of **PHUKET** have come to a standstill. With Thailand closed to foreign visitors for the past eight months, tourist boats have been stuck at the quay and fishing has been easier for the Chao Lay, or "people of the sea". "We don't dive as deep as before, so it's less dangerous," says Sanan and the authorities are less strict when the Chao Lay sail in protected marine reserves or near islets usually reserved for tourists.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/11/23/asia-pacific/thailand-sea-gypsies-tourism-coronavirus/>

529) *November 25*. Authorities in **SICILY** have asked **CUBA** government to send about 60 healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, to the region as hospitals in the Italian island struggle with a shortage of medical personnel during the second coronavirus wave. On 4 November, Rome designated Sicily as an "orange zone", at high risk, mainly because of the lack of health facilities and beds in intensive care units.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/25/sicily-asks-cuba-to-send-medics-as-italy-fights-second-covid-wave>

530) *November 25*. Tourism revenue is down but online sales of **PITCAIRN ISLAND** honey are helping to keep islanders financially afloat after the global

pandemic stopped cruise ship visits. This year 21 ships were due to visit Pitcairn which was settled by Fletcher Christian, his fellow mutineers and their Polynesian wives in the late 18th century. Their descendants, who make up most of the 42-strong population, make money selling souvenirs and other local produce when the vessels anchor offshore during tours of the Pacific. Homestay experiences were also part of the offering to the few tourists who venture to Pitcairn, a two week boat journey from New Zealand. Pitcairn Islander Meralda Warren said locals depended on the tourists and households were making between NZ\$12,000 and \$20,000 annually. She said there had only been three cruise ship visits this year and income from tourism was now "almost non-existent." Pitcairn Island is one of only a handful of places worldwide which are free of Covid-19. Since March the only ship allowed to visit is the supply vessel, the *Silver Supporter*, based in Tauranga, New Zealand. "We're very strict. No yachts, no ships are allowed to stop. We've had a few come by but they haven't been allowed to come ashore."

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/431395/pandemic-affects-even-remote-pitcairn-island>

531) *November 25.* Kári Stefánsson is the founder and chief executive of deCODE genetics, a human-genomics company in Reykjavik. He became convinced that making sense of the epidemic, and protecting the people of **ICELAND** from it, would require a sweeping scientific response. Since March deCODE and Iceland's Directorate of Health, the government agency that oversees health-care services, have worked hand-in-hand, sharing ideas, data, laboratory space and staff. The high-powered partnership, coupled with Iceland's diminutive size, has put the country in the enviable position of knowing practically every move the virus has made. The teams have tracked the health of every person who has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, sequenced the genetic material of each viral isolate and screened more than half of the island's 368,000 residents for infection. Late nights analysing the resulting data trove led to some of the earliest insights about how the coronavirus spreads through a population. The data showed, for example, that almost half of infected people are asymptomatic, that children are much less likely to become sick than adults and that the most common symptoms of mild COVID-19 are muscle aches, headaches and a cough - not fever. Their achievements aren't merely academic. Iceland's science has been credited with preventing deaths - the country reports fewer than 7 per 100,000 people, compared with around 80 per 100,000 in the United States and the United Kingdom. It has also managed to prevent outbreaks while keeping its borders open, welcoming tourists from 45 countries since mid-June. The partnership again kicked into high gear in September, when a second large wave of infections threatened the nation.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03284-3>

532) *November 26.* Is the Covid-19 pandemic about to tear **SOLOMON ISLANDS** apart? The sensible answer is, probably not. But the consequences of the pandemic, including jostling among China, Taiwan and even the US, certainly have the potential to destabilise the country.

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/could-covid-19-micro-nationalism-and-china-cause-solomon-islands-to-split/>

533) *November 27.* **SAMOA** has confirmed its first case of coronavirus – a case imported from Australia – after nearly 11 months keeping Covid from its shores. The positive case was detected in a 70-year-old Samoan citizen who travelled to Apia from Melbourne, landing in the capital on a repatriation flight on 13 November.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/27/samoa-records-its-first-covid-19-case-imported-from-australia>

534) *November 27.* Escaped mink carrying the virus that causes Covid-19 could potentially infect **DENMARK** wild animals, is raising fears of a permanent Sars-CoV-2 reservoir from which new virus variants could be reintroduced to humans. Denmark, the world's largest exporter of mink fur, announced in early November that it would cull the country's farmed mink after discovering a mutated version of the virus that could have jeopardised the efficacy of future vaccines. Around 10 million mink have been killed to date. Fur industry sources expect the fur from the remaining 5 million to 7 million mink will be sold.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/27/escaped-infected-danish-mink-could-spread-covid-in-wild>

535) *November 30.* At least eight inmates were killed and 71 others injured when guards opened fire to control a riot over coronavirus conditions at a prison on the outskirts of **SRI LANKA** capital. Two guards were critically injured. Pandemic-related unrest has been growing in Sri Lanka's overcrowded prisons. Inmates at several prisons have staged protests in recent weeks as the number of coronavirus cases surges inside the facilities.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/30/sri-lanka-prisoners-killed-in-riot-over-coronavirus-conditions>

536) *November 30.* The Hawaiian island of **KAUAI** is opting out of the state's travel testing program following an increase in both travel-related coronavirus cases and community spread. The statewide testing program, launched in October, allows visitors to skip the mandatory quarantine if they test negative for the virus before arriving. Starting Dec. 2, all visitors to Kauai - including those from other islands as well as the mainland - will have to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

<https://www.travelweekly.com/Hawaii-Travel/Kauai-makes-two-week-quarantine-mandatory>

537) *December 1.* In remote villages on **LOMBOK**, a rugged Indonesian island east of Bali, resilience to global warming means figuring out how to maintain water and food supplies through longer droughts punctuated by extreme rainstorms, and adapting to warming and rising seas that affect crucial fisheries. The residents of the island are not relying on technology or engineering solutions in their preparations, at least for now. Instead, they have built a network of local leaders who know the environmental conditions and who can identify the strengths and weaknesses of their communities, down to the neighborhood level. And that grassroots approach has proved doubly useful. Since March it has enabled Lombok to meet the challenges of another crisis: the global coronavirus pandemic. Villages were able to quickly prepare and implement emergency measures that limited community spread of the virus,

including the installation of hand washing stations and the distribution of masks. The emergency teams also quickly ramped up contact tracing to identify who might have traveled in a high-risk area, disinfectant spraying in public areas and routine visits with quarantined people to provide support during isolation. The emergency response teams also collected data on which households were most at risk of falling into poverty because of the pandemic and so would need assistance for basic food and non-food items. Lombok has been better prepared than other island communities in the region, showing how climate resiliency can help society with a wider range of challenges.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/01122020/resilience-covid-climate-change-sea-level-rise-lombok-indonesia/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342884390\\_COVID-19\\_tourism\\_and\\_small\\_islands\\_in\\_Indonesia\\_Protecting\\_fragile\\_communities\\_in\\_the\\_global\\_Coronavirus\\_pandemic](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342884390_COVID-19_tourism_and_small_islands_in_Indonesia_Protecting_fragile_communities_in_the_global_Coronavirus_pandemic)

538) *December 1.* For many Pacific Island countries, **FIJI** and the **SOLOMON ISLANDS** included, COVID-19 was an unexpected life-changing experience. The pandemic meant an urgent change in all things considered normal from grassroots level to national and international arena. The pandemic meant border lockdowns, restricted movements and curfews to curb the spread of the virus. Ultimately, these changes also brought on socio-economic changes that meant reduced household incomes, purchasing power and access to markets of rural and urban households in Fiji and Solomon Islands. A recent study titled, ‘Assessing nutrition and socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on rural and urban communities in Fiji/Solomon Islands’, by The University of the South Pacific’s (USP) Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD) delved into these socio-economic impacts.

<https://junctionjournalism.com/2020/12/01/cultivating-sustainable-food-practices-in-the-pacific/>

<https://www.innov4agpacific.net/resource/assessing-nutrition-and-socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19-on-communities-in-pacific-island-countries-fiji-and-solomon-islands/>

539) *December 2.* The COVID-19 pandemic has turned **SIDS** economies and livelihoods on end. UNDP’s ‘Rising Up for SIDS’ is an integrated approach targeting island states’ systemic vulnerabilities to act as a vehicle for green recovery and beyond based on three pillars of action:

1. **Amplifying climate action for decarbonized and resilient societies**

UNDP is increasing investment in supporting SIDS through their energy transitions, developing and implementing climate adaptation strategies and leveraging nature-based solutions. To realize their goals, UNDP is helping close the climate finance gap by mobilizing investment to facilitate the energy transition through initiatives like the Climate Investment Platform.

## 2. **Propelling the blue economy for the wealth of island communities and health of oceans**

With international and local partnerships, UNDP is supporting both the preservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and the acceleration of the ocean economy sectors – centering on empowering and protecting livelihoods, especially vulnerable populations. Support is rooted in a commitment to the use of innovative blue financial instruments, including through the Global Fund for Coral Reefs.

## 3. **Catalyzing digital transformation for inclusive societies and competitive economies**

Through strong partnerships and innovation networks, including the SIDS Accelerator Labs, UNDP is helping in their efforts to adapt to the digital age, adopting digital solutions including data-based decision-making processes. Accelerated and just digital transformation will act as a catalyzer for stronger climate action. It will also help SIDS remain connected to the global economy, boosting their competitiveness while improving social and financial inclusion.

We are witnessing a moment of pivoting among SIDS. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly presented new and magnified existing hurdles. However, it also has inspired SIDS to reinvent, building forward stronger, greener, bluer in ways not previously imaginable. Now is the time to come together to rise up for SIDS.

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2020/small-island-developing-states-do-not-have-the-luxury-of-time-.html>

<https://www.tourism-review.com/small-islands-tourism-recovery-recipes-news11797>

540) *December 2.* The global Covid-19 pandemic could derail efforts to control and eradicate malaria across the **PACIFIC**, with the potential for thousands of new cases and deaths, health experts have warned.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/03/covid-could-derail-efforts-to-eradicate-malaria-in-pacific-health-experts-warn>

541) *December 2.* The devastation caused by Covid-19 presents an opportunity for countries to rebuild their economies in a way that is environmentally responsible, researchers say in the annual Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change report, which tracks the impacts of global heating on health. This report – compiled by experts from more than 35 institutions including the World Health Organization and the World Bank, and led by University College London (UCL) – teases out parallels between infectious diseases such as Covid-19 and climate change, highlighting that climate change and its fossil fuel-powered drivers such as urbanisation and intensive agriculture tend to encroach upon wildlife habitats, thereby encouraging pathogens to jump from animals into humans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/02/covid-pandemic-offers-chance-to-act-on-climate-report-says>

542) *December 3.* Pubs, bars and restaurants in **JERSEY** are set to close from 00:01 GMT on Friday for up to a month in order to tackle a surge in Covid cases. The "hospitality circuit breaker" announced on Wednesday comes amid fears health services could be overwhelmed. When Jersey's politicians agreed in July to reopen the borders, there were no known active cases of the virus. And while the numbers increased in the following months, many felt the situation was under control - largely thanks to a system of rapid border testing. But within days, the mood has changed significantly. The number of cases has more than doubled since 25 November, with a series of parties and social events blamed.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-55161923>

543) *December 3.* The annual grey seal census on the **FARNE ISLANDS**, one of Britain's largest colonies, has had to be carried out by drone because of the coronavirus pandemic. Drone pilot Ritchie Southerton said initial images suggested it would be "an amazing year for the seal pups". Numbers have been rising in recent years and an early count suggests a record 3,000 pups could be born this season, up from 2,800 last year. The 2020 spring count of moulting grey seals in the Wadden Sea also shows an increase of numbers in comparison to the previous year. The experts estimate that this spring the seals could have benefited from a reduction of disturbances, especially at beaches, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, resulting in more seals resting on land.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-55177030>

<https://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/news/wadden-sea-grey-seal-report-fewer-disturbances-grey-seals>

544) *December 3.* Health officials in **GREENLAND** are urging people to forego Christmas travel plans, and even going so far as to halt all flights to and from the country in the days before the holiday in a bid to try to prevent an unmanageable outbreak of COVID-19 in the following weeks.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/seeking-to-prevent-covid-19-outbreak-greenland-grounds-christmas-flights/>

545) *December 6.* First Nation communities are in some of the most remote areas of **VANCOUVER ISLAND**. They're also some of the most at-risk for COVID-19. Confirmed cases are climbing across the Canadian province of British Columbia, but First Nation communities on the island are shouldering a disproportionate amount of cases, but thanks to the quick actions of a chief, one of those outbreaks looks under control.

<https://www.cheknews.ca/island-first-nation-communities-see-disproportionately-high-numbers-of-covid-19-722988/>

546) *December 6.* **INDONESIA** social affairs minister, Juliari Batubara, has been accused of taking bribes while arranging food aid for people affected by the

coronavirus pandemic. Anti-corruption agents discovered more than 14.5 billion rupiah (\$1m; £760,000) stuffed into suitcases and other containers, and arrested four suspects during a raid on Saturday. Mr Juliari turned himself in on Sunday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55204061>

547) *December 7.* The emergence of Japan's coldest city as a COVID-19 hotspot has raised fears among health experts that it could be a sign of what the rest of the nation may face as winter sets in and more people stay indoors, raising airborne transmission risks. The city of Asahikawa, about 140 km (87 miles) north of Sapporo on the northern island of **HOKKAIDO**, is reeling from infection clusters at two hospitals and a care home. By Sunday, the number of cases recorded on the island was more than 10,000, and Asahikawa had accounted for 16% of the 256 deaths. It prompted the government to announce a plan on Monday to send nurses from Self Defense Forces to the region and western metropolis of Osaka to help fight the outbreak.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201207044118-4a2rq>

548) *December 7.* Millions of domestic tourists are descending on China's southernmost island province of **HAINAN**, presenting a surreal contrast with grim hospital scenes, shuttered restaurants and stifling home quarantine elsewhere in a virus-ravaged world. The island, known at home as the "Hawaii of China," has been free of the coronavirus for six months, drawing eager shoppers to duty-free malls, couples seeking a subtropical backdrop for wedding pictures and surfers just looking to "breathe freely." October arrivals of 9.6 million, according to official data, exceeded the year-earlier figure, before the pandemic struck, by 3.1%, although foreign visitors slumped 87%. That was a far cry from February, when arrivals had dropped almost 90%.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/12/07/business/china-hainan-coronavirus-tourist-destination/>

549) *December 8.* A UK grandmother has become the first person in the world to be given the Pfizer Covid-19 jab as part of a mass vaccination programme.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55227325>

550) *December 8.* **INDONESIA** has received its first shipment of coronavirus vaccine from China, as the Government plans a mass vaccination program aimed at reopening **BALI** next year. On Sunday, Indonesian President Joko Widodo said 1.2 million doses of a vaccine from Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinovac had arrived. It was also expecting another 1.8 million doses and raw materials - which could produce about 45 million doses - to come next year. The vaccine, known as CoronaVac, still needs approval from Indonesia's food and drug agency (BPOM) while the Government continues to prepare for distributing it to Indonesians. Bali residents could be among the first to receive the Chinese drug, in order to make the island "a green zone at the start of next year", according to China's state-owned Xinhua news agency. In the global race to develop COVID-19 vaccines, China has been among the frontrunners. It has late-stage trials underway in at least 16 countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. Though Beijing has a huge task to vaccinate its 1.4 billion citizens, Chinese President Xi Jinping has pledged to provide the

vaccines as a "global public good". He has signed deals with Brazil, Chile, Indonesia, Philippines and Turkey, before showing the world the result of final testings. So what do we know about China's "vaccine diplomacy", and will it lead to changes in China's geopolitical position?

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-08/indonesia-bali-coronavirus-covid-sinovac-china-vaccine-diplomacy/12958762>

551) *December 11*. The global response to the Covid-19 pandemic has driven the biggest annual fall in CO2 emissions since World War Two, say researchers. Their study indicates that emissions have declined by around 7% this year. France and the UK saw the greatest falls, mainly due to severe shutdowns in response to a second wave of infections. China, by contrast, has seen such a large rebound from coronavirus that overall emissions may grow this year.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55261902>

552) *December 14*. In pre-COVID times, some half a million tourists would descend on the tiny Thai island of **KOH TAO**, one of Southeast Asia's most pristine diving destinations. But that all changed in April, when the country entered lockdown and closed its borders to foreign tourists for the next six months. A meager 1,200 foreign visitors arrived in Thailand when it reopened its doors in October, compared to over 3 million in October 2019 – a near total collapse for a tourism industry that had previously accounted for 20 percent of the country's GDP. And the situation is particularly dire on Koh Tao, which measures just 21 square kilometers and offers few other sources of income to its 10,000 inhabitants. In the absence of tourists, some 90% of the island's boat operators are out of work. With tourist numbers not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2024, the UNDP Biodiversity Finance (BIOFIN) initiative has launched a new crowd funding campaign that will place 200 of the island's laid-off boat operators into an alternate stream of work: cleaning up the island. Koh Tao has struggled to manage the estimated 30 tons of waste a day left by tourists in recent years, and this year's lull has provided its marine ecosystems with much-needed respite. Starting in December, the 200 boat operators are being paid a monthly sum of THB 3,000 (USD 100) – raised entirely through crowd funding – to clear waste and marine debris from the island's beaches and waters. They will also be provided with training in financial literacy, courtesy of Krung Thai Bank (KTB), one of the project's main sponsors.

<https://news.globallandscapesforum.org/48880/crowdfunding-for-conservation-on-a-deserted-tourist-island/>

553) *December 14*. **MADAGASCAR** endangered lemurs are being killed during pandemic lockdowns. Early data paints a troubling picture for these animals and their habitat. Illegal forest burning for agricultural expansion, felling trees to burn and convert the wood into charcoal, hunting and consumption of lemurs on the increase and severe drop in tourism income are all cited.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2020/12/pandemic-lockdown-endangered-lemurs/>

554) *December 14.* Some **SCOTTISH ISLAND** communities cannot currently get the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine. The vaccine has to be stored at -75C and is being distributed from 23 freezers located around Scotland. People in Lewis in the Western Isles and mainland Orkney have been vaccinated, but transporting it to other areas presents a challenge. Islanders may have to wait for approval of a second vaccine, which is expected soon.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-55308636>

555) *December 14.* A new variant of coronavirus which can grow faster has been found in **ENGLAND**. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said at least 60 different local authorities had recorded Covid infections caused by the new variant. He said the World Health Organization had been notified and UK scientists were doing detailed studies.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55308211>

556) *December 16.* When the first case of Covid hit **JAMAICA** in early March, the government closed primary and secondary schools and over 500,000 children transitioned to remote learning. The majority of schools have yet to resume face-to-face classes since the March 13 closure. Across the world, 1.6 billion children do not have access to school as a result of the pandemic, according to Unicef. It is this mass absence that experts are flagging as one of main explanations for an increase in instances of physical, psychological and sexual abuse of minors. And even if children are not directly endangered by their caretakers or people in their community, they are suffering the effects of the pandemic. “What we have heard from our partners is that although there is no hard data at the moment, social workers and community workers are seeing an increase in incidents of abuse, incidents of violence, and what is even more troubling is some of the kids who are experiencing these things, they are unable to access the persons who under normal circumstances, they would have gone to make a complaint or a report to assist them in a situation,” says Janet Cupidon Quallo, child protection specialist with UNICEF Jamaica.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/12/pandemic-puts-jamaican-children-heightened-risk-abuse/>

557) *December 17.* **NEW ZEALAND** has advance purchased two new coronavirus vaccines from pharmaceutical companies AstraZeneca and Novavax, giving the small island country the ability to vaccinate its 5 million residents. Government officials also announced they will go a step further and provide free doses to its population as well as neighbouring nations Tokelau, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu, should they want them.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/12/17/947403839/new-zealand-will-give-free-coronavirus-vaccines-to-residents-neighboring-nations?>

558) *December 17.* Funding for conservation has been decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic, from sharp dips in ecotourism to decreases in charitable donations. Rather than pursuing new sources of biodiversity funding, countries should consider eliminating taxpayer-funded subsidies for agriculture, forestry and fishing, which are the top industries driving species extinctions. In 2019, subsidies for these economic

activities exceeded the global total spend on biodiversity conservation by a factor of at least two.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/12/to-fund-biodiversity-conservation-redirect-subsidies-from-these-three-industries-commentary/>

559) *December 18.* In the French overseas department of **GUADELOUPE**, fighting the Covid-19 pandemic is more difficult than in mainland France. Hospitals on the Caribbean archipelago lack sufficient medical staff and equipment. Meanwhile, hand washing, an important way of preventing transmission of the coronavirus, is often impossible due to regular water shortages in some regions.

<https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/reporters/20201218-on-french-islands-of-guadeloupe-an-unequal-fight-against-covid-19>

560) *December 19.* Covid-19 vaccinations begin in the **NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS** this weekend, but it's not yet clear when other Pacific countries will have access to a vaccine. The Northern Marianas, which is a US territory, was expecting 5,000 doses of The Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine to arrive during the week, and vaccinations to start today. The vaccine has already been approved in the USA and UK. It must be stored at around -70C, and transported in special boxes, packed in dry ice. Once delivered, it can be kept for up to five days in a fridge. A couple of weeks ago the CNMI government purchased and received 10 ultra cold freezers. The freezers ordered came from South Korea, and two were sent to Tinian and Rota and the rest will be used in Saipan.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-vaccine-roll-out-starts-in-parts-of-the-pacific/ZXJHWRLSAGG2QVO5VW4ILDHEVM/>

561) *December 20.* The pandemic gives locals chance to take ports back from tourists. From **KEY WEST** to Alaska, anti-cruise-ship activists have celebrated a silver lining to Covid as it halted travel. Key West and Juneau each see more than 1 million cruise ship passengers each year. Haskell and Hart said the intense tourism had diminished quality of life for year-round residents, degraded the environment and over time replaced vibrant local businesses with monotonous “trinket” shops catering to cruise passengers. In Key West, organizers collected signatures for three ballot measures for this year’s 3 November elections that would restrict cruise ships to the smallest and most environmentally friendly. And they won – by a landslide – even as the pandemic shredded the local economy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/dec/20/coronavirus-cruise-ships-lines-key-west-juneau>

562) *December 21.* **HAWAII** County’s economy hasn’t been hit as hard as neighboring islands, data shows, but that’s little solace for businesses on the Big Island fighting through the worst economic landscape in memory. And while the Oct. 15 reopening of tourism injected financial life into the state, those same businesses are wary of what could be ahead. They know that increased COVID-19 cases on the mainland bring tighter travel restrictions to Hawaii, which means tourism could be strangled to another standstill this winter - typically peak visitor season just when it looked like it was starting to recover.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/12/big-island-economy-is-getting-by-as-the-pandemic-persists/>

563) *December 22.* **ANTARCTICA**, once the only continent not to be affected by the coronavirus pandemic, has reportedly recorded its first cases. The 36 new infections are among people stationed at a Chilean research base and include 26 members of the Chilean army and 10 maintenance workers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/22/covid-cases-recorded-in-antarctica-for-first-time>

564) *December 22.* In the eyes of the world's media, **Britain – a “Plague Island”** led by a man who thinks “optimism is a substitute for hard truths and proper management” – is currently getting a good lesson in “what ‘reclaiming sovereignty’ means”. If never quite explicit, the schadenfreude is palpable as dozens of countries, days before the end of the [Brexit](#) transition period and with no trade deal yet agreed, suspend travel from the UK in response to the new, more contagious coronavirus variant.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/22/worlds-media-ask-how-it-went-so-wrong-for-plague-island-britain-covid>

565) *December 22.* With COVID-19 vaccine distribution now in its early stages, early steps toward the resumption of labour migration in the **PACIFIC** region underway, and hopes for an international travel ‘bubble’ between Australia and New Zealand, questions are now arising as to what additional measures will be needed before international tourism returns to the Pacific region. In this context, World Bank report - *How Could the Pacific Restore International Travel?* - has recommended that Pacific Island countries and Papua New Guinea take a phased approach to resuming international travel to the region in order to safeguard against COVID-19 outbreaks and ensure a steady economic recovery.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/12/22/vaccine-only-part-of-the-cure-for-resumption-of-pacific-travel-world-bank-report>

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/303971611070755211/pdf/How-Could-the-Pacific-Restore-International-Travel.pdf>

566) *December 23.* **TAIWAN** imposes new regulations after first Covid case since April. The change in Taipei was subtle but apparent. Within hours of authorities announcing Taiwan's first community transmission of Covid-19 since April, more people were wearing masks in more places, and hand sanitiser dispensers appeared in doorways, positioned so people would have to step around them to avoid the hint. Until Tuesday Taiwan had gone 253 days without a local case of the virus. The circumstances around the new case have sparked fear and anger. Health authorities said they had diagnosed a woman in her 30s, a friend of a New Zealand-born resident and pilot in his 60s, who had flown between the US and Taiwan and moved about Taipei while infectious without disclosing his symptoms or movements to authorities. The department of public health in Taoyuan, where the man lives, said he violated the Communicable Disease Control Act by failing to provide detailed and accurate information, and would be fined the maximum penalty of 300,000 Taiwan dollars

(£8,000). His employer, EVA Air, is investigating and considering firing the pilot, who flew with two co-pilots while coughing and not wearing a mask.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/23/taiwan-imposes-new-regulations-after-first-covid-case-since-april>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/02/world/asia/taiwan-coronavirus-health-minister.html>

567) *December 25.* More than 500 people packed a church for a zero-distanced carol service on the **ISLE OF MAN** - thought to be one of the largest in the British Isles. Residents have been living without restrictions since 15 June as there is no spread of Covid-19 on the island. There have been a total of 374 cases of the virus on the island since March, including 25 deaths. However, strict border controls and isolation rules have allowed nearly all restrictions to be lifted for six months and life has almost returned to normal. The only three active cases on the island are self-isolating and the spread is not classed as uncontrolled community transmission.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-55432576>

568) *December 26.* The forced cremation of a 20-day-old Muslim baby in **SRI LANKA** has highlighted the government's controversial order to burn the bodies of all those who died of Covid. Critics say the decision is not based in science and only intended to target the minority community.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55359285>

569) *December 27.* Scientists call for **UK** lockdown after rapid spread of Covid-19 variant. Cases of the new variant were confirmed in several European countries on Saturday, including Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. All were linked to people who had arrived from the UK. Meanwhile, Japan has announced it is banning all new entries of foreign nationals from Monday following the discovery of the variant in travellers from the UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/27/scientists-call-for-nationwide-lockdown-after-rapid-spread-of-covid-19-variant>

570) *December 28.* Coronavirus infections have barely touched many of the remote islands of the **PACIFIC** but the pandemic's fallout has been enormous, disrupting the supply chain that brings crucial food imports and sending prices soaring as tourism wanes. With a food crisis looming, many governments have begun community initiatives to help alleviate shortages: extending fishing seasons, expanding indigenous food gathering lessons and bolstering seed distribution programs that allow residents greater self-reliance. In **TUVALU**, the government held workshops teaching youth indigenous food production methods such as taro planting and sap collection from coconut trees. In **FIJI**, the government extended fishing season of coral trout and grouper that could be sold for income or used as food. Another project provides residents with vegetable seeds, saplings and basic farming equipment to help them grow their own home gardens. "We initially started with 5,000 seeds and thought we would finish them in nine months' time. But there was a very big

response, and we finished distributing the seeds in one week,” said Vinesh Kumar, head of operation for Fiji’s Agriculture Ministry.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/amid-pandemic-pacific-islands-work-to-offset-food-shortages-supply-chain-pacific-residents-pandemic-islands-b1779403.html>

571) *December 28.* One of America’s richest islands got pummeled by COVID. Then the warring started. Over the past several weeks hundreds of people on the small Massachusetts island of **NANTUCKET** have tested positive for the virus, kickstarting a local game of whodunnit. Residents have begun accusing others of contributing to the spread of the disease. For every individual charged with disregarding public-health guidelines, there seemed to be another calling their neighbors out for their reckless behavior either on social media or privately on calls with the board of health. For a community on such an edge, the arrival of a vaccine was highly anticipated. And when the high-speed ferry docked in the island’s port, the passengers seeing a nurse in scrubs sign off for the package finally caught on. Hospitals throughout Massachusetts had received their deliveries earlier in the week on Dec. 15. But Nantucket’s didn’t show up until two days later. Hospital administrators on the island were unsure if it would make it to the island that week at all given the impending storm. The doses, as luck would have it, arrived just hours before the snowfall. For nearly four weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas, more than 70 people a day had showed up at the Nantucket Cottage Community Hospital for testing. And each day, island officials reported dozens of new positive cases. For an island with a current year-round population of around 18,000, those slight upticks had the potential to overwhelm the hospital and its staff. During the week of Dec. 14, Nantucket reached a test positivity rate of 13.1 percent - one of the highest in the country. At points over the last few weeks, doctors at the hospital, fearing their COVID-19 patients may take a turn for the worse, transferred several individuals to Boston hospitals via helicopter. It wasn’t just the rising infection rate that had health-care workers and officials on the island on edge. Nantucket is a small community known as an escape for the wealthy during the summer months. But many of those who own summer homes chose to stay on the island throughout the pandemic, joining the 11,000 people who live there year-round. And some who had little to no previous connection to Nantucket moved into rentals and apartments there to flee the East Coast cities where COVID-19 was spreading rapidly. That uptick in residents meant more people shopping at the supermarket and more people showing up at bars, coffee shops, and churches. The influx alarmed portions of the island population, primarily older individuals who were anxious about catching the virus in a community with limited medical resources. Instead of unifying the community, however, some residents of Nantucket seemed to turn on one another.

<https://uk.style.yahoo.com/one-americas-richest-islands-got-095926632.html>

572) *December 28.* How the pandemic impacted rainforests in 2020: a year in review. It was supposed to be a make-or-break year for tropical forests. It was the year when global leaders were scheduled to come together to assess the past decade’s progress and set the climate and biodiversity agendas for the next decade. These included emissions reductions targets, government procurement policies and corporate zero-deforestation commitments, and goals to set aside protected areas and restore degraded lands. COVID-19 upended everything: Nowhere, not even tropical rainforests escaped the effects of the global pandemic. Conservation was particularly

hard in tropical countries. 2019's worst trends for forests mostly continued through the pandemic including widespread forest fires, rising commodity prices, increasing repression and violence against environmental defenders, and new laws and policies in Brazil and **INDONESIA** that undermine forest conservation.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/12/how-the-pandemic-impacted-rainforests-in-2020/>

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/12/indonesias-five-most-consequential-environmental-stories-of-2020/>

573) *December 29.* Officials in the **COOK ISLANDS** have indicated that a travel bubble with New Zealand may start as early as next month. People from **NIUE** might also be able to travel to New Zealand without quarantine as soon as mid-January.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/cook-islands-niue-travel-bubble-could-start-to-open-as-early-as-january-according-to-local-officials/3LZ2BXFNQUTYBQBDDUU3QW2SA/>

574) *December 29.* Progress made towards sustainable development by the Atlantic Ocean nation, **CAPE VERDE**, is under serious threat due to the COVID-19 pandemic according to the United Nations' most senior official in the country. Public revenues are expected to decrease by 25 per cent and unemployment will double. Recession is hitting the most vulnerable, jeopardizing decades of development gains. With the pandemic crisis striking a hard blow to the country's economy, the UN Country Team in Cape Verde rapidly shifted to emergency development mode, advising the government and reprogramming more than half of its annual joint work plan of \$17 million and mobilizing an additional \$6 million for immediate response, to save lives and sustain the economy.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1080752>

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-restrictions-cripple-cape-verde-tourism/a-55732875>

575) *December 30.* The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine has been approved for use in the **UK**, with the first doses due to be given on Monday. There will be 530,000 doses available from next week, and vaccination centres will now start inviting patients to come and get the jab. Priority groups for immunisation have already been identified, starting with care home residents, the over-80s, and health and care workers. It comes as millions more in England are placed in tier four restrictions. The UK has ordered 100 million doses of the new vaccine - enough to vaccinate 50 million people.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55280671>

576) *December 30.* 'A critical time': how Covid-19 piled the pressure on conservation efforts. Ecotourism revenues plummeted around the world as some areas saw poaching and land grabs increase in 2020 Conservation International warned: "There is a misperception that nature is 'getting a break' from humans during the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, many rural areas in the tropics are facing increased pressure from land grabbing, deforestation, illegal mining and wildlife poaching." NGOs and

scientists say the big picture is still unclear as many population surveys and monitoring programmes could not go ahead due to the pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/30/a-critical-time-how-covid-19-put-the-natural-world-under-pressure-in-2020-aoe>

577) *December 30.* A tourism operator believes **STEWART ISLAND** in New Zealand is having its best summer in 30 years. Rakiura Adventure owner Manfred Herzhoff has been overwhelmed with the number of domestic visitors to the island and said it was one of few businesses benefiting from border closures. This month, visitor numbers increased by 150 per cent compared with the past six months, and 200% compared with the past two months. Herzhoff believed the tourism sector had previously dismissed the importance of the domestic market. "It is awesome but not without some reservation. We need to manage the island resources and find a strategy and a balance of lifestyle, income, activities, visitors and residents."

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/stewart-island-proving-a-hit-with-domestic-travellers/ZTEPAHHSZNHQKJ4BEVGVQPMDNA/>

578) *December 30.* The **MARSHALL ISLANDS** became the first independent nation in the Pacific region to begin Covid-19 vaccinations on Tuesday as a group of high-ranking Marshall Islands leaders joined with Ministry of Health doctors and nurses to be the first to receive the United States government-provided vaccine. The US Centers for Disease Control delivered to Majuro an initial batch of 1,200 vaccines and the Ministry of Health wasted little time, rolling out the vaccine launch the same afternoon. The US government also delivered a similar number of vaccines to the **FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA** and **PALAU**. Both countries will launch their Covid vaccine drives in January. All three nations that share a free association relationship with Washington chose the Moderna brand vaccine over Pfizer because it is logistically easier for these remote islands to handle. The only other islands in the region to begin administering Covid vaccines are the US-affiliated islands of **GUAM**, the **NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**, and **AMERICA SAMOA**, which started their Covid immunization programs in mid-December.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/433812/marshalls-first-independent-pacific-nation-to-launch-covid-vaccines>

579) *December 30.* Year in review: COVID-19 in the **CAYMAN ISLANDS** with a detailed timeline of how it unfolded. Two people who had the virus have died – one a cruise ship tourist and the other a resident returning from overseas. Anyone arriving on island is tested at the airport and then required to spend 14 days in quarantine before being tested again. While a handful of quarantine breaches have caused concern among the public, there have been no reports of community transmission on island since October. People in Cayman, and worldwide, are pinning their hopes of border re-openings and life returning to some form of normalcy on new vaccines. The first batch of vaccines is expected to arrive in the Cayman Islands on 5 Jan.

<https://www.caymancompass.com/2020/12/31/year-in-review-covid-19-in-the-cayman-islands/>

580) *January 3.* Australia is moving to boost ties with small island nations off its eastern coastline, pushing back against China's growing influence in the **PACIFIC** as the virus outbreak hinders travel. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government has promised to supply its neighbours with Covid-19 vaccines in 2021 as part of a A\$500 million package aimed at achieving "full immunization coverage" in the region. It also recently signed a "landmark" deal with Fiji, one of the region's most populous nations, to allow military deployments and exercises in each other's jurisdiction.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-03/australia-makes-gains-in-pacific-islands-as-covid-hinders-china>

581) *January 4.* **PALAU** could become one of the first countries to be vaccinated against the coronavirus. With a population of around 18,000, the country is about the same size of some suburbs in Sydney and Melbourne. It's this size that has put the country in prime position to be among the first to be inoculated against COVID-19, after it received its first shipment of the Moderna vaccine on Saturday and commenced vaccinations on Sunday. Palau was initially due to receive doses of the Pfizer vaccine in December, but didn't have the facilities to keep the doses at the required minus 70 degrees Celsius. It gave its allocation of Pfizer vaccines to **GUAM**, which had been much harder-hit by the virus, recording more than 7,300 cases and 122 deaths.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-05/palau-may-become-first-majority-vaccinated-covid-19-coronavirus/13030012>

582) *January 5.* **SEYCHELLES** recorded its first coronavirus related death as it experiences its biggest surge of Covid-19 cases since the pandemic started.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/7456/seychelles-records-first-covid-19-death>

583) *January 5.* **CANARY ISLANDS** beaches deserted as COVID-19 decimates Spanish tourism. International tourist arrivals in Spain fell 90% year-on-year in November, official data showed on Tuesday, after authorities imposed new travel restrictions to curb an increase in coronavirus infections. Over the first 11 months of the year, some 19 million foreign tourists visited Spain, around 78% fewer than in the same period of 2019, the National Statistics Institute (INE) said. Tourists spent 91% less in November than in the same month a year ago, INE said. The situation is worst in the Canary Islands, where mild temperatures attract tourists all through the European winter. Travel restrictions in the region have left beaches and hotels almost empty, bringing local businesses to the brink of collapse.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-spain-tourists/canary-islands-beaches-deserted-as-covid-decimates-spanish-tourism-idUSKBN29A1XD>

584) *January 5.* The prospect of 1,000 people returning to **GREENLAND** in the span of five days after spending the holidays in Denmark has led that country's health authorities to suspend all flights to the country until January 12. The measure, which took effect on January 2, is being imposed at the same time as the Greenland begins to administer the vaccine against the virus and comes amid high rates of infection in Denmark.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/greenland-suspends-inbound-flights-to-halt-covid-19-spread-from-denmark/>

585) *January 6.* A handful of countries – most of them islands, most of them remote – remain coronavirus-free, but life has not remained wholly unchanged. The Pacific is home to the world's largest cluster of Covid-free nations. In the distant archipelago of the **COOK ISLANDS** coronavirus has been a spectre that never emerged from the shadows. In the early months of the outbreak, schools were closed on Rarotonga - the most populous island - and social distancing encouraged in public places. Relaxed after a handful of weeks, the measures were the closest the Cooks would get to experiencing living with the virus. But in a country of only 22 doctors and two ventilators for a population of 17,500, many have lived in fear of an unchecked outbreak. Across the Pacific, keeping the virus out has required, essentially, keeping borders resolutely shut. **TONGA** has stopped almost all movement in and out of the kingdom, and has avoided the virus, as has **KIRIBATI, NIUE, NAURU** and **TUVALU**. Enforced isolation helps. Two of the only places on earth not connected by aviation - the airstrip-less islands of **TOKELAU** (a New Zealand dependency) and **PITCAIRN ISLAND** (a British territory) - are also Covid-free. But the counter-narrative has been all too starkly apparent. **FRENCH POLYNESIA** re-opened its borders and abandoned quarantine in July, in order to reignite a stalled tourism-dependent economy. At that stage, the French territory had just 62 confirmed cases: it now has more than 15,000, and 91 deaths. But staying shut has come at its own price. Covid-19 shutdowns have devastated already fragile economies across the Pacific, especially those dependent on tourism. **FIJI** economy cratered more than 20% in 2020, and thousands there have abandoned tourism sector jobs to return to farming on ancestral lands. In some parts of **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**, people have returned to using shell money and bartering as the formal economy ground to halt. Across PNG, more than half (52%) of families have pulled children out of school because they could not afford to keep them enrolled and attending, according to a World Bank survey. And in neighbouring **SOLOMON ISLANDS**, where there have been just 17 cases, 57% of all families surveyed are eating less because of reduced incomes. In Koror, the largest city in the western Pacific archipelago of **PALAU**, remaining Covid-free after a year is regarded as a combination of luck, fortified by the early decision to close borders. The country has even received 2800 doses of the Moderna vaccine, courtesy of the United States, and has ambitions to effectively vaccinate its entire population by mid-year.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/06/life-without-covid-the-nations-that-have-sidestepped-the-pandemic-so-far>

586) *January 6.* Detainees at the **CHRISTMAS ISLAND** detention centre have set buildings on fire and rioted as part of a protest over conditions at the centre. In August, the federal government announced it was reopening the detention centre on Christmas Island, saying its ability to remove unlawful non-citizens from Australia had been curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic. Some 225 people, mostly migrants who have had their visas cancelled due to criminal activity, were detained in the centre at the end of November, government figures show.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/06/christmas-island-detainees-riot-and-set-fire-to-buildings-in-protest-against-conditions>

587) *January 7.* For heavily indebted **SIDS**, resilience-building is the best antidote. A recent UNCTAD study on debt vulnerability finds that SIDS have chronic debt not only because of their vulnerability to disasters but also due to many other structural issues. There is also a looming debt crisis in SIDS in the aftermath of COVID-19 as their tourism-dependent fragile economies are pummeled by travel restrictions. The International Monetary Fund projects a 9% fall in real GDP for SIDS in 2020.

<https://unctad.org/news/heavily-indebted-small-islands-resilience-building-best-antidote>

[https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2020d14\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2020d14_en.pdf)

588) *January 7.* Taking social distancing to a whole new level, Sweden's Goteborg Film Festival is inviting one cinema fan to spend seven days on an isolated lighthouse island, with only movies and the sea for company. Like many recent film festivals, Goteborg festival is going digital in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, but organizers decided to offer one festival goer a totally different experience, dubbed 'The Isolated Cinema'. The chosen fan will be transported by boat to the Swedish island of **PATER NOSTER**. Once there, they'll be set up in the former lighthouse keeper's house and spend a week from January 30 to February 6 watching Goteborg's offerings. They won't be allowed a cellphone, a laptop, a book or any other distractions.

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/goteborg-film-festival-isolated-island/index.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55875256>

589) *January 7.* If Covid-19 is primarily a 'First World' virus, why is the Global South in lockdown? An interesting opinion piece by Dr. Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake who is a Social and Medical Anthropologist, at the International Center for Ethnic Studies, based in Colombo, **SRI LANKA**. The Covid Pandemic: Broadening the Discourse is another opinion piece by Dr Asoka Bandarage, a scholar and practitioner who has taught at Yale, Brandeis, Mount Holyoke (where she received tenure), Georgetown, American and other universities and colleges in the U.S. and abroad.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/01/covid-19-primarily-first-world-virus-global-south-lockdown/>

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/11/covid-pandemic-broadening-discourse/>

590) *January 7.* Community spread of COVID-19 on **MAUI**, Big Island raises alarm. The Neighbor Islands are grappling with a growing number of COVID-19 infections and say community spread is fueling the case count. On Thursday, the state reported 56 new cases on Maui County, 18 in Hawaii County, and one on Kauai. Before community spread was so severe, officials with Maui Memorial Medical Center said they were dealing with two or three COVID-19 positive patients a day. Currently, they have a dozen. "We're coming to the conclusion it's the community, it's not the visitors," said Maui Memorial Medical Center CEO Michael Rembis.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2021/01/07/community-spread-covid-maui-big-island-raises-alarm/>

591) *January 8.* Catholic **MALTA** has the strictest ban on abortion in the EU, but during the pandemic more Maltese women have been ordering abortion pills from abroad, unable to travel because of the lockdown.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55579339>

592) *January 8.* The pandemic lockdown in the **PHILIPPINES**, amongst the longest and strictest in the world, curtailed field expeditions in the southern Mindanao region thus impacting upon the protection of the critically endangered Philippine eagles. Despite the limitations, Philippine eagle conservationists and their partner agencies rescued seven eagles and sighted two new eagle families. While 2020 was a productive year, the pandemic crippled the steady stream of revenue coming from tourists visiting the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/a-good-year-for-the-philippine-eagle-in-2020-but-not-for-its-supporters/>

593) *January 8.* More than one million Muslim minority Rohingya's fled Myanmar in 2017 due to ethnic cleansing, which has been condemned internationally as genocide. They now live in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, **BANGLADESH**. Many are uneducated as the Myanmar government never allowed them to study in their country and currently many in the refugee camps still do not have access to education. It is a life of uncertainty. And the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed them to the edge. At the world's largest refugee camp, many Rohingya refugees aren't wearing masks. This is despite the fact that many non-profit organisations as well as the Bangladesh government are providing basic protective kits and conducting awareness programmes educating those living here on how to protect themselves from COVID-19. Though the number of COVID-19 cases is low as per the data from healthcare centres in the camps, many refugees are asymptomatic. In addition, many refugees experiencing flu-like symptoms are said to be hiding in their make-shift homes and hoping to recover without medical intervention. In early December, Bangladesh began moving Rohingya families from the port of Chittagong to the remote island of **BHASAN CHAR** in the Bay of Bengal, despite concerns about its safety and a lack of consent from the refugees,

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/01/tales-21st-century-rohingyas-without-home/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/dec/03/bangladesh-begins-moving-rohingya-families-to-remote-island>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/dec/28/bangladesh-moves-more-rohingyas-to-remote-island-despite-rights-concerns>

594) *January 9.* The **FALKLAND ISLANDS** government has established a vaccination planning group, although there is not a delivery date for the Covid-19 doses to be sent from the United Kingdom.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2021/01/09/falklands-has-established-a-vaccination-plan-group-gibraltar-first-to-receive-the-pfizer-vaccine>

<https://en.mercopress.com/2021/01/18/falklands-has-a-plan-of-attack-to-inoculate-islanders-with-oxford-astrazeneca-vaccine>

595) *January 10.* Coronavirus: Virus provides leaps in scientific understanding. In January 2020, two scientists published the entire genetic code of a coronavirus that was soon to wreak havoc around the world. It marked the start of a year of intense and rapid scientific endeavour, to work out how we might fight the virus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55565284>

596) *January 10.* The pandemic to most of us has meant sequestered days at home and weekly trips to the grocery store, but for a couple on **PENDER ISLAND**, located in the Gulf of Georgia, British Columbia, Canada, stores are out of the question. Instead, the couple are on an epic one-year quest to only eat what they catch, grow, harvest and raise. That means no processed or packaged food. No takeout. No alcohol, coffee, tea or soft drinks.

<https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/pender-island-couple-only-eating-what-they-can-grow-and-catch-1.24265193>

597) *January 10.* First Nations across Canada have begun to receive doses of COVID-19 vaccines as provincial immunization programs get underway and Indigenous leaders encourage people to roll up their sleeves. Six of 14 Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations on **VANCOUVER ISLAND** were priority recipients of doses of Moderna's vaccine last week, said Mariah Charleson, vice-president of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council that serves about 10,000 members. The council employs nurses who are among those administering vaccinations so people see a familiar face they know and trust, she said.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-arrives-in-remote-first-nations-across-canada-1.5260824>

598) *January 11.* One year ago, China announced the first death from a new virus in Wuhan - 12 months later, Covid-19 has claimed 1.9 million lives in an unrelenting march across the world. But in the central Chinese city of 11 million where the first known outbreak started, the virus has been extinguished. On Monday morning, the anniversary slipped by unmarked in Wuhan - commuters moved freely to work while parks and riverside promenades buzzed with walkers in a city determined to banish its tag as the coronavirus ground zero. In a sparse report on Jan 11, 2020, China confirmed its first death from an unknown virus - a 61-year-old man who was a regular at the now-notorious Wuhan wet market linked to many of the early cases.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2049023/year-on-from-first-covid-19-death-wuhan-basks-in-recovery>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ug2m2qsrZMg>

599) *January 11.* The World Health Organization insisted today that the international investigation into the COVID-19 pandemic's origins, set to start this week in China,

was not looking for "somebody to blame". WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said the delayed mission - finally given the green light by Beijing - was about science, not politics. Ten international experts will visit China from Thursday to probe the origins of the new coronavirus, more than a year after the pandemic began and amid accusations that Beijing has tried to thwart the investigation.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/who-says-china-covid-19-mission-not-playing-blame-game-13940622>

600) *January 11*. Scientists at the World Health Organization warned that mass vaccinations would not bring about herd immunity to the coronavirus this year, even as one leading producer boosted its production forecast. Infections numbers are surging around the world, especially in Europe where nations have been forced to ramp up virus restrictions even as vaccines are rolled out. The WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan warned Monday that it would take time to produce and give enough shots to halt the spread of the virus, which has infected more than 90 million people worldwide with deaths approaching two million.

<https://sg.news.yahoo.com/vaccination-efforts-boosted-probe-covid-162958435.html>

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/vaccination-efforts-boosted-who-to-probe-covid-origins-in-china/article/583702>

601) *January 12*. Military helicopters could be used within days to airlift coronavirus patients from the **ISLE OF WIGHT**, the island's medical director has said, after an "astronomical" rise in infections fuelled by mixing and visitors over Christmas. A 71-fold increase in cases means the Isle of Wight has the 13th highest infection rate in the UK this week, from having one of the lowest in early December. The county of 141,606 people recorded 1,871 new cases in the first 10 days of January – 43% of its total since the pandemic began. Hospital admissions and deaths are rising sharply.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/12/army-helicopters-may-be-sent-to-evacuate-covid-patients-from-isle-of-wight-amid-surge>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/16/isle-of-wight-covid-catastrophe-island-hospital-tier>

602) *January 13*. The COVID-19 pandemic that has gripped the world for much of the past year has disrupted many industries, and fisheries are no exception. An early analysis estimates that in the **UNITED STATES**, the pandemic has caused fresh seafood catches to decline by 40 percent relative to 2019, while imports fell by 37 percent and exports by 43 percent. The decline in demand for fresh seafood was driven in large part by the closure of restaurants and fish markets during lockdown. In the United States, restaurants account for two-thirds of spending on seafood, and demand dropped by more than 70 percent in the early days of the pandemic. A sharp increase in delivery and takeout services - of 270 percent - only partially offset this decline.

<https://www.hakaimagazine.com/news/us-fisheries-hit-hard-by-covid-19/>

603) *January 13*. A case study about the impact of COVID-19 on **ST. LUCIA** by Zoe Martial, who is a Geography student at St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford. Her paternal grandparents were born in Saint Lucia.

<https://www.thestkittsnevisobserver.com/impact-of-covid-19-on-island-nations-st-lucia-a-case-study/>

604) *January 16*. With 160,000 positive cases and nearly 8,000 deaths linked to Covid-19, there's no doubt that after 10 months the virus has stretched its tendrils into every corner of Scotland. But for some **SCOTTISH ISLAND** communities, like the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides, this has so far been more in theory than in practice, with restrictions in place and very real concern about the pandemic, but no major outbreaks reported. This changed on January 13, when three cases were announced. This grew to 10 on Thursday, and the situation is now "rapidly developing", according to NHS Western Isles, with just under 90 people told to self-isolate, not far below 10 per cent of the island's population.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/weve-been-waiting-it-was-always-going-come-isle-barra-pulls-together-covid-19-arrives-3102745>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jan/20/outer-hebrides-islands-put-into-lockdown-as-covid-takes-hold>

605) *January 18*. Even as the WHO appeals to Global North countries to stop hoarding COVID-19 vaccines, potentially making acquisition costs even further out of reach for smaller nations, the **CARIBBEAN** Community (CARICOM) has called for a global summit to address more equitable distribution.

<https://globalvoices.org/2021/01/18/caribbean-calls-for-global-summit-to-address-fair-covid-19-vaccine-roll-out/>

606) *January 18*. Covid-19 has only catalysed the growing geopolitical interest in the **PACIFIC** islands. Donors have been tripping over each other to prepare for an outbreak of the virus. But, at the same time, this has only exacerbated fundamental cleavages in the delivery of aid to the region. The Pacific has always had a messy web of donor footprints. Australia and New Zealand have been a constant presence. Alongside this, there is a split between the islands that recognise China versus those that recognise Taiwan. On top of this, colonial relationships and ongoing Compacts of Free Association agreements mean that the support of some big powers looms large in parts of the region, while being entirely absent in others. And more recently, new players such as the European Union have also stepped into the ring. If current trends continue, the Pacific is on track for a collision between its fundamental development needs and the rapidly evolving state of its geopolitical relationships. In just the past few years alone, China has overtaken the United States to become the third-largest donor in the region. The great risk in all this is that whatever the Pacific needs, it is unlikely to actually receive. Purely donor-driven approaches rarely deliver what a recipient needs, especially when it is geopolitics – not development – driving the agenda. This new-found interest in the region has also created a myriad of different bilateral aid processes for recipient countries to navigate. As a result, public servants are forced to spend their days writing proposal after proposal, rather than actually getting on with delivering them. Take **TUVALU**, where the support of 58 different

donor countries makes up more than half of its gross domestic product, but where there are only eight people responsible for managing this aid.

<https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3113760/australia-china-and-other-aid-donors-must-realise-theres-better-way>

607) *January 18.* While the **PACIFIC** and Papua New Guinea have avoided some of the worst health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of international travel and lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19 have had serious impacts on employment, international labour mobility, and livelihoods across the region. A new World Bank report, *Pacific Island Countries in the era of COVID 19: Macroeconomic impacts and job prospects* details the potential extent of job losses and labour market impacts in the region, while also suggesting how the Pacific may benefit from changing employment trends and other opportunities.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/01/18/reskilling-and-labour-migration-vital-to-the-pacifics-economic-recovery>

608) *January 19.* Tackling the existential risk posed by the climate crisis will be made harder by the growing gap between rich and poor triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Economic Forum has said. The body that organises the annual gathering of the global elite in the Swiss town of Davos said warning signs of the threat posed by infectious disease had been ignored for the past 15 years, with disastrous results. Despite the loss of almost 2 million lives to Covid-19, the WEF's global risks report said the Covid-19 pandemic had widened longstanding health, economic and digital disparities, making it harder to secure the international cooperation needed to combat challenges such as environmental degradation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/19/climate-crisis-covid-19-inequality-wef>

609) *January 19.* When legions of office employees were sent to work from home last year, a new generation of digital nomads was born. Countries around the world began competing for their attention by launching long-stay visa programs designed specifically for remote workers, but now, Portugal is taking things to the next level. The Portuguese archipelago of **MADEIRA** is creating a "digital nomad village." Digital Nomads Madeira is a project that will host up to 100 remote workers at a time in the town of Ponta do Sol, home to just 8,200 inhabitants. Phase one will start on Feb. 1 and last through June 30, 2021. Participants will be provided with a free working space featuring a desk and chair, access to a Slack community, and free internet from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily at the John dos Passos Cultural Centre in the village. The experience will also include fun activities for the digital nomads, as well as other events that will facilitate connections between participants and the local community.

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/jobs/madeira-portugal-new-digital-nomad-village-remote-workers>

610) *January 19.* **TONGA** has extended a State of Emergency for another month, until 15 February, due to ongoing concerns around the global spread of Covid-19. The State of Emergency was first declared 12 March and has been renewed regularly

since. The extension, announced on Monday evening, means that a curfew will remain from midnight to 5am. Restrictions on gatherings to a maximum of 50 people indoors and 100 outdoors with the exception of church and schools also remain. Funerals also come under the restrictions and the government will continue to promote social distancing measures. Tonga has had no cases of Covid-19 and flights into the kingdom have been heavily restricted.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/434769/tonga-extends-covid-state-of-emergency>

611) *January 20.* **SOLOMON ISLANDS** has avoided the worst of the COVID-19 crisis, but new research shows it could take it and other Pacific countries years to vaccinate the majority of their populations. With only 17 coronavirus cases detected from returning nationals at quarantine centres, and no community transmission in Solomon Islands, the focus in the capital Honiara is on life after the pandemic and re-opening the country to the rest of the world. In the Pacific, thousands of vaccines have already been deployed to US territories and associated countries like Palau and Marshall Islands under the US Government's Operation Warp Speed. But others, like Solomon Islands, are having to wait. They're largely relying on the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility commonly known as COVAX, which aims to supply 2 billion doses to developing countries by the end of the year. As the Pacific waits, there are worries low-income countries, which are relying on COVAX, could be sidelined in the rush by wealthier nations wanting to access the limited vaccine supplies. That has prompted World Health Organization Director General Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus to issue these blunt comments on Monday. "COVAX was designed to avoid with hoarding, a chaotic market, an uncoordinated response and continued social and economic disruption," he said. The UK-based Economist Intelligence Unit forecast that Pacific countries like Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands may not vaccinate the majority of their populations - more than 60 per cent - until at least 2025. However, Dr Paula Vivili, the Director of Health at the Pacific Community organisation, said the wait might only be a few months.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-21/pacific-islands-covid-rolling-out-vaccines-until-2025/13073054>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-55795297>

612) *January 21.* A global assessment commissioned by the UN Forum on Forests concluded that COVID-19 has affected forests across the globe – hurting ecotourism, impeding conservation efforts and in some parts, crippling forest management budgets. But the authors are optimistic that the role of forests in post-pandemic recovery has never been clearer. **JAMAICA** Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site was one of the sites which closed temporarily, early in the pandemic. “The national park has places that we encourage people to visit. We initially had shut down our sites, but later on, as there was greater understanding of how the disease spreads and realising that protocols could be put in place, we followed the UN and the Health and Tourism Ministries’ guidelines,” said Dr. Susan Otuokon, Executive Director of Jamaica’s Conservation and Development Trust. Like conservation bodies the world over, the Trust, which manages the site, has been trying to fulfil its mandate amid challenges that include reduced funding and the need for distancing when many projects demand physical meet-ups. “Some of the

work that we do in terms of training for sustainable livelihoods with communities and having community meetings, it is challenging so we have had to revisit some of our outreach methods,” said Otuokon, adding that, “we’ve been lucky that some of our funding has not been affected, but some, particularly from government, has been reduced and that has impacted us, particularly our admin and support side.” While forests are not immune to the shocks of COVID-19, a recurring theme in the global assessment is the acknowledgement by respondents that those ecosystems are critical to any plan to ‘build back better’ and respond to COVID-19. Recommendations on the way forward point to forests as pillars for sustainable job creation, food production, fuel sources and ecotourism services. Some of the assessment’s regional reports also acknowledge those who, despite the limitations, continue to strive for sustainable forest management over the pandemic period. It is something the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust Director has seen among her staff. “We have national park rangers who decided they were still going out in the field, they were still working, they put on their masks and went out because they really believe that their work is very important, in terms of protecting the forests, trying to reduce clearing by farmers, both large and small scale, at a time like this when our water supply is even more critical and we need to maintain our forests,” said Otuokon.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/01/measuring-impact-covid-19-worlds-forests/>

613) *January 22.* House lawmakers in the **PHILIPPINES** have passed a bill to legislate a new, Covid-safe form of greeting in an effort to reduce contact during the pandemic. According to the bill approved by the House of Representatives, the new gesture will involve “gracefully laying the palm of the right hand over the centre of one’s chest while simultaneously lowering the head, with eyes either closed or cast down”. The traditional handshake, while well meaning, was a risk to public health, said Representative Bayani Fernando, who proposed the bill. He called the new greeting “Bating Filipino”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/22/bating-filipino-covid-safe-greeting-mps-philippines-bill>

614) *January 22.* A one-way travel bubble between the **COOK ISLANDS** and New Zealand began on Thursday. On Auckland-bound flights, Cook Islanders will now be able to skip quarantine requirements and head straight out to lunch in Auckland.

<https://simpleflying.com/air-new-zealand-cook-islands/>

615) *January 22.* **PUERTO RICO** new governor, Pedro Pierluisi, was on a mission on his trip to Washington, D.C. - to ensure that the U.S. territory of 3 million people is top of mind for Congress and the new administration. Pierluisi's immediate priority is to manage the health and economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed at least 1,447 people in Puerto Rico and infected over 82,5000 others. The island's coronavirus vaccine distribution process was off to a bumpy start at the end of last year, but Pierluisi said Puerto Rico is now "distinguishing itself by being one of the jurisdictions that most quickly administers the vaccines we're receiving. Of the 270,000 vaccine doses the island has received, at least 220,000 have already been given and the rest are in the process of distribution or administration."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/puerto-rico-gov-pierluisi-seeks-equality-funding-tackle-covid-reconstruction-n1255197>

616) *January 22.* Seasonal workers from the **PACIFIC** islands will be allowed into Victoria under special quarantine arrangements after a deal was struck between the state and Tasmania. Under the deal, announced after Friday's National Cabinet meeting, Tasmania will quarantine the 1,500 workers for two weeks before they are allowed onto Victorian farms. Workers from Pacific nations, which are considered a lower COVID-19 risk than other countries, do regular farm work in Australia under the Pacific Labour Mobility scheme and Seasonal Worker program. In a normal year, about 3,000 Pacific Islanders would be a part of Victoria's seasonal harvest.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-22/seasonal-worker-deal-struck-coronavirus-shortage/13082424>

617) *January 22.* New coronavirus cases in Japan's capital city held steady at just over 1,000 for a tenth consecutive day as U.S. military bases in the country reported 64 new infections as of 6:30 p.m. Friday. On **OKINAWA**, Marine Corps bases reported no new cases but curtailed most off-base activities indefinitely due to a record-breaking number of new infections on the island. All off-base activity will be limited to physical fitness and essential services only. The Marines also ordered their people on Okinawa to wear masks at all times when indoors on and off base while in the presence of someone who is not a family member or a roommate.

<https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/okinawa-marines-ban-most-off-base-activities-as-island-s-coronavirus-case-numbers-climb-1.659458>

618) *January 23.* **SRI LANKA** health minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi, who endorsed herbal syrup to prevent Covid, has tested positive for the virus. She had promoted the syrup, manufactured by a shaman who claimed it worked as a life-long inoculation against the virus. Sri Lanka recorded 56,076 cases and 276 deaths since the pandemic began, with cases surging in recent months. Ms Wanniarachchi is the fourth minister to test positive. A junior minister, who also took the potion, tested positive earlier this week. The shaman who invented the syrup, which contains honey and nutmeg, said the recipe was given to him in a visionary dream. Doctors in the country have quashed claims the herbal syrup works, but AFP news agency reports thousands have travelled to a village to obtain it.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55780425>

619) *January 23.* A year ago, on 23 January 2020, the world saw its first coronavirus lockdown come into force in Wuhan, the Chinese city where the pandemic is believed to have started. At the time, the wider world was shocked by the harsh restrictions and rigid enforcement. From late January until June, the city was effectively sealed off from the rest of the country. But even though it came at a significant cost, it proved to be a highly successful method of tackling the virus. One year on, China is often held up as one of the virus success stories - not least by Beijing itself. So how exactly did China get from lockdown to here - and how has Beijing controlled its own story?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-55628488>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-54987675>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-55212787>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-55756452>

620) *January 23*. Wuhan has long since recovered from the world's first outbreak of Covid-19. It is now being remembered not as a disaster but as a victory, and with an insistence that the virus came from somewhere - anywhere - but here. From the moment a new, pandemic coronavirus emerged in the same city as a laboratory dedicated to the study of new coronaviruses with pandemic potential, Prof Shi Zhengli has found herself the focus of one of the biggest scientific controversies of our time. For much of the past year she has met the suggestion that Sars-Cov-2 might have escaped from the Wuhan Institute of Virology with angry denial. Now though, she has offered her own thoughts on how the initial outbreak may have begun in the city. In an article in this month's edition of Science Magazine she referred to a number of studies that, she said, suggest the virus existed outside of China before Wuhan's first known case in December 2019. "Given the finding of Sars-Cov-2 on the surface of imported food packages, contact with contaminated uncooked food could be an important source of Sars-Cov-2 transmission," she wrote. From one of the world's leading experts on coronaviruses, even the discussion of such a possibility seems unusual. Could a spiralling outbreak of infection that almost destroyed Wuhan's health system, sparked the world's first Covid lockdown and spawned a global catastrophe really have arrived on imported food without any signs of similarly devastating outbreaks elsewhere? But with the virus vanquished, the idea that it is a foreign import is repeated with almost unanimity across this city of 11 million people. "It came here from other countries," one woman running a hotpot stall in a busy street tells me. "China is a victim." "Where did it come from?" the next-door fishmonger repeats my question aloud, and then answers: "It came from America."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-55765875>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-55364445>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2021/feb/01/loose-rule-breaking-culture-covid-deaths-societies-pandemic>

621) *January 25*. After an 11-month suspension due to the pandemic, China's cruise ships have set sail again. And, with the Covid-19 outbreak largely under control, the first cruises to resume operations in the country are going to one of the world's most hotly disputed areas. Two Chinese cruise ships have been back in service since December 9, running from Sanya, a port city in southern Hainan province, to the **PARACEL ISLANDS** - which the Chinese call Xisha - an archipelago in the disputed South China Sea that Beijing has laid territorial claim to. Six other governments in the region, including Vietnam and the Philippines, also lay claim to at least parts of this vast swath of water, which contains the world's busiest shipping lanes and holds rich natural resources. In recent years, the Chinese government has built a number of artificial islands in the area, equipping them with sophisticated military installations, despite opposition from other claimants as well as the United States.

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/south-china-sea-paracel-islands-cruise-tourism-intl-hnk/index.html>

622) *January 25.* **PACIFIC** island nations are turning to China-led agencies to plug funding gaps in their pandemic-ravaged budgets after exhausting financing options from traditional western partners, stoking fears the region is becoming more dependent on Beijing. The **COOK ISLANDS**, a tiny country of around 20,000 people in the South Pacific, turned to the Beijing-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) late last year after loans from the U.S. and Japanese-led Asian Development Bank (ADB) and grant from close ally New Zealand fell short. The US\$20 million AIIB loan to the Cook Islands was the second to a strained Pacific economy in the last few months, after **FIJI** secured a US\$50 million facility, signalling the arrival of a development bank closely linked to China's Belt and Road Initiative to the Pacific. **VANUATU**, with a population of 300,000, also announced last week that it had accepted a US\$12 million grant from the Chinese government.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-pacific-cookislands-idUSKBN29U00A>

623) *January 26.* An Edinburgh couple have managed to escape Scotland's long Covid winter - by answering a call from a Caribbean island. They accepted the invitation of the **BARBADOS** government to live and work on the island for a year on a new visa. The Welcome Stamp Visa allows nationals from other countries to live and work there for a year, while doing their jobs for employers in other countries. The Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted the island's tourist income, but the Welcome Stamp, launched last summer, is designed to bring people to the location and let them live like a local. So far, more than 3,000 so-called "stampers" have taken up the offer.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-55798027>

624) *January 26.* The newfound freedoms of remote working have prompted a wave of people to flee the US mainland for the **HAWAIIAN ISLANDS**. While the total number of relocatees is unknown, signs point towards a major influx. Real estate agents say demand has reached a fever pitch. A scheme backed by local business owners to sponsor remote-workers' flights to Honolulu, in exchange for community service, received more than 50,000 applications for just 50 slots. Some newcomers are making good on a long-held dream, while others are moving rather spontaneously, without knowing how long they will stay. They are coming for the climate, the scenery, the abundance of year-round outdoor activities. Many are fleeing virus hotspots; Hawaii has maintained some of the lowest rates of Covid infections in the nation throughout the pandemic. Among them are tech workers from Silicon Valley, couples forced by the pandemic into early retirement and parents seizing the opportunity to enroll their children in private schools offering in-person classes. There are also a number of prominent new Hawaii denizens. Mark Zuckerberg, the Facebook CEO, is riding out the pandemic on Kauai, where he owns a 700-acre estate. Larry Ellison, the founder of the software giant Oracle who owns 98% of Hawaii's smallest inhabited island of Lanai, announced that he now lives in Hawaii full-time. And while the influx has been a boon for some, it has also increased tensions – exacerbating a housing market that is already unaffordable for many locals. And, for some, it has brought back painful historical memories of outsiders exploiting the Hawaii lifestyle with little regard for the consequences. The brisk depopulation of

the Native Hawaiian people in the early 1800s was in part due to western diseases introduced by white businessmen who forced Hawaiians off their lands to build sprawling pineapple and sugarcane plantations. The decline of Hawaii's native population during this era – and the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom by the US government – remains a source of intergenerational trauma and anger toward outsiders. As a result, the idea of incentivising Hawaiian escapism during a public health crisis hasn't gone down well with everyone. Although Hawaii is in the enviable position of having the nation's lowest Covid-19 death rate, the virus has decimated the tourism industry that buoys the state economy, driving the unemployment rate from the nation's lowest to its highest. With fewer airplanes coming in, hotels sit empty. An unprecedented number of residents are struggling with food insecurity as they face almost a year of joblessness. So when it comes to moneyed newcomers, some locals are in short supply of the aloha spirit that Hawaii is famous for.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/26/hawaii-remote-workers-relocating-covid-19>

625) *January 26.* Health experts in **INDONESIA** have warned that hospitals in some areas are on the brink of collapse as the nation passed one million confirmed cases of coronavirus. In one case, a man died after he was turned away from 10 hospitals, including three in Jakarta, with doctors under greater strain than any time in the pandemic. Irma Hidayana, a public health expert and co-founder of Lapor Covid-19, a volunteer group that aims to improve data collection during the pandemic, said that over recent weeks her team had been in touch with dozens of patients unable to find a hospital bed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/26/covid-patients-turned-away-as-hospitals-in-indonesia-face-collapse>

626) *January 26.* The United Nations has warned that the devastating socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt for years to come unless smart investments in economic, societal and climate resilience ensure a robust and sustainable recovery of the global economy. The report underscores that sustained recovery from the pandemic will depend not only on the size of the stimulus measures, and the quick rollout of vaccines, but also on the quality and efficacy of these measures to build resilience against future shocks.

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2021/01/global-economic-recovery-remains-precarious-post-covid-19-years/>

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/communication-resources/un-research-roadmap-covid-19-recovery>

627) *January 28.* UK production and sales firm MSR Media is planning to shoot comedy feature *One Year Off* on the relatively Covid-free Caribbean island of **NEVIS**. Stringent Covid-19 guidelines, as well as its location, have helped Nevis avoid many of the ravages of the virus. To date, Nevis and neighbouring island Saint Kitts have only recorded 37 Covid cases and no deaths. Mark Brantley, Premier of Nevis, said: "Nevis is uniquely placed to develop a world class film industry. My government is agile, responsive and aggressively seeking to partner with filmmakers to develop this industry on Nevis."

<https://nevisisland.com/blog/news/uk-comedy-one-year-off-to-shoot-in-nevis-as-caribbean-island-looks-to-grow-film-business>

628) *January 28.* **CLARE ISLAND** off the coast of Co Mayo is experiencing a Covid-19 outbreak that has infected about one in every eight of its 160 residents. About 20 people have tested positive for the disease, making the mountainous island at the entrance to Clew Bay one of the most infected communities in Ireland.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/mayo-s-clare-island-one-of-state-s-most-infected-communities-1.4469244>

629) *January 28.* As both COVID-19 and climate change make rural living more difficult in many parts of the Pacific region, British High Commissioner to the **SOLOMON ISLANDS** and **NAURU** Brian Jones said it poses further dangers to the country's environment. Satellite technology could, however, provide some support. According to the World Bank, the Pacific nation's rural population sits at over 75%. And the top industries include tuna fishing, mining, and timber. But when people are desperate for income - perhaps as a result of COVID-19's impacts on the country's tourism and associated livelihoods - they're more likely to sell their rights to the environment to "unscrupulous extractive industries" at a lower rate, Jones said. If not done with due consideration, this could speed up the effects of climate change on those communities by enhancing soil erosion, enhancing the turbidity of water around those islands, and damaging coral reefs and fish, he added. But satellite technology in its ability to provide data on more hard-to-reach, rural locations, could allow policymakers to take action to better protect the environment and the livelihoods of those who depend on it.

<https://www.devex.com/news/q-a-satellites-to-the-rescue-in-the-solomon-islands-98429>

630) *January 29.* Inhabitants of remote **GREEK ISLANDS** received the COVID-19 vaccine this week as the government rolled out its inoculation campaign to include tiny villages, some with no more than a couple of dozens inhabitants. Many of the islands have been shielded by distance and life has continued relatively undisturbed by the pandemic. The vaccinations are aimed at ensuring that continues before the summer months bring in a hoped-for influx of tourists.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-greece-islands/greece-rolls-out-vaccinations-to-island-outposts-ahead-of-summer-idUSKBN29Y1Q9>

631) *January 29.* The whole of the **WESTERN ISLES** has moved up to level four lockdown restrictions as part of efforts to suppress the spread of Covid-19. Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said "quick and decisive" action was needed following new cases on the islands.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-55857072>

632) *January 29.* **SAMOA** will receive its first shipment of Pfizer vaccine by the end of March with the Ministry of Health looking at legal options for people who would not want to be immunised.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/pacific/435426/samoa-expects-pfizer-vaccine-by-end-of-march>

633) *January 30*. The WHO has criticised the EU's announcement of export controls on vaccines produced within the bloc, saying such measures risked prolonging the pandemic. The EU introduced the measure amid a row with vaccine manufacturers over delivery shortfalls. The so-called transparency mechanism gives EU countries powers to deny authorisation for vaccine exports if the company making them has not honoured existing contracts with the EU. The controls will affect some 100 countries worldwide - including the UK, the US, Canada and Australia - but many others, including poorer nations, are exempt. However, the EU has been forced to backtrack on plans to impose restrictions on the export of vaccines across the border on the island of Ireland after outcry from Dublin and London. The EU insists its controls are a temporary scheme, not an export ban.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55860540>

634) *January 30*. The **SEYCHELLES** government is aiming to vaccinate 70% of the population and achieve herd immunity by mid-March 2021. This decision will allow their economy to slowly get back on its feet. As of January 28, 2021, a total of 28,779 people in Seychelles had received the first dose of the Sinopharm and Covishield vaccines against the coronavirus.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/7726/covid-19-vaccination-programme-28779-people-receive-first-dose>

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/protecting-seychelles-outer-islands/index.html>

635) *January 31*. **PROCIDA**, the smallest and least known island in the Bay of Naples, has been thrust into the limelight after recently winning the coveted accolade of Italy's Capital of Culture for 2022, fending off competition from nine other candidates. It is the first time that the title has ever been granted to an island. The prize was a moment of celebration among the island's 10,000 inhabitants and gave a glimmer of hope for the future amid Italy's ongoing struggles with the coronavirus pandemic. Giuseppe Conte, the country's caretaker prime minister, said: "Let's get ready to visit Procida," while culture minister Dario Franceschini said the island "would accompany us in the year of rebirth". But some residents, wary of the pre-Covid mass tourism that has blighted so many other cultural treasures in Italy, say a balance must be struck between developing the island and maintaining its cherished characteristics.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/31/the-little-island-of-procida-prepares-to-shine-as-italys-capital-of-culture>

636) *January 31*. Confusion reigns as **ROTTNEST ISLAND** empties in single afternoon. Hotel Rottneest standing deserted on a summer weekend afternoon was only one of the strange sights and sounds on the island on Sunday as authorities moved to evacuate 2000 people after the announcement WA was going into a five-day lockdown.

<https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/confusion-reigns-as-rotnnest-island-empties-in-single-afternoon-20210201-p56yhe.html>

637) *February 1.* The French government, fearing the spread of deadlier and more contagious variants of the coronavirus, has closed the borders of its overseas territories indefinitely. Caribbean destinations that fall into that category are **ST. BARTS, ST. MARTIN, MARTINQUE** and **GUADELOUPE**. French Polynesia, which includes the islands of **TAHITI, BORA BORA** and **MOOREA**, has also temporarily halted inbound tourism.

<https://www.travelweekly.com/Asia-Travel/French-government-shuts-down-Caribbean-Polynesian-islands>

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20210209/french-caribbean-islands-in-dire-straits-as-new-covid-rules-hit>

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2021-01-28/pandemic-wiped-out-tourism-pacific-island-nations-can-they-stay-afloat>

638) *February 2.* Pupils in some rural parts of the Highlands and **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** like Canna, Eigg, Rum and Muck face challenges to learning at home due to poor or "non-existent" broadband or mobile phone coverage. Some families were said to be paying for satellite contracts to overcome connection issues.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-55903350>

639) *February 3.* The Caribbean island of **MONTSERRAT** launches year-long visa program for remote workers.

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-news/montserrat-year-long-work-remote-program>

<https://montserratremoteworker.com/>

640) *February 4.* The **FALKLAND ISLANDS** government announces Covid-19 vaccination program beginning 8 February and for everybody over 50.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2021/02/04/falklands-announces-covid-19-vaccination-program-beginning-8-february-and-for-everybody-over-50>

641) *February 5.* The UK's physical isolation sets it apart from its continental neighbours, but could its island status have protected it from the full horror of Covid-19, had it closed borders in early 2020, as New Zealand and Taiwan did? Both have been applauded for their efficient handling of the pandemic, with just 33 Covid-19 deaths between them. Other island nations such as Tonga, in the South Pacific Ocean, have reported no infections. "To be an island in 2020 or 2021 is probably the greatest geographical gift you could have," said Prof Devi Sridhar, chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/05/covid-could-britain-have-been-more-like-new-zealand>

642) *February 5.* Men, women and children in **INDONESIA** are risking their health wearing metallic paint to earn money as the economic impact of coronavirus worsens. Alfian, who has two young children, is one of many cash-strapped Indonesians who have taken up the street art of *manusia silver*, or silvermen, to make ends meet during the pandemic. His work as a public minivan driver dried up when people were forced to stay at home when coronavirus hit last year. He shares a bottle of silver paint, which consists of cooking oil and glitter ink usually used for screen printing, with another hard-up driver. Before the pandemic Alfian said he could earn 100,000-150,000 rupiah from his van, or *angkot*. But now it is difficult to find passengers and he can only get about Rp 30,000 a day. The head of central Jakarta's social affairs agency, Ngapuli Peranginangin, said the appearance of the "silver humans" was one of the most noticeable features of the pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/feb/05/i-have-to-do-this-to-survive-a-night-with-jakartas-silvermen>

643) *February 8.* A study published in the journal *Science of the Total Environment* provides the first evidence of a mechanism by which climate change could have played a direct role in the emergence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that caused the current Covid-19 pandemic. The number of coronaviruses in an area is closely linked to the number of different bat species present. Thanks to their immune systems, bats have a notorious ability to live with viruses, acting both as a reservoir for new mutations and asymptomatic carrier for viruses. The world's bat population carries around 3,000 different types of coronavirus, with each bat species harboring an average of 2.7 coronaviruses. An increase in the number of bat species in a particular region, driven by climate change, may increase the likelihood that a coronavirus harmful to humans is present, transmitted, or evolves there. Most coronaviruses carried by bats cannot jump into humans. But several coronaviruses known to infect humans are very likely to have originated in bats, including three that can cause human fatalities: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) CoV, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) CoV-1 and CoV-2.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidbressan/2021/02/08/climate-change-could-have-played-a-role-in-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969721004812?via%3Dihub>

644) *February 8.* Western nations and pharma companies have, for long, allegedly appropriated and taken thousands of pathogen specimens and data without permission from developing countries. Just over a year ago, Chinese scientists shared on a public database the first genetic sequence data (GSD) of the virus which causes the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The data was released on GenBank, a partnership of the US, Europe and Japan. Two days later, that's on January 12, China officially shared the GSD with the World Health Organization. This allowed its large network of influenza laboratories known as the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) to access this vital data. There was much praise for China for sharing the whole genome and associated data for the severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2 or SARS-CoV-2 less than two weeks after the first cluster was

reported. This was critical in fighting the pandemic. The public availability of the high-quality data enabled scientists in laboratories around the world to quickly develop diagnostic test kits and kickstart the laborious work on antiviral medications and vaccines.

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/science-technology/sharing-pathogens-but-not-the-benefits-during-pandemics-75304>

645) *February 9.* International experts investigating the origins of Covid-19 have all but dismissed a theory that the virus came from a laboratory in China. Peter Ben Embarek, the head of the WHO mission, said it was "extremely unlikely" that the virus leaked from a lab in the city of Wuhan. Dr Embarek said work to identify the origins of Covid-19 pointed to a "natural reservoir" in bats, but it was unlikely that this happened in Wuhan. The team also called for further investigation into the possibility of "cold chain" transmission, referring to the transport and trade of frozen food.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/09/wuhan-laboratory-leak-covid-origin-theory-unlikely-says-who-team>

646) *February 9.* Scientists say coronaviruses related to Sars-CoV-2 may be circulating in bats across many parts of Asia. They have discovered a virus that is a close match to the virus that causes Covid-19 in bats at a wildlife sanctuary in eastern Thailand. And they predict that similar coronaviruses may be present in bats across many Asian nations and regions. The discovery extends the area in which related viruses have been found to a distance of 4,800km (2,983 miles).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55998157>

647) *February 9.* A group of Muslim families are launching a complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee about the **SRI LANKA** policy of enforced cremation for all those confirmed, or suspected to have died with Covid, saying it breaches their religious rights and is causing "untold misery".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/09/muslim-families-complain-to-un-over-sri-lankan-covid-cremations>

648) *February 10.* The Prime Minister of **DOMINICA**, Roosevelt Skerrit, showered praises on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India for New Delhi's swift response to his request for 35,000 Covid-19 vaccines that can shield nearly half his country's 72,000-strong population from the deadly virus. PM Skerrit, who sought the vaccines on January 19, said he hadn't really hoped to get the vaccines so soon.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/prayers-answered-says-dominican-pm-as-india-s-vaccine-lands-in-caribbean-island-101612944040100.html>

649) *February 10.* Whilst many hope that the Year of the Ox will herald times of plenty, a herd of wild cows in **HONG KONG** is going hungry after visitors to their habitat surged during the coronavirus pandemic. The animals have made their home for generations alongside a few dozen fishing families on Grass Island, one of Hong Kong's far-flung islets. Named for its verdant meadows, the island is closer to

mainland China than Hong Kong's skyscraper-studded harbour front and is reached by a long bus and ferry ride. Until the coronavirus struck last year, a largely manageable number of hikers and campers made their way to the island. But with overseas travel no longer possible for most Hong Kongers, a huge influx of visitors has arrived as residents look for ways to escape the confines of social distancing in one of the world's most densely populated cities. The once grassy pastures have transformed into barren dirt, wiping out the primary food source for the island's herd of feral cows.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/hong-kong-grass-island-cows-starving-hikers-surge-14160138>

650) *February 10*. All the coronavirus in the world could fit inside a Coke can, with plenty of room to spare. When Christian Yates, Senior Lecturer in Mathematical Biology, University of Bath, was asked to calculate the total volume of SARS-CoV-2 in the world for a BBC radio show, he freely admitted he had no idea what the answer would be. His wife suggested it would be the size of an Olympic swimming pool. “Either that or a teaspoon,” she said. “It’s usually one or the other with these sorts of questions.”

<https://theconversation.com/all-the-coronavirus-in-the-world-could-fit-inside-a-coke-can-with-plenty-of-room-to-spare-1542>

651) *February 10*. In December, **ANTARCTICA** lost its status as the last continent free of COVID-19 when 36 people at the Chilean Bernardo O'Higgins research station tested positive. The station's isolation from other bases and fewer researchers in the continent means the outbreak is now likely contained. However, we know all too well how unpredictable - and pervasive - the virus can be. And while there's currently less risk for humans in Antarctica, the potential for the COVID-19 virus to jump to Antarctica's unique and already vulnerable wildlife has scientists extremely concerned.

<https://theconversation.com/covid-has-reached-antarctica-scientists-are-extremely-concerned-for-its-wildlife-154481>

652) *February 10*. When tourists come to **STORA KARLSO**, a limestone-ledged nature reserve off the coast of Sweden, they keep a respectful distance from the many seabirds that call the island home. In a paper published last month, researchers detail how the sudden absence of tourists on Stora Karlso during the pandemic set off a surprising chain reaction that wreaked havoc on the island's colony of common murrelets, diminishing its population of newborn birds. When the researchers visited the island in late April, they noticed that the murrelets “were flying off all the time,” with individuals sometimes disappearing for days. That was a change in behavior and a sign that something was making the birds more nervous than usual. The island's white-tailed eagles also changed their behavior. Normally, seven or eight eagles will spend the winter there, and then head out as visiting season picks up in the spring. But without the influx of tourists, they stuck around, and more eagles joined them - sometimes dozens at a time. Further observation clarified the new dynamics: The eagles, freed from the bothersome presence of humans, were themselves bothering the murrelets. Researchers across the world have taken advantage of pandemic-related travel

restrictions to study the effects of sudden human absence on the natural world, an event some have called the “anthropause.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/science/seabirds-covid-tourism.html>

653) *February 10*. The sharp decline in international tourism is having a significant macroeconomic and social impact in the **EASTERN CARIBBEAN**. The industry is a major source of both formal and informal employment across the region, with estimations of up to 90% of the region’s GDP being derived directly or indirectly from tourism. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), it is predicted that international tourism could fall as much as 80% in 2021, a rate much greater than the global average. Against this background, there is a need to reimagine existing practices and systems. With this in mind, a new project aims to support the efforts of 10 governments within the Eastern Caribbean region by targeting some of the defined national priorities with a specific focus on supporting MSMEs, youth entrepreneurship and the female-focused workforce within the tourism sector. The “FUT-Tourism: Rethinking Tourism and MSMEs in times of COVID-19” project aims to technically and financially support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that are directly or indirectly linked to the tourism sector or have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will consider how it can contribute to policy solutions to address the informality of the MSME sector; promote alliances with the private sector in order to provide re-skilling programmes that can guarantee access to job markets and consider how UNDP will maximise opportunities to work with partners to successfully implement the project and achieve desired results.

[https://www.bb.undp.org/content/barbados/en/home/library/undp\\_publications/fut-tourism--rethinking-tourism-and-msmes-in-times-of-covid-19.html](https://www.bb.undp.org/content/barbados/en/home/library/undp_publications/fut-tourism--rethinking-tourism-and-msmes-in-times-of-covid-19.html)

654) *February 10*. The hospital on Massachusetts island of **MARTHA’S VINEYARD** expects to vaccinate 70 percent of the island’s 75-and-older population by the end of this week.

<https://www.mvtimes.com/2021/02/10/70-percent-islands-75-plus-vaccinated-end-week/>

655) *February 13*. The **MARSHALL ISLANDS** has pulled out of a Pacific regional Covid vaccine program because a steady stream of vaccines from the United States government is meeting the needs of the Republic. After initially registering to participate in a vaccine program known as COVAX sponsored by the World Health Organization and managed in the region by the Pacific Community (SPC), the Marshall Islands said this week the US Centers for Disease Control is supplying an adequate supply of vaccines. With over 13,000 Moderna brand vaccines delivered to the Marshall Islands since the end of December, the ministry is now vaccinating any adult aged 18 and above. This follows priority vaccination of health workers and other “front line” workers at air and seaports starting at the end of December.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/436366/marshalls-drops-pacific-regional-covid-vaccine-program>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/436910/marshalls-leads-pacific-s-covid-19-vax-charge>

656) *February 14.* There is growing controversy over a WHO investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic after one of its members said China had refused to hand over key data, and the US national security adviser said he had “deep concerns” about the initial findings.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/14/who-investigator-claims-china-refused-to-hand-over-key-covid-information>

657) *February 14.* **HAWAII** has a lot of agricultural land but very little of it is used for growing food. Federal data shows that in 2017 - when the most recent agricultural census was conducted - only 8% of the state’s agricultural lands were used for growing crops. Another 18.5% was used for grazing animals, 8% was woodlands and another 8% was categorized as “other,” which includes farmsteads, homes, buildings and livestock facilities. Although access to land is one of the biggest challenges for would-be farmers in Hawaii, an analysis of state and federal data shows no shortage of agricultural land. Part of the decrease in agricultural land use is because of modernizations in farming, which increased efficiency and productivity. Part of it has to do with the end of large-scale plantation farming and the decline of agriculture as an industry in general. Competing land uses - including from solar and residential development, also hinder more agricultural land from being fully utilized, local experts say. In the distant past, Hawaii’s agricultural footprint looked dramatically different, said Kamuela Enos, director of the Office of Indigenous Innovation at the University of Hawaii. Food production was everyone’s kuleana and a “practical consideration.” Since then, the islands’ agricultural systems have undergone several transformations - from the indigenous system to the plantations and monocropping, and now to smaller-scale farms and diversified crops. In contemporary society, agriculture has become much more commodity-based, with increased ability for crops to be imported and exported, he said. But lately, with COVID-19 impacting Hawaii’s food supply chain and an increased awareness for food sustainability, Enos said the community is primed to embrace local farming, and further, Native Hawaiian practices that prospered on these lands many years ago. The emerging understanding of farming’s value is coming back, he said.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/02/hawaii-grown-maps/>

658) *February 14.* People in **SAMOA** are turning to the ocean to sustain their livelihoods as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic continues to force more and more people out of jobs. Satuimalufilufi village resident, 35-year-old Kitiona Malaesaili is one of those who turned to the ocean for food and income, in order to support his family in these difficult times. Three to four times a week, he wakes up early in the morning to go out diving for the trochus shell (aliao). “For me, after fishing, I will travel to the market in town to sell it and most of my frequent customers are some Chinese people, they seem to love it. The price of a 550ml bottle full of flesh from the trochus is worth \$10 and we get close to \$300 a week.” The trochus is a top-shaped sea snail that has a pearly inside to their shells; a layer that makes them highly valued on the commercial market. It can be found at all but one of 14 sites around Upolu and at more than half of the 14 sites around Savai’i. They are

considered to be superabundant in Samoan waters with approximately more than 1000 per hectare in Sataua and Salelologa. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has hosted training programmes in 2020 that taught villagers to use machines to polish the inner pearly nacre of the trochus shell and shape it artistically. Besides being valued for its meat, the trochus shell is also used to make buttons, jewelry and handicrafts. Some countries export the shells to markets in Italy, Korea and Japan.

<https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/79169>

659) *February 15*. Conflicts over land flared up across **INDONESIA** in 2020, as Indigenous and rural communities tried to hold off pulpwood, palm oil and logging companies ramping up their expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic. The flurry of activity came despite the economic slowdown wrought by the government's response to the pandemic, and suggests the companies were taking advantage of the situation to lay claim to disputed territory, according to the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA), an NGO that advocates for rural land rights.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/02/palm-oil-pulpwood-firms-behind-indonesia-land-grab-agrarian-conflict-spike-report/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/18/indigenous-peoples-face-rise-in-rights-abuses-during-covid-pandemic-report-aoe>

660) *February 15*. **FIJI** is exploring the development of a 'vaccination passport' that would provide proof that the holder had been vaccinated against Covid-19 and would also assure visitors that Fiji was safe and open for business. The vaccination passport could be an app on a mobile device, a QR code or barcode printed on a vaccination certificate or an authenticated way of verifying the individual vaccine passports through information systems.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/436429/fiji-targets-vaccine-passport-for-economic-recovery>

661) *February 16*. Optimism as **CUBA** set to test its own Covid vaccine. Some of the equipment at the Finlay Institute of Vaccines in Havana might be considered outdated elsewhere in the world but the science taking place behind its white-washed walls is cutting edge. Researchers are working long shifts on Cuba's best shot to solve its coronavirus crisis: Soberana 2, the island's domestically-produced Covid-19 vaccine. Soberana (Spanish for "sovereign") 2 is a conjugate vaccine - meaning an antigen is fused to a carrier molecule to bolster the vaccine's stability and effectiveness. Within weeks, it will be tested on tens of thousands of volunteers.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-56069577>

662) *February 17*. A deal for **TAIWAN** to buy 5m doses of a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Germany's BioNTech is on hold, the island's health minister said, citing potential pressure from China for the delay. Taiwan's health minister, Chen Shih-chung, said officials were on the verge of announcing the deal in December when BioNTech pulled the plug. While he did not directly say China was to blame, Chen implied there was a political dimension to the decision and that he had been worried

about “outside forces intervening”, hence his caution in discussing the planned deal publicly. China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory, has repeatedly sparred with the island over the coronavirus pandemic. Taiwan has been angered by China’s assertion only it can speak for the island on the international stage about the subject, while Taiwan has accused China of a lack of transparency. In a later statement, BioNTech said discussions to supply Taiwan with doses were still ongoing. It said “BioNTech is committed to help bringing an end to the pandemic for people across the world and we intend to supply Taiwan with our vaccine as part of this global commitment,” but it did not address Chen's comments or explain why the December deal did not materialise. BioNTech has struck a deal with the Shanghai-based Fosun Pharmaceutical Group to bring the vaccine to China, including Taiwan.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/17/taiwan-china-pressure-covid-vaccine-deal-biontech>

[https://www.terraily.com/reports/BioNTech\\_says\\_committed\\_to\\_supplying\\_Taiwan\\_with\\_vaccine\\_999.html](https://www.terraily.com/reports/BioNTech_says_committed_to_supplying_Taiwan_with_vaccine_999.html)

663) *February 17*. “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent,” poet John Donne famously wrote. But oh, how many of us would wish to live on an island detached from any continent today - especially if that island is **SINGAPORE, TAIWAN**, or one of the many making up **NEW ZEALAND**? These three island nations have effectively defeated COVID-19 despite their urban population density, proximity to China, and robust international connectivity. Luck was clearly not on their side - but paranoia was. Robust contact tracing, strict lockdowns, enforced quarantines, isolation of vulnerable populations, and other measures were crucial to suppressing the virus in all three places. The varying locations of these three island nations show that it is not a particular geography that has succeeded but rather a particular geology: the fact of being an island. Beyond this, it’s essential to be hypercautious - as Ireland has been for the most part - rather than flippant - like the larger island next door - or just ill-prepared for the virus’s pugnacious surges, like in Cuba and Sri Lanka where COVID-19 has returned with a vengeance. Even as the coronavirus’s destructive march continues, there is one clear conclusion policymakers can draw: Paranoid islands have been, and will continue to be, the safest places on Earth well into the future.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/02/17/taiwan-new-zealand-singapore-covid-islands-of-immunity/>

664) *February 17*. **SEYCHELLES** will soon receive a first batch of Russian made Sputnik V vaccine against the coronavirus from the Russian Federation including USD500,000 from its (Russian) business community.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/7910/russia-to-donate-home-made-sputnik-v-vaccine-to-seychelles>

665) *February 17*. To continue to support **FIJI** efforts in agricultural modernization and pursuing agricultural sustainable development and resilience in response to climate change as well as the impact of COVID-19, Taiwan is setting up a new \$3 million Center for Agricultural Technology Transfer in Nausori.

[https://www.roc-taiwan.org/fj\\_en/post/1228.html](https://www.roc-taiwan.org/fj_en/post/1228.html)

666) *February 17*. The UNDP Pacific Accelerator Lab together with UN-Habitat is testing the adoption and uptake of hydroponic kits as farming methods in **FIJI** to increase food security in informal settlements as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate resiliency.

[https://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/blog/Food\\_and\\_Income\\_Security\\_Solutions\\_Exploration\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_Informal\\_Settlements\\_in\\_Fiji\\_0.html](https://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/home/presscenter/blog/Food_and_Income_Security_Solutions_Exploration_The_Case_of_Informal_Settlements_in_Fiji_0.html)

667) *February 18*. The world is on the brink of a nutrition crisis and **PACIFIC** children living on the frontlines of the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate change crisis are most at risk. A report released by Save the Children showed the impacts of both crises had led to an increase in poverty, a loss of livelihoods, and reduced access to health and nutrition services, pushing up rates of hunger and malnutrition.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/436674/pacific-children-on-frontline-of-global-nutrition-crisis>

668) *February 18*. All mink farms are at risk of becoming infected with Covid-19 and spreading the virus, and staff and animals should be regularly tested said EU disease and food safety experts. Mink are highly susceptible to coronavirus, which spreads rapidly in intensive farms that often breed thousands of animals in open housing caged systems (outdoor wire cages covered with a roof). Humans are the most likely initial source of infection. **DENMARK**, the world's largest exporter of mink fur, announced that it would cull up to 15 million mink in November, after discovering a mutated variant of the virus that scientists feared might have jeopardised the effectiveness of future vaccines.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/18/mink-farms-a-continuing-covid-risk-to-humans-and-wildlife-warn-eu-experts>

669) *February 18*. The UN secretary general, António Guterres, has sharply criticised the “wildly uneven and unfair” distribution of Covid vaccines, saying 10 countries have administered 75% of all vaccinations and demanding a global effort to get all people in every country vaccinated as soon as possible. The UN chief told a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on Wednesday that 130 countries had not yet received a single dose of vaccine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/18/wildly-unfair-un-says-130-countries-have-not-received-a-single-covid-vaccine-dose>

670) *February 18*. Could Covid give **NEW ZEALAND** struggling tourism sector a chance to go green? A new report suggests the pandemic could present an opportunity to make the sector less environmentally harmful, but some operators are not so sure.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/18/could-covid-give-new-zealands-struggling-tourism-sector-a-chance-to-go-green>

671) *February 18*. While **PACIFIC** island countries have, so far, been spared a catastrophic spread of COVID-19, their economies have been devastated by the effects of border closures, internal lockdowns and the demise of international tourism and trade. With the global pandemic far from over, Pacific Islanders are looking to their local and regional economies to drive resilience and recovery. Some local entrepreneurs are already manoeuvring to gain new skills and adapt their enterprises for a local, rather than international market. In the Polynesian Kingdom of **TONGA**, a local business, South Pacific Mozuku (SPM), specialised in a luxury range of cosmetics and skincare products incorporating seaweed, known as ‘Mozuku’, which grows in the waters around Tonga. It was a perfect fit for the international tourist market. Before the pandemic, Tonga received up to 5,000 cruise ship visitors per day. The business also exported raw seaweed to international buyers, mostly in Japan. But then the pandemic hit, tourist visitors evaporated and the export market declined. After a strategic rethink, the business switched to making fresh food products, still using ‘Mozuku’ seaweed, which possesses nutritious and anti-oxidising properties, as an ingredient. They are now sold through local supermarkets and distributors. SPM, which employs 25 local Tongans, is delivering further benefits to local communities. Its partnership with the Tonga Youth Employment Entrepreneurship (TYEE) scheme has led to local youths being involved in promoting public awareness of ‘Mozuku’ seaweed as a health food and organising tasting events in shops and restaurants in the capital, Nuku’alofa. And ‘Mozuku’ is now on the menu for patients, doctors and nurses at the Vaiola Hospital, also situated in the capital. Further west in **VANUATU**, youths, women and islanders with disabilities are being mobilized in a new income generating initiative by making recycled and reusable coconut bags. In Port Vila, about 30 young people are being employed to collect discarded waste plastic, which is then crafted and sewn by local women and disabled people into large reusable carry bags. Each bag, which is designed to hold six heavy coconuts, features an inner lining of recycled plastic and an outer layer of aesthetically woven pandanus leaves. It is envisaged that, following production, the bags, which are being promoted as waterproof, reversible and fashionable, will be on sale in March in local fresh produce markets, retail shops and online.

<https://www.spc.int/updates/blog/2021/02/pacific-islanders-turn-to-local-economies-to-drive-post-pandemic-recovery>

672) *February 19*. Vaccine diplomacy: west falling behind in race for influence. “Today it is easier to get a nuclear weapon than to get a vaccine,” the Serbian president, Aleksandar Vučić, declared in January. He was bragging. The Balkans country had just received its first shipment of almost 1m Covid-19 vaccine doses from Sinopharm, a state-owned Chinese pharmaceutical company. Since then, Serbia has augmented its stockpile with tens of thousands of shots of Russia’s Sputnik V, signed an agreement to build a bottling plant for the Russian vaccine and now boasts the fastest vaccination rate in continental Europe. Belgrade is flush enough that it has started practising its own vaccine diplomacy, giving thousands of doses to neighbouring North Macedonia, with others in its orbit such Montenegro and Republika Srpska expecting to receive donations soon. As the race to administer Covid-19 inoculations has ramped up this year, so have efforts to use the vaccines as instruments of influence. India entered the fray in February by giving away millions of doses to its neighbours in south Asia, where it has been competing for diplomatic

sway with China. Beijing has announced a flurry of free doses over recent weeks to 13 countries, and says it plans to provide vaccines to 38 more. Moscow has capitalised on delays in the EU's programme to sell its own vaccine to Hungary - even though the Russian formulation still awaits the bloc's regulatory approval. In a market of extreme scarcity, with vaccination yet to begin in 130 countries, states such as Serbia are emerging as early leaders in the vaccination race, leveraging geopolitical competition – along with a willingness to smooth out regulatory hurdles – to access millions of doses fast. Conspicuously missing so far from the fray of overseas deals and donations have been western governments, which are consumed with vaccinating their own populations first and have preferred to channel vaccine aid into multilateral schemes such as Covax, the sharing mechanism that will start by supplying about 3% of the most vulnerable people in middle- and lower-income countries over the next six months. By then, countries such as the UK, US and Canada expect to be on their way to herd immunity, along with a clutch of other wealthy countries that have bought up most of the supply of western vaccines that will be produced in 2021. The divide is a diplomatic opportunity, and some foreign capitals are taking it.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/19/coronavirus-vaccine-diplomacy-west-falling-behind-russia-china-race-influence>

673) *February 19.* On March 10, 2020, **JAMAICA** confirmed its first case of COVID-19. Since that day, Jamaica's economy, in common with the rest of the world, has been reeling. The creative sector, which had begun to show many "green shoots" prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, has been particularly hard hit, but it is forging ahead thanks to novel ideas, financial support and the brave spirit of entrepreneurship. After the initial "shock" of the country's first lockdown, Andrea Dempster-Chung, executive director of the non-profit Kingston Creative, decided to proceed with its Artisan Collective Store and its Creative Hub. Both opened in June 2020 and these two new creative spaces in downtown Kingston offer everything from retail and co-working locations to digital/podcasting studios. In the latest phase of its "Paint the City" project, Kingston Creative contracted 10 Jamaican artists for a series of murals in the Water Lane area of the city. These murals have brought greater energy and vibrancy to downtown Kingston during the challenging times of the pandemic, and point the way to a brighter future.

<https://globalvoices.org/2021/02/19/downtown-kingstons-new-murals-brighten-jamaicas-covid-19-gloom/>

674) *February 20.* The Irish Air Corps has delivered the first batch of Covid-19 vaccines to both the **ARAN ISLANDS** in Galway and **ARRANMORE ISLAND** in Donegal. The delivery was made following a request by the Health Service Executive (HSE). Three shipments of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine were flown by helicopter, from Casement Aerodrome in Baldonnel, to the Inishmore and Inisheer islands, as well as Arranmore Island. Local GP's have since received the shipment, and the vaccines will be administered to local residents of the three islands. The Defence Forces have said that it marks a significant milestone in the vaccine rollout, and that it will continue to support the HSE in any way it can.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/covid19-vaccines-islands-5360487-Feb2021/>

675) *February 20.* **ASCENSION ISLAND** in the South Atlantic Ocean could “become the first island to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19,” the British Military said today. The island – a UK overseas territory – has a population of just over 800 inhabitants. At least 1,950 doses of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine arrived at Ascension earlier this week on a special support flight by the Royal Air Force. Staff at the island’s Georgetown Hospital administer the vaccine and given the number of inhabitants expect first doses will be given to all those offered it within a week.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/17/exclusive-rafs-daring-race-against-time-vaccinate-ascension/>

676) *February 21.* As Covid pushed **CUBA** economy to the brink of collapse, musicians and film-makers found another way to be creative – cooking, baking and selling food.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/21/how-cubas-artists-took-to-the-kitchen-to-earn-their-crust-in-lockdown>

677) *February 22.* The UN secretary general António Guterres said the Covid-19 pandemic had rolled back years of progress on human rights, and that abuses had “thrived because poverty, discrimination, the destruction of our natural environment and other human rights failures have created enormous fragilities in our societies”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/feb/22/human-rights-in-the-time-of-covid-a-pandemic-of-abuses-says-un-head>

678) *February 22.* Vaccinations are coming to the **MAINE ISLANDS**. Maine Seacoast Mission is providing island COVID-19 vaccination clinics starting this week with medical and support staff arriving on the organization’s 74-foot boat, Sunbeam, equipped with health facilities including a medical grade refrigerator.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-maine-23da155055014013401187eb8a7f1e3d>

<https://www.pressherald.com/2021/02/25/maine-seacoast-missions-boat-the-sunbeam-will-take-covid-vaccines-to-outer-islands/>

679) *February 23.* President Joe Biden has addressed the nation as the US passed the figure of 500,000 Covid-related deaths, the highest number of any country. Confirmed US infections now stand at 28.1 million, also a global record.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-56159756>

680) *February 23.* Drones are being used to carry Covid-19 samples and test kits in some **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** - in what has been described as a UK first. Following a trial last year, the project has been expanded, with medical cargo now being carried up to 40 miles (64km). Flights from Mull, Clachan-Seil and Lochgilphead to Lorn and the Islands Hospital in Oban have been authorised. Both a scheduled service and an on-demand service will be run, with orders able to be placed by NHS staff through an online system developed by digital consultants Deloitte. The drones can carry a

payload of up to 3kg (6.6lbs) and cover distances faster than they can be by road. Some of the road journeys also involve a ferry crossing. Drone operator Skyports has been given permission by the Civil Aviation Authority for the flights.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-56154503>

681) *February 23*. For years, migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa have followed a well-worn path north, boarding traffickers' boats in Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria to take them across the Mediterranean to Spain and Italy. But as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and measures taken to prevent the spread of the virus, many of the traditional migrant routes through Africa have been disrupted, making the **CANARY ISLANDS** the new gateway for many trying to make a fresh start in Europe. Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs says around 23,000 migrants arrived in the Canary Islands from Africa in 2020 - more than seven times the number of arrivals in 2019. And almost 2,600 of them were unaccompanied minors - more than three times 2019's numbers. The pandemic has complicated authorities' handling of new arrivals, according to Gemma Martinez Soliño, the islands' deputy minister for human rights. "The migrant crisis quickly became not only a humanitarian problem but a health one too," she said. "We had to come up with a system so that we could test all those who were arriving and create spaces where we would quarantine people with the virus."

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/23/europe/child-migrants-canary-islands-spain-intl/index.html>

682) *February 23*. The annual day when the outside world spills into Australia's remote **TIWI ISLANDS** for a local football grand final and art sale will return in 2021 - a year on from when the coronavirus outbreak triggered a snap shutdown of the Tiwis. A ring fence was put up around the islands last year when, due to coronavirus precautions, Tiwi leadership restricted outside access to the famous cultural event that typically attracts thousands of tourists from around Australia. But with the current suppression of coronavirus across Australia, Tiwi Land Council chief executive Andrew Tipungwuti said tourists would be welcome on the islands for the Sunday, March 21 showcase. The island's predominantly Aboriginal population of about 2,500 people is considered by health experts to be at high risk if coronavirus were to reach local communities.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-24/tiwi-island-footy-grand-final-and-art-sale-2021-to-go-ahead-nt/13183350>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-23/tiwi-islands-football-grand-final-and-art-sale-2021/100021992>

683) *February 24*. They are known as the "Forgotten Islands", uninhabited because of their remote, hostile landscape and harsh climate. Now conservationists are worried the **AUCKLAND ISLANDS ARCHIPELAGO** will fall into neglect once again, after Covid-19 forced the abandonment of what was to be the world's most ambitious predator control programme. The Maukahuka Pest Free Auckland Island project was to rid the 46,000ha Auckland Island of feral pigs, cats and mice that have inflicted severe ecological damage over the past two centuries. It is the last island in the New

Zealand subantarctic region where mammalian pests remain, and the programme would have allowed the recovery of 38 native bird species, more than 280 species of native insects, and almost 200 types of native flora. But the estimated cost was between \$60-100 million over 10 years. And with the country's borders closed to fend off the coronavirus pandemic, Department of Conservation boss Lou Sanson says he decided to put the programme on hold as revenue from international tourism dried up.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/124298784/the-forgotten-islands-pest-control-plan-halted-by-covid19>

684) *February 24.* The **FALKLAND ISLANDS** Government has received its second batch of Covid-19 vaccines, supplied by the UK government. These 2,200 doses arrived today via the South Atlantic Airbridge and are of the same Oxford/AstraZeneca type as the first batch received at the beginning of the month. Since 8 February, a nationwide vaccination program has been in operation, delivered by the staff of the Falkland Islands' only hospital, the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2021/02/24/the-falkland-islands-receives-second-batch-of-covid-19-vaccines>

685) *February 24.* **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** health authorities are struggling to gauge the extent of the country's Covid-19 outbreak. Over a hundred new confirmed cases of the virus have been reported in the past several days, taking the total number to 1,111. The National Pandemic Controller's office reported 34 new cases overnight. But concern is rising over the limitations of PNG's testing - with only around 50,000 thousand people having been tested so far in a country of eight million.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437063/png-struggles-to-gauge-extent-of-covid-19-in-country>

686) *February 24.* Covax has delivered its first Covid-19 vaccine doses in a milestone for the ambitious programme that seeks to offset “vaccine nationalism” by wealthy countries and ensure poor ones do not wait years to start inoculating people. Covax aims to distribute enough vaccines over the next six months to inoculate 3% of the population of 145 countries – enough to cover health workers and some of the most vulnerable – and plans to deliver tens of millions more by the end of the year. Though the programme is low profile and complex in its administration – run by four separate organisations including the vaccine alliances Gavi and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (Cepi) – Covax is quietly radical in its aims, trying to build a mechanism for the equitable distribution of vaccines in the teeth of the worst pandemic in more than a century. Its 192 members include wealthy countries, whose advance purchases through Covax were used to subsidise vaccine research as well as to secure doses for poorer countries. It is seen as the only viable alternative to the kind of vaccine free-for-all that prevailed during the swine flu pandemic in 2009 and in the years after Aids treatments were first created. In both cases, poorer countries went without effective pharmaceuticals during the acute phases of the pandemics and received supplies only after they had become plentiful in the wealthy countries. But in practice, alongside signing up for Covax, wealthy countries have engaged in a frenzy of private deals with manufacturers of western-developed vaccines, locking up much of the global supply for 2021. Many countries, including the UK and Australia, have

opted not to take vaccines from Covax, effectively using it as a way to channel their Covid-19 aid. Separately several African countries that include Morocco, Egypt, Senegal and **SEYCHELLES** are using the Chinese vaccine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/24/first-covax-coronavirus-vaccines-delivered-to-ghanaian-capital>

687) *February 24.* Very few places across the globe have managed to escape the Covid-19 pandemic; even Antarctica has reported cases. However, a handful of **ITALIAN ISLANDS** - Linosa, Tremiti, Vulcano, Filicudi & Alicudi - are among the spots that have kept Covid at bay for now. An Italian proverb popular with sailors declares "the sea can be treacherous but it can also be your greatest ally." This seems particularly fitting now, as the water acts as a natural barrier protecting many of those living on Italy's most isolated and idyllic islands.

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/italys-covid-free-islands/index.html>

688) *February 24.* Life was going well for 39-year-old **MAURITIUS** fisherman Bimsen Beeharry when COVID-19 hit in early 2020, prompting authorities to impose a lockdown and suspend fishing. The COVID-19 restrictions were lifted at the beginning of June, but Mr. Beeharry's hopes were again dashed on 25 July 2020 when a Japanese bulk carrier, MV Wakashio, ran aground on a coral reef near Pointe d'Esny, off the coast of Mauritius. The suspension of fishing in the affected region has effectively cut off Mr. Beeharry's financial lifeline. To mitigate the economic impact of the oil spill, the government provides each registered fisher, such as Mr. Beeharry and his wife, MUR 5,100 (about \$128) monthly. Also, they are paid a similar amount to cushion the effects of COVID-19.

<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/march-2021/mauritius-fisherman%E2%80%99s-life-amid-covid-19-and-oil-polluted-ocean>

689) *February 25.* Officials in the **CAYMAN ISLANDS** are poised to reduce the number of cruise vessels visiting the destination while also slashing the millions of shipboard visitors the nation hosts annually. Traditionally among the most-visited Caribbean cruise ports, the Cayman Islands will not abandon cruise tourism but will "cap the numbers so that our current system can accommodate them in a better way and the experience for those who do visit can be better," said Alden McLaughlin, the Cayman Islands premier. The government banned cruise ship calls in March following the COVID-19 outbreak and postponed a referendum that would have decided the fate of a government-backed, \$150 million cruise berthing facility proposed for George Town. McLaughlin said the cruise port proposal, which the government has explored over the past several years, is "effectively dead." The outcome makes it unlikely the Cayman Islands will host cruise mega-ships and the millions of shipboard visitors they accommodate in future years.

<https://www.travelpulse.com/news/destinations/cayman-islands-will-likely-cap-cruise-calls-post-covid-19-pandemic.html>

690) *February 25.* Despite a tourism-dependent economy devastated by coronavirus shutdowns, **VANUATU** Covid-19 vaccination programme will not inoculate most of

its population until the end of 2023. According to the ministry of health's national deployment and vaccination plan, the first shots will be administered in April this year, but only the most vulnerable 20% of the population will get a jab in the first phase.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/26/vanuatu-coronavirus-vaccine-rollout-to-take-until-end-of-2023>

691) *February 25.* Soldiers in the **PHILIPPINES** will be required to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, the military said Thursday, as the country prepares to receive its first doses and begin inoculations. Pressure is mounting on President Rodrigo Duterte's government to kickstart the delayed vaccine rollout amid accusations its officials have bungled the procurement and delivery of jabs. Beijing's donation of 600,000 doses of the Sinovac vaccine will arrive Sunday, the Chinese embassy in Manila said Thursday. The military is supposed to receive 100,000 of those doses. The announcement comes days after the Philippine drug regulator gave emergency approval to CoronaVac despite widespread misgivings over its safety and effectiveness. It is still not clear who will receive the first injections - or even when. Duterte has said he wants soldiers to be among the first to be inoculated, but health authorities said Thursday the allocation and rollout were still being "evaluated". What is certain is members of the military will be vaccinated eventually - whether they want it or not. Vaccines will be free but if soldiers want to choose a brand not in the military's stockpile then they will have to pay for it. Those who refused to be inoculated could be disciplined. Soldiers most at risk of exposure to the virus will be prioritised and will have to take the vaccine available at the time, even if that is CoronaVac. The order comes after Pentagon officials said roughly one-third of US soldiers declined a coronavirus vaccine, as the government taps troops to help nationwide-inoculation. CoronaVac is the third vaccine approved for emergency use in the Philippines. But the Food and Drug Administration said it was not recommended for health care workers due to its comparatively low efficacy. Although trials in Turkey found CoronaVac to be 91.25 percent effective, other, more robust trials in Brazil only demonstrated an efficacy rate of around 50 percent. The government is in talks with seven vaccine makers, including Sinovac, in the hope of securing enough doses to inoculate 70 million people - about 60 percent of the population - this year. But the bulk of the supply is not expected to start arriving until the second half.

<https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2021/02/25/philippine-soldiers-ordered-to-get-virus-vaccine-.html>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-philippines-vaccin-idUSKBN2AP0JR>

692) *February 26.* The fuse was lit. Dozens of helmeted worshippers and adrenaline seekers stood stoic if they could, or ran from the flaming projectiles and paper shrapnel, the thousands of explosions ringing ears a block away. In the final days of the lunar new year celebrations and as part of the lantern festival, this notorious TAIWAN folk event was much scaled down but no less dramatic, and in the current global climate, newly significant. The Yanshui beehive fireworks festival was almost cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. But then it was revived, for the same

reason. On the one hand, Taiwan recently had a Covid scare, and the thought of allowing people to crush together in the streets of Yanshui seemed inconceivable. But on the other hand, this century-and-a-half-old tradition was about warding off plagues. And so, “in order to show respect to the gods”, Tainan city council and Yanshui Wu Miao temple decided to keep it going, scaled down.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/26/gods-fireworks-plague-taiwan-folk-festival-takes-aim-covid-yanshui-beehive>

693) *February 26*. The Ministry of Health in **TONGA** says it plans to vaccinate up to 70 percent of the population by the end of the year. The COVAX facility, an initiative set up to provide equitable access to vaccines, has put Tonga on the tentative list to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine, which was recently approved by the World Health Organisation. Chief Executive Officer, Dr Siale 'Akau'ola, said Tonga initially tried to obtain the Pfizer vaccine when it was approved, but it had decided to prioritise countries where people were sick with Covid-19. Tonga had yet to record a case of the coronavirus. 'Akau'ola said Tonga would receive the AstraZeneca vaccine as it was easier to store and use. Tonga does not have ultra-cold storage for the Pfizer vaccine.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437258/tonga-aims-to-get-70-percent-of-people-vaccinated-by-year-end>

694) *February 26*. In an effort to deal with the COVID-19 epidemic, **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO** closed its borders to everyone but its nationals at midnight on March 17, 2020. By March 23, citizens abroad were also being barred from re-entering the country. An exemption application system, which now pertains to both arrivals and departures, was subsequently put in place but it is a process deemed a failure by many nationals stuck abroad, many of whom have unsuccessfully applied to come home - especially since those who applied under the initial process are now being asked to reapply under an updated system.

<https://globalvoices.org/2021/02/26/trinidad-tobagos-covid-19-travel-exemption-process-is-demoralising-its-citizens-abroad/>

<https://globalvoices.org/2021/02/26/could-trinidad-tobagos-covid-19-travel-exemption-process-be-compromising-citizens-rights/>

695) *February 27*. Authorities in **FIJI** are concerned the latest cases of Covid-19 in New Zealand and Australia will impact Fiji's Blue Lanes initiative amid the pandemic. With no tourists coming in by air, the Blue Lanes initiative has been a tourism lifeline. It was launched last July opening the way for yachts and pleasure craft to be accepted into Port Denarau in Nadi, once they met criteria including 14-day quarantine at sea. Since then, about 100 yachts - including eight superyachts - have come through Fiji bringing with them more than 400 passengers and crew. Cynthia Rasch of the Port Denarau Marina in Nadi said most of the yachts had arrived via New Zealand and Tahiti. But she warned that with New Zealand and Australia battling Covid-19 outbreaks, and Tahiti's border still shut, Fiji's maritime tourism sector is under threat.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437293/fiji-concerned-boating-season-will-be-affected-by-aus-nz-covid-19-surges>

696) *February 28*. As the number of coronavirus cases continues rising in Italy (18,916 new cases per day as of yesterday and 280 deaths), with the government moving towards the implementation of new restrictions, one region in the country wakes up to be almost free from Covid. It's the island of **SARDINIA**, known for its beautiful beaches and clear waters, a beloved summer destination for Italians and foreign tourists alike. Here, the number of cases has decreased so much in the past weeks that there is basically no need for any more restrictions: starting March 1st, shops and restaurants can be open at all times, a shorter curfew (between h.11.30 pm and 5 am) is imposed and schools and other facilities can work at 100% of their capacity. The concept of a "white zone" (which entails that only 50 coronavirus cases are registered every 100,000 inhabitants for three subsequent weeks), was introduced only recently: never before, since the beginning of the pandemic, a region has been doing so well with contagion rates. This is especially meaningful for a country like Italy, which was hit the hardest in Europe from the early stages of the pandemic.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/irenedominioni/2021/02/28/sardinia-the-lucky-island-almost-free-from-covid-19/>

697) *March 1*. The **SEYCHELLES** immunisation campaign against Covid-19, which officially kick-started on Sunday January 10 as an additional measure against the rapid spread of the virus, is still in progress and well on track, according to programme manager for vaccination Florida Bijoux. The campaign, which has been ongoing with Sinopharm and later Covishield vaccines directed at different target populations, is set to continue this week after 18 to 30 year olds were last week called to the various distribution centres to be administered with the immunisation jabs. The Seychelles hopes to open up to international tourism from March 25, 2021 and will require visitors to present a negative PCR test taken 72 hours prior to departure, but will have no quarantine requirements in place or restrictions on movement. Minimum stay in establishments upon arrival will no longer be applicable, but visitors will still be required to adhere to public health measures such as wearing of face masks, social distancing and regular sanitisation or washing of hands.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/8028/covid-19-vaccination-campaign-on-track>

<https://travelweekly.co.uk/news/air/the-seychelles-to-open-to-tourists-from-march-25>

698) *March 1*. Today **ST. LUCIA** received 25,000 doses of Indian made Covishield vaccines. The shipment was received by the country's Prime Minister Allen Chastanet, who offered his gratitude to New Delhi for donating the lifesaving vaccine shots. Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII) is the localized name of the vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford. India has dispatched over 36 million doses of domestically produced vaccines to over 25 countries, under its 'Vaccine Maitri' programme. **BARBADOS** has just announced it is in the process of a mass COVID-19 vaccination program, following the donation of 100,000 doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine from India. It adds, with over 25,000 people - approximately 12.5 percent of the adult population - already receiving their first shots within just two weeks, the island leads the way as the most vaccinated

country in the Caribbean. The interesting part is this: To ensure widespread protection, the Government of Barbados has signaled its intent to obtain more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for persons on island, whether they are citizens or not, by the end of April or early May 2021. This means that travelers to the island who have not been vaccinated would be able to receive one or more doses. The **MALDIVES** that started their mass inoculation campaign on February 1, has now immunized at least 19 percent of its total 557,426 population with Covishield dispatched under India's 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/st-lucia-in-the-caribbean-islands-receives-25000-doses-of-indian-made-covishield-vaccine.html>

<https://www.travelagentcentral.com/caribbean/barbados-could-begin-vaccinating-visitors-by-end-april>

699) *March 1.* The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), together with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), handed over more than 22,000 Cepheid GeneXpert test kits to the **FIJI** Ministry of Health and Medical Services today as part of the Government of Fiji's efforts to strengthen coronavirus disease (COVID-19) prevention activities and the safe continuation of essential basic services. The government said the testing kits come ahead of the arrival of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine in Fiji this weekend.

<https://www.adb.org/news/adb-unicef-support-health-care-workers-fiji-22000-covid-19-testing-kits>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437671/fiji-gets-mass-shipment-of-testing-kits>

700) *March 1.* New Zealand's **PACIFIC** community has been living and working on the front line of the Covid-19 pandemic, since the coronavirus arrived a year ago. On the 28th February 2020, New Zealand announced their first confirmed Covid-19 case reported to the Ministry of Health.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437409/covid-one-year-on-for-pasifika-leaders-at-the-frontline>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437802/pandemic-in-paradise-a-year-of-covid-19-in-the-pacific>

<https://www.policyforum.net/looking-back-on-one-year-of-covid-19-in-the-pacific/>

701) *March 2.* A remote island, Iranathivu, in the Gulf of Mannar has been chosen by **SRI LANKA** government for the burial of Covid-19 victims from the minority Muslim and Christian communities. Islam prohibits cremation. The government previously forced minorities to cremate their dead in line with the practice of the majority Buddhists. It claimed burials would contaminate ground water. But the government backed down last week in the face of vehement criticism from rights groups. Iranathivu lies some 300km away from the capital, Colombo, and was chosen, the government says, because it is thinly populated.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-56249805>

702) *March 3.* A 21-day "circuit-breaker" lockdown has been announced to limit the spread of Covid-19 on the **ISLE OF MAN**. The island has seen a rise in cases in recent days, with some stemming from an infected ferry crew member.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-56245100>

703) *March 3.* **ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA** and **CURACAO** have been placed on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Level 4: COVID-19 Very High" designation risk list of countries Americans should avoid traveling to, joining other islands like **ARUBA** and **ST. LUCIA** the agency warns against visiting. However, not all Caribbean island destinations received the CDC's highest warning. The **BAHAMAS** and **BERMUDA** were classified as "Level 3: COVID-19 High," **GRENADA** was considered "Level 2: COVID-19 Moderate," and **ANGUILLA** was "Level 1: COVID-19 Low." While many Caribbean islands have welcomed Americans (with hotels setting up on-site COVID-19 testing to make it easier for people traveling home), some islands have closed their borders amid the emergence of new coronavirus variants. For example, the French Caribbean islands – **ST. BARTS**, **ST. MARTIN**, **MARTINIQUE** and **GUADELOUPE** – have been shut to most nonessential travelers.

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-news/antigua-barbuda-curacao-cdc-do-not-travel-list>

704) *March 4.* The UK-based Economist Intelligence Unit had forecast that some **PACIFIC** countries may not get to vaccinate majority of their populations until at least 2025. The group said this involved more than 60 percent of people in some countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. But the Director of Health at the Pacific Community organisation, Dr Paula Vivili, said the wait may only be a few months rather than years as initially thought. The COVAX facility had announced it is looking at an April rollout for the Pacific. Vivili said the vaccine production technology is changing rapidly and it was highly likely that Pacific countries would be able to roll out their Covid-19 vaccination programmes faster.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437625/spc-optimistic-about-rapid-regional-vaccination-timelines>

705) *March 4.* The COVID-19 pandemic thrust into the global spotlight how infectious diseases originating in animals can have devastating effects on humans, something researchers have long known. On the front lines of that research was PREDICT, an epidemiological research program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Founded in 2009 in the wake of H5N1 avian influenza, PREDICT focused on identifying and combating zoonotic diseases caused by pathogens that jump from animals to humans. The program, which former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration shuttered, identified more than 1,000 viruses and trained staff in over 60 foreign laboratories, including the lab in Wuhan, China, that identified SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Its work

highlighted the importance of early warning programs that engage epidemiologists and veterinarians to examine the kinds of interactions between humans and animals that researchers believe led to the pandemic. Those interactions are only increasing as humans degrade natural systems at rates that affect every dimension of human health. Human activity is driving people and wildlife to closer proximity than ever: Forty percent of land surface is now used for croplands and pasture, half of all tropical and temperate forests have been cleared, and livestock make 60% of the total biomass of all mammals. It's all driving a surge in zoonotic diseases. And research shows those trends may drive the majority of global health threats in the years to come. Among policymakers, funders, and practitioners, there is a growing recognition that it is impossible to safeguard human health without protecting natural systems. Many are calling for greater adoption of a collaborative approach called planetary health.

<https://www.devex.com/news/how-the-pandemic-is-connecting-environmental-conservation-and-public-health-99127>

706) *March 5.* **CYPRUS** and Portugal say they hope to welcome vaccinated British tourists from May - the month when travel restrictions may be lifted in the UK. The Cypriot government said those who had two Covid jabs could travel, while Portugal said those who tested negative or were "immune" could also visit. It is not known how vaccine status would be proved.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56289054>

707) *March 5.* **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** is battling to control a surge in coronavirus cases across the archipelago, just as hospitals are shutting their doors because they have run out of money. The country's crowded capital, Port Moresby, is the epicentre of the latest outbreak. The city recorded just five cases for all of January, and 124 for February. But 108 cases have been confirmed in the first four days of March as community transmission accelerates. PNG has reported only 1,492 confirmed cases for the entire pandemic, but the actual caseload is believed to be many times higher. Fewer than 48,000 tests have been conducted across the country of nearly 9 million people since the beginning of the pandemic, and, in many remote parts of the country, there is no testing capacity at all. PNG has not yet begun a vaccination program. Health authorities are also concerned about a spike in cases in PNG's huge western province, which links the country to Indonesia, and has a sea border with Australia. Travel between PNG and **AUSTRALIAN ISLANDS** in the Torres Strait is usually unrestricted but has been suspended for the pandemic. But at least six cases of Covid-19 detected in hotel quarantine in Queensland are in workers who have flown in from the Ok Tedi mine in PNG's western province. Queensland's chief health officer, Jeannette Young, said the AstraZeneca vaccine rollout would be fast-tracked across Australian islands in the Torres Strait. "I'll be going through and doing the whole community on Boigu, Saibai and Badu, they're the three islands that are closest to Papua New Guinea," Young said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/05/papua-new-guinea-hospitals-run-out-of-funding-as-covid-cases-surge>

708) *March 5.* On the face of it, Scotland's **ORKNEY ISLANDS** have been a safe haven from the horrors of the coronavirus pandemic. In the 13 months since the UK's

first two Covid-19 infections were identified, Orkney has had just 70 cases. Its infection rate – 314.3 per 100,000 people – is by far the lowest in the UK. For a place where so few have caught the virus and people still have a degree of freedom, however, islanders say life has been much less “normal” than you would perhaps expect. Orkney is one of four island areas which have not been under Scotland’s national lockdown, which will remain in place until 26 April.

<https://www.aol.co.uk/news/everyones-frightened-life-remote-uk-114814138.html>

709) *March 5.* **HAWAII** county officials and private experts weighed in Thursday about how the county can improve the island’s ecological future during a two-day Sustainability Summit hosted by the Office of the Mayor. The event covered a range of topics from climate change to waste management to food security and more. Ross Birch, executive director of the Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau, said the bureau and Hawaii Tourism Authority have worked extensively, particularly during the lull in tourism caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to change marketing messaging for the island to encourage a more conscientious class of visitor. “Eventually, we want visitors to come here with intentionality,” Birch said, explaining that visitors should be aware of the environmental impacts of their visit from the beginning of their trip. Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy, director of the Kahalu‘u Bay Education Center, said the absence of tourists has led to a resurgence in natural vibrancy around Kahalu‘u Bay - fish have returned, corals are thriving and limu are bountiful. Kennedy added that the center has considered some pilot programs during the pandemic that could serve as models to reduce visitor impacts on the environment, including implementing “rest days” at popular snorkeling sites to mitigate the impact to corals and local water-life, or a “snorkel trail” that takes snorkelers on a guided tour through a reef without damaging the site. Meanwhile, Sanjiv Hulugelle, general manager of the Mauna Lani resort, said several hotels and resorts have started policies such as eliminating disposable plastics or switching to LED lights.

<https://www.westhawaii.com/2021/03/05/hawaii-news/sustainability-summit-explores-ecological-issues-on-big-island/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/travel/hawaii-covid-tourism.html>

710) *March 5.* The little-known Greek island of **KASTELLORIZO** is being hailed a success for its vaccine rollout, becoming the first in Europe to be totally COVID-free. Tucked away in a remote part of the Aegean Sea a few kilometres from the Turkish coast, it's successfully inoculated all of its 520 residents against COVID-19, with first and second doses of the Pfizer vaccine. Since last March only one COVID-19 case has been detected on Kastellorizo. The Greek government is trying to protect small islands that do not have large hospitals by vaccinating their whole populations. Greece's strategy is, therefore, to make all small and remote areas COVID-19-free ahead of the summer. They will promote this strategy internationally, with the hope of giving a new impetus to tourism. There are not one or two, but 18 **GREEK ISLANDS** which are COVID-19 free and can already be considered as ideal travel destinations for the summer.

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/03/05/this-little-known-greek-island-has-become-europe-s-first-covid-free-destination>

<https://greekcitytimes.com/2021/03/06/18-covid-19-free-greek-islands/>

<https://www.politico.eu/article/greece-tourism-summer-economy-recovery-coronavirus-vaccines-islands/>

711) *March 6*. In **AMERICAN SAMOA**, close to 24,000 Covid-19 vaccination shots have been administered to date in the territory. This is about 42 percent of the eligible population according to the Department of Health's Aifili Dr John Tufa.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437798/close-to-24-000-covid-19-vaccines-rolled-out-in-american-samoa>

712) *March 7*. This small **MAINE ISLAND** community rallied together to keep the coronavirus at bay. In different times, a taxi met visitors at Cliff Island wharf to take them to any destination on this H-shaped island's dirt roads. Few visitors come now. But the taxi is still parked up the road with its back window emblazoned with a simple message in bold yellow lettering: "Sorry! No Taxi Service Due to COVID-19." It is one of the most immediately visible ways that life has changed on the island in Casco Bay that is part of Maine's largest city, but is a remote last stop on the ferry from the mainland. Cliff Island has yet to see a confirmed case of the coronavirus in nearly a year since the pandemic arrived in Maine, infecting more than 45,000 statewide and more than 3,700 in Portland. That is a distinction few others can boast and the Cliff Island's roughly 45 year-round residents want to keep. North Haven, which briefly attempted to ban outside visitors when the pandemic began, saw 15 cases in a week last fall. Swans Island, the lobstering village off the Blue Hill Peninsula with a population of about 320, saw its first confirmed case just a few weeks ago.

<https://bangordailynews.com/2021/03/07/news/portland/this-small-maine-island-community-rallied-together-to-keep-the-coronavirus-at-bay/>

713) *March 8*. The first batch of COVAX Covid-19 vaccines in the Pacific has arrived in **FIJI**. About 12,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were sent to Fiji by the UN Children's Fund as part of the World Health Organisation's COVAX initiative. The Fiji government said while the vaccine cost them \$US30 million, AstraZeneca was ideal for the country's storage capability. At least 600,000 Fijians need to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to ensure the country is protected against infection, the government said. It said about 6,000 front-line and essential workers would be the first to receive the jabs.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/437844/fiji-first-pacific-country-to-benefit-from-covax-covid-19-vaccines>

714) *March 8*. Denmark's military has started delivering Covid vaccines to remote settlements along **GREENLAND** west coast, part of efforts to vaccinate isolated communities in the vast territory where logistics are complicated by extreme cold weather. A naval patrol ship set out in mid-February to visit two settlements, fitted with a specialised refrigerator to store doses of the vaccine and transporting civilian medical staff to administer them at the request of Greenland's health authorities. The autonomous Danish territory's 56,000 inhabitants are spread over some two million

square kilometres, with a limited road network and the Arctic weather throwing up hurdles to air travel. Greenland's health authorities have barred entry to the territory until April 18th, with 31 cases of the infection and no deaths reported since the beginning of the pandemic. Vaccinations started on January 4 and Greenland's authorities asked the Danish military's Joint Arctic command in the capital Nuuk to help with settlements unreachable by air or due to the weather. Six percent of the territory's population has been vaccinated so far.

<https://www.thelocal.dk/20210308/danish-navy-transport-covid-vaccines-to-remote-greenland-areas/>

715) *March 8.* The **KIRIBATI** sailors stranded 8,000 miles from home. One hundred and thirty men who are living in a German youth hostel haven't been able to see their families on the other side of the world for nearly two years say they're now desperate to return. Their government sealed off borders at the start of the pandemic to stop the virus getting onto the island, which has still recorded no positive cases. Authorities there have told them they're doing all they can to get them home.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-56308350>

716) *March 9.* Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is washing up on coral reefs close to the **PHILIPPINES** capital, Manila. According to an estimate by the Asian Development Bank, during the peak of the Covid-19 outbreak, the city could have been generating up to 280 tonnes of extra medical waste per day. Environmental groups are warning that the plastic inside face masks is breaking down and being consumed by marine wildlife. They're urging the Philippine government to improve its handling of medical waste, to prevent further pollution of the seas.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-56322369>

717) *March 9.* Visitors to Thailand can now spend their mandatory two-week coronavirus quarantine on a yacht. The government is hoping that the new initiative will bring 1.8 billion baht (£42m, \$58m) in yacht tourism revenue. The move is aimed at reviving the country's struggling tourism industry, which was hit hard by the pandemic. Announced on Monday, the yacht quarantine programme will allow visitors with a negative coronavirus test to spend their time on board a yacht or small cruise ship in **PHUKET**. The programme has already begun accepting yachters for a trial run, and around 100 yachts are expected to take part once it gets off the ground. Travellers are required to wear a smart wristband that monitors vital signs including temperature and blood pressure, as well as tracking the wearer's location via GPS. The device can transmit information even at sea, within a 10 km radius, the government said. The southern resort island of **KOH SAMUI** plans to fully reopen to foreign visitors who are vaccinated, and will allow them to skip quarantine from October 1.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56329806>

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/travel/thai-resort-island-plans-to-open-to-vaccinated-tourists-in-october-101615623829794.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/20/thailands-empty-beach-resorts-hope-vaccines-will-put-them-back-in-the-sun>

718) *March 9*. Governments must fill a major gap in post-Covid recovery plans with action on the root cause of pandemics – the destruction of nature – a new coalition of health and environment groups has warned. Crucial investments and actions are missing, the Preventing Pandemics at the Source coalition said, leaving the world playing an “ill-fated game of Russian roulette with pathogens”. Many trillions of dollars are justifiably being spent to strengthen human healthcare and boost the global economy, said the coalition, but far less expensive measures to halt deforestation and end the illegal wildlife trade are vital. The call is the latest in a series of high-level warnings that worse and more frequent pandemics will strike without action, but to date these have been largely unheeded. The coronavirus that causes Covid-19 is thought to have jumped from wild bats to humans and about two-thirds of diseases that infect humans start in other species, including the influenza, HIV, Zika, West Nile and Ebola viruses. The increasing destruction of nature by farming, logging and the wild animal trade has brought people and their livestock into closer contact with wildlife and led to a great increase in diseases crossing from animals to people in recent decades.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/09/inaction-leaves-world-playing-russian-roulette-pandemics-experts>

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/03/the-covid-19-question-how-do-we-prevent-future-pandemics/>

719) *March 10*. We got rid of Covid-19 in the **FAROE ISLANDS** through competence and luck said their prime minister. On 26 February, the Faroe Islands became officially free of Covid-19. Since July 2020, our archipelago has experienced three waves of the virus, and each time the number of cases has declined quickly. In the beginning this looked like luck. Now, it seems more like the result of a successful strategy. How did we manage it? In some ways, our response to Covid-19 followed the same map as other countries: testing, contact tracing, lockdowns, public health campaigns and a reorganisation of our health sector. But, in other respects, our approach was unique. Unlike most other governments, we decided early on that we wanted to influence the behaviour of our citizens by issuing recommendations - not by making laws.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/10/got-rid-covid-19-faroe-islands-competence-luck>

720) *March 10*. Governments around the world are failing to match their green rhetoric with action in rescuing their economies from the Covid-19 pandemic, the UN has warned, with prospects for a “green recovery” in danger unless swift action is taken. Countries are spending an unprecedented \$14.6tn (£10.5tn) on trying to prevent economic collapse, seeking to protect jobs and save businesses on the brink of ruin. However, a UN-backed analysis of 50 leading economies has found only \$368bn, or about 18%, of the rescue spending so far can be regarded as green. Investing in projects that cut greenhouse gas emissions, restore the natural world or repair environmental damage can lead to strong economic growth and create jobs, in the

short and longer term, according to research from the University of Oxford, which led the UNEP analysis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/10/governments-failing-fulfil-talk-green-covid-recovery-un-warns>

721) *March 10*. The UK suffered the largest contraction among top fishing nations during the coronavirus pandemic, according to tracking data analysed by the conservation group Global Fishing Watch. In a year of unprecedented decline, the UK and China saw the most “dramatic declines” in fishing activity undertaken within their territories. In Britain, whose fishing industry was badly hit by storms in the months before the pandemic, there was a drop of 368,000 fishing hours in 2020, or 16.5% compared with 2019, while in China there was a fall of 2m fishing hours, down 13.5%. Fishing activity also decreased in Italy, Spain, France and Norway, mostly in the first months of 2020. Early on in the pandemic, boats were tied up and many workers in the Scottish fishing industry were forced to use food banks as export demand fell, restaurants were closed and lockdown restrictions were introduced all over the UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/10/fishing-industry-in-uk-shrank-dramatically-during-pandemic>

722) *March 10*. An outbreak of a deadly pig disease may have set the stage for Covid-19 to take hold in humans, a new analysis has suggested. African swine fever (ASF), which first swept through China in 2018, disrupted pork supplies increasing the potential for human-virus contact as people sought out alternative meats. Pork is the main meat source in the Chinese diet, and the country produces half of the world’s pigs, which generate roughly 55m tonnes of pork annually, forming an industry worth more than \$128bn (£98bn). The ASF outbreak had spread across most of China by the fourth quarter of 2019. The disease is untreatable and incurable. Once it takes hold, the only solution is to kill infected animals. The dramatic drop in pork supply, after restrictions on movement of pigs and culling led to price rises, escalated demand for alternative sources of meat to be transported nationwide. These sources included wild animals, thus greatly increasing opportunities for human-coronavirus contact, a team of researchers from China and the UK have suggested in a yet to be peer-reviewed analysis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/10/deadly-pig-disease-could-have-led-to-covid-spillover-to-humans-analysis-suggests>

723) *March 11*. **BRAZIL** has exceeded 2,000 Covid-related deaths in a single day for the first time, as infection rates soar. The country has the second highest death toll in the world, behind the US. Experts warn the transmission rate is made worse by more contagious variants.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-56355861>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/13/brazil-covid-coronavirus-deaths-cases-bolsonaro-lula>

724) *March 11*. Covid-19 is taking a "severe toll" on conservation efforts, with multiple environmental protections being rolled back, according to research. Conservation efforts have been reduced in more than half of Africa's protected areas and a quarter of those in Asia, said the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). And 22 countries are rolling back protection of natural areas. Protected areas encompass some of the world's most precious ecosystems. They include pristine forests, wilderness areas and natural habitat that support endangered species. The research is published in a special edition of an IUCN journal dedicated to areas of the globe protected for nature.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/11/budget-cuts-and-collapse-in-tourism-revenue-pose-severe-threat-to-nature>

<https://www.iucn.org/news/world-commission-protected-areas/202103/covid-19-fallout-undermining-nature-conservation-efforts-iucn-publication>

725) *March 12*. **PUERTO RICO** sees a surge in tourism and a rise in aggressive tourist behavior. Low-cost flights have enticed many travelers to choose the island as a vacation spot during the pandemic, but relaxed restrictions have led to large gatherings, fights and Covid rule-breaking.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/12/puerto-rico-tourists-aggressive-behavior-coronavirus>

726) *March 12*. Sea of resilience: how the **PACIFIC** fought against Covid. The Pacific's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been one of self-reliance and resistance: to turn to its communities and churches, its lands and seas. The region has escaped - so far - the very worst of the health ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic. A handful of islands remain defiantly coronavirus-free, though that number dwindles almost weekly now. But even without high rates of infections from the virus, the impact of the pandemic has been widespread, and profound. The enforced border closures have isolated communities, threatened food supplies, crippled businesses and devastated economies, particularly across a part of the world so dependent on tourism and exports. And the global pandemic has come on top of other disasters to hit the Pacific. At one stage in April 2020, Vanuatu was simultaneously grappling with the triple crisis of Covid-19, a category-five cyclone in its northern islands and an erupting volcano in its south. A documentary from the Australian National University's Australia Pacific Security College, told through the eyes of four Pacific video diarists, charts daily life on islands isolated by Covid-19.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/13/sea-of-resilience-how-the-pacific-fought-against-covid>

727) *March 13*. The small, lush green Portuguese island of Corvo, home to around 400 people, has vaccinated most of its population against COVID-19 and will soon reach herd immunity, according to its only doctor. Authorities in Corvo, the smallest island of the **AZORES** archipelago, on Friday finished vaccinating 322 people with a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. That is about 85% of the island's population and 95% of those eligible to receive shots. Herd immunity happens when enough people in a population have immunity to an infection to be able to effectively stop that

disease from spreading. Experts say it could kick in when between 50% and 70% gains immunity through vaccination.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-portugal-azores-idUSKBN2B50M8>

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/03/16/the-azores-smallest-island-has-vaccinated-its-population-and-escaped-pandemic-almost-unscathed>

728) *March 14*. A third wave of the Covid pandemic is now advancing swiftly across much of **EUROPE**. As a result, many nations - bogged down by sluggish vaccination campaigns - are witnessing sharp rises in infection rates and numbers of cases. The infection rate in the EU is now at its highest level since the beginning of February, with the spread of new variants of the Covid-19 virus being blamed for much of the recent increase. Several countries are now set to impose strict new lockdown measures in the next few days – in contrast to the UK, which is beginning to emerge slowly from its current bout of shop and school closures and sports bans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/14/third-covid-wave-sweeps-across-eu-and-forces-new-restrictions>

729) *March 15*. The **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS** just celebrated its 486th anniversary amid great challenges of preservation and economic revival as it transitions into a post-pandemic scenario. The government of Ecuador reported that this week the islands will receive 5,000 doses of vaccines and will be the first province to complete phase one of vaccination. The current goal is for Galapagos to be able to finish mass vaccination campaigns before May 15. The estimated population of the islands is 33,042 inhabitants. In recent weeks, international visitors are returning to the streets of cities like Santa Cruz, which is seen as a good sign for tourism, the industry on which more than 80% of the economy of the Galapagos depends. As of now, in terms of visits, the industry is performing at 20% of its level before the pandemic.

<https://www.tourism-review.com/galapagos-launching-the-post-pandemic-scenario-news11927>

730) *March 15*. Labor wants the Morrison government to provide emergency medical assistance to **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**, including providing Covid vaccine doses for health workers, as concerns escalate about the growing number of cases in the Pacific nation. The calls came as the Queensland premier announced that their state facilities had been conducting Covid tests for PNG, with one batch of 500 samples returning a staggering 250 positive results. The number of cases in PNG has been relatively low throughout the pandemic, with 2,083 confirmed cases and 21 deaths in the country, according to the country's National Department of Health. But the number of cases has jumped dramatically in the last fortnight and there are fears that the true number of cases has been masked by low testing rates, with just 55,000 tests having been conducted across the country of nearly 9 million people. Fears about the spread of Covid have led to the fast-tracking of the rollout of the AstraZeneca vaccine in the **TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS** this week, including on the island of Saibai which is only a short dinghy ride south of PNG's Western province, with plans to start vaccinating people on Boigu and Dauan islands next week.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/15/labor-says-australia-must-provide-png-with-covid-vaccines-amid-alarming-outbreak>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/mar/16/covid-vaccine-fast-tracked-in-torres-strait-as-fears-of-papua-new-guinea-outbreak-grow>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/17/covid-has-reached-my-hospital-in-papua-new-guinea-people-could-soon-be-dying-in-the-parking-lot>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/17/png-could-already-have-vaccines-if-australia-had-not-blocked-waiver-says-msf>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/20/this-is-what-we-feared-how-a-country-that-avoided-the-worst-of-covid-finally-got-hit-papua-new-guinea>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/22/covid-cases-in-papua-new-guinea-triple-in-a-month-as-doctors-warn-of-danger-days-ahead-png>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/26/inside-the-covid-unit-crisis-threatens-to-overwhelm-pngs-biggest-hospital>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/30/png-prime-minister-first-to-be-vaccinated-with-australian-supplied-doses-to-show-its-safe>

731) *March 15.* With its tourism-reliant economy bowed by debt, and facing climate shocks and now the COVID-19 crisis, the tiny Caribbean nation of **ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA** will require more international funding to transition to green energy, its prime minister said. Gaston Browne, a former banker and businessman who came to power in 2014, said his island country of less than 100,000 people had decided to slow down an earlier drive to switch to renewable energy, to avoid tipping itself further into debt. With pandemic restrictions preventing international tourist travel, the nation's economy was likely to shrink by about 30% in 2020-21, pushing up its debt-to-GDP ratio from just under 70% to 95%.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-caribbean-energy-idUSKBN2B726H>

732) *March 16.* With **SAMOA** Covid-19 vaccine roll-out slated to start in April, some in the tourism sector aren't sure they'll be in business when borders eventually re-open. While the tragedy of the measles epidemic of 2019 prepared the country to act fast and avert another health crisis, it couldn't prepare them for an economic one. A year into the pandemic and Samoa is one of a handful of countries to remain free of community transmission of the coronavirus. It was also one of the first countries to close its borders which helped prevent Covid-19's entry according to the country's Director General of Health, Leausa Dr Take Naseri, who said, with grief from the measles epidemic still fresh, the whole country rallied.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/438422/from-pandemic-to-economic-crisis-samoa-s-covid-journey-one-year-on>

733) *March 16.* German tourists hoping to visit **MALLORCA** are being warned that coronavirus restrictions apply to everyone after the Spanish island was taken off Berlin's high-risk list, leading to a surge of interest from holidaymakers. Officials in Mallorca are now bracing for an influx of German tourists, as they queue up by the thousands to book Easter getaways in the Mediterranean, escaping a country that seems to be entering a third wave of Covid-19 and whose vaccination programme is off to a stuttering start. The surge in interest comes days after Germany's foreign ministry announced that Mallorca, a destination jokingly referred to among some Germans as the country's 17th state, was no longer considered a high risk area along with other parts of Spain, Portugal and Denmark.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/16/germans-hope-to-travel-to-mallorca-as-island-comes-off-high-risk-list>

734) *March 17.* **ICELAND** will this week open its borders to all visitors who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 without mandatory testing or quarantine, as it seeks to attract more tourists to help revive its coronavirus-hit economy. The North Atlantic country, which will become one of the first to open its borders since the beginning of the pandemic, saw tourist numbers plummet by 75% last year to just under half a million, causing its economy to contract by 6.6%.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-iceland-border-idUSKBN2B91BE>

735) *March 17.* Now **SEYCHELLES** borders will open up to visitors on 25 March, Port Victoria will in August this year see the docking of a first cruise ship after a moratorium imposed by cabinet on this activity as a result of the pandemic.

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/8247/port-victoria-gears-up-to-welcome-back-cruise-ships-by-patrick-joubert>

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/8354/tourism-minister-addresses-partners-as-seyelles-re-opens-borders-to-visitors-worldwide>

<http://www.nation.sc/articles/8409/new-contact-tracing-app-against-the-spread-of-covid-19>

736) *March 17.* The Asia Foundation's new report *The Future of Work for Women in the Pacific Islands* looks at the challenges and opportunities facing **PACIFIC** women in the context of the pandemic, climate change, and technology-led change. Across the Pacific there are pronounced gender disparities in labor market participation, the work men and women perform, and the wages they earn. There are also significant gender gaps in unpaid work. Pacific women are overwhelmingly employed in the informal economy, and the combination of Covid-19 and climate-related events has laid bare the vulnerability of these workers, many of whom have lost jobs and income due to mobility restrictions, the decimation of the travel industry, and a dramatic drop in demand.

<https://asiafoundation.org/2021/03/17/the-future-of-work-for-women-in-the-pacific-islands/>

737) *March 18.* The Commonwealth of Dominica's 'Safe in Nature' certification programme has successfully allowed tourism to resume on the island in a managed way that prioritises the safety of both visitors and citizens. Launched in October, the programme enables visitors to come to **DOMINICA** and experience the island with little risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus while still partaking in all the nation has to offer. With tourism being a primary driver of Dominica's economy, the 'Safe in Nature' programme also enables the island to support its stakeholders who the pandemic has hit. Later in the month, Dominica invited digital nomads and remote workers to stay on the island for an extended period under a new visa offering. The newly launched Work in Nature (WIN) Visa allows tourists to relocate to Dominica for a period of up to 18 months to work remotely and live amongst the natural beauty of the island. With much of the world still facing some form of travel restriction, tourism-driven nations, particularly in the Caribbean, are creating new ways of attracting visitors while those under the stress of having to work from home are increasingly seeking out alternative ways to live.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/dominicas-safe-in-nature-certification-programme-brings-tourism-back-to-the-nation-301250307.html>

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/dominica-invites-remote-workers-to-stay-in-nature-island-with-launch-of-work-in-nature-visa-301252818.html>

<https://discoverdominica.com/travel-advisory-for-dominica>

738) *March 19.* Health authorities in **SOLOMON ISLANDS** are aiming to vaccinate the country's entire adult population against Covid-19. On Friday the first 24,000 doses of the Astra Zeneca vaccine arrived in the capital Honiara sourced through the Global Covax facility. The country had been approved for enough doses to vaccinate 20 percent of its population of under 700,000 people.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/438771/solomon-islands-govt-aiming-to-vaccinate-entire-adult-population>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/438899/solomons-vaccine-rollout-to-begin-wednesday>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/439683/solomons-prioritising-border-community-vaccinations>

739) *March 20.* **TAIWAN** will open its first travel bubble with **PALAU** starting on April 1. The arrangement, which had been anticipated for months, will allow tourists from Taiwan to visit Palau for up to eight days, and vice versa, with fewer entry and quarantine restrictions. Palau is one of Taiwan's few remaining diplomatic allies and has confirmed no cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. Taiwan has been remarkably successful in containing the spread of COVID-19, recording just 998 total cases as of March 19 - most of them imported.

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/taiwan-palau-say-they-will-open-travel-bubble-next-month/>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/438613/palau-to-open-travel-bubble-with-taiwan-from-next-month>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/439352/palau-receives-johnson-and-johnson-vaccines-from-the-united-states>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/31/palau-to-welcome-first-tourists-in-a-year-with-presidential-escort>

740) *March 21*. While Western Europe's "vaccine war" has been a struggle to prevent doses from being exported, in another part of the world, the battle is to give vaccines away. Over the past decade, China has ramped up its relationship with Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangladesh and other states traditionally considered to be in India's sphere of influence. The rivalry between Delhi and Beijing has occasionally taken the form of high-altitude standoffs between their armies, but over past months, it has involved a scramble to send Covid-19 vaccine doses across the wider world. India, with its formidable vaccine manufacturing capacity, and a licensing deal to produce AstraZeneca's formulation, has donated nearly 60m doses; the crates arrive in foreign capitals bearing the message: "Gift from the people and government of India". China says it plans to send its own manufacturers' vaccines as aid to 69 countries, and is selling them to another 28 as part of agreements that could provide a commercial foothold for its pharmaceutical industries in regions normally dominated by US drug makers, including the Middle East and Latin America. Analysts in Delhi say India's donations are both strategically savvy and realistic. Like most countries, India has never embarked on a vaccination drive as large as that against Covid-19. It needed weeks to scale up the vaccine infrastructure, usually geared at children and pregnant women, so that it would serve a population of more than 1.3 billion. In the meantime, manufacturers, including the Serum Institute of India, were pumping out about 2.5m doses of Covid vaccines every day, giving Delhi some room for largesse. With China firmly in their sights, an emerging partnership of Japan, Australia, the US and India - who label their grouping the Quad - last weekend announced a plan to expand India's manufacturing capacity even further, with a view to distributing vaccines in south-east Asia, another site of geopolitical contest. The Indian programme of "vaccine *maitri*" (vaccine friendship) has been cheered all the way by local media, but as both India and China seek to begin inoculating greater swathes of their own populations, pressure to keep more supply at home may grow. On Thursday, the UK confirmed its vaccination programme foresaw a major shortage over the coming weeks due to the later than expected arrival of doses from the Serum Institute.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/mar/21/china-india-coronavirus-covid-vaccine-diplomacy-is-reaching-its-limit>

741) *March 21*. **TAIWAN** Premier Su Tseng-chang received the AstraZeneca COVID-19 shot on Monday, having volunteered to be first in line to underscore government confidence in the vaccine's safety as the island began its inoculation campaign. More than a dozen European countries suspended use of the AstraZeneca vaccine last week amid concerns about its safety after reports of a small number of

blood disorders. The World Health Organization's European director said on Thursday the benefits of the shot far outweigh any risks, and its widespread use resumed on Friday. Taiwan's first vaccines - 117,000 doses of the AstraZeneca shot - arrived on the island earlier this month from a South Korean factory. Around 60,000 people are in line to get the first vaccinations and Taiwan is prioritising health workers. In December, Taiwan said it had agreed to buy almost 20 million vaccine doses, including 10 million from AstraZeneca. Taiwan's government has played down concerns about the late start to the vaccination programme, saying that with such a low case rate there is not the urgency that exists in other countries where the pandemic remains rampant. Only 33 people remain in hospital being treated for COVID-19 in Taiwan. The island has kept the pandemic well under control thanks to early and effective prevention, including largely closing its borders.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-03-21/taiwan-premier-gets-astrazeneca-shot-as-island-starts-vaccine-campaign>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/24/how-taiwan-triumphed-over-covid-as-uk-faltered>

742) *March 22.* The **U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS** is crediting smart, sensible public health policies and tourism management efforts for the admirable performance of the Territory's bread-and-butter industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The USVI recently announced that it will allow all residents ages 16 or older to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, making it the first United States jurisdiction to offer the vaccine to such a large majority of residents. With at least 20,000 people in the Territory having received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the USVI is on pace to meet Governor Bryan's goal of having half the population, or 50,000 people vaccinated by July 1, 2021.

<https://www.traveldailynews.com/post/us-virgin-islands-reports-strong-tourism-preformance-during-pandemic>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/24/health/vaccine-tourism-virgin-islands.html>

743) *March 22.* Covid-19 has shaken the world, with more than 2.5 million deaths and 115 million cases confirmed. BBC Panorama's Jane Corbin has scoured the globe to find the best examples of strategies for combating the virus i.e. countries that nailed it, and what we can learn from them.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56455030>

744) *March 22.* Today the Biden administration launched the “**Small and Less Populous Island Economies (SALPIE) Initiative**,” an economic cooperation framework designed to strengthen U.S. collaboration with island countries and territories in the Caribbean, North Atlantic, and Pacific regions. The SALPIE Initiative signals the U.S. government's prioritization of cooperation with these economies to counter COVID-19 economic challenges, promote economic recovery, respond to the climate crisis, and advance longer-term shared interests. Pandemic-related economic disruptions have caused an unprecedented global crisis, and import and tourism-dependent island economies have not been spared. These same island

communities are also among the most vulnerable to climate change; their economic resilience is increasingly threatened by more frequent and severe storms, rising sea levels, and warming ocean temperatures. SALPIE partners are geographically diverse island economies that face similar challenges. Most have populations under 1 million, have been heavily impacted by COVID-related economic disruptions, and are especially susceptible to the effects of climate change. Many do not qualify for concessional foreign assistance programs due to their higher income levels per capita. Re-focusing our economic relationships with these partners will advance shared interests and promote economic recovery and resilience. The Initiative builds on programming designed to elevate our economic cooperation to provide a framework for the United States to enhance bilateral, regional, and multilateral collaboration in SALPIE regions. Beyond addressing more immediate economic and humanitarian consequences of the pandemic and climate change, the U.S. government welcomes the opportunity to partner with these economies to advance important long-term objectives, including strengthening bilateral and regional economic ties, countering predatory investment practices by malign actors, and enhancing collaboration within international organizations. The United States values the strong trade and investment ties we have with SALPIE and views this as an opportune time to reaffirm and reinvest in the importance of those relationships as we work together on economic recovery efforts. While not an all-inclusive inventory of U.S. cooperation with this set of economies, the SALPIE Initiative brings 29 U.S. departments and agencies together to coordinate ongoing and future engagements in the following areas:

- *Economic Growth*: Programs that support generating rapid, meaningful, sustained, inclusive, and broad-based economic growth.
- *Climate/Sustainable Energy/Environment*: Programs that support climate initiatives, sustainable energy development, natural disaster response and resilience, and other critical environmental and sustainability issues.
- *Development Finance*: Programs in partnership with the private sector that leverage loans and/or other credit guarantees to finance projects.
- *Humanitarian/Social*: Programs that directly support or promote capacity building to improve humanitarian and social conditions.
- *Diplomatic/Educational/Cultural*: Programs with an economic focus that foster relationship building and enhance bilateral cooperation.
- *Political/Security*: Programs aimed at establishing the conditions and capacity necessary for sustainable economic growth by promoting peace, security, stability, and sound democratic institutions and processes.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/22/fact-sheet-small-and-less-populous-island-economies-salpie-initiative/>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/22/statement-by-nsc-spokesperson-emily-horne-on-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-and-national-economic-council-director-brian-deeses-small-and-less-populous-island-economies-salpie-init/>

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/us-opens-initiative-to-focus-on-small-and-less-populous-island-economies/>

745) *March 22*. Researchers wearing headlamps and protective suits race to untangle the claws and wings of bats caught up in a big net after dark in the **PHILIPPINES** province of Laguna. The tiny animals are carefully placed in cloth bags to be taken away, measured and swabbed, with details logged and saliva and faecal matter collected for analysis before they are returned to the wild. The researchers call themselves the “virus hunters”, tasked with catching thousands of bats to develop a simulation model they hope will help the world avoid a pandemic similar to COVID-19, which has killed nearly 2.8 million people. The Japanese-funded model will be developed over the next three years by the University of the Philippines Los Banos, which hopes the bats will help in predicting the dynamics of a coronavirus by analysing factors such as climate, temperature and ease of spread, to humans included.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-philippines-bats-w/by-catching-bats-these-virus-hunters-hope-to-stop-the-next-pandemic-idUSKBN2BE356>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2021/apr/06/bat-catchers-fight-the-next-pandemic-in-pictures>

746) *March 23*. How **ICELAND** clamped down to conquer coronavirus. Yes, Iceland is a remote island in the North Atlantic, with just one international airport. And yes, it is home to fewer than half a million people. So it would be fair to assume that it has luck to thank for becoming the first country in Europe to virtually rid itself of Covid. But say that to Icelanders, and you won't make many friends. Because when you peel back the geography and look at the detail, there is more to it, and these islanders are pretty proud of their success.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56412790>

747) *March 24*. Outbreaks of infectious diseases are more likely in areas of deforestation and monoculture plantations, according to a study that suggests epidemics are likely to increase as biodiversity declines. Land use change is a significant factor in the emergence of zoonotic viruses such as COVID-19 and vector-borne ailments such as malaria. Even tree-planting can increase health risks to local human populations if it focuses too narrowly on a small number of species, as is often the case in commercial forests, the research found. The authors said this was because diseases are filtered and blocked by a range of predators and habitats in a healthy, biodiverse forest. When this is replaced by a palm oil plantation, soy fields or blocks of eucalyptus, the specialist species die off, leaving generalists such as rats and mosquitoes to thrive and spread pathogens across human and non-human habitats. The net result is a loss of natural disease regulation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/24/disease-outbreaks-more-likely-in-deforestation-areas-study-finds>

748) *March 24*. For years, **VASHON ISLAND**, USA, has made local, national, and international news for being a bastion of vaccine hesitancy, a place where parents have, in big percentages, opted out of giving their kids the state's required vaccines. Which is why it may seem surprising that, when King County began publishing data

earlier this year on the proportion of seniors around the county who had received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine, Vashon was in the lead - sometimes by a whopping amount. Medical professionals, vaccination volunteers, residents, and public health officials reconcile this seemingly conflicted picture a number of ways. They point to a vaccination rate that had already been rising on Vashon during the past six years; possible differences in how vaccines are viewed by young parents versus the older generation currently making up the majority of those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine; and a situation in which outbreaks of contagious diseases - especially one as disruptive as the coronavirus - tend to prompt high immunization rates in response. Others have pointed out that Vashon is a small, isolated, increasingly wealthy, mostly white community, where people could get the vaccine without facing some of the health equity hurdles that have been present elsewhere in King County.

<https://crosscut.com/news/2021/03/vashon-island-isnt-avoiding-vaccines-time-around>

749) *March 24*. How has the pandemic affected **SCOTTISH ISLANDS**? Covid has caused a collapse in tourism and threatened islanders' health and wellbeing, but there have also been signs of a strong community spirit.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-56510231>

750) *March 24*. Summer rentals have gone wild on Cape Cod, **MARTHA'S VINEYARD** and **NANTUCKET**, with most weeks already booked with demand so high people are "panic calling" daily, real estate agents say. The combination of families being able to room together - from grandparents on down due to the coronavirus vaccines - and fear of traveling abroad has renters turning to the islands. More people can work remotely and because the Cape is within driving distance for 15 million people from Boston to New York City, supply just can't keep up with demand.

<https://www.bostonherald.com/2021/03/24/rentals-gone-wild-on-cape-cod-and-the-islands-with-summer-booked/>

751) *March 24*. UNICEF welcomes a US\$9 million contribution from the Government and the people of Japan that will strengthen the vaccine cold chain, and the logistics capacity, to address the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic in ten countries in the **PACIFIC** region.

<https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/press-releases/unicef-welcomes-us9m-contribution-japan-support-pacific-island-countries-during>

752) *March 25*. The stringent COVID-19 guidelines for **ST KITTS AND NEVIS** under Prime Minister Timothy Harris' leadership have helped the islands become a COVID-19 safe zone. "One Year Off," a comedy feature film, will be shot on Nevis, since the production company felt it was a safe haven for filming during the coronavirus pandemic. The star-studded British cast and crew of about 50 people have already arrived in Nevis under strict protective measures. Prime Minister Harris announced that the filming would create more opportunities and jobs for people in St Kitts and Nevis. The production company is projected to contribute about \$1 million

to the nation's economy every four months. Sales firm MSR Media also revealed the creation of an education programme to train local people in various on-set roles to boost the island's production infrastructure. A plan to create an acting academy on the island is also underway. As waves of the pandemic carve out harsher borders between nations and prolong working from home practices, many business people have resorted to investing in second citizenship to escape cold weather and lockdowns. As the pioneer of the concept of *Citizenship by Investment*, St Kitts and Nevis, under its extended limited time offer, allows families of up to four who contribute \$150,000 citizenship for life, enabling them to work from paradise for as long as they need. St Kitts and Nevis citizenship also allows visa-free and visa-on-arrival travel to over 156 different destinations globally. These mobility benefits save investors time, stress and money as they can go about business without worrying about travel restrictions. Additionally, the programme does not require one to visit the country during the application process or live in the country for any number of days to keep citizenship.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/hollywood-producers-find-caribbean-island-of-nevis-safe-haven-for-filming-during-pandemic-301255244.html>

<https://www.ciu.gov.kn/the-sustainable-growth-fund/>

753) *March 24*. More people were buried on **HART ISLAND** in 2020 than any year during the AIDS epidemic - and New York is on pace to inter one in 10 of its COVID-19 victims in the potter's field. An exclusive analysis of city data, public records and interviews with dozens of local officials indicates at least 2,334 adults were buried on Hart Island in 2020 - 2 ½ times the figure recorded in 2019 and about 1,000 more than in 1988, the peak year for AIDS burials. The analysis also shows how COVID-19 ravaged New York's poorest neighborhoods and struck the sick and elderly in communities of color hardest. Meanwhile, the city's Office of Chief Medical Examiner is storing more than 780 bodies in refrigerated trucks. These COVID-19 victims will be brought to Hart Island unless claimed by family members.

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/up-to-10-of-nycs-covid-victims-could-end-up-buried-in-hart-islands-mass-graves/2963867/>

754) *March 25*. The **COOK ISLANDS** takes one step closer to a safe travel bubble with New Zealand, as it launches its own Covid-19 tracing app CookSafe+. Developed by Rush - which created the NZ Covid Tracer app with New Zealand's Ministry of Health - it will be available to Cook Islands residents and New Zealanders, visiting the islands. The Islands anticipate the new app and the opening of a PCR lab will allow them to effectively trace and test air passengers arriving on Rarotonga. Previous tests had to be sent off-island for processing.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/cook-islands-launch-covid-tracer-app-ahead-of-new-zealand-bubble/WBY5YCBWYEIHMVDR435KIZOXZA/>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/439234/nz-plans-cook-islands-vaccination-campaign>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/439499/cook-islands-shifts-focus-to-future>

755) *March 25*. China's exotic farms may be a missing link behind the pandemic's leap to people. Before the pandemic, such farms kept China's wildlife markets stocked with live animals - civets, bamboo rats, crocodiles, porcupines, and snakes, among others - primarily for sale to restaurants. The small farms, promoted by government officials as a way to reduce poverty in rural areas with few other job opportunities, numbered in the thousands and employed millions of people. But by the end of 2020, the government said it had shuttered all these farms as part of its response to the novel coronavirus. Now, a WHO team is considering if wildlife farms may be a missing link that helped the coronavirus jump from its probable host animals - bats - to humans at Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, a site connected to a cluster of the earliest human infections. (The team is also investigating possible links to another market in Wuhan that was tied to an early patient with no connection to Huanan.) Yunnan, the southern Chinese province where many of the now-shuttered wildlife farms are located, is also where virologists found a bat virus almost identical to the coronavirus circulating in humans. Some wildlife farms sold animals that can be infected with other coronaviruses, including civets, so scientists suspect that these species may also be susceptible to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/chinas-exotic-wildlife-farms-may-be-a-possible-missing-link-behind-the-pandemics-leap-to-people>

756) *March 29*. A team commissioned by the WHO to investigate the source of the coronavirus in Wuhan in January concluded that it was "extremely unlikely" that the pathogen originated in a top-security lab in the ground-zero Chinese city. And a WHO report - seen on Monday by AFP before its official release - found that COVID-19 was most probably first passed to humans from a bat through an intermediary animal, with investigators all but ruling out the laboratory leak theory.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-03-wuhan-lab-heart-extremely-leak.html>

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-03-covid-theories.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-56581246>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-56602681>

757) *March 29*. **GREENLAND** tourism industry should prepare for a summer without any cruise ships and a reopening of its borders to airline passengers no earlier than July, effectively eliminating a third of the high season, warned the national tourism promotion board, Visit Greenland. That bleak assessment came in a forecast of various scenarios public health authorities could choose as they wind down COVID-19 restrictions. The loss of much of the coming season would follow a disastrous year last year in which the number of people visiting Greenland fell by 70 percent.

[https://www.arctictoday.com/prepare-for-the-worst-greenland-tourism-industry-warned/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=prepare-for-the-worst-greenland-tourism-industry-warned](https://www.arctictoday.com/prepare-for-the-worst-greenland-tourism-industry-warned/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=prepare-for-the-worst-greenland-tourism-industry-warned)

<https://www.arctictoday.com/a-stringent-isolation-strategy-has-kept-greenland-mostly-safe-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

758) *March 29.* The inability of developing nations to spend on post COVID-19 recovery and resilience has placed the world on the “the verge of a debt crisis”. “We face the spectre of a divided world and a lost decade for development,” United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said today during a high-level meeting on financing development post COVID-19. He said that developing nations needed access to liquidity to allow them to sufficiently respond to the pandemic and invest in recovery and urged the global community to provide this necessary support. Guterres highlighted the over 2.7 million COVID-19-related deaths and the over 128 million people who fell into extreme poverty over the last year. He noted that while the world’s rich nations have benefited from an unprecedented \$18 trillion of emergency support measures, setting the stage for economic recovery post COVID-19, many developing nations could not invest in recovery and resilience. In fact many have spent 580 times less per capita on their COVID-19 response, in comparison to richer nations, because they do not have the money to do so. One third of emerging market economies were at high risk for fiscal crisis while six countries had already defaulted on loan payments. Guterres said the situation was even worse for least-developed and low-income countries.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/03/developing-countries-covid-19-debt-crisis-could-put-sdgs-climate-agreement-completely-out-of-reach/>

759) *March 29.* Cuban leader Fidel Castro vowed to build a biotech juggernaut in the Caribbean, advancing the idea in the early 1980s with six researchers in a tiny Havana lab. Forty years later, the communist island nation of **CUBA** could be on the cusp of a singular breakthrough: Becoming the world’s smallest country to develop not just one, but multiple coronavirus vaccines. Five vaccine candidates are in development, two in late-stage trials with the goal of a broader rollout by May. Should they prove successful, the vaccines would be an against-the-odds feat of medical prowess - as well as a public relations coup - for an isolated country of 11 million that was added back to the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism in the final days of the Trump administration. Cuban officials say they’re developing cheap and easy-to-store serums. They are able to last at room temperature for weeks and in long-term storage as high as 46.4 degrees, potentially making them a viable option for low-income, tropical countries that have been pushed aside by bigger, wealthier nations in the international scrum for coronavirus vaccines. They could also make Cuba the pharmacist for nations lumped by Washington into the “Axis of Evil” and “Troika of Tyranny.” Iran and Venezuela have inked vaccine deals with Havana. Iran has agreed to host a Phase 3 trial of one of Cuba’s most promising candidates - Soberana 2 - as part of a technology transfer agreement that could see millions of doses manufactured in Iran. If Phase 3 trials are positive, Cuban authorities said this week, they would move to a vast “intervention study” that would inoculate almost all the residents of Havana, or 1.7 million people, by May. By August, they would aim to reach 60 percent of the national population, with the rest getting doses by year’s end.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/03/29/cuba-coronavirus-vaccine-iran-venezuela/>

760) *March 30*. A group of world leaders have joined the head of the WHO in calling for an international treaty to improve pandemic preparedness and response in the wake of COVID-19, for the sake of future generations. In a joint article published today across leading news platforms, the signatories said that the coronavirus pandemic had been a “stark and painful reminder that nobody is safe until everyone is safe” and that “there will be other pandemics and other major health emergencies”. “The question is not if, but when. Together, we must be better prepared to predict, prevent, detect, assess and effectively respond to pandemics in a highly coordinated fashion”, they said. The main goal of the treaty, which would be rooted in the WHO Constitution, would be to foster a comprehensive approach to strengthen national, regional and global capacities and resilience to future pandemics, the leaders added.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1088652>

761) *March 31*. Activists are calling for changes to intellectual property laws in hopes of beginning to boost Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing globally, and addressing the gaping disparity between rich and poor nations’ access to coronavirus vaccines. The US and a handful of other wealthy vaccine-producing nations are on track to deliver vaccines to all adults who want them in the coming months, while dozens of the world’s poorest countries have not inoculated a single person. Activists have dubbed the disparity “vaccine apartheid” and called for the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies to share technical know-how in an effort to speed the global vaccination project. The pressure to get more vaccines to poor nations has also weighed on the Joe Biden administration, which is now considering whether to repurpose or internationally distribute 70m vaccine doses. After outcry, the US has shared 4m AstraZeneca vaccine doses with Canada and Mexico. As it stands, 30 countries have not received a single vaccine dose. Roughly 90m vaccine doses expected to be distributed through Covax, the global alliance to distribute vaccines to poor countries, have been delayed through March and April by a Covid-19 outbreak in India. In Europe, rising Covid-19 cases and a slow vaccination campaign have also prompted vaccine export controls.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/30/coronavirus-vaccine-distribution-global-disparity>

762) *April 1*. The WHO has criticised the rollout of coronavirus vaccines in **EUROPE** as being “unacceptably slow”. It also says the situation in the region is more worrying than it has been for several months. Vaccination campaigns in much of Europe have been hit by delays and the number of infections is rising. The EU has been criticised for the pace of its vaccination programme - only 16% of its population has received the jab, compared with 52% in the UK. But the EU says the UK has had an unfair advantage in contracts it signed with vaccine manufacturers, some of whom are based within the EU.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56600660>

763) *April 1*. Officials in **HAWAII** are looking into vaccine passports, especially for inter-island travel. Hawaii Lt. Gov. Josh Green said the state hopes to work with a local company to create an app that would verify that a traveler has been vaccinated.

Starting next Monday, Maui will join Hawaii and Kauai counties in expanding eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination to all residents ages 16 and older, the final group in the state's four-phase immunization program.

<https://apnews.com/article/travel-hawaii-0ed34867de794d2789860ceff0a4f495>

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2021/04/04/hawaii-news/hawaii-sees-4-new-coronavirus-related-deaths-and-112-new-infections-as-statewide-tally-tops-30k/>

764) *April 1.* The cruise ship company Hurtigruten has over many years significantly grown its presence in Norway's far northern archipelago of **SVALBARD** and today owns several hotels, office buildings, apartments and shops in local town Longyearbyen. The real estate development has gone hand-in-hand with an explosive growth in Arctic tourism. In 2019, there were 166,000 overnight stays in local hotels, an increase of almost 40,000 in four years. The number of expedition cruise tourists that same year amounted to almost 20,000 and conventional cruise tourists – almost 50,000. A significant number of the visitors were served by Hurtigruten's ships, hotel staff and adventure tourism personnel. However, since 2019, the local tourism industry has collapsed following the coronavirus pandemic and Hurtigruten has lost billions in revenues. The company is now reported to have accumulated multi-billion kroner debts. The cruise and adventure company is owned by British private equity firm TDR Capital. This week, Hurtigruten announced that it is selling all its properties in the archipelago to Store Norske, the state company that operates the last remaining coal mine in the area.

<https://www.arctictoday.com/crisis-ridden-hurtigruten-sells-properties-in-svalbard/>

765) *April 2.* St. Paul in Alaska's **PRIBILOF ISLANDS** goes into hunker down after confirming first COVID-19 case. An essential worker who initially tested negative before traveling to St. Paul later tested positive on the island. School will be remote for the next two weeks, with packets getting dropped off by teachers because the internet isn't great in St. Paul. Despite the fact that it is orthodox Lent, church services are postponed. Only one person is allowed into the store at a time, said St. Paul City Manager Phillip Zavadil. It's the first confirmed case of the illness in St. Paul, more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic. Zavadil credited prompt action in the community for keeping out the virus for so long. The community tried to use its geographic isolation to its advantage, Zavadil said. St. Paul implemented a travel ban early in the pandemic, eliminated nonessential travel and required specific workforce plans be submitted to the city for any essential work. They've also had a face mask requirement in public places like the store and post office. St. Paul has 370 full-time residents and has a little less than 300 nonresident essential workers on the island, between processor workers and others. According to officials, 177 St. Paul residents are fully vaccinated while 20 residents and 154 nonresidents have one dose of the vaccine.

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2021/04/02/st-paul-in-alaskas-pribilof-islands-goes-into-hunker-down-after-confirming-first-covid-19-case/>

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2021/02/27/unscathed-these-alaska-villages-are-reaching-herd-immunity-without-a-single-case-of-covid-19/>

766) *April 2.* As richer western nations continue hoarding COVID-19 vaccines to the detriment of poorer nations, there is some light on the horizon. On April 15, 2021, the U.S. will join the Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) and co-host the launch of the Investment Opportunity for COVAX Advance Market Commitment. The aim of the event is to raise more funds to ensure at least 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines are available to 92 low-income nations. The U.S. recently donated \$4 billion to COVAX and this new leadership role is highly commendable. However, even if all the commitments are met from the launch, only 20% of people in poorer nations would be vaccinated. Furthermore, it could take until late 2022 for that population to be vaccinated. Continued inequity in COVID-19 vaccination means virus mutations occur and newer variants emerge that may be resistant to currently available vaccines. Therefore, it is in the interest of every nation (both rich and poor) that everyone everywhere has a fair chance of being vaccinated simultaneously.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/04/three-ways-us-can-promote-equity-ending-covid-19-pandemic-globally/>

767) *April 2.* Pandemic accentuates need for **CARIBBEAN** countries to improve food and nutrition security. An October 2020 study of eight Caribbean countries found that 40% of people surveyed experienced some form of hunger, with 42% of those saying it was moderate to severe. The survey by the College of Health Sciences at the University of Technology included 2,257 households in eight countries across the region (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Belize, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda.) Another recent study from the Caribbean Research and Policy Institute and Unicef also found that in a survey of 500 Jamaican households, 44% reported that they were experiencing food shortages, while 78% said their savings could last them four weeks or less. Food and nutrition insecurity are just one frightening outcome of the pandemic, which has ravaged one of the most tourism-dependent regions in the world. In **JAMAICA** alone, a minimum of 50,000 people have been laid off from the tourism industry, a number that is likely even higher when taking into account indirect employment. An estimated 135,000 people have lost their jobs in total. The country's real GDP for fiscal 2020/21 is expected to contract by up to 12%, according to the Bank of Jamaica, and the unemployment for Oct. 2020 was 10.7%. According to the World Bank, the percentage of people living below the poverty line was 19.3% in 2017, and while this figure had been improving, it is unlikely to continue this trajectory. With this hardship in mind, the government has introduced a series of financial stimulus measures to reach the most vulnerable, but these are not sustainable. In addition to financial measures, the government has also focused on increasing food security, an effort that existed prior to the pandemic, but has since been ramped up. In terms of boosting food security and assisting the farming industry, Jamaica's Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Floyd Green says that the government is investing JMD\$1 billion this year. Decreased market demand, in large part from the hotel and restaurant industry, has harmed the farming industry. So while at times there is an excess of supply, a lack of demand has impacted farmers and their production systems, which in turn erodes food security. "The challenge with COVID is clearly the downturn in the market, which discourages the farmers from producing," says Green, adding that they worry their supply will not be absorbed. With this in mind, the government created a "buy-back" program, which found new clients for farmers, which has helped. "We saw an

initial decline in production with COVID when it came in, but we went back into a growth position overall and now year-over-year seeing growth.” Ultimately, Green says COVID has forced people to examine their self-sufficiency. “Covid has brought back into sharp focus in the minds of people the need to be more self-sufficient when it comes to feeding ourselves.” The need for self-sufficiency exists on a large scale as well, especially on an island that imports over US\$1 billion of goods annually. And while some of that cannot be avoided as it is inefficient or impossible to produce everything needed by Jamaicans, Green says there are some efforts to increase the nation’s self-sufficiency, as well as to ramp up exports, which can help to balance the import bill. To this end, the government is looking to encourage production of ginger, turmeric, cocoa, coffee, castor oil, and mangoes, which are all in demand because of their superior quality, he says. “We are looking to further encourage incentive some of our farmers to go into some of these crops. What you will see now over the next three years is a determined push towards export stimulation.” In terms of local food supply, Green says it is sufficient. The issue, however, is with a lack of purchasing power, especially of late as a result of the economic downturn. “Our challenge is to restart the economy to make sure people can get back purchasing power.” Green mentions a backyard gardening program in which 2,500 families across the country, with a majority focus on urban areas, received a kit containing all the necessary tools to start a garden and become more self-sufficient.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/04/pandemic-accentuates-need-caribbean-countries-improve-food-nutrition-security/>

768) *April 2.* Of the handful of countries in the world that managed to stay completely COVID-free, almost all were islands in the **PACIFIC**. Most Pacific countries, protected by their remoteness and their governments’ decisions to close their borders have kept their case numbers very low with some notable exceptions including French Polynesia, which restarted international travel early and suffered a devastating outbreak in the second half of 2020 and Papua New Guinea, which is now facing a very serious flare-up. But, in these tourism-dependent economies, the closed borders that have kept them safe have also spelt financial disaster. Before the pandemic, tourism contributed nearly 40% to **FIJI** gross domestic product - about FJ\$2 billion (AU\$1.4bn) - and directly or indirectly employed over 150,000 people. But as visitor arrivals fell by 87%, the economy plummeted by 19% in 2020. **VANUATU** tax revenues tumbled by about 19% from 2019 to 2020, with huge personal cost for residents. The Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce recently rolled out a social media campaign highlighting the impact of the economic slump on Ni Vanuatu business owners, deploying the hashtags #WeAreNotAllFine and #LaefIHadNaioia – life is hard now. For the tiny country of the **COOK ISLANDS** in the eastern Pacific, which, pre-pandemic, saw up to 17,000 tourists a month, even the creation of a travel bubble with New Zealand has not helped, with visitor arrivals yet to crack 200 people monthly. **SAMOA**, with a more diversified economy, has fared better, but there’s little doubt the nation’s finances will be a hot topic in the coming general election. Many have returned to farming, turned to family overseas, diversified businesses and relied on survival skills more commonly needed in the aftermath of a cyclone. Here is how three Pacific island countries have survived a year after their borders closed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/03/covid-coronavirus-deserted-islands-pacific-resorts-struggle-to-survive-a-year-without-tourists>

769) *April 2.* The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of healthy coastal fisheries for the cultural, social, and economic wellbeing of **PACIFIC** islanders. Protecting coastal fisheries is critical for the security of people's food, sources of income and livelihoods, and sustaining the natural environment of Pacific SIDS. Following through on this responsibility depends on political commitment, human capability, and data. Our oceans face a number of challenges. Climate change is affecting the interactions between the ocean, land, and atmosphere, whilst also influencing the health and productivity of the biosphere, society, and the economy. Increasing ocean acidity and rising sea levels are damaging marine ecosystems that sustain healthy marine environments and coastal fisheries. Ocean health is tied to food security in the region. Increasing populations, increase demands on oceans, strained ecosystems and the rising need for income to purchase food, especially in urban areas, are all adding to ocean health pressures. Fresh fish is consumed on average three times a week in the Pacific, and 95 per cent of fisherwomen's households consume fresh fish daily. But Pacific Islanders today sell their best food products for cash and are taking up paid employment in urban areas. These workers struggle to afford healthy and nutritious food, which they previously sourced from their gardens and the sea. In addition, fisheries development initiatives are heightening the demand for reef fish, leading to overfishing that accelerates reef erosion and reduces biodiversity. With the increased demands of commercialisation, there is concern that fishers may be harvesting under-sized and juvenile fish and compromising the sustainability of some of the common fisheries. Larger populations, modernisation, and global trade have amplified pressures on coastal fisheries, and increased the demand for food. Moreover, the increased and unregulated use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers, coupled with changes in land use and infrastructure development, is leading to greater sediment and nutrient runoff into coastal waters. This has degraded coral reefs and the fisheries in the region, including in Pohnpei (Federated States of Micronesia), Fanga'uta Lagoon (Tonga), and the Coral Coast and Suva Lagoon (Fiji), where sewage contamination has been reported. Collapsed fisheries across the Pacific highlight the need to align fisheries development to the capacities of the fish stocks. Unfortunately, fisheries with multiple species make management complicated as fishers have the luxury to move to a new commodity after the depletion in preferred stocks.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=2019673860666096890827a336ec32>

770) *April 3.* **EUROPE** battles a third wave of the pandemic and delays in its vaccine rollout. France has entered its third national lockdown with a surge in cases of Covid-19 that threatens to overwhelm the country's hospitals. All schools and non-essential shops will shut for four weeks, and a curfew will be in place from 19:00 to 06:00. Eastern Europe largely escaped the worst of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, but the picture has changed dramatically with several countries experiencing record infections and deaths.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56622471>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-56526265>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56588509>

771) *April 3.* Like many of the vast majority of people unlucky enough to receive a positive Covid test result, the precise moment of infection remains a mystery. **NEW ZEALAND** is one of the few places in the world where that's not the case. The country eliminated Covid 19 in the community by shutting its border in mid-March 2020, introducing compulsory quarantine for all returnees, and instituting a series of lockdowns to stamp out existing clusters. Every so often, a case slips through the border, causing a small outbreak. But without community transmission in the background, New Zealand can drill down into individual cases with forensic detail. Using a mixture of genomic sequencing and epidemiology, the country works to identify precisely who gave the virus to whom and - often enough - the environment in which it happened. That knowledge has proven critical for New Zealand's pandemic response, allowing it to avoid longer lockdowns by more precisely mapping the spread. But it's also yielded scientific insights to the rest of the world into exactly how and where Covid spreads. With conditions controlled to a degree that's simply not possible elsewhere, the country behaves like a laboratory for the world.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global/2021/apr/04/how-new-zealands-covid-success-made-it-a-laboratory-for-the-world>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-56645990>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/06/new-zealand-coronavirus-breaches-jailed-convictions>

772) *April 5.* **HAITI** does not have a single vaccine to offer its more than 11 million people over a year after the pandemic began, raising concerns among health experts that the wellbeing of Haitians is being pushed aside as violence and political instability across the country deepen. So far, Haiti is slated to receive only 756,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine through a United Nations program aimed at ensuring the neediest countries get Covid-19 shots. The free doses were scheduled to arrive in May at the latest, but delays are expected because Haiti missed a deadline and the key Indian manufacturer is now prioritizing an increase in domestic demand.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/05/haiti-no-covid-vaccine-doses>

773) *April 5.* In Thailand, it's the all-important tourism sector that has jumped to the head of the COVID-19 vaccination line, with the country's most popular resort island embarking on a mass inoculation programme two months ahead of the rest of the country. The island of **PHUKET** aims to deliver shots to at least 460,000 people - most of its population - as it gears up for July 1, when vaccinated overseas visitors will no longer be required to quarantine. Phuket also has its own international airport and tourists would be able to roam the island freely without posing any coronavirus risk to the rest of Thailand's population.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-thailand-tourism-idUSKBN2BS02F>

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/phuket-thailand-reopening-vaccines-cmd/index.html>

774) *April 5.* A group of bar, karaoke and mahjong parlour owners have gone on a symbolic hunger strike in **HONG KONG** over anti-coronavirus measures that have kept them shuttered for most of the last year. Hong Kong's bars - a major early source of infections - have been hit particularly hard by social distancing measures that have been tightened and relaxed depending on infection rates. Over the last year, they have been fully closed for 230 days, opened with restrictions for 101 days, and allowed to run normally for only 24 days. The latest closures have been in place since November, meaning bar owners missed out on the usually peak Christmas, New Year and Easter holiday seasons. Densely populated Hong Kong was one of the first places to be hit by the coronavirus, but strict social distancing and universal mask wearing has helped keep infections to just over 11,000 with 205 deaths. Those measures have caused economic devastation, however, and prompted accusations that authorities are more willing to relax curbs for politically connected industries. Restaurants have remained open in recent weeks - with a cap on four people per table - while Hong Kong's malls and theme parks have been packed. Gyms have also been allowed to reopen despite being at the centre of a major recent cluster. The protesting owners said their industries were willing to adopt stringent measures including capacity restrictions and even requiring customers to drink with a straw. But so far they have not won any government approval to reopen.

[https://www.terradaily.com/reports/Hong\\_Kong\\_bar\\_owners\\_in\\_hunger\\_strike\\_over\\_virus\\_closures\\_999.html](https://www.terradaily.com/reports/Hong_Kong_bar_owners_in_hunger_strike_over_virus_closures_999.html)

775) *April 6.* A 28-year-old **PHILIPPINES** man has died after allegedly being forced by village guards to perform an exercise 300 times as a punishment for violating coronavirus quarantine, his family has said. Darren Manaog Peñaredondo was caught buying drinking water after 6pm, allegedly in violation of the Covid curfew in the city of General Trias, in Cavite province.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/06/philippines-man-dies-after-doing-300-squats-for-breaching-covid-curfew>

776) *April 6.* The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take an unprecedented human and economic toll, wiping away years of modest and uneven progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Developing countries now need much more support as progress towards the SDGs was not on track even before the pandemic. By end-2022, average incomes are expected to be 18% below pre-crisis levels in low-income countries (LICs) and 22% less in emerging and developing countries excluding China - compared to 13% lower for developed economies. These lower incomes will push hundreds of millions into extreme poverty and hunger, surviving on incomes under US\$1.90/day. The World Bank estimates the poor increased by 119–124 million in 2020 and by 143–163 million more this year. As the UN Secretary-General has noted, “richer countries have benefited from an unprecedented \$16 trillion of emergency support measures... the least developed countries have spent 580 times less in per capita terms on their COVID-19 response”! Last year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and UNCTAD estimated that developing countries need about US\$2.5 trillion for relief to affected families and businesses, and

to expedite economic recovery. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva later acknowledged that developing countries need much more. The IMF now estimates that only achieving access to basic services by 2030 in 121 developing countries would require US\$3tn, up to half in LICs.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/04/imf-world-bank-must-support-developing-countries-recovery/>

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/04/covid-19-teaches-us-better-manage-global-systemic-risks/>

777) *April 6.* Isles scattered across the **AEGEAN ARCHIPELAGO** are to become the first “Covid-free” areas of Greece as vaccination efforts intensify in tourist destinations hoping for an influx of summer visitors. In one of the biggest operational challenges of modern times, authorities have vowed at least 69 islands will be fully vaccinated by the end of April. “We have so many smaller isles,” said Marios Themistocleous, the health ministry official overseeing the programme. “Precisely because they’re so difficult to get supplies to, we decided to vaccinate entire populations in one go with the aim that when they begin receiving tourists, permanent residents are fully vaccinated and protected.” Under the scheme, conceived with the help of the armed forces, delivery of thousands of vaccines to far-flung isles will be stepped up in the coming weeks. Themistocleous described the operation as complex and logistically fraught. Planes, helicopters and coastguard boats had been seconded with soldiers, civil protection officials and the police all involved at different stages. As urban centres across Greece struggle to suppress the third wave of coronavirus infections now spreading across Europe, the country’s vast array of islands has remained remarkably untouched by the crisis. On Lipsi, part of the southern Aegean’s Dodecanese chain, Fotis Mangos, the island’s mayor, proudly proclaims there has been “only one case” since the outbreak of the pandemic. “And that was of a soldier who returning from leave was found to be positive,” he said. “We look at Athens, and other cities, and realise how lightly it’s touched us. We’ve been in lockdown, our shops and schools are shut, but I put our success to throwing all our weight at people coming in. They’re tested twice and we’re very strict about it.” With the island, like the Greek economy at large hugely dependent on tourism, Mangos said the vaccination programme – codenamed Freedom – had elicited overwhelming support. Almost the entire adult population of the 800 people permanently living on Lipsi had been vaccinated. “Forty-five percent are under the age of 18 but nearly everyone who is eligible has had both shots and 86 people are getting their second jab this weekend. I hear tourist bookings are up. We’re very, very satisfied.” On the adjacent island of Patmos, popular with celebrities, religious pilgrims and the well-heeled cosmopolitan elite, the prospect of being “Covid-free” within weeks has been met with elation. “In the winter we have around 3,100 people living here and most over the age of 60 have been vaccinated,” said Eleftherios Pentas, its mayor. “The list closes this Friday and almost everyone between the ages of 18 and 59 is signing up for the shot. Last November we had 25 Covid cases here and I think it was a lesson for all of us.” The scheme, which is echoed on the other side of the world as Thailand puts the island resort of **PHUKET** to the front of its vaccine queue, is not without critics. This week the Greek tourism minister, Haris Theoharis, insisted that with the nation setting a target date of 14 May to reopen to tourists, the focus was not only on islands but “all of Greece” being a safe destination. On outposts that can often feel cut off from the

rest of the world out of season, the vaccination drive has also boosted morale. For those working in the tourist sector it had been very positively welcomed after last year's terrible showings, said Dimitris Grillis, who runs a small hotel on Patmos. "Just the idea that we are going to be Covid-free removes a whole layer of uncertainty," he enthused. "You have to be happy to work and practically and psychologically this will help motivate staff. Last year we had the sort of losses you see in war."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/06/aegean-islands-to-become-first-covid-free-areas-of-greece>

778) *April 7.* **TAIWAN** has accused Beijing of 'vaccine diplomacy' by offering Chinese-made Covid vaccines to pressure Paraguay to sever ties with the island. Foreign Minister Joseph Wu claimed China had promised millions of doses for Paraguay which has been hit hard by the pandemic. Paraguay is only one of a handful of countries that recognise the self-governing territory of Taiwan as a sovereign nation.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-56661303>

779) *April 7.* Indians are jetting off to the **MALDIVES** in ever greater numbers to escape the coronavirus pandemic. Visitors from the South Asian nation to the sandy paradise known for its clear water and white beaches jumped 50% to just over 44,000 in the first two months of the year versus 2020, figures from the island nation's ministry of tourism show. Arrivals from China, Japan and South Korea were down around 98%. Tourists from India also made up 23.3% of the total in the two months, the most from any single country. India reached a grim milestone on April 5 when the government reported over 100,000 new cases on a single day for the first time. The second wave has shuttered businesses once again and sent some cities back into lockdown, triggering a desire to holiday in far-flung destinations. Local airlines are sensing opportunity, too. Vistara, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines Ltd., started non-stop Mumbai to Male flights under a travel bubble agreement between India and Maldives last month, becoming the only airline to offer premium economy class on the route. The ease of entry is also a big sell. The Maldives has exempted all tourists from mandatory quarantine if passengers test negative for Covid 96 hours before their departure. That's in contrast to other countries such as the U.K. where overseas trips are effectively banned and any incoming travelers must take multiple Covid tests and undergo quarantine.

<https://theprint.in/india/maldives-is-the-new-go-a-as-indians-flock-islands-to-holiday-escape-pandemic/635469/>

780) *April 7.* The beaches on **HAWAII** are back to being shared between locals and tourists but, steering the tourism comeback while balancing the needs of the community is a challenge. "The tourists are back and in greater numbers than we've seen in a very long time," said State Sen. Chris Lee of Windward Oahu. Lee says he was sent an image, a week ago, of a tour van dropping off visitors in an undesignated drop-off area in a Kailua neighborhood. He hopes his bill to increase penalties from \$1,000 to \$5,000 dollars for tour companies that repeatedly violate the law will continue to move forward in legislature. "We want to make sure that those fines are meaningful. That those companies do right by the community," Lee said. Hawaii's

tourism levels are nowhere near pre-pandemic levels, but the amount of visitors arriving to the state is rising. Hawaii Tourism Authority says the average daily census showed that there were 90,776 in February compared to 250,052 in February 2020. Only 513 travelers flew into Hawaii at the beginning of the pandemic exactly one year ago. On Wednesday, the Hawaii Tourism Authority reports nearly 20,000 travelers. The group, Aloha Aina Economic Futures, is advocating for an economic reboot that cares for the community and the environment. The group is not saying no outright to tourism but calling for regenerative pono tourism and tourism that's going to benefit local people.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2021/04/08/state-community-leaders-hope-pono-tourism/>

<https://www.ponopledge.com/>

<https://www.sustainabletourismhawaii.org/ponotraveler/>

781) *April 8*. Some tourism businesses on **SCOTTISH ISLANDS** have said continuing restrictions on travel from the mainland would be hugely damaging. Scotland could see a significant easing of Covid-19 rules on 26 April, including an end to limits on non-essential travel within the mainland. But travel from the mainland to the islands could remain off limits to prevent the virus being brought in.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-56661833>

782) *April 8*. There are less than two weeks to go until the Atlantic Bubble is expected to be back and residents can again travel between provincial borders without needing to self-isolate. A request to join the Atlantic bubble has come from the president of **ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON** - islands just off of the coast of Newfoundland that still belong to France. But, it's a decision, Newfoundland says, that comes down to the federal government. The Atlantic Bubble is a special travel-restricted area created on July 3, 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. The area was suspended on November 26, 2020 due to a second wave of COVID-19 cases across Canada. The Council of Atlantic Premiers confirmed the bubble will resume April 19, 2021. The area is an agreement between four Atlantic Canadian provinces including New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland & Labrador which allows unrestricted travel among provincial residents and restricts travel from Canadians who are residents of outside provinces. Residents wishing to travel to the Atlantic Bubble are subjected to screening and are required to quarantine for 14 days before moving freely amongst the bubble. Individual provinces have specific rules toward travellers from outside of Atlantic Canada. The provinces in the bubble have seen the lowest numbers of COVID-19 compared to others throughout the pandemic. In late November, three of the member-provinces temporarily suspended their involvement due to increasing COVID-19 cases numbers and PEI joined them on 17 March 2021.

<https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/french-islands-off-coast-of-newfoundland-ask-to-join-atlantic-bubble-1.5380505>

783) *April 9.* Ocean scientists around the world are studying the "unique moment" of quiet created by the pandemic. "Lockdown slowed global shipping on a scale that would otherwise be impossible," explained Prof Peter Tyack from the University of St Andrews. The scientists plan to listen to the ocean soundscape before, during and after lockdown. They have identified 200 ocean hydrophones - underwater microphones that are already in place around the global ocean. "So the idea is to use those to measure the changes in noise and how they affect marine life - like calling whales or fish choruses," Prof Tyack said. "Just like people and cities may have noticed that, with much less traffic noise and human activity, you hear more birdsong or maybe see more wildlife in your own environment, we need ways to monitor that in the ocean." The aim is not only to measure how the pandemic briefly changed the ocean soundscape, but to take the opportunity to find out how decades of increasing ocean noise has affected marine life. Combined with other methods such as animal tagging, researchers hope this will reveal the extent to which noise in "the Anthropocene seas" affects life in the deep.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-56676820>

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/04/studying-marine-lifes-brief-break-human-noise/>

784) *April 9.* The small islands of **ITALY** are emerging as a safe destination for this summer as they emulate Greece's example of vaccinating entire populations. Islands such as Ischia, Procida and Capri are pushing to have all their inhabitants vaccinated so they can welcome foreign visitors. The Aeolian archipelago, north of Sicily and Elba off the coast of Tuscany are also hoping to sign up to the campaign. Sardinia and Sicily are trying to get in on the act, although their much larger populations - Sardinia has around 1.6 million inhabitants while Sicily has five million - make mass vaccination a far greater challenge. There is no national plan to vaccinate Italy's islands - for now, the initiative is being taken by regions such as Campania, which counts Capri, Procida and Ischia among its island gems. Campania has set aside 20,000 vaccines for the islands, with the push due to start next week.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/04/09/italys-islands-hope-vaccinate-entire-populations-make-tourism/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/irenedominioni/2021/04/10/italy-on-the-lookout-to-save-summer-tourism-by-launching-covid-free-islands/>

785) *April 10.* Already facing the threat of a new coronavirus outbreak, the tiny nation of **TIMOR-LESTE** has been hit by devastating flooding and landslides. Timor-Leste, formerly East Timor, is a Southeast Asian nation with a population of 1.3 million people. The capital, Dili, with a population of 220,000 was ordered into lockdown along with Baucau and Viqueque cities last month following an increase in community transmission of the coronavirus. Timor-Leste now has 765 Covid cases with 472 active cases isolated in hospitals. On Wednesday, the country launched its vaccination program following the arrival of 24,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine through the COVAX initiative.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/440182/timor-leste-faces-new-challenge-amid-covid-19-pandemic>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/14/xanana-gusmao-slaps-mourners-and-sleeps-in-street-outside-timor-leste-hospital-in-covid-19-protest>

786) *April 11*. Three countries stand out for the effectiveness of their COVID-19 vaccination programmes: Israel, Chile, and the UK. All have managed to inoculate an impressively high percentage of their people but each has fared very differently in controlling the disease. Israel has done so well it is resuming university lectures, concerts and other mass gatherings and has opened up its restaurants and bars. By contrast, Chile is experiencing soaring levels of Covid cases and faces new lockdown restrictions. In Britain, deaths and hospital admissions have plummeted but it remains to be seen what will happen when lockdown restrictions are eased in England from Monday. (Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland each have their own timetables for easing.) Will the UK follow the grim example of Chile or the happier precedent of Israel? It is Chile that supplies the sharpest warning for the UK. Its health workers have delivered first jabs to 37% of the population but daily cases are still rising sharply. Several reasons have been put forward for this unexpected jump: the spread of more virulent coronavirus strains from Brazil; increased numbers of Chileans travelling around the country; and reduced adherence to social distancing after the vaccination programme gave people a false sense of security.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/11/is-vaccinating-against-covid-enough-what-we-can-learn-from-other-countries>

787) *April 11*. Imagine if China had refused to share COVID-19's genetic sequences with other countries. Vaccine development would have been delayed indefinitely. Monitoring the virus would have been next to impossible. Thankfully, that didn't happen. Chinese scientists shared the full SARS-CoV-2 sequence on Jan. 10, 2020, thus kickstarting the development of multiple vaccines created in record time. But such a nightmarish alternative scenario is not farfetched. China could have referred to an international agreement known as the Nagoya Protocol to indefinitely withhold this vital data, even as the death toll soared around the globe. Preventing nations from abusing the Nagoya Protocol will require another binding international agreement - one that specifically obliges countries to share pathogens in a timely manner, which would undoubtedly benefit society as a whole. Any commonsense approach to the Nagoya Protocol would exempt pathogens like SARS-CoV-2. Thankfully, the member states of the World Health Organization have a chance to enact such reforms through the International Health Regulations, a legally binding international instrument currently under revision, or through the recently proposed international treaty on pandemics.

<https://www.ibtimes.com/international-agreement-could-lead-pandemics-worse-covid-19-3178648>

788) *April 11*. Geopolitics meets pandemic in the **PACIFIC**. As Pacific island nations reel from Cyclone Harold and the coronavirus, US-China tensions are complicating the path to recovery.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=158813556560738645dd26db2b4b20>

789) *April 12.* The **SOLOMON ISLANDS** has received a batch of Chinese-made Covid-19 vaccines developed by Sinopharm, the first among Pacific island countries. On the other hand, the **NIUE** government has announced the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine will be used to inoculate their population against Covid-19 as it is the only vaccine currently approved by Medsafe in New Zealand. Niue has so far remained covid free. Pacific island countries using the AstraZeneca vaccine should continue with their rollouts, the World Health Organisation says. That is despite several European countries and Australia limiting its use because of safety concerns.

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-04/12/c\\_139874701.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-04/12/c_139874701.htm)

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/440539/pfizer-biontech-vaccine-to-be-used-in-niue>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/440497/pacific-countries-press-ahead-with-astrazeneca-rollout>

790) *April 14.* It may be one of the UK's most remote communities but tiny **FAIR ISLE** - with a population of just 48 people - can now claim to be one of the safest. The Scottish island - located between Orkney and Shetland - is famed for its knitwear and migratory birds. This week, vials of AstraZeneca vaccine were flown in on a small plane, meaning every adult on the island was able to have their second dose.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-56691073>

791) *April 14.* In April last year, 17-year-old Rani Khatun, a resident of **SAGAR ISLAND** in the Sundarbans, would spend most of her day in school, preparing for the upcoming board exams. She wanted to be a teacher one day. Less than a year later, Khatun is a school dropout and a victim of domestic violence after a forced underage marriage. Sundarbans, the world's biggest delta, is a 10,000 sq km (6,213 sq miles) dense forest of tidal mangroves, straddling India's eastern coastline and western Bangladesh, opening into the Bay of Bengal. Crisscrossed by rivers, it is home to nearly 4.5 million people on the Indian side, with a large part of its population being subsistence farmers, dependent on fishing, paddy and betel leaf cultivation, and honey collection. Sagar Island, spread over 282 sq km (175 sq miles), is home to more than 200,000 people. The deltaic region saw large-scale migration of people to cities for work in 2009 after Cyclone Aila devastated the region, killing more than 300 people. But many had to return after they lost their jobs due to the coronavirus lockdown imposed in March last year. As they returned, another super cyclone, Amphan, ravaged Sundarbans in May 2020, killing more than 100 people. Khatun's father, Sheikh Mustafa, who ran a tailoring shop, saw his income dip to near zero after the lockdown was imposed last year. Even as COVID-19 restrictions were eased in June, the 46-year-old could not re-establish his tailoring business due to rampant poverty in the region, pushing the family into acute financial distress. Then came a marriage proposal for Khatun, with the groom's family demanding little dowry. Though outlawed, the practice of dowry continues in the Indian subcontinent, in which money and expensive gifts are given to the groom's family for marriage. Though Khatun was a minor who could not be married according to Indian laws, her family married her off. However, Khatun was allegedly assaulted by her husband and in-laws and she

came back within a month to her parents, who have ended up with a bigger liability – a debt of 80,000 Indian rupees (\$1,104), which they had taken for their daughter’s marriage. Like Khatun, other young girls in the Sundarbans are also being forced into marriage due to poverty, worsened by climate change as recurrent storms and rising sea level lead to land loss and fall in farm productivity due to saline water intrusion. The COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in job losses and more poverty, has only aggravated the crisis.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/14/india-covid-climate-change-pushing-sundarbans-women-to-distress>

792) *April 14.* Antique province in the central **PHILIPPINES** is looking to boost local revenues through ecotourism, after the COVID-19 pandemic put the brakes on a thriving tourism industry. The province is home to a rich biodiversity, including the critically endangered writhed-billed hornbill, giant rafflesia “corpse flower,” and rare bowl corals. Taking a leaf from the experience of nearby Boracay, the resort island where a tourism boom led to severe environmental damage, local officials face the challenge of balancing tourism-driven development and environmental protection. A prominent lawmaker is pushing for seascapes and coastal zones in the province to be given national protection.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/philippine-province-builds-on-lessons-learned-to-grow-ecotourism-industry/>

793) *April 14.* Throughout the pandemic, destinations have been getting creative with ways to lure travelers – from **SICILY**, which announced plans to subsidize trips with discounted travel, to **CYPRUS** which was offering a free vacation if you got diagnosed with Covid-19 while you were there. Now the latest place to start enticing travelers with cash is **MALTA**, which will pay you to visit this summer - if you can get there, that is. Here’s how it works: The Malta Tourism Authority will pay money to each traveler for booking a three-night stay at select hotels. And the plan is tiered: You’ll get €100 (about \$119) per person for booking a five-star hotel, €75 (about \$89) for a four-star property and €50 (about \$60) for a three-star. That’s not all – the payments will be matched by the hotels, meaning the amounts will actually be double. So you could earn up to €200 (about \$238) for a three-night stay at a five-star hotel. And it keeps getting better: Travelers who go to Malta’s smaller island of Gozo will get an additional 10% on top of the payout.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurabegleybloom/2021/04/14/this-european-island-wants-to-pay-you-to-visit/>

794) *April 14.* On April 13, the prime minister of **JAMAICA**, Andrew Holness, was pleased to announce in parliament that the shipment of 75,000 shots of the AstraZeneca vaccine received a few days earlier had been swiftly delivered into citizens’ arms. This island-wide vaccination effort, referred to as a blitz, was done in an effort “to use as many of the doses as possible.” The vaccines, a gift from the government of South Africa that was supplied through the Africa Medical Supplies Platform, arrived on April 8, just two days before the blitz began, but with an expiry date of April 13, they had to be used up quickly. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie insisted that despite the expiry date, the vaccines were safe.

Despite the concerns raised by the opposition, the planned rollout went ahead. The shipment from South Africa is the third batch of vaccines that Jamaica has received thus far. Take-up appeared slow at first, especially among the priority senior age group, prompting the health ministry to expand the categories of eligible citizens the day after the vaccines arrived. For the first time, younger age groups, those with co-morbidities, and certain categories of workers - including 30,000 of the estimated 170,000 in the tourism sector - could now get inoculated. Teachers were also included, since - with Jamaica's schools still closed for face-to-face classes - students have been suffering. It is hoped that schools may be reopened more quickly once teachers are vaccinated. Although the journey towards herd immunity in Jamaica has only just begun, the vaccination blitz has injected a sense of buoyancy that the government will seek to capitalise on. Meanwhile, after three consecutive weekends of lockdowns, including on the Easter holiday weekend, new curfew hours and COVID-related restrictions were announced on April 13. These come in the context of Jamaica's persistently high numbers of new COVID-19 cases and high positivity rates, although there may be signs that these are easing. It remains to be seen whether blitzes and lockdowns will have a long-term impact on Jamaica's still concerning infection rates, but at least Jamaicans now have a good reason to cheer up a little.

<https://globalvoices.org/2021/04/14/jamaicas-covid-19-vaccination-blitz-administers-75000-doses-just-before-expiry-date/>

795) *April 15*. It launched with a presidential escort and the promise of rare international travel to a postcard-perfect tropical island, but the **TAIWAN-PALAU** travel bubble has deflated after just a couple weeks, with Taiwanese bookings dwindling to single figures. Travel agents, consumers and health authorities have blamed the high cost of the tours and the Taiwanese government's strict rules for returning travellers. The "sterile corridor" of bilateral tourism guaranteed travel between the two archipelagos, which are both otherwise closed to all tourists, on strictly managed, twice-weekly package tours. The inaugural flight, packed with nearly 100 passengers including Palauan president Surangel Whipps Jr, boded well, but this week China Airlines announced it had cancelled an upcoming flight from Taipei after just two people booked tickets.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/15/palau-taiwan-travel-bubble-high-prices-strict-rules>

796) *April 16*. **TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS** are paying the price for Australia's poor Covid-19 vaccination planning, experts say, and now faces significant risk from the outbreak in nearby Papua New Guinea. The rollout of the AstraZeneca vaccine to vulnerable populations in the Torres Strait was complicated significantly when the federal government on 8 April shifted its advice to warn against the shot for people who are under 50. More than 80% of the Torres Strait population is under the age of 50, according to the 2016 census, and the local health service says the AstraZeneca rollout is now paused. About 800 locals are thought to have been vaccinated prior to the pause, according to the Torres shire council. The risk from PNG, meanwhile, is ever-present. The Torres Strait island of Saibai, which has received some vaccinations, is only a short dinghy ride from PNG. On Friday, the Queensland government announced five new cases in the state. All involved returned travellers from PNG. There were 12 active cases in Queensland hospitals involving those from

PNG. The total number of cases in Queensland that can be traced back to PNG was 97.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/17/torres-strait-faces-significant-covid-risk-from-nearby-png-as-astrazeneca-vaccine-rollout-paused>

797) *April 17*. The global coronavirus death toll has topped 3 million as the race for immunisation continues and countries such as India grapple with rising infections and new lockdowns. The figures come as a new wave of the pandemic in India pushed the number of cases in the country to almost 14.5m, second only to the United States which has reported more than 32m.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/17/new-delhi-placed-under-weekend-lockdown-as-covid-wave-worsens>

798) *April 21*. The prime minister of **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**, James Marape, has adjourned parliament for four months, avoiding a vote of no confidence that would have likely removed him from office. The adjournment was announced late on Wednesday, with the government citing the Covid-19 outbreak in the country as the reason. On Tuesday, the government announced that 36 parliamentary staffers and one MP had tested positive for Covid-19 in the last week. The political crisis comes as Papua New Guinea is in the grip of a health crisis, with the South Pacific nation passing the milestone of 10,000 Covid-19 cases yesterday, with 91 known deaths. The true number of cases is suspected to be far higher. PNG is also grappling with terrible tribal violence in Eastern Highlands Province that has claimed 38 lives and left 5,000 people homeless.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/22/chaos-in-png-politics-as-prime-minister-adjourns-parliament-avoiding-no-confidence-vote>

799) *April 23*. Leaders in **MARTHA'S VINEYARD** and **NANTUCKET** are worried the islands don't have enough vaccine for residents, especially with the population expected to swell this summer. Cape Cod officials are encouraged by the region's progress toward vaccinating its most vulnerable populations, but with eligibility now open to all adults, they worry that the islands will fall behind. Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are more reliant on the stream of doses the Baker administration allocates with neither island home to a retail pharmacy in the federal vaccination program and every mass vaccination site a ferry ride and a drive away.

<https://www.wbur.org/commonhealth/2021/04/23/nantucket-marthas-vineyard-covid-vaccine-supply>

800) *April 23*. After an international mission to China turned up more questions than answers about the pandemic origins, the WHO is evaluating how to move forward through a diplomatic quagmire to solve the mystery. Determining how the virus that causes Covid-19 first began spreading among humans is seen as vital to preventing future outbreaks. But a long-delayed report, drafted by the team of international experts sent to Wuhan at the start of the year and their Chinese counterparts, drew no firm conclusions and called for more investigation. The World Health Organization's emergency committee this week urged the "rapid implementation" of the report

recommendations for phase two probes. But while the WHO and countries worldwide agree further investigation is needed, a fight is brewing over what the next phase of inquiry should entail and where it should take place. It took more than a year after Covid-19 first surfaced in Wuhan in December 2019 to get the international expert team to China, and Beijing appears intent on seeing the next phase focus elsewhere. "We hope that other relevant countries will cooperate closely with WHO experts in a scientific, open, transparent and responsible manner, as China has done," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters on March 31. But critics question the transparency around the first mission, called for in a resolution passed last May by WHO member countries, and insist far more investigation in China is needed. "At a very basic level, there is unanimity in terms of that the phase two should take place in China," a senior Western diplomat in Geneva said, requesting anonymity. Beijing was the only party voicing "the view that somehow the next phase should be in any other region," the diplomat added. "The idea that the next phase should not focus primarily on China is absurd," US geopolitical expert Jamie Metzl said. Metzl, one of 24 scientists from the US, Europe, Australia and Japan who published an open letter earlier this month demanding a more comprehensive investigation, described the first mission and resulting report as "deeply flawed". Critics charge the mission was heavily orchestrated by Beijing and that the report focused disproportionately on theories favoured by China. While the international and Chinese experts provided no clear answers on the origins of the pandemic, they ranked a number of hypotheses according to how likely they believed they were. The report said the virus jumping from bats to humans via an intermediate animal was the most probable scenario, while it dismissed a theory involving the virus leaking from a laboratory as "extremely unlikely". For basically every area investigated it said more study was needed except one: the lab-leak theory - a US favourite under former president Donald Trump that has always been flatly rejected by China. After the report was released, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus however insisted all theories remained on the table. In particular, he said the probe into Wuhan's virology labs was not "extensive enough" and that he was prepared to launch a fresh investigation. The scientists behind the open letter also called for proper investigation of the lab-leak theory, emphasising that just 440 words of the report were dedicated to discussing and dismissing it. They highlighted that the very terms of reference for the mission, negotiated with Beijing, stated the task was to "identify the zoonotic source of the virus". "The Chinese did a fantastic job of making clear very subtly that this study mission was about looking at the zoonotic origins," Metzl said. While this was "one very credible hypothesis, what we should have been looking at is the origins of the pandemic," he said. "When you start with the frame of the zoonotic origins of the virus, you start with a conclusion." Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian slammed Metzl and the other letter signatories, saying their aim was "obviously to mount pressure on the WHO and the joint mission". He maintained it was the US and other countries, not Beijing, that had politicised the mission to "discredit China". "By blatantly questioning the independence and research conclusions of real scientists, they will not only cripple international cooperation on origin tracing, but also undercut global anti-epidemic efforts," he warned. Even as all sides stress the urgency of solving the origins mystery, there seems to be little progress towards the next steps. A WHO team is currently reviewing the report recommendations and "will prepare a proposal for the next studies that will need to be carried out," a spokesman said. But he did not say when the proposal would be presented to Tedros or a new mission could be expected. In their letter, the scientists urged countries to pass a fresh

resolution during next month's World Health Assembly demanding a truly "unrestricted" and full international investigation. "Any process that doesn't fully examine the possibility of a lab incident is not credible," Metzl said.

[https://www.terraily.com/reports/WHO\\_seeks\\_next\\_steps\\_in\\_Covid\\_origins\\_probe\\_999.html](https://www.terraily.com/reports/WHO_seeks_next_steps_in_Covid_origins_probe_999.html)

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