

# Singapore opens gyms, dining out as China outbreak steadies

June 19 2020, by Royston Chan and Elaine Kurtenbach

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A man lifts weights at a fitness center Friday, June 19, 2020, in Singapore. Singaporeans can now wine and dine at restaurants, work out at the gym and get together with up to five people after most lockdown restrictions were lifted Friday. (AP Photo/YK Chan)

Singaporeans can wine and dine at restaurants, work out at the gym and

socialize with no more than five people at a time as of Friday, when the city-state removed most of its pandemic lockdown restrictions.

The latest relaxation comes as reopenings in many places around the world are touching off fresh spikes in infections, raising questions about how to live with the coronavirus without causing unnecessary deaths or economic catastrophe.

Getting back to business in Singapore came as China declared a fresh outbreak in Beijing under control after confirming 25 new cases among some 360,000 people tested. That was up by just four from a day earlier.

A Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention official said the number of cases was expected to fall soon in outbreak centered on Beijing's main wholesale market. So far Beijing has confirmed 183 new cases over the past week.

Singapore's malls, gyms, massage parlors, parks and other public facilities reopened their doors with strict social distancing and other precautions.

"It was a long awaited experience, I would say. It's been quite a few months long," said Thomas Tan, a 34-year old customer service officer eating in an outdoor market. "It's good to be able to eat outside with friends but there still must be social distancing."



Passengers wait for a bullet train at Tokyo station Friday, June 19, 2020. All domestic restrictions were removed Friday and people can now start travel anywhere in Japan. (Kyodo News via AP)

After at first appearing to have been a model for containing the virus, the country of only 5.8 million has one of the highest infection rates in Asia with 41,473 cases, mostly linked to foreign workers' dorms. Authorities say such cases have declined, with no new large clusters and a stable number of other cases despite a partial economic reopening two weeks ago.

Wee Cheng Yan, a gym trainer, said it felt good to return to work after two months at home.

"Definitely, interaction has been lacking the past few months," he said. "Watching a lot of TV. Doing a bit of resistance band training, which is not as effective as working out in the gym."

Members of the gym still must make appointments and are limited to only two hours a day. The steam rooms remained shut and clients must wear masks at most times.



People have lunch together at the Newton Food Center Friday, June 19, 2020, in Singapore. Singaporeans can wine and dine at restaurants, work out at the gym and get together but no more than five people after most lockdown restrictions were lifted Friday. (AP Photo/YK Chan)

Contact sports, concerts, [trade fairs](#), singing lessons and mass religious meetings are still banned and entertainment venues such as cinemas, karaokes and bars remain shut.

The 25 new cases reported Friday in Beijing were among 32 nationwide in China, four of them in Chinese who had returned from overseas.

Such outbreaks are inevitable, Wu Zunyou of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention told a news conference. But he stressed that prevention measures should not slacken.

Beijing suspended classes and put opening-up plans for everything from sports events to art exhibitions on hold. Bus travel to other regions was suspended to prevent the spread of the outbreak.

The outbreak started in the seafood section of the city's Xinfadi market, raising worries infections might have come from imported fish or sea products. But a customs administration notice said nationwide testing for the coronavirus in food imports were all negative.



A group of five people have lunch together at the Newton Food Center Friday, June 19, 2020, in Singapore. Singaporeans can now wine and dine at restaurants, work out at gyms and get together with five people or less after most lockdown restrictions were lifted Friday. (AP Photo/YK Chan)

The pandemic is waxing and waning in many places, with numbers of cases soaring in Indonesia and India, Brazil and Mexico but appearing to be under control or contained in Thailand, Japan, Vietnam and New Zealand.

Japan's foreign minister, Toshimitsu Motegi, said Friday that Japan and Vietnam have agreed to partially lift travel bans and ease restrictions step by step under the understanding that both countries have their outbreaks largely under control.

Vietnam is among four countries that Japan is discussing resuming mutual visits in phases. It is seeking similar arrangements with Thailand, Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, India recorded 13,586 newly confirmed cases on Friday, raising its total to 380,532. Still, shops, malls, factories and places of worship have been allowed to reopen while schools and cinemas remain shuttered.



A boy wearing a face mask sells balloons on a street in Kolkata, India, Friday, June 19, 2020. India is the fourth hardest-hit country by the COVID-19 pandemic in the world after the U.S., Russia and Brazil. (AP Photo/Bikas Das)

Infections surged in rural areas after hundreds of thousands of migrant workers left cities after losing jobs in a lockdown announced in late March. Such precautions are now restricted to high-risk "containment" zones.

In South Korea, outbreaks have inspired second-guessing on whether officials were too quick to ease social distancing guidelines in April after a first wave of infections waned. Officials reported 49 cases of COVID-19 on Friday as the virus continues to spread in the densely populated capital area of Seoul, where half of its 51 million people live. About 30 to 50 new cases have been confirmed per day since late May.

The new coronavirus has infected more than 8.4 million people worldwide and killed more than 453,000, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The actual number is thought to be much higher because many cases are asymptomatic or go untested.





Orange jerseys are placed on empty seats during a practice session prior to an opening baseball game between the Yomiuri Giants and the Hanshin Tigers at Tokyo Dome in Tokyo Friday, June 19, 2020. Japan's professional baseball regular season will be kicked off in the day without fans in attendance because of the threat of the spreading coronavirus. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

In the U.S., which has the most cases at nearly 2.2 million, states have been pushing ahead with reopenings from full or partial pandemic shutdowns despite surges in cases in many places, including Texas, Oklahoma, Florida and California.

New cases skyrocketed Thursday in Oklahoma by 450, double the record-setting number reported two days earlier. Tulsa County, where President Donald Trump plans a rally on Saturday at an indoor arena, remained the

state's leading hot spot with 120 new cases for a total of 1,825.

The new wave comes amid demonstrations to protest police killings of black citizens and ahead of weekend Juneteenth celebrations marking the end of slavery in the U.S.

Scores of people in campers and tents were lining up early for Trump's first rally in months. Protesters were also gathering.



In this June 18, 2020, photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, workers spray disinfectant in the central hall of the Beijing Railway Station in Beijing. New confirmed cases of coronavirus remained stable in China's capital on Friday after a public health official declared Beijing's latest outbreak under control. (Chen Zhonghao/Xinhua via AP)



A woman wearing a mask to curb the spread of the new coronavirus rides an electric bike on the streets of Beijing on Friday, June 19, 2020. China declared a fresh outbreak in Beijing under control after numbers for new cases stabilized as hundreds of thousands are tested. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)



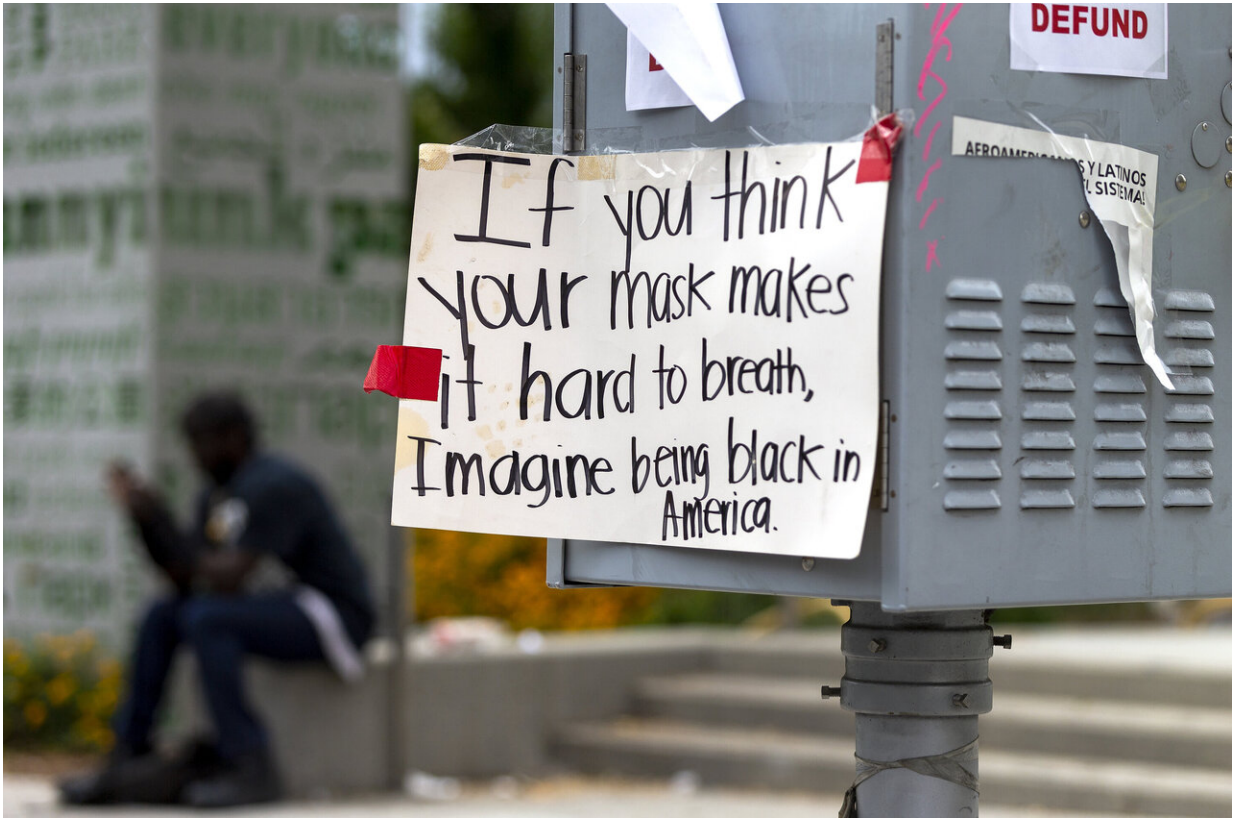
Children wearing masks to curb the spread of the new coronavirus chat outside a restaurant in Beijing on Friday, June 19, 2020. China declared a fresh outbreak in Beijing under control after numbers for new cases stabilized as hundreds of thousands are tested. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)



Kayakers race in front of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, off the coast of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, June 19, 2020. Dubai has begun allowing organized sports competitions to take place after locking down over the coronavirus pandemic and the COVID-19 illness it causes. Competitions held Friday at the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club were among the first events to be held. (AP Photo/Jon Gambrell)



Kayakers wearing face masks due to the coronavirus pandemic race off the coast of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, June 19, 2020. Dubai has begun allowing organized sports competitions to take place after locking down over the coronavirus pandemic and the COVID-19 illness it causes. Competitions held Friday at the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club were among the first events to be held. (AP Photo/Jon Gambrell)



A sign posted on a street box by "Black Lives Matter" protesters, reads " If you think your mask makes it hard to breath, Imagine being black in America," seen at the Grand Park downtown Los Angeles, Thursday, June 18, 2020. California is now requiring people to wear masks in most indoor settings and outdoors when distancing isn't possible under a new statewide order. California Gov. Gavin Newsom previously allowed local governments to decide whether to mandate masks, and major counties like Los Angeles and San Francisco already require people to wear them inside and outside. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)



Cesar Ambrosio, son of Peruvian migrant coffin maker Carmen and Cesar Ambrosio, rests near a coffin used as furniture in his bedroom at the Bergut Funeral Services factory in Santiago, Chile, Thursday, June 18, 2020. Coffin production has had to increase up to 120%, according to Nicolas Bergerie, owner of the factory. His more basic coffin model is called the COVID model and is made to cope with the increase of deaths during the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Esteban Felix)





Players of Bangu, wearing white uniforms, and Flamengo pay a minute of silence for the victims of the coronavirus prior to a Rio de Janeiro soccer league match at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Thursday, June 18, 2020. Rio de Janeiro's soccer league resumed after a three-month hiatus because of the coronavirus pandemic. The match is being played without spectators to curb the spread of COVID-19. (AP Photo/Leo Correa)



Supporters of President Trump, including a man dressed as the border wall, line up outside outside an arena in Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 18, 2020, where the president will hold his first campaign rally in months this weekend .Despite the heat, the ever-growing risk of coronavirus and a lukewarm reception from local officials, dozens of backers of Trump are already camped out outside the arena (AP photo/ Tom McCarthy)



Guillerma Torres, wearing a face mask to curb the spread of the new coronavirus, carries a basket of fruit on her head to sell, on a street in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Thursday, June 18, 2020. The hospitalization Wednesday of Honduras' president with COVID-19 and pneumonia has drawn attention to another country struggling under the pandemic's strain as cases rise exponentially in the capital. (AP Photo/Elmer Martinez)

Trump said Thursday he picked Oklahoma partly because "you've done so well with the COVID."

Tulsa Health Department Director Bruce Dart pushed for postponing the event, but the state's Republican governor, Kevin Stitt said Oklahoma was ready and its rate of positive COVID-19 tests was lower than many other states.

"It's going to be safe," said Stitt, a Republican. "We have to learn how to be safe and how to move on."

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