

A potentially deadly roll of the dice, and a messaging failure

On Monday evening, Donald Trump was storming out of a press briefing after telling an Asian-American reporter, "don't ask me, ask China". Last Sunday he was pushing a conspiracy theory about Barack Obama and the Russia investigation, accusing his predecessor of "the biggest political crime in American history". Just another week ...

But as Trump grabs the headlines for his bombastic discourse, America faces a health disaster. As of Tuesday morning, the US had 1.35m confirmed cases and more than 80,000 deaths - but Trump is determined to reopen the economy (his electoral ace) whatever the cost. Our chief US reporter Ed Pilkington has been in Nebraska, which is beginning to open up, despite being one of the states least ready for the outbreak. What will be the health impact of effectively waving a white flag to the virus?

Bad deal page 8 →

In the UK, millions tuned in last Sunday to hear Boris Johnson's plan for easing the lockdown. The result?

Confusion all round as the government dropped its "stay at home" message for the rather vague "stay alert" and appeared to tell some people to return to work the next day.

The confusion was amplified as leaders of the UK's devolved authorities in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff made clear that they disagreed with Johnson's messaging and that they would be telling people in their nations to remain at home - leading to different rules for England.

The confusion over the rules was perhaps typical of a country that has coped poorly with the pandemic and now has the highest rate of deaths in Europe. This week we focus on the 100 days since the UK's first coronavirus case and ask - how did it deal so badly with the outbreak?

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On the cover
The Gambler by Want Some Studio
Want Some Studio is Edinburgh-based Marco Bevilacqua: "This is Trump in the style of the American horror and sci-fi comics of the 50s. It felt an appropriate way to capture his brashness and authoritarian manner. The allusion to the 50s makes sense as it feels like we're all living out a storyline from some atomic, dystopian literature."