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INDIA REJECTS SECOND LOCKDOWN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has thus far ruled out a country-wide lockdown and urged state governments to only use it as the last resort. Several states have announced weekend lockdowns and night curfews in recent weeks. A handful of states are leading the nation's spike, including the capital Delhi and Maharashtra, the seat of the commercial capital Mumbai. New Delhi, which has a population of about 20 million, imposed a lockdown until May 3, while Maharashtra, which has about 123 million residents, has shut down non-essential shops and tightened restrictions on travel and a range of public activities until May 15th.

BRENT EXPANDS PREMIUM TO PLATTS DUBAI

A steadily improving outlook for world oil demand and a decline in surplus OECD inventories over the past few months have propped up Brent as the benchmark most representative of global balances. At the same time, OPEC/non-OPEC's decision to start releasing more oil into the market from May has pressured Dubai, which is the marker for east-of-Suez sour crudes. The twin pressures saw the Brent-Dubai Exchange of Futures for Swaps, the difference between Brent futures and Dubai swap values, widen to \$3.49/barrel last week as per Platts assessments, the widest the spread has been since November 2019.

EUROPE BETS ON SUMMER REOPENING

The situation is not as sanguine across Europe, where summer holiday travel is a big deal, but things are starting to look up, even if in a patchwork form. As recently as last week it appeared that Covid was still casting a shadow over the mid-year travel season across the continent, but our view has evolved to one of cautious optimism. The third wave of the pandemic has begun levelling off in the worst-hit big economies of Germany, France and Italy, and equally as important, Covid immunization in the 27-member European Union has also ratcheted up, after a spate of setbacks through January-March. ■

**Paraphrased comments*

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