

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 18th Sep 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **Health workers account for one in seven patients**

The World Health Organization has announced that healthcare workers account for one-in-seven Covid-19 cases, [underlining the risk to frontline medical staff](#). In some countries, the proportion is as high as one-in-three.

#### **Canada at risk of losing control of its Covid-19 outbreak**

Canada runs the risk of its Covid-19 crisis spiralling out of control. Chief Public Health Officer Theresa Tam said, '[an average of 779 new cases had been reported daily during the most recent week, more than double the level in July...we could lose the ability to keep Covid-19 cases at manageable levels.](#)'

#### **Lockdown restrictions eased in South Africa**

With a drop in cases, South Africa is easing its lockdown restrictions including on social gatherings, alcohol sales and curfews. '[We have withstood the coronavirus storm,](#)' said President Cyril Ramaphosa. Physical distancing and mask-wearing requirements stay in place.

#### **Australia records lowest rise in Covid cases in almost three months**

Australia has recorded its lowest single-day rise in Covid-19 cases for almost three months. Some 35 cases were recorded, the lowest since June 24th, including 28 in the country's epicentre of Victoria. [State premier Daniel Andrews described this as 'a fantastic outcome and a tribute to the hard work, sacrifice and contribution every single Victorian is making.'](#)

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **One in 7 reported COVID-19 infections is among health workers, WHO says**

One in seven cases of COVID-19 reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) is a health worker and in some countries that figure rises to one in three, the agency said on Thursday. The WHO called for frontline medical workers to be provided with protective equipment to prevent them from being infected with the novel coronavirus, and potentially spreading it to their patients and families. "Globally around 14% of COVID cases reported to the WHO are among health workers and in some countries it's as much as 35%," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-who-healthworkers/one-in-seven-reported-covid-19-infections-is-among-health-workers-who-idUKKBN2681V>

#### **Latin Americans seek more time to join COVAX vaccine facility**

Several Latin American countries have informed the World Health Organization (WHO) they intend to request more time to sign up for its global COVID-19 vaccine facility known as COVAX, an official at the WHO's regional branch said on Thursday. Countries have until midnight on Friday to formalize legally-binding commitments to COVAX, a mechanism for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of eventual vaccines. The requests for an extension to the deadline will be sent directly to the GAVI Alliance, the COVAX secretariat, the official at the Pan-American Health Organization

said. A representative for GAVI said by email that details of which nations joined COVAX will only be made public after the deadline.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20200917174407-vm84p>

### **Canada could lose ability to manage COVID-19 cases, says chief medical officer**

Canada could lose its ability to manage the coronavirus pandemic due to a worrying recent spike in new COVID-19 cases, the country's top medical officer said on Thursday. The warning from Chief Public Health Officer Theresa Tam is the clearest indication yet of how worried authorities are about the potential for the outbreak to spiral out of control. An average of 779 new cases had been reported daily during the most recent week, more than double the level in July, Tam said. Officials in major provinces blame social gatherings for the spike. "The ongoing increase in new cases being reported daily continues to give cause for concern," Tam said in a statement. "With continued circulation of the virus, the situation could change quickly and we could lose the ability to keep COVID-19 cases at manageable levels."

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/ontario-planning-social-gathering-limits-153409386.html>

### **School closures are inevitable if teachers and pupils cannot get Covid-19 tests**

As executive head of an alternative provision school and two social, emotional and mental health schools (SEMH), I know from experience that the start of a new academic year brings its challenges. Pupils can take time to settle back into school life after the summer break and routines can take time to be established as well as welcoming many new children and all the issues that come with that. But in my 24-year teaching career, never before have I experienced such a difficult and frankly chaotic start to the school year on a national scale. Our teaching teams have worked tirelessly over the summer to make sure our schools are as safe as they possibly can be, meeting all government "Covid-safe" guidelines. We have introduced meticulous handwashing, created one-way systems, re-arranged classrooms, and ensured social distancing in some form or other where we can.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/covid-19-testing-school-closures-teachers-pupils-cases-b453520.html>

### **Business daily - How the French economy is faring six months after the lockdown order**

It's been six months since France went into lockdown over the coronavirus pandemic, tipping the economy into its worst recession since World War II. How bad was the damage, and what hopes are there for a recovery? Also today, we look at the divisions within the French government over a proposed increase in environmental taxes on flying.

<https://www.france24.com/en/business/20200917-how-the-french-economy-is-faring-six-months-after-the-lockdown-order>

### **'You could see it was really serious': France's lockdown, six months on**

On March 17, 2020, the day after Emmanuel Macron's famous address to the nation, lockdown measures to fight the spread of Covid-19 came into force in France. Six months on, people remember the surprise and anguish they felt during this unprecedented historical moment. By mid-March the French government needed to act to prevent coronavirus infections spiraling out of control. Consequently, the president addressed the country on March 16, telling the French people that "from noon tomorrow, for 15 days at least, trips outside the home will be reduced greatly". The lockdown came into force the subsequent day. The aim was to reduce French people's interactions as much as possible: "The message is clear - stay home!" the then Interior Minister Christophe Castaner declared after Macron's speech. Everyone lived through this moment in his or her own way - without knowing that these "15 days at least" would in fact last for 55 days, ending on May 11.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200917-you-could-see-it-was-really-serious-france-s-lockdown-six-months-on>

### **Why India's Covid problem could be bigger than we think**

India is approaching the ninth month of the coronavirus pandemic with more than five million confirmed cases - the second-highest in the world after the US - and more than 80,000 reported

deaths. Infection is surging through the country in a "step-ladder spiral", a government scientist told me. The only "consolation" is a death rate - currently 1.63% - that's lower than many countries with a high caseload. The increase in reported cases has partly to do with increased testing - but the speed at which the virus is spreading is worrying experts. Here's why. It took 170 days for India to reach the first million cases. The last million cases took only 11 days. Average daily cases have shot up from 62 in April to more than 87,000 in September. In the past week, India has recorded more than 90,000 cases and 1,000 deaths every day. Seven states are worst affected - accounting for about 48% of India's population.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-54176375>

### **New Zealand officially in recession as second-quarter GDP posts record decline**

New Zealand fell into its deepest economic slump on record in the second quarter as its battle against the coronavirus pandemic paralysed business activity, official data showed on Thursday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-newzealand-economy-gdp-idUKKBN26730D>

### **A shark and mermaid love affair: surreal Burberry show kicks off London Fashion Week**

London Fashion Week kicked off on Thursday in the midst of a coronavirus pandemic with Britain's Burberry putting on a live virtual display of its latest collection which broke with the traditional catwalk show.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-fashion-london/a-shark-and-mermaid-love-affair-surreal-burberry-show-kicks-off-london-fashion-week-idUKKBN2682LB>

### **France to implement extra COVID measures in two new cities**

France is to implement extra measures to curb the COVID-19 epidemic in the cities of Lyon and Nice, the health minister said, adding to the three other regions deemed as virus "red zones" where additional measures are already in place. The minister, Olivier Veran, did not say what those measures would be, but that local officials in Lyon and Nice would have until the weekend to submit their plans for extra measures to the government in Paris. France has this month seen a resurgence in the number of virus cases, surpassing the daily record reached earlier this year. Numbers in hospital and intensive care with COVID-19 are climbing too, though they are still a long way short of the peak reached in the spring.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france/family-friends-are-major-sources-of-covid-19-infections-france-minister-idUKKBN2682M4>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Wristband Covid-19 tracker for passengers landing in Abu Dhabi**

Passengers arriving in Abu Dhabi are now required to wear a tracking wristband during the mandatory 14-day home quarantine due to Covid-19, according Etihad Airways. Authorities at Abu Dhabi International Airport are giving out the medically-approved tag to all passengers arriving from all countries. "On arrival into Abu Dhabi you must self-isolate for 14 days. Self-isolation must take place at home and you will be required to wear a medically approved wristband for the duration. The wristband will be provided by the authorities at Abu Dhabi Airport after you clear immigration," Etihad Airways said in the new guidelines posted on its website. "If you are holding a diplomatic passport, under the age of 18, over the age of 60, or suffering from a chronic disease, you will be exempt from having to wear the wristband."

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/abu-dhabi/international-arrivals-to-abu-dhabi-must-wear-covid-19-tracking-device>

### **Indonesians caught without a mask forced to dig graves for Covid-19 victims**

Villagers who refuse to wear masks are being forced to dig graves for victims of Covid-19 by local authorities in one part of rural Indonesia, in the hopes that a little bit of manual labor and empathy will convince others to do their part to help stop the pandemic. Three middle-aged men and five

minors in Cerme district of Gresik Regency, East Java, were given the unique punishment on September 9, authorities said.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/indonesians-caught-without-a-mask-forced-to-dig-graves-for-covid-19-victims/ar-BB1980yZ>

### **Hundreds of French COVID-19 testers strike over work conditions, says union**

Hundreds of workers at COVID-19 laboratories in France went on strike on Thursday, a trade union said, angry over poor working conditions as the coronavirus testing system buckles under huge demand. The hard-left CGT union said the strike was disrupting testing in some towns and could drag on if laboratory owners failed to deal with staff shortages and increase pay. The walkout comes as the government demands more and faster testing to fight a surge in new coronavirus cases. "We're overwhelmed," laboratory nurse Aminata Diene, one of about 50 lab workers protesting outside a diagnostics centre on the edge of Paris said.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/hundreds-of-french-covid-19-testers-strike-over-work-conditions-says-union/ar-BB198TNj>

### **Further funds announced to control Covid-19 infections in care homes**

An emergency support fund to help limit the spread of Covid-19 in care homes in England is being topped up with an additional £546m ahead of the winter. A key purpose of the Infection Control Fund is to help the care sector restrict the movement of people in and out of the home

<https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/social-care/further-funds-announced-to-control-covid-19-infections-in-care-homes-17-09-2020/>

### **Bugs in online booking system add to UK's Covid-19 testing crisis**

The website for booking coronavirus tests is struggling to cope with the number of requests, adding more problems to those already accrued by the NHS test-and-trace scheme. People in the UK who attempt to book a test for Covid-19 online are directed – once they have passed screening questions to ensure they are entitled to the test – to a purpose-built website where they can theoretically book either a home test kit or a walk-through or drive-through test. However, in practice, an increasing number of users are reporting errors on the site itself that prevent them from even attempting to book a test.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/sep/16/bugs-in-nhs-website-add-to-uks-covid-19-testing-crisis>

### **Contact Tracing, the West's Big Hope for Suppressing Covid-19, Is in Disarray**

When countries across the West emerged from lockdown in the spring, governments trained legions of investigators to identify and isolate people potentially infected with the coronavirus. The goal was to prevent a resurgence of the pathogen. Four months later, the systems to find people who might pass on infections, known as contact tracing, are in disarray. Europe and the U.S. are each recording tens of thousands of new daily infections. In France, Spain and England—nations where cases are now rising quickly—investigators have been interviewing far fewer contacts of infected people than officials expected. In some U.S. states and big cities, investigators aren't even reaching many people who test positive and those who are reached often don't disclose their contacts. That has prevented investigators from casting a wide net to stop new infections.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/contact-tracing-the-wests-big-hope-for-suppressing-covid-19-is-in-disarray-11600337670>

### **COVID-19 Has Crushed Everybody's Economy—Except for South Korea's**

As the United States struggles with a stubbornly persistent pandemic and a stubbornly slow return to economic growth, South Korea seems to have found the recipe to succeed on both fronts—if it can survive a late-year uptick in new coronavirus cases. In the latest economic projections by the OECD, South Korea is looking at a mere 1 percent GDP contraction for 2020, the second-best performer among major economies behind only China. In contrast, the euro area is expected to

shrink by around 8 percent, and the United States could see full-year contraction on the order of almost 4 percent of GDP.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/16/coronavirus-covid-economic-impact-recession-south-korea-success/>

### **Coronavirus: South Africa eases strict lockdown as cases drop**

South Africa, which had one of the world's earliest and strictest lockdowns, has announced a further easing of anti-coronavirus measures. From 20 September an overnight curfew will be reduced, gatherings will be allowed at 50% of a venue's capacity, and restrictions on the sale of alcohol will be eased. "We have withstood the coronavirus storm," said President Cyril Ramaphosa. But rules on social distancing and mask-wearing will remain in place.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54186040>

### **'It doesn't work': Kevin Rudd calls for new lockdown strategy in Australia**

Former prime minister Kevin Rudd has called for a new approach to lockdowns as Australia continues to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. Speaking to journalists after the Yahoo Finance All Market Summit on Thursday, Mr Rudd blasted the government's COVIDSafe app as a failure. He said better technology infrastructure was needed to boost Australia's economic path out of the pandemic, and allow for more surgical lockdowns in the future, if required. "I'm told by the prime minister and the health minister to download the app, I go ahead and do it," he said. While he still has the COVIDSafe app on his phone, "it doesn't work," he lamented. "But frankly where is the effective Bluetooth technology that enables us not just to have a passive information system but an active information gathering system, if and when we need it.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/it-doesnt-work-kevin-rudd-calls-for-new-lockdown-strategy-in-australia-081407344.html>

### **NYC again delays in-person learning for most students**

New York City has again delayed the start of in-person learning for most of the more than 1 million students in its public school system

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/nyc-delays-person-learning-students-73072232>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Bill Barr likens lockdown to slavery**

United States attorney general William Barr compared coronavirus lockdown measures to slavery, as he called on prosecutors to aggressively target demonstrators. Speaking at a Constitution Day celebration event in Michigan on Wednesday, Mr Barr sought to compare strict coronavirus lockdown measures with arrest and slavery, as he dubbed those restrictions an "intrusion" on Americans civil liberties. "Putting a national lockdown, stay at home orders, is like house arrest," said Mr Barr about orders put in place across a swathe of states to slow the coronavirus spread since March. "Other than slavery, which was a different kind of restraint, this is the greatest intrusion on civil liberties in American history," he added, amid debates over a nationwide lockdown.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/bill-barr-lockdown-slavery-constitution-day-b467512.html>

### **The risk of a second lockdown exposes the UK government's failures on Covid-19**

Almost two million people across Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead, County Durham and Sunderland will face bans on mixing with other households and a 10pm curfew from midnight tonight, in an attempt to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. Is this a sign that the United Kingdom is heading for a second lockdown? Not according to health minister Ed Argar, who denied that a two-week nationwide lockdown is on the cards. Downing Street also remains keen to avoid a second shutdown.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2020/09/risk-second-lockdown-exposes-uk-government-s-failures-covid-19>

### **Ex-Pence adviser says Trump bungled virus; she's for Biden**

A former adviser to Vice President Mike Pence who served on the White House coronavirus task force says President Donald Trump once suggested that COVID-19 might be a good thing because it would stop him from having to shake hands with "disgusting people." Olivia Troye is the latest former member of the Trump administration to speak out against him and urge voters to deny him a second term. She joins a growing list that includes Miles Taylor, former chief of staff at the Department of Homeland Security, and former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci. Trump said Thursday that he did not know Troye, who was Pence's homeland security adviser.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/ex-pence-adviser-says-trump-bungled-virus-shes-for-biden/2020/09/17/84ab8d60-f942-11ea-85f7-5941188a98cd\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/ex-pence-adviser-says-trump-bungled-virus-shes-for-biden/2020/09/17/84ab8d60-f942-11ea-85f7-5941188a98cd_story.html)

### **Continued Lockdown**

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#### **Who suffers most from Melbourne's extended lockdown? Hint: They are not necessarily particularly vocal**

Businesses are protesting vociferously about Victoria's extended lockdown. It's "gut-wrenching," "devastating," a "trainwreck," a "death knell." Yet businesses and shareholders are far from representative of those most at risk. The best evidence we've got suggests the hardest hit are Victoria's already disadvantaged. Those arguing for extended lockdowns make the point that they are not as costly as they might seem (to anyone) because their effects need to be compared not with business as usual, but with business in which a pandemic encourages people to stay at home and reduce spending.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-09-melbourne-lockdown-hint-necessarily-vocal.html>

#### **Australia says daily COVID-19 cases fall to three-month low**

Australia on Thursday reported its lowest one-day rise in new COVID-19 cases in nearly three months, as states said restrictions imposed to slow the spread of the virus will be further relaxed. Australia said 35 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the past 24 hours, the lowest one-day rise since June 24. Victoria state - Australia's COVID-19 epicentre - accounted for the bulk of the new cases, with 28 people diagnosed with the virus in the past 24 hours. "It is a fantastic outcome and a tribute to the hard work, sacrifice and contribution every single Victorian is making and I want to say thank you," Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews told reporters in Melbourne.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-australia-state/australia-says-daily-covid-19-cases-fall-to-three-month-low-idUKKBN2673OQ?il=0>

#### **Victorian lockdown impact to be 'laid bare' in August unemployment figures**

InvestSMART's Evan Lucas says Australia's August unemployment numbers set to be released on Thursday will take into account the entire Victorian lockdown scenario. Mr Lucas said the numbers would be negative and were difficult to gauge correctly due to the JobKeeper program. "The Victorian effect will finally be laid bare today with how much unemployment in Victoria has now happened because of stage four lockdowns," he said. He said the United States Federal Reserve had come to the point where "monetary policy is running out of its ability to actually react to the market and to react to the economy and needs to get fiscal policy to support it".

[https://www.skynews.com.au/details/\\_6191499867001](https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6191499867001)

#### **Southern hemisphere has record low flu cases amid Covid lockdowns**

Health systems across the southern hemisphere were bracing a few months ago for their annual surge in influenza cases, which alongside Covid-19 could have overwhelmed hospitals. They never came. Many countries in the southern half of the globe have instead experienced either record low levels of flu or none at all, public health specialists in Australia, New Zealand and South America have said, sparing potentially tens of thousands of lives and offering a glimmer of hope as winter

approaches in the northern hemisphere. General practitioners in New Zealand have not detected a single influenza case since they started screening patients in June, health data shows; last year about 57% of the samples they collected were positive.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/sep/17/falling-flu-rates-in-southern-hemisphere-offers-hope-as-winter-approaches-coronavirus>

### **Victorian child deaths spike during Covid lockdown after series of home accidents**

Eight young children have died in the past two months across Victoria in a series of incidents experts say have spiked due to the state's Covid-19 lockdown. In one case, a youngster was unintentionally strangled after getting caught in a curtain chain. Each year an average of 17 children die from unintentional injuries across the state, according to the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit. But there have been eight deaths since the beginning of August, the coroner reported. They were all aged under five.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/17/victorian-child-deaths-spike-during-covid-lockdown-after-series-of-home-accidents>

### **Melbourne's lockdown set to surpass Wuhan's**

Residents in Melbourne's original 10 hot spots have already been through 78 days of lockdown, beating the 77 days faced by residents of Wuhan, China, where the coronavirus was first detected. Those living in other parts of Melbourne will surpass Wuhan's lockdown next week. The Chinese city, which went into lockdown on January 23 and came out of it on April 8, had about coronavirus 70,000 cases. As of Thursday, Victoria has 19,970.

<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/health-problems/melbournes-lockdown-set-to-surpass-wuhans/news-story/44d93021b3ed61df00e3c338b845f923>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Coronavirus is NOT mutating to become more virulent: Scientific review suggests a vaccine is likely to work while debunking the myth the virus was created in a Chinese lab**

Study traced the evolutionary origins of the coronavirus back to its origin. Found it is too different to other coronaviruses to have been man-made. The virus has an unusually slow mutation rate and is not changing to become more severe or infectious

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8743601/Covid-19-virus-analysis-suggests-low-level-mutation.html>

### **Steroid improves survival chances of sickest Covid-19 patients, study involving Cambridge University Hospitals finds**

The survival chances for severely ill Covid-19 patients are improved by treating them with the steroid hydrocortisone, research involving Cambridge University Hospitals has shown. Patients had up to a 93 per cent chance of a better outcome if given an intravenous seven-day dose of the drug, results from the REMAP-CAP study suggested.

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/steroid-improves-survival-chances-of-sickest-covid-19-patients-study-involving-cambridge-university-hospitals-finds-9122859/>

### **US experts stress over safety of AZ's COVID-19 vaccine**

US medical experts are reportedly concerned that a neurological side effect picked up in AstraZeneca's closely-watched COVID-19 vaccine trial could compromise the whole project, as the FDA weighs whether to give the go ahead for US studies to resume. While tests of the vaccine co-developed with Oxford University have resumed in the UK, experts from the US National Institutes of Health have launched an investigation into the incident, which is still being kept under wraps by the UK pharma for patient confidentiality reasons. Side-effects that caused AstraZeneca to pause its coronavirus vaccine trial are unlikely to be caused by the shot according to documents posted online and cited in other press reports - but the FDA is yet to give the go ahead for US testing to restart.

<https://pharmaphorum.com/news/us-experts-stress-over-safety-of-azs-covid-19-vaccine/>

### **NIH hands out seven digital health contracts to fight COVID-19**

The US National Institutes of Health has awarded seven contracts to companies and academic institutions to develop digital health solutions to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the US-government funded NIH, the work could lead to user-friendly tools like smartphone apps, wearable devices, and software that can identify and trace contacts of infected individuals, keep track of verified COVID-19 test results, and monitor the health status of infected and potentially infected individuals. The NIH's The National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), selected the seven projects from nearly 200 ideas. Contracts are being awarded in two phases - initial awards will go to pilot projects to demonstrate feasibility, after which the NIH has an option to provide additional funding for further development.

<https://pharmaphorum.com/news/nih-hands-out-seven-digital-health-contracts-to-fight-covid-19/>

### **An 'uncoordinated' immune response may explain why COVID-19 strikes some hard, particularly the elderly**

Even a world-class orchestra will produce a cacophony if its strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion sections don't play in harmony. Similarly, the sophisticated human immune system can fail to beat back a pathogen if its many players don't hit the right notes at the right times. A new study now finds that people who suffer the most from COVID-19 have an immune response that's out of sync. The results help clarify how the disease progresses and could possibly inform how best to use various treatments and how to design the most effective vaccines. "We need to know exactly how the immune response is shaped to this virus," says Donna Farber, an immunologist at Columbia University who was not involved in the research. "This is probably the most comprehensive analysis of virus-specific immunity in people who either had COVID or are acutely infected."

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/09/uncoordinated-immune-response-may-explain-why-covid-19-strikes-some-hard-particularly>

### **Tighten UK Covid restrictions or risk a national lockdown, warn scientists**

Scientists have warned the government must act fast to contain the spread of coronavirus, including further restrictions on public mixing, though ministers have denied they are considering a full England lockdown. Prof Susan Michie, the director of the Centre for Behaviour Change at University College London and a member of the scientific pandemic influenza group on behavioural science, a government advisory group, said that with cases doubling every eight days in England, urgent action was needed. "If more restrictions aren't done very soon then I think we risk being back into the situation where a national lockdown may be necessary," she said. "Business as usual isn't an option."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/17/health-minister-rejects-claims-two-week-national-lockdown>

### **Rich nations grab coronavirus vaccine stocks in global race**

Rich nations representing a fraction of the global population have already bought up over half the promised COVID-19 vaccine stocks, a study showed, as U.S. President Donald Trump pledged to begin inoculating Americans within weeks. Big Pharma is racing to produce an effective vaccine to counter a virus that has now killed more than 935,000 people around the world and infected almost 30 million. European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned against "vaccine nationalism" that she said could put lives at risk by depriving the most vulnerable in poorer nations of immunity. But a study released by Oxfam showed a group of wealthy countries representing just 13 percent of the world population has already secured the lion's share of doses. "Access to a life-saving vaccine shouldn't depend on where you live or how much money you have," said Robert Silverman of Oxfam America.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/09/17/world/science-health-world/rich-nations-coronavirus-vaccine/>

## **Why Indonesia Became a Testing Ground for a Chinese Covid-19 Vaccine**

On a scorching August day in Bandung, the capital of West Java province, two dozen volunteers arrive at a small community clinic inside a narrow alley to take part in the last stage of one of the world's fastest-moving trials for a coronavirus vaccine. There, surrounded by cramped homes and kids playing outdoors without masks, they prepare to take an experimental shot developed by China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd., which many in Indonesia hope will bring an end to the destruction wreaked by the virus. With about a quarter-million infections, Indonesia's outbreak is the second-worst in Southeast Asia after the Philippines, its daily case count hitting records every week since the end of August.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/businessweek/covid-pandemic-why-indonesia-became-testing-ground-for-china-s-covid-19-vaccine>

## **All countries need consistent Covid-19 messaging - WHO**

The World Health Organization has warned of "alarming rates of transmission" of Covid-19 across Europe and cautioned countries against shortening quarantine periods. The WHO's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said the number of coronavirus cases seen in September "should serve as a wake-up call for all of us." "Although these numbers reflect more comprehensive testing, it also shows alarming rates of transmission across the region," he told an online press conference from the Danish capital Copenhagen. The health body also said it would not change its guidance calling for a 14-day quarantine period for anyone exposed to the novel coronavirus.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2020/0917/1165695-coronavirus-global/>

## **Pfizer vaccine trial bets on early win against coronavirus, documents show**

Pfizer Inc is betting that its coronavirus vaccine candidate will show clear evidence of effectiveness early in its clinical trial, according to the company and internal documents reviewed by Reuters that describe how the trial is being run. Pfizer's clinical trial protocol outlines for the company, scientists and regulators how the drugmaker could show that its vaccine meets efficacy and safety standards set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. A company's protocol is submitted to the FDA for review and is overseen by an independent panel of experts known as a Data and Safety Monitoring Board.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-vaccines-focus/pfizer-vaccine-trial-bets-on-early-win-against-coronavirus-documents-show-idINKBN268350>

## **UK faces bottleneck on COVID-19 testing due to lab capacity: minister**

Britain faces difficulties in carrying out COVID-19 tests due to shortages of lab capacity, said junior health minister Edward Argar. "Lab capacity is one of the bottlenecks, or one of the challenges in significantly increasing that capacity," Argar told Sky News on Thursday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-faces-bottleneck-on-covid-19-testing-due-to-lab-capacity-minister-idUKKBN2680RV>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **149 new Covid-19 cases in NI in 24 hours**

A total of 149 people have tested positive for Covid-19 in Northern Ireland in the last 24-hour reporting period, according to the Department of Health. There have been no related deaths during that time, leaving the official death toll at 573 - however, that figure is expected to rise significantly when deaths in all community settings are accounted for.

<https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2020-09-17/149-new-covid-19-cases-in-ni-in-24-hours>

### **Coronavirus: Madrid hospitals have Covid-19 patients in four out of ten beds**

The health minister is under growing pressure amid criticism that test and trace policies are in chaos. Olivier Véran is said to have been rebuked by President Macron over the programme. More

than a million tests a week are being conducted in France but people are having to wait up to 12 days between requesting a test and getting the results. "One million tests a week is all very well but if the results arrive too late, it's pointless," Mr Macron told his minister, according to briefings by presidential aides. Meanwhile, the French association of Covid-19 victims filed a legal complaint against Jean Castex, the prime minister, for allegedly mishandling the pandemic.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-madrid-hospitals-have-covid-19-patients-in-four-out-of-ten-beds-hv0lkdgpp>

### **290 new Covid-19 cases in Scotland in past 24 hours - including 13 in north-east**

The latest update from the Scottish Government shows there have been a further 290 Covid-19 cases recorded since Wednesday - this is 4% of newly-tested individuals. A total of 52 people are in hospital with a recently confirmed case of the virus. Five of those in hospital are receiving treatment in intensive care. No Covid-19 related deaths were reported in the past 24 hours.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/290-new-covid-19-cases-in-scotland-in-past-24-hours-including-13-in-north-east/>

### **Could UK go back into lockdown as coronavirus cases soar?**

Medical experts are reportedly pushing for a two-week national lockdown as coronavirus cases across the UK are starting to soar. Anthony Costello, who sits on the independent SAGE panel, claimed yesterday evening that chief medical officer Chris Whitty is pushing for the strict national measures as there are fears infection numbers could be as high as 38,000 per day. The former World Health Organisation director tweeted: 'I'm hearing from a well-connected person that Government now thinks, in absence of testing, there are 38,000 infections per day. 'Chris Whitty is advising PM for a two-week national lockdown.'

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/09/17/could-uk-go-back-into-two-week-national-lockdown-13283853/>

### **Dr Hilary Jones warns another national lockdown might be needed in UK**

Cases of the virus are beginning to increase again, with many areas in the North East now going into regional lockdown and reports claiming curfews may be put in place elsewhere. Appearing on Good Morning Britain on Thursday, Dr Hilary stressed that another national lockdown is 'not wanted by anyone', but may be necessary if the new 'rule of six' - restricting social gatherings to just six people both indoors and outdoors - isn't effective in controlling the spread of Covid-19. 'Nobody wants [another national lockdown], but we're seeing 4000 cases [of coronavirus] in the last 24 hours, numbers are increasing quite rapidly,' Dr Hilary said.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/09/17/dr-hilary-jones-warns-another-national-lockdown-might-be-needed-as-coronavirus-cases-in-uk-rise-13283627/>

### **Coronavirus: Speak to those breaking rule of six first before calling police - PM**

In an interview with the Sun, Boris Johnson said he had "never much been in favour of sneak culture, myself". It comes after policing minister Kit Malthouse, called on people to report neighbours breaking the coronavirus rules. The new measures came into force in England, Scotland and Wales this week. Speaking to the Sun, Mr Johnson said: "What people should do in the first instance is obviously if they are concerned is raise it with their friends and neighbours. "But I think what is reasonable for anyone to do is if they think there is a serious threat to public health as a result of their neighbour's activities - if there is some huge kind of Animal House party taking place, as I am sure, hot tubs and so forth - and there is a serious threat to public health then it's reasonable for the authorities to know."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54186098>

### **Spain's Andalucia records deadliest COVID-19 figures since end of lockdown**

Andalucia has recorded its blackest COVID-19 figures since the end of lockdown with 25 deaths and 1,389 detected cases in the past 24 hours. The figures, released by the Junta, represent the

deadliest day since the beginning of summer and the highest ever daily increase in cases.

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/09/17/spains-andalucia-records-deadliest-covid-19-figures-since-end-of-lockdown/>

### **Spain sees deadliest COVID-19 day since end of lockdown**

Spain has seen its deadliest day in terms of Covid-19 since the end of the nationwide lockdown. According to the Ministry of Health there have been 239 deaths caused by the disease in the past 24 hours. It is the highest daily count since the country entered the new normal in June.

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/09/16/spain-sees-deadliest-covid-19-day-since-end-of-lockdown/>

### **Coronavirus outbreaks hit French universities**

At least 12 coronavirus clusters have been detected in French universities this month, prompting concern that students, including those in medical faculties, are failing to respect social distancing. The clusters have emerged since the start of the academic year and have forced the temporary closure of some of the country's leading institutes. Students have been accused of behaving irresponsibly, notably at parties, but they blame overcrowded lecture theatres. A Twitter hashtag, #Balancetafac, which translates roughly as Denounce Your Uni, has been set up for students to post images and comments illustrating widespread sanitary failings in higher education. Concern is particularly acute since about half of French students live at home.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/coronavirus-outbreaks-hit-french-universities-knbv8rtx>

### **Young people blamed for spike in coronavirus cases in UK and France**

Tom Clark thinks it is a bit of Aussie pragmatism that is helping him break through the COVID-19 slump in France. The 36-year-old takes the pandemic seriously, but in his stride. He moved to Paris more than a decade ago, quickly making his mark selling specialty coffee. Now he runs eight cafes, three of which he has opened since the start of the pandemic. "I don't look at the case load and panic," he told 7.30 of the spike in coronavirus cases across France.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-17/fears-of-second-wave-in-uk-and-france-as-coronavirus-cases-soar/12672696>

### **Health minister Edward Argar dismisses two-week national lockdown as Chris Whitty claims withdrawn**

Health Minister Edward Argar has rejected reports that the Government is considering a two-week national lockdown. Former World Health Organisation director Anthony Costello, who sits on the independent SAGE panel, sparked concern by suggesting that Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty was advising Boris Johnson on blanket restrictions. The Prime Minister has insisted he is doing "everything in my power" to prevent a second national lockdown, but has acknowledged that he could not dismiss the possibility. Cases have been rising over the last month with the UK recording nearly 4,000 Covid-19 cases in a day for the first time since the start of May.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newslondon/health-minister-edward-argar-dismisses-two-week-national-lockdown-as-chris-whitty-claims-withdrawn/ar-BB197VgM>

### **'It's like March in slow motion': Doctors in Madrid face coronavirus resurgence**

"In a way, it's like the situation in March but in slow motion," said Dr. Carlos Velayos, who works as an intensive care unit physician at the public hospital in suburban Fuenlabrada. The hospital is expanding its ICU capacity from 12 to 24 beds by the end of September, as all of them are currently filling up with coronavirus patients. With 1,273 patients in ICUs, Spain has as many beds devoted to treat grave patients of COVID-19 as France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy together. And 359 of them are in the Madrid region, which for the past week has accounted for roughly one-third of a national average of 8,200 new infections per day. Spain has a virus caseload above 600,000, one of the world's highest, and more than 30,000 confirmed deaths for the new virus

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/09/17/world/doctors-madrid-coronavirus-resurgence/>

### **Madrid backtracks on plan for targeted COVID-19 lockdowns**

The local government of Madrid, the region of Spain hit hardest by the pandemic, on Thursday (Sep 17) backtracked on its plans to introduce targeted lockdowns in areas with high numbers of coronavirus cases. The region's deputy health chief, Antonio Zapatero, announced on Wednesday that the local health department was planning to confine people in areas with the highest incidence of the virus, without naming which neighbourhoods would be affected. The announcement caused concern among residents of densely populated, low-income neighbourhoods in the south of Madrid which have a high rate of infections.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/madrid-spain-covid-19-lockdown-backtrack-13120724>

### **'Very serious situation' unfolding in Europe, WHO warns, as cases rise dramatically**

There are growing concerns in Europe at what is being seen as an alarming rise in coronavirus cases. The number of new daily infections has reached record highs in some countries. Targeted lockdowns and restrictions are returning across the continent.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/17/coronavirus-latest-europe-jittery-as-cases-rise-and-lockdowns-return.html>

### **Stick to rules to avoid further lockdowns says UK minister**

Britain can avoid further local restrictions and another national lockdown by sticking to the rules such as not meeting in groups of more than six people, junior health minister Edward Argar said on Thursday. "The message is very clear if we stick to that (the rule of six), if stick to the hands, face and space guidance we can avoid further local restrictions, we can avoid further national restrictions," he told the BBC.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-rules/stick-to-rules-to-avoid-further-lockdowns-says-uk-minister-idUKS8N2CN04H>

### **Indonesia capital eyes doubling of virus testing as cases soar**

Jakarta alone has seen more than 1,000 new daily cases on average this month, more than double the average in the first half of August, with the tide of infections piling pressure on its under-resourced health sector. Governor Anies Baswedan said in an interview that the city of 10 million was conducting about 50,000 daily coronavirus tests and hopes to "at least reach double from where we are today".

<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/health/1216149-indonesia-capital-eyes-doubling-of-virus-testing-as-cases-soar>

### **Coronavirus: Second national lockdown would be 'disastrous', PM says**

A second national lockdown would be likely to have "disastrous" financial consequences for the UK, the prime minister has said. Appearing at a committee of MPs, Boris Johnson said the government was doing "everything in our power" to prevent another nationwide lockdown. This was why new restrictions - such as the "rule of six" - were necessary to "defeat" the disease, he said. The PM also admitted there was not enough testing capacity. Earlier, he blamed a "colossal spike" in demand for ongoing problems in accessing tests and results being delayed. On Wednesday, coronavirus cases in the UK increased by 3,991, taking the total to 378,219, according to figures from the government.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54182368>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Covid-19 restrictions announced for swathe of north-east England**

Nearly 2 million people in north-east England will be banned from mixing with other families under the strictest measures imposed since the country eased out of nationwide lockdown. The restrictions, which will come into force at midnight on Thursday, will prohibit residents in seven council areas from meeting others outside their support bubbles and include a 10pm curfew on nightlife. People in the affected areas should only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work, and avoid attending amateur or semi-professional sports events as

spectators. Residents should also take holidays only with people in their own household or support bubble. The rules will apply to people in Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead, County Durham and Sunderland.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/17/covid-19-restrictions-announced-for-swathe-of-north-east-england>

### **Under lockdown, Israel faces bitter start of Jewish New Year**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has imposed a three-week lockdown, beginning on Friday afternoon — just hours before Rosh Hashana starts. Israel's first lockdown, in March and April, put a damper on Passover, the Jewish spring holiday marking the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Now, the Jewish High Holidays look to be similarly subdued. Israel has seen new daily cases of COVID-19 skyrocket in recent weeks, climbing to more than 5,000 on Wednesday — one of the highest per capita infection rates in the world. Since the pandemic began this year, it has recorded more than 169,000 cases, including 1,163 deaths, as of Wednesday, according to Health Ministry figures.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/under-lockdown-israel-faces-bitter-061707640.html>

### **Coronavirus: Restrictions expected in north-east England**

Almost two million people in north-east England are expected to face restrictions as coronavirus cases rise. Northumberland, Newcastle, Sunderland, North and South Tyneside, Gateshead and County Durham council areas are in discussions to get the measures. These may include pubs closing earlier and restrictions on households mixing. It comes as Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the Sun: "The only way to make sure the country is able to enjoy Christmas is to be tough now." He previously said the government was doing "everything in our power" to avoid another nationwide lockdown.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tyne-54166256>

### **Coronavirus: Madrid lockdown targets poor areas**

Tighter restrictions will be introduced in Madrid this weekend as Spain struggles with Europe's highest number of coronavirus infections. The curbs on movement will most likely be imposed on the city's southern working-class districts, where infection rates are highest. Madrid, home to 6.6 million people, is by far Spain's worst-affected region at present, with an infection rate of 651 per 100,000 people in the past 14 days.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-madrid-faces-drastic-lockdowns-to-curb-soaring-cases-j7vlzm2wd>

### **Covid: North-east England restrictions announced to stem virus spike**

The World Health Organization warns of "a very serious situation unfolding" in Europe. It comes as cases exceed those seen at the peak of the pandemic in March. New social restrictions are introduced for north-east England amid a spike of cases. The temporary measures include restrictions on households mixing and pubs closing earlier at night. Turnaround times to get test results back are getting longer in England, figures show.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/world-54187391>

### **Global report: China locks down border city in response to two Covid cases**

China has locked down a city on its border with Myanmar and launched a campaign to test the city's entire population of more than 200,000 people. Officials in Ruili in Yunnan province said the city had entered a state of "wartime" defences against Covid-19 after two new cases emerged among travellers from Myanmar. Residents have been ordered to stay at home and authorities have set up checkpoints to prevent anyone entering or leaving Ruili and restricting access to border areas nearby. Most businesses have been closed. On Thursday, more than 360 testing sites were set up and almost 1,200 people deployed to conduct testing around the clock. Ruan Chengfa, deputy secretary of Yunnan's party committee, said in a meeting on Wednesday that local authorities were implementing a strict policy of "complete inspection, strict quarantine. No entry and no exit." As of

Tuesday evening, 60,000 people had been tested.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/17/global-report-chinese-border-city-enters-wartime-mode-to-tackle-covid-outbreak>

### **New Zealand in Covid recession after worst quarterly GDP fall on record**

New Zealand has entered a recession with the economy contracting 12.2% in the June quarter – the largest drop since such records began in 1987. Paul Pascoe at Stats NZ said the GDP fall was “by far the largest on record in New Zealand” and reflected months spent in lockdown. Industries such as retail, accommodation, restaurants and transport saw significant declines; as did construction and manufacturing at 25.8% and 13% respectively. Household domestic spending dropped by 12%.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/17/new-zealand-in-covid-recession-after-worst-quarterly-gdp-fall-on-record>

### **New Zealand backs lockdown strategy despite record contraction**

New Zealand’s finance minister has defended one of the world’s toughest Covid-19 lockdowns following a record economic contraction, insisting the restrictions saved lives and was facilitating a strong recovery. The country’s gross domestic product fell 12.2 per cent in the three months to the end of June, compared with the previous three months. The contraction has plunged New Zealand into its first recession in a decade, following a 1.4 per cent fall in GDP in the first quarter. But the drop was not as bad as initially feared, beating Wellington’s prediction in the May budget of a 23.5 per cent fall.

<https://www.ft.com/content/ab85dadf-e730-4e3d-89a0-05f4cc713f3c>

### **Covid pushes New Zealand into worst recession in years**

New Zealand is in its deepest recession in decades, following strict measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic which were widely praised. The country's GDP shrank by 12.2% between April and June as the lockdown and border closures hit. It is New Zealand's first recession since the global financial crisis and its worst since 1987, when the current system of measurement began. But the government hopes its pandemic response will lead to a quick recovery. The nation of nearly five million was briefly declared virus free, and although it still has a handful of cases, it has only had 25 deaths. The economy is likely to be a key issue in next month's election, which was delayed after an unexpected spike in Covid-19 cases in August.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-54186359>

### **Northeast England to face tighter lockdown restrictions from Friday - Sky News**

Parts of northeast England will be subjected to tighter lockdown restrictions from Friday, Sky News reported late on Wednesday. The restrictions will be announced on Thursday, the report said. The areas affected are likely to be Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead, County Durham and Sunderland, according to the report.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-lockdown-n/northeast-england-to-face-tighter-lockdown-restrictions-from-friday-sky-news-idUKKBN2673D3>

### **Huge area of England goes back into lockdown with 2,000,000 under curfew**

Residents in the north-east of England will no longer be allowed to meet up with friends and hospitality venues will be placed under a curfew in a matter of hours. From midnight tonight, around 2 million residents will be banned from mixing with other households, announced the health secretary on Thursday morning. Pubs, restaurants and other licensed premises will also be forced to close their doors to the public between 10pm and 5am and move to table service only.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/09/17/huge-area-of-england-goes-back-into-lockdown-with-2000000-under-curfew-13284196/>