

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 23rd Oct 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **Europe clamps down as cases surge in most countries**

Several countries in Europe are battling a second wave of the coronavirus and have imposed strict restrictions on everyday life. France, [which registered 41,600 new cases on Thursday, expanded curfews on additional cities as did Italy, which imposed overnight restrictions on Rome, Naples and Milan](#). Greece followed the same route in Athens and other parts of the country and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis urged citizens to abide by the restrictions.

#### **New cluster of infections in South Korea lead to highest tally in a month**

South Korea, which had won accolades for successfully containing the pandemic in its first wave, [reported 121 new infections of Covid-19 on Thursday - its highest daily numbers since the 109 cases reported almost a month ago](#). Health officials traced the infections to clusters at senior care hospitals and other health facilities and intensified efforts to track down suspected patients who may still be carrying the virus.

#### **President promises new lockdown measures in Switzerland with rise in cases**

President Simonetta Sommaruga has suggested that new lockdown procedures may be imposed soon in Switzerland to control a drastic rise in Covid-19 cases, which are now doubling from week to week. [Clusters of infection have broken out in retirement homes in the southwest of the country](#) and the president said restrictions could be imminent unless the curve flattens in the next few days.

#### **FDA approves remdesivir as first drug to treat Covid-19**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved Gilead Sciences' antiviral medicine, remdesivir, as the first drug to treat Covid-19 after a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health showed that the drug cut recovery time of patients hospitalised due to coronavirus from 15 days to 10 days. [Remdesivir, or Veklury as it is called by Gilead](#), works by inhibiting a substance the virus uses to replicate itself and has been authorised to be used on people hospitalised with Covid-19 who are at least 12 years old and weighing at least 40kg.

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Bars and restaurants account for less than 3% of COVID-19 outbreaks in Spain since end of lockdown**

In Spain, bars and restaurants are responsible for less than 3% of coronavirus outbreaks, a new report has found. A study released by the Ministry of Health which analysed data from the end of lockdown to October 15 said family reunions accounted for almost 40% of outbreaks. The report also warns of the high number of outbreaks with mixed origins, where transmission shifts from the family environment to other areas such as work

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/10/22/bars-and-restaurants-account-for-less-than-3-of-covid-19-outbreaks-in-spain-since-end-of-lockdown/>

### **Ardern urged to review New Zealand Covid measures after election landslide**

Jacinda Ardern won New Zealand's election with a commanding majority, in part attributed to her handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in her country. But a veteran epidemiologist is exhorting the prime minister to use the political capital gained in her decisive victory to scrutinise the coronavirus response by her government and officials, and adopt strategies proposed by her opponents before Saturday's vote. "New Zealand has shown it can be quite smart and flexible, but we can see we've got these blind spots and we need to have no blind spots," said Nick Wilson, a University of Otago epidemiologist. "This is such an unforgiving disease and very few countries are doing it right so we need to smarten up our act quite substantially."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/22/ardern-urged-to-review-covid-measures-after-election-landslide>

### **China beats the virus, eclipses India in growth**

To keep local transmission at negligible levels, China has been extensively tracking its population through their phones and going in for testing. Perhaps the most draconian step has been the imposition of lockdowns for weeks on end. India has also gone in for extensive lockdowns, but the results have not come remotely close to those in China. Economies across the world contracted sharply when the pandemic arrived but thereafter climbed out of the downturn. In this return to growth, China has shown the greatest robustness. Right now, it is significantly better off than where it was at this time last year. The reason for this is that despite being hit by the coronavirus first, it has been globally among the foremost in successfully tackling it.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/china-beats-the-virus-eclipses-india-in-growth-159134>

### **Dying of loneliness: How COVID-19 is killing dementia patients**

Teresa Palmer is sitting on the back porch of her home in San Francisco when the mobile phone in her hand starts to buzz. A kind, raspy voice inquires from the other end of the line: "Did I wake you?" If the question surprises Palmer, she does not show it. Her reply is plain and swift. "No," she says: It is past one in the afternoon. She has been awake for hours.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/10/22/loneliness-isolation-and-depression-how-the-pandemic-is>

### **COVID-19 crisis to speed up depletion of Social Security**

The economic crisis caused by the coronavirus will dramatically speed up the depletion of the United States' Social Security programme, a bipartisan think-tank warned on Thursday, outlining how quickly retirement and disability trust funds could run dry depending on the depth and length of the pandemic-induced recession. The Bipartisan Policy Center modelled four scenarios for the current recession, ranging in severity from "50 percent worse than the Great Recession" to "surprisingly quick economic rebound". What it found was that every scenario showed Social Security retirement fund reserves depleting earlier than predicted – between 2029 and 2033. The centre presented its findings in a brief entitled How Will COVID-19 Affect the Social Security Trust Funds? (PDF), which was published Thursday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/10/22/covid-19-crisis-to-speed-up-depletion-of-social-security-funds>

### **Britain tightens COVID restrictions in more areas of England**

Britain tightened COVID-19 restrictions in three more areas of England on Thursday, putting them in the "high" category of the UK's three-tier system, meaning people will not be able to mix outside their households. "We're seeing rising rates of infection in Stoke-on-Trent, in Coventry and in Slough. In all of these areas, there are over 100 positive cases per 100,000 people, cases are doubling around every fortnight and we're seeing a concerning increase of cases among the over-60s," health minister Matt Hancock told parliament. Several cities in northern England are in the top "very high" category, which requires the closure of hospitality.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-tier/britain-tightens-covid-restrictions-in-more-areas-of-england-idUKKBN277221>

## **France extends curfew as COVID second wave surges in Europe**

France extended curfews to around two thirds of its population on Thursday and Belgium's foreign minister was taken into intensive care with COVID-19, as the second wave of the pandemic surged across Europe. French Prime Minister Jean Castex announced a curfew imposed last week on Paris and eight other cities would be extended to 38 more departments, confining 46 million out of the country's 67 million population to their homes from 9 pm to 6 am. "A second wave of the coronavirus epidemic is now under way in France and Europe. The situation is very serious," Castex said at a news conference. Shortly after the measures were announced, French health authorities reported a record 41,622 new confirmed cases, bringing the cumulative total to 999,043.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus/germany-issues-travel-warnings-as-covid-surges-in-europe-idUKKBN27726N>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Covid-19 app development 'bumpy and painful' says NHS boss**

The development of the contact tracing app for Covid-19 was 'bumpy and painful' according to the head of the NHS's innovation division. England and Wales's app, which uses Bluetooth to keep an anonymous log of those in close proximity, was delayed due to technical issues and concerns about privacy. Speaking about the app, NHSX boss Matthew Gould said it was an 'error' not to tell the public it was working on both versions of the technology at the same time. 'It was bumpy and painful but at each point I think we did plus or minus the right thing,' he told the FabChange2020 conference.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/22/covid-19-app-development-bumpy-and-painful-says-head-of-nhsx-13461629/>

### **Why Germany's coronavirus strategy might come back to haunt it**

Germany's coronavirus epidemic, and strategy to deal with the virus, has not been the same as its European counterparts. This might be a good thing, given that Germany has recorded 397,922 cases of the virus, far lower than Spain. The country has also differed from its European peers at a political level in that it has taken largely a decentralized approach to managing the virus response. But that approach could prove to be a double-edged sword when it comes to clear public guidance and messaging on the virus, however, according to Carsten Nickel, deputy director of research at Teneo Intelligence. "The question is whether Germany's strength since the beginning of the pandemic - the not just local imposition but in fact locally-driven design of restrictive as well as support measures - will turn into an obstacle," Nickel said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/22/germanys-coronavirus-strategy-why-it-might-not-work.html>

### **Coronavirus: Italians find new ways to eat out**

The ebb of the first wave and summer al fresco dining saw an encouraging return to business for many Italian eateries and bars; but as the cold sets in, this second wave in is forcing restaurateurs to find new ways to stay afloat. New national restrictions mean restaurants and bars have to close by midnight until 13 November and can seat a maximum of six people per table. Vagh in ufezzi is a simple restaurant with paper place mats and no cover charge. Until two weeks ago, diners would have paid for each dish they ordered; now they are paying by the hour.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54575958>

### **Analysis: China and U.S. economies diverge over coronavirus response**

The United States and China dealt with the spread of the devastating coronavirus pandemic in vastly different ways, and that split is reshaping the global battle between the world's two leading economies. About 11 months after the Wuhan outbreak, China's official GDP numbers this week show not only that the economy is growing, up 4.9% for the third quarter from a year earlier, but also that the Chinese are confident enough the virus has been vanquished to go shopping, dine and spend with gusto. In the United States, 221,000 people are dead from COVID-19 after a delayed

federal response, partisan battles over mask-wearing and lockdowns, and plenty of public events that do not follow public health guidelines. The country is in the midst of a new wave of infections.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa-china-analysis-idUSKBN277066>

### **Coronavirus: China continues to ban tour groups to prevent COVID-19 from spreading**

China will continue to suspend outbound and inbound group tours in a move aimed to prevent international travellers from bringing the coronavirus into the country. The decision was made due to the risk of a resurgence in COVID-19 cases across the country this winter, authorities said yesterday. In China, where COVID-19 was first discovered, the virus appears to have been mostly banished through a combination of lockdowns and travel restrictions that have officials touting the nation as a coronavirus success story.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8867575/Coronavirus-China-continues-ban-tour-groups-prevent-COVID-19-spreading.html>

### **Europe's resilient manufacturers bounce back from virus**

Factories across Europe are buzzing with activity again, encouraging some industrial bosses to invest in extra production as they shrug off the rise in coronavirus infections that is casting a shadow over the continent's economic recovery. Many manufacturers adapted production sites quickly to protect their workers after the pandemic hit, and in recent months they have benefited from rising demand, driven by a rebound in exports, particularly to the resurgent Chinese market.

<https://www.ft.com/content/6d6f4db8-0775-4f06-94f2-332bac3669b5>

### **Permanently remote workers seen doubling in 2021 due to pandemic productivity - survey**

The percentage of workers around the world that is permanently working from home is expected to double in 2021 as productivity has increased during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey from U.S.-based Enterprise Technology Research (ETR). ETR in September surveyed about 1,200 chief information officers from around the world across different industries. The CIOs also expressed increased optimism about business prospects in 2021, as they see an increase in tech budgets by 2.1%, compared with a 4.1% decline this year due to the lockdowns triggered by the pandemic. The survey said information technology decision-makers expect permanent remote work to double to 34.4% of their companies' workforces in 2021, compared with 16.4% before the coronavirus outbreak, a result of positive productivity trends.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-technology/permanently-remote-workers-seen-doubling-in-2021-due-to-pandemic-productivity-survey-idUKKBN2772P8?il=0>

### **Test and trace works better when numbers are low - UK science adviser**

England's test and trace scheme needs improvement and it is hard to run an effective system when there are large and increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases, UK chief scientific adviser Patrick Vallance said on Thursday. "It's undoubtedly the case that test trace and isolation becomes much more difficult to have an impact once numbers are high. So, it's much more effective when numbers are low," he said at a news conference. "It's very clear that there's room for improvement."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-adviser/test-and-trace-works-better-when-numbers-are-low-uk-science-adviser-idUKKBN2772DF>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Covid-19 anti-vaxxers use century-old arguments**

As we get closer to an effective vaccine for Covid-19, we should expect to see a renewed push of disinformation and vocal resistance from the anti-vaccination movement. Over the past year, seemingly endless conspiracy theories and misinformation campaigns have gained traction online amid rising Covid-19 infection rates worldwide. Looking at the history of these movements can help

us understand why they can be so effective at capturing a popular following. As a historian of medicine, it has become clear from researching the history of vaccines that those who promote anti-vaccination consistently use a standard set of strategies. Although it can be hard to see patterns of argument in the modern context, looking back at a historical instance of epidemic and misinformation provides a useful case study for revealing today's recurring anti-vaccination strategies.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/22/health/anti-vaxxers-old-arguments-covid-19-wellness-partner/index.html>

### **Coronavirus: National lockdown 'not right course' for UK, says Prime Minister**

Prime minister Boris Johnson has ruled out another national lockdown in the UK. Speaking at a Downing Street press conference on Thursday (October 22), Mr Johnson said he did not believe it was the "right course now" for the country. He said: "Not when the psychological cost of lockdown is well known to us and the economic cost. "Not when it is being suggested that we might have to perform the same brutal lockdowns again and again in the months ahead. "And not when there is such an obvious variation unlike last time, between different parts of the country. That's why we are going for a middle course."

<https://www.business-live.co.uk/economic-development/coronavirus-national-lockdown-not-right-19149522>

### **Outcry in India as Modi's ruling party offers 'free vaccines' in election manifesto**

India's ruling party has sparked an outcry by including a pledge to offer "free vaccines" in its election manifesto for a crucial upcoming state election. Senior figures from Narendra Modi's BJP are campaigning hard in the populous eastern state of Bihar, where voting will begin in less than a week, and where a loss for the party would be seen as a damning indictment on its handling of the Covid-19 crisis. National finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman released the party's manifesto for the state polls on Thursday in Patna, Bihar's largest city, but was accused of politicising the central government's response to the pandemic by making the vaccine pledge.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/outcry-in-india-as-modis-ruling-party-offers-free-vaccines-in-election-manifesto/ar-BB1aib8v>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Covid-19: Services for special needs children 'went to zero overnight'**

Essential services for many young people with disabilities "went to zero overnight" due to lockdown, a Stormont committee has heard. MLAs were told that as a result, some children had harmed themselves and injured their parents. Donna Jennings, from the Evangelical Alliance, said the need for help increased, "but services disappeared". Schools, including most special schools, closed to the majority of pupils for a number of months. Many respite and other support services were also suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-54642037>

### **Two Indian restaurants in Melbourne to defy lockdown rules and open up**

Two Indian restaurants to defy lockdown rules. Honest Restaurant in Dandenong and Lala's Kitchen in Boronia to open dine-in on Monday. The state government has announced dine-in to be allowed from November 1

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/two-indian-restaurants-in-melbourne-to-defy-lockdown-rules-and-open-up>

### **COVID-19 Lockdown Contributes To Infant Mortality Cluster In Australia**

The city of Adelaide in South Australia has seen four newborn deaths in four weeks due to COVID-19 lockdowns preventing transport to better-equipped hospitals in Victoria. Officials in Victoria say Adelaide lockdowns prevented them from initiating medical transport. Adelaide's hospitals are chronically underfunded and lack both the personnel and equipment to deal with these difficult cases. The hospital was already under investigation for the third infant death when the fourth

fatality occurred on Friday. Obstetrician, gynecologist and professor John Svigos testified on Oct. 13 that Adelaide's hospital is the only one in a mainland capital city that does not have heart machines for children and infants.

<https://www.ibtimes.com/covid-19-lockdown-contributes-infant-mortality-cluster-australia-3066115>

### **Indian garment workers cover bosses' lockdown losses**

From unpaid overtime to wage cuts, Indian garment workers say they are being made to compensate their bosses for the food, shelter and salary provided in the coronavirus lockdown. But it is a steep price for a workforce that was already juggling low pay and poor conditions before the pandemic shuttered their factories and strangulated orders. Workers say they are being offered the choice of less money or working extra shifts for free to pay back their bosses, who dangle the threat of unemployment if employees refuse.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/india-workers/indian-garment-workers-cover-bosses-lockdown-losses-idINL4N2HB3SD>

### **Foreign tourism shutdown supports Russia's struggling economy amid COVID-19**

Russia's economy could benefit by up to \$30 billion this year from Russians spending their roubles at home rather than on foreign holidays due to travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, economists say. The estimates are a rare piece of good news for an economy battered by low global oil prices as well as coronavirus lockdowns. Russia ran a budget deficit of around \$23 billion in the first nine months of this year. Like many other countries, Russia also saw foreign tourists stay away in droves in 2020. But it sent far fewer travellers overseas than usual after closing its borders in March. The outflow in some cases fell by as much as 80%.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-russia-travel/foreign-tourism-shutdown-supports-russias-struggling-economy-amid-covid-19-idUKL8N2HD2FE>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Sewage can reveal COVID outbreaks, UK project finds**

Traces of COVID-19 can be successfully detected in sewage, helping to give health officials an early warning of local outbreaks of the virus, the British government said on Friday. A project, originally launched in June, has now proved that fragments of genetic material from the virus can be detected in waste water, indicating if a local community or institution is experiencing a spike in cases. The government said this would allow health officials to identify large outbreaks especially where there were carriers not displaying any symptoms and to encourage people to get tested or take precautions.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-sewage/sewage-can-reveal-covid-outbreaks-uk-project-finds-idUKKBN27738F>

### **'It has been a trauma': nurses on 'shambolic' 111 Covid-19 clinical service**

Ten nurses who worked for the NHS 111 Covid-19 Clinical Assessment Service have come forward to blow the whistle on their unit's organisation, describing it as shambolic, and lacking in adequate training and safeguards. The nurses, who had retired or left the NHS after many years' experience, were recruited to the CCAS, a new national division of NHS 111, after the health secretary, Matt Hancock, urged doctors and nurses to return and work on the response to the pandemic. The former CCAS nurses came forward to talk about their experiences after it was revealed that an audit had found that 60% of calls to patients, by nurses and allied healthcare professionals (AHPs), had not been safe.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/22/it-has-been-a-trauma-nurses-on-shambolic-111-covid-19-clinical-service>

### **Efficacy of Tocilizumab in Patients Hospitalized with Covid-19**

Tocilizumab was not effective for preventing intubation or death in moderately ill hospitalized

patients with Covid-19. Some benefit or harm cannot be ruled out, however, because the confidence intervals for efficacy comparisons were wide.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2028836>

### **The false promise of herd immunity for COVID-19**

Epidemiologists have repeatedly smacked down such ideas. “Surrendering to the virus” is not a defensible plan, says Kristian Andersen, an immunologist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California. Such an approach would lead to a catastrophic loss of human lives without necessarily speeding up society’s return to normal, he says. “We have never successfully been able to do it before, and it will lead to unacceptable and unnecessary untold human death and suffering.” Despite widespread critique, the idea keeps popping up among politicians and policymakers in numerous countries, including Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. US President Donald Trump spoke positively about it in September, using the malapropism “herd mentality”. And even a few scientists have pushed the agenda. In early October, a libertarian think tank and a small group of scientists released a document called the Great Barrington Declaration. In it, they call for a return to normal life for people at lower risk of severe COVID-19, to allow SARS-CoV-2 to spread to a sufficient level to give herd immunity. People at high risk, such as elderly people, it says, could be protected through measures that are largely unspecified. The writers of the declaration received an audience in the White House, and sparked a counter memorandum from another group of scientists in *The Lancet*, which called the herd-immunity approach a “dangerous fallacy unsupported by scientific evidence”<sup>3</sup>.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02948-4>

### **Huawei phones to get their own version of NHS Covid-19 app**

The NHS Covid-19 app has been submitted to Huawei's app store. The move will initially mean that users of Huawei's older handsets will be able to download it from the firm's App Gallery as an alternative to the Google Play store. But it potentially paves the way for the contact-tracing software to come to the Chinese firm's newer handsets too. Huawei indicated that this might happen as soon as November. But others have stressed there are hurdles to overcome. The app - which is designed for use in England and Wales - has already been downloaded more than 18 million times from Apple and Google's own stores. All of Huawei's existing phones are powered by Android.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-54644994>

### **A Sustainable Alternative to Blanket Lockdowns**

As cities around the world—including Auckland, Jakarta, Melbourne and Tel Aviv—have entered seemingly endless cycles of lockdowns and viral resurgences, there is a pressing need to reassess this lockdown strategy given the economic, social and psychological damage it wreaks. Blanket lockdowns may be effective, but they are blunt and brutal tools. As this pandemic wears on, possibly for months or even years to come, we need a sustainable alternative that involves more targeted measures that are evidence-based and data-driven.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-sustainable-alternative-to-blanket-lockdowns/>

### **Lockdown made life worse for two in five children, NHS report says**

Two in five children aged 11 to 16 feel the coronavirus lockdown has made their lives worse, an NHS report on mental health suggests. They said their biggest anxieties were about missing school and family and friends contracting Covid-19. Mental disorders have risen in boys and girls since 2017 and now affect 16% of children, a large survey suggests. The children's commissioner for England said the increase was “extremely alarming”. Anne Longfield said a properly-funded children's mental health service was needed and every school should have its own NHS-funded counsellor. Mental health charities say the pandemic has put a huge strain on children, parents and carers.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54644627>

### **'Call for data on Covid-19 health impacts'**

New Zealand has not released any analysis about the negative health impacts of the Covid-19 elimination and lockdown policy. This is highlighted this week, by a study released in the UK this week which indicates that their lockdowns are responsible for thousands of deaths and new illnesses, principally as a result of delayed cancer diagnoses. The only known study of lockdown health impacts in New Zealand was of a Dunedin primary health clinic, where referrals and tests had dropped 100% and 99% respectively. Anecdotal evidence provided to the Covid Plan B group is that referrals and tests may be down across the country by two thirds. Auckland District Health Board is also investigating after four women died during and after pregnancy this year, with three dying since alert level 3 was instituted in late March. Expected numbers of deaths are between 0 and one from previous years. Evidence provided from affected individuals indicate illnesses and health prognosis have worsened due to delayed tests and treatment. Whether these cases represent a wider problem is not known. Dr Simon Thornley, spokesman for Covid Plan B, said the Government's elimination and lockdown policy was based on hope, because little analysis of the downsides of the policy has been carried out.

<http://www.voxy.co.nz/health/5/375754>

### **Gilead's remdesivir first to win US approval to treat COVID-19**

The United States Food and Drug Administration has approved Gilead Sciences Inc's antiviral drug Veklury - better known as remdesivir - for the treatment of COVID-19, the company announced Thursday. Veklury is the brand name for remdesivir, which was previously authorised by the FDA for emergency use to treat patients who have been hospitalised with COVID-19. Gilead becomes the first and only company to receive approval for a COVID-19 treatment in the US,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/10/22/gileads-remdesivir-first-to-win-us-approval-to-treat-covid-19>

### **Spike in South Korea flu shot deaths fuels vaccine doubts**

At least 13 South Koreans have died after receiving flu shots in recent days, according to official and local media reports, fuelling doubts about vaccine safety even as authorities rule out a link and as global efforts to find a vaccine against COVID-19 intensify. Health authorities said on Wednesday there were no plans to suspend the programme to vaccinate approximately 19 million people for free after a preliminary investigation into six deaths found no direct connection with the drug they had received.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/22/spike-in-south-korea-flu-shot-deaths-fuelling-vaccine-doubts>

### **Remdesivir: US regulators approve first drug to treat Covid-19**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first drug to treat Covid-19: remdesivir, an antiviral medicine given through an IV for patients needing hospitalization. The drug, which California-based Gilead Sciences Inc is calling Veklury, cut the time to recovery from 15 days to 10 on average in a large study led by the US National Institutes of Health. It had been authorized for use on an emergency basis since spring, and now has become the first drug to win full US approval for treating Covid-19. Gilead says Veklury is approved for people at least 12 years old and weighing at least 88lb (40kg) who need hospitalization for their coronavirus infection. It works by inhibiting a substance the virus uses to make copies of itself.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/22/us-regulators-approve-remdesivir-drug-to-treat-covid>

### **UK PM Johnson says COVID trace scheme needs improvement after new low**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday England's test and trace scheme needed improvement after a record low proportion of contacts of positive COVID-19 cases were reached in the latest weekly figures. Just 59.6% of contacts of positive COVID cases were reached between Oct. 8 and Oct. 14, statistics for England's Test and Trace scheme showed - compared with the 80% target - with turnaround times for people receiving their results also getting slower. "I share people's

frustrations and I understand totally why we do need to see faster turnaround times and we do need to improve it," Johnson said at a news conference.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-trace/johnson-says-covid-trace-scheme-needs-improvement-after-new-low-idUKKBN2771GX>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Care home staff 'worried' amid Covid-19 second wave**

Care home staff are "very tired and very worried" amid the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, a group representing care providers has said. Stormont's Health Committee has heard morale is low among workers who fear that the "system is now working against" their efforts to keep Covid out. Pauline Shepherd of the Independent Health and Care Providers outlined concerns around "no safety net" of re-testing residents on returning to care homes from hospital, staff shortages and increased visitors. She said Department of Health guidance for care partners for residents to be in place by November 5 left staff feeling very worried that the work they were doing to keep the virus out could be jeopardised by increased footfall.

<https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2020-10-22/care-home-staff-worried-amid-covid-19-second-wave>

### **Coronavirus: First Nightingale hospital in England reopens in Manchester for Covid-19 patients**

Hospital was set up in Manchester's Central Conference Centre but closed in June when last Covid patient left. It will be reopened in anticipation of a surge in Covid-19 patients in the city, to open bed capacity elsewhere. Manchester faces Tier Three lockdown rules from midnight on Friday as city's outbreak rumbles on. Local rules are now springing up nationwide, with worries in Nottingham and Stoke as Slough enters Tier Two. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is still refusing a national lockdown despite calls from top scientists

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8867921/Coronavirus-Nightingale-hospital-England-reopens-Manchester-Covid-19-patients.html>

### **Stretched Dutch hospitals to send COVID patients to Germany within days**

The Dutch hospital system is coming under increasing strain from coronavirus admissions as daily cases hit a record high, and it expects to begin transferring some patients to Germany within two days, the hospital association said on Thursday. Almost half the country's intensive care beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients, the LNAZ association's head Ernst Kuipers said. "And we certainly have not seen the end of it", he told reporters. "Hospital numbers will continue to rise at least until the end of this month." The number of daily infections hit 9,271 on Thursday, the National Institute for Public Health (RIVM) said

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-netherlands-tally/stretched-dutch-hospitals-to-send-covid-patients-to-germany-within-days-idUSKBN2771SS>

### **Germans Are Panic Buying Toilet Paper And Disinfectants As Covid-19 Surges Again**

Sales of toilet paper, disinfectants and soaps are rising once again in Germany, the country's statistics office announced on Thursday, highlighting fears of an imminent lockdown as Europe's largest economy sees a resurgence in Covid-19 cases. Unlike the April lockdown, where massive hoarding led to empty store shelves, German retailers claim that they are better prepared this time. "After the events we saw earlier this year, we are monitoring changes in demand more closely than ever to ensure that nothing is in short supply", discount retailer Aldi Süd told news website Local.de last week. Another retailer Lidl also said it was "well prepared" to react quickly and provide stores with "sufficient supplies" if demand increases.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/siladityaray/2020/10/22/germans-are-panic-buying-toilet-paper-and-disinfectants-as-covid-19-surges-again/>

### **German disease control center urges vigilance as virus rises**

The head of Germany's disease control center urged people Thursday to be vigilant about following coronavirus precautions as the country posted a record number of new cases, saying a rapid increase in infections could be reversed but only if everyone works together. Robert Koch Institute President Lothar Wieler said the daily number of confirmed cases hit 11,287, the first time Germany's 24-hour tally has been over the 10,000 mark since the beginning of the pandemic and shattering the previous daily record of 7,830 set on Saturday. The country had a nationwide infection rate of 56.2 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days. Some hot spots, including several districts of the capital, had rates well over double that.

<https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-pandemics-europe-consumer-confidence-economy-f0f201423a559b150ee21cf7bfd41da>

### **Switzerland promises lockdown measures unless infections subside**

Switzerland's president has promised the country would adopt additional lockdown measures unless skyrocketing new coronavirus case numbers slowed. Switzerland's coronavirus case numbers are now doubling from week to week. If the situation does not stabilise within days, the government is threatening to impose new measures to control the surge in registered infections, which began around the start of the month. "If the curve does not flatten out by next Wednesday, we will really make decisions that go further," President Simonetta Sommaruga told national broadcaster RTS. The southwest of the country has been particularly affected, with clusters breaking out in retirement homes. "We were all hoping we could go into winter without this new increase in the number of cases," said Sommaruga.

<https://www.thelocal.ch/20201022/we-will-make-decisions-switzerland-promises-lockdown-measures-unless-infections-subside>

### **Rome, Milan and Naples prepare for coronavirus curfews as Italy cases soar**

Italy's three largest cities face new curfews as regional authorities try to slow the spread of COVID-19 where it first struck hard in Europe, most of whose countries are now imposing, or mulling, new restrictions to cope with rapidly rising caseloads

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/italy-coronavirus-restrictions-cases-rome-milan-naples-b1227746.html>

### **The number of older people getting coronavirus in Europe is rising again. That's really bad news**

Europe is deep in the second wave of the coronavirus epidemic, and a particularly worrying trend is beginning to emerge: More older people are becoming infected. Over the summer months, the continent saw infection clusters popping up mostly among younger people who were venturing out into bars, restaurants and other public spaces. While that wasn't ideal, it meant the death rate stayed relatively low, since younger people are statistically less vulnerable to the virus and most avoid getting seriously ill. However, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has warned that more older people are now becoming infected. According to the ECDC's latest situation report, at least 13 countries in Europe saw new infection rates among people aged 65 or over rise to what ECDC defines as "high" last week -- between 64 per 100,000 in Croatia and 206 per 100,000 in the Netherlands.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/cases-of-covid-19-rising-among-older-people-in-europe-again-1.5155715>

### **Spain mulls curfews to contain 'out-of-control' pandemic**

Spain's health minister described a second wave of the coronavirus sweeping the county as "out of control" on Thursday as the government postponed a decision on whether to follow France and other European countries in imposing curfews.

<https://www.metro.us/spain-mulls-curfews-to/>

### **Spain surpasses one million coronavirus infections as western Europe falls back into**

## **lockdown**

Spain has become the first European Union nation to record a million coronavirus infections, official data showed on Wednesday, as the government mulled fresh restrictions on public life to curb the spread of the disease. The country recorded 16,973 confirmed cases of Covid-19 over the past 24 hours, the health ministry announced, taking the total to 1,005,295 since its first case was diagnosed on January 31 on the remote island of La Gomera in the Canary Islands. Of this number, 34,366 people have died, with 156 more deaths were recorded in the previous 24 hours.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/spain-surpasses-one-million-coronavirus-infections-as-western-europe-falls-back-into-lockdown>

## **Spain first in Western Europe to pass 1 mln cases**

Spain is now the first Western European country to exceed 1 million reported COVID-19 infections, despite increasingly aggressive control methods. After slowing to a trickle in the wake of Spain's strict March-to-June lockdown, the infection rate accelerated to frequently exceed 10,000 cases a day from late August. It hit a new peak of more than 16,000 last week. Health Minister Salvador Illa said on Thursday (October 22) that Spain needs drastic measures to tackle Europe's second wave, which he says is out-of-control in his country. He is now considering new restrictions including curfews. However, daily deaths in the country have been hovering around 100, still a far cry from the peak of nearly 900 registered in late March.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/spain-first-western-europe-pass-122610748.html>

## **South Korea's virus battle faces new cluster challenge**

A cluster of infections around the Greater Seoul area has given South Korea yet another challenge to mount in its fight against COVID-19. The country reported 121 new infections on Thursday, highest in almost a month, taking the nationwide tally up to 25,543, Yonhap News Agency reported. The death toll increased by three to reach 453, with the fatality rate remaining at 1.77%. Thursday's figures were the highest since 109 cases were reported on Sept. 24, but infection numbers had dropped down to double digits since then. The spike in cases is due to clusters at senior care hospitals and other health facilities. Health authorities have intensified efforts to track down suspected patients, many of whom have been linked to a hospital in Gwangju, south of Seoul.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/south-korea-s-virus-battle-faces-new-cluster-challenge/2014989>

## **How New York's mis-steps let Covid-19 overwhelm the US**

The US had seen coronavirus coming as it swept from China through Asia, Europe and Iran in early 2020. "We're prepared and we're doing a great job with it, and it will go away," said Donald Trump, US president, on March 10. A week earlier, New York governor Andrew Cuomo declared: "Excuse our arrogance as New Yorkers . . . [but] we don't even think it's going to be as bad as it was in other countries." As the National Guard responded to New Rochelle's 108 recorded cases, Mr Cuomo observed reassuringly that New York City had just 36 and no deaths. But since then it has suffered more than 260,000 infections and buried 24,000 of its citizens, almost 10 times the number who died at the World Trade Center in 2001.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a52198f6-0d20-4607-b12a-05110bc48723>

## **Australia still the lucky COVID-19 country**

While Canberrans were concentrating on the ACT election and the rest of the country was distracted by the Gladys Berejiklian and Daniel Andrews shows the global crisis has gone from terrible to catastrophic. New cases are being logged at the fastest rate so far, health systems in many countries are being swamped, and much of Europe is heading back under the lockdown "doona". Just when it seems Australians may be able to enjoy some sort of "COVID-19 normal" Christmas billions of people are doing it tougher than ever as second waves rage out of control.

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6978974/this-is-still-the-lucky-covid-19-country/>

## **Big spike in Sweden's coronavirus cases forces rethink on lockdown amid Europe's second wave**

Ballooning coronavirus cases in Sweden have forced a major rethink of the country's controversial no-lockdown policy. The Scandinavian nation, like most of Western Europe, is experiencing a second wave of infections. Sweden's per-capita death rate as of last week was 58.6 per 100,000 people, reports Time magazine. The nation's average daily cases figure rose by 173 per cent from early September to early October.

<https://www.9news.com.au/world/coronavirus-sweden-jump-in-covid19-cases-forces-lockdown-rethink-europe-news/5b573a9d-1fff-47b2-a155-ae291dd9dcaf>

## **Germans start 'hamstering' toilet paper again as COVID-19 cases surge**

Sales of toilet paper and disinfectants are on the rise again in Germany, the country's statistics office said on Thursday, as Europe's largest economy struggles with a second coronavirus wave. "Hamster purchases are starting again," the office said on Twitter, using a German phrase for panic-buying or hoarding. Sales of toilet paper surged by 89.9% last week when compared to pre-crisis levels, while disinfectants (up 72.5%) and soap (up 62.3%) were also in high demand, it said in a separate statement.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany-hoarding/germans-start-hamstering-toilet-paper-again-as-covid-19-cases-surge-idUSKBN2770UB>

## **German consumer morale darkens as coronavirus cases soar**

German consumer morale fell heading into November as fears about a second coronavirus wave that is hitting Europe's biggest economy made Germans less willing to open their wallets, a survey showed on Thursday. The GfK institute said its consumer sentiment index, based on a survey of around 2,000 Germans, fell to -3.1 heading into November from a revised -1.7 in the previous month. The reading missed a Reuters forecast for a narrower drop to -2.8. GfK consumer expert Rolf Buerkl said optimism among German consumers faded in October with coronavirus cases soaring in Germany, fuelling fears of another lockdown to contain the outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/germany-economy-consumersentiment/german-consumer-morale-darkens-as-coronavirus-cases-soar-idUSKBN2770M2>

## **Germany can grow next year if it avoids another lockdown - minister**

German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said there was a prospect of economic growth next year if the country managed to avoid a second lockdown, adding that the economy looked better than they had expected it would six months ago. Avoiding a second lockdown would involve controlling the spread of the disease. The latest overnight increase of over 11,000 new cases was a major concern. "That is far too much," Altmaier said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-altmaier/germany-can-grow-next-year-if-it-avoids-another-lockdown-minister-idUSL8N2HD55U>

## **Blood of recovered COVID-19 patients shows little benefit as treatment**

Using blood of recovered COVID-19 patients - or so-called convalescent plasma - as a potential treatment is of little benefit in helping hospitalised patients fight off the infection, according to results of a clinical trial in India. Published in the BMJ British Medical Journal on Friday, the results show that convalescent plasma, which delivers antibodies from COVID-19 survivors to infected people, failed to reduce death rates or halt progression to severe disease. The findings, from a study of more than 400 hospitalised COVID-19 patients, are a setback for a treatment that U.S. President Donald Trump touted in August as an "historic breakthrough". The United States and India have authorised convalescent plasma for emergency use.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-plasma/blood-of-recovered-covid-19-patients-shows-little-benefit-as-treatment-idUKKBN277388>

### **Jordan announces record daily new COVID-19 cases**

Jordan on Wednesday reported 2,648 new COVID-19 cases, its highest daily number since the start of the pandemic as the country faces a major outbreak with a tripling of deaths in just the last two weeks. The surge in the last month has put Jordan's infection numbers above those of most of its Middle East neighbours and reverses months of success in containing the outbreak. It also accompanies an alarming jump in daily deaths that now average around 30. Prime Minister Bisher al-Khasawneh said although the country had entered a "difficult phase" after widespread community transmission, it would not reimpose a national lockdown.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-jordan-surge-idUKKBN276379>

### **Italy's daily coronavirus cases soar to new daily record above 15,000**

Italy has registered 15,199 new coronavirus infections over the past 24 hours, the health ministry said on Wednesday, the highest daily tally since the start of the country's outbreak and up from a previous record of 11,705 posted on Sunday. Tuesday saw 10,874 new cases of the highly contagious virus. The ministry also reported 127 COVID-related deaths on Wednesday, up from 89 the day before but still far fewer than at the height of the pandemic in Italy in March and April, when a daily peak of more than 900 fatalities was reached. After declining over the summer, infections have steadily accelerated in the last few months.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy/italys-daily-coronavirus-cases-soar-to-new-daily-record-above-15000-idUSKBN2762AY>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Czechs Enter 2nd Lockdown to Avoid Health System Collapse**

But amid a record surge of coronavirus infections that's threatening the entire health system with collapse, the Czech Republic is adopting on Thursday exactly the same massive restrictions it slapped on citizens in the spring. Prime Minister Andrej Babis had repeatedly said these measures would never return. "We have no time to wait," Babis explained Wednesday. "The surge is enormous." Babis apologized for the huge impact the restrictions will have on everyday life but said if they were not taken "our health system would collapse between Nov 7-11."

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-10-22/despite-pledges-czechs-face-2nd-lockdown-as-system-totter>

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### **Ireland goes back on lockdown: Residents must stay within 3 miles of home through November**

Ireland is already focused on Christmas. It's a major national priority. Unless the country can get the COVID-19 pandemic under control, there won't be much Christmas cheer this year in Galway, Cork or Dublin. With infections on the rise, the government has imposed a tough new lockdown that began at midnight Wednesday, shutting down nonessential shops, limiting restaurants to takeout service and ordering people to stay within 3 miles of their homes for the next six weeks. The restrictions are among the toughest in Europe, and Prime Minister Micheal Martin said he imposed them in part to ensure Ireland can celebrate Christmas "in a meaningful way."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/news/2020/10/22/ireland-goes-back-lockdown-6-weeks-save-christmas/3725194001/>

### **Dublin 'eerie' as Ireland plunges into second lockdown**

A "cloud of sadness" descended on the streets of central Dublin Thursday as Ireland became the first EU nation to return to a full coronavirus lockdown. Schools remain open but otherwise for six weeks, all Irish citizens have been told to stay home, with a strict five-kilometre (three-mile) travel limit for exercise. Restaurants, bars and pubs will be shuttered and visits between different households banned.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201022-dublin-eerie-as-ireland-plunges-into-second-lockdown>

### **More than seven million people in Spain now facing perimetral lockdowns**

More than 7.2 million people in Spain live in municipalities or regions that are currently, or soon to be, subject to a perimetral lockdown, meaning residents cannot leave or enter the area unless it is for essential reasons, such as for work, to access care services or in the case of an emergency. This restriction – aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus – is already in place in 50 municipalities of greatly different sizes, from Madrid, with its 3.2 million inhabitants to Jerte in Extremadura, which is home to 1,266 residents. Over the past weeks and months, a series of measures has been introduced in the affected areas in a bid to slow contagion rates. But they have not worked.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-10-22/more-than-seven-million-people-in-spain-now-facing-perimetral-lockdowns.html>

### **Why countries are resorting to pandemic lockdowns again**

The lockdowns are back. On Thursday, Ireland is set to become the first country in Europe to impose a second national lockdown as cases of the novel coronavirus surge once again. “We’re making a preemptive strike against the virus, acting before it’s too late,” Deputy Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said as he announced the measures. Ireland is not alone in moving toward drastic action, although the extent of measures varies. The Czech Republic, only months ago considered a rare pandemic success story, announced similar plans on Wednesday. Britain, France, Germany and Spain have set regional restrictions this month, prompting demands for nationwide action.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/10/22/second-lockdown-ireland-europe-coronavirus/>

### **What is Rishi Sunak’s new job support package for tier 2 and 3 lockdown areas and who is eligible?**

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak has announced some major changes to the Job Support Scheme to help businesses that have been affected by lockdown restrictions. Mr Sunak was under pressure to devise a more generous support system after Manchester Metro Mayor Andy Burnham and others accused the government of risking thousands of jobs by forcing businesses’ doors to close with lackluster financial support. The current furlough scheme ends on October 31, which will be replaced by the Job Support Scheme. What changes have been made to the scheme?

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/10/22/what-rishi-sunak-new-job-support-scheme-tier-2-3-lockdown-13463412/>

### **Europeans face more curfews, restrictions, as virus surges**

Curfews were largely expanded Thursday across France, which registered some 41,600 new confirmed virus cases to approach a total of 1 million, while similar overnight restrictions were slapped on Italy’s three biggest cities — Rome, Naples and Milan — as rapidly rising caseloads across Europe prompted tighter limits on everyday ways of life. In Greece, people in the Athens area and other parts of the country with high infection rates were also ordered to stay off the streets from 12:30 a.m. to 5 a.m. “The aim is to reduce general movement and evening gatherings, which favor the transmission of the virus,” Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a televised address. “With a little less fun, for a short period of time, we will have better health for a long time.”

<https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-pandemics-italy-rome-europe-3b1cc9d90a777f717a7e37cf7f9fa879>