

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

25th Nov 2020

News Highlights

UK nations to relax lockdown restrictions to salvage Christmas

England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, the four nations of the UK, [have all agreed to relax lockdown restrictions and allow up to three households to meet at home for five days in a bid to allow Britons to celebrate Christmas](#). Up to three households will be able to form a 'Christmas bubble' which will allow them to meet at home, outdoor public spaces and places of worship from December 23 to December 27.

Moderna vaccine will protect from virus but may not prevent one from spreading the virus, chief scientist says

Moderna recently announced that the coronavirus vaccine being developed by them is 94.5% effective in preventing people from getting sick or severely ill from the virus. However, [the company's chief medical officer Tal Zaks said that since the company did not test asymptomatic participants](#), they couldn't tell if vaccinated people could still be silent spreaders of the disease.

PM Modi holds key meet with CMs on coronavirus surge, no national lockdown for now

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual meeting on Tuesday attended by the Chief Ministers of Delhi, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh, states that are all witnessing a surge in coronavirus cases lately. [While rumours abounded of the possibility of another national lockdown](#), no such decision was announced after the meeting, with the gathering serving as a brainstorming session to formulate strategy for the coming days to tackle the large spike in Covid-19 cases.

Rollout of coronavirus vaccine by mid-December, says CDC director

Dr Robert Redfield, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), said that the first coronavirus vaccine doses could be rolled out as early as mid-December. [Health officials announced that 6.4 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine would be released in the initial distribution](#), pending approval from the FDA, whose officials are meeting on December 10 to decide whether to provide emergency approval for the vaccine.

Lockdown Exit

Special Report: 50,000 COVID-19 deaths and rising. How Britain failed to stop the second wave

Faced with one of the highest death tolls from the first wave of the coronavirus, Boris Johnson pledged a "world-beating" test-and-trace system to prevent a resurgence this winter. A Reuters investigation reveals how that promise came unstuck.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-newwave/special-report-50000-covid-19-deaths-and-rising-how-britain-failed-to-stop-the-second-wave-idUSKBN28410Z>

Melbourne's brutal coronavirus lockdown does job

It was a grim, lifeless mid-winter in shuttered Melbourne — Australia's second largest city and the nation's cultural and gastronomic capital. As a second coronavirus outbreak took hold, triggered by lapses in the city's mandatory hotel quarantine system for returning overseas travellers, the southern state of Victoria and its capital entered another lockdown, one of the West's harshest.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/melbourne-s-brutal-coronavirus-lockdown-does-job-c02bv3hgg>

UK's four nations will relax COVID restrictions to save Christmas

The four nations of the United Kingdom have agreed to relax COVID-19 restrictions for Christmas to allow up to three households to meet at home for five days. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have taken differing approaches to handling the pandemic so far but the leaders of the devolved nations reached agreement with London on Tuesday on rules governing the festive period. Three households will be able to form a "Christmas bubble", allowing them to meet up at home, places of worship and in outdoor public places but not at indoor hospitality or entertainment venues from Dec. 23 until Dec. 27 under the plans.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-christmas/uks-four-nations-will-relax-covid-restrictions-to-save-christmas-idUKKBN2842N8>

Hong Kong to shut bars, nightclubs for the third time as new COVID-19 cases jump

Hong Kong will close bars, nightclubs and other entertainment venues for the third time this year, Health Secretary Sophia Chan said on Tuesday (Nov 24) as authorities scramble to tackle a renewed rise in COVID-19 cases. Authorities are also reopening a temporary COVID-19 treatment hall near the city's airport. On Tuesday, Hong Kong reported 80 new coronavirus cases, taking the total since late January to 5,782 COVID-19 infections and 108 deaths. The financial hub has so far managed to avoid the widespread outbreak of the disease seen in many major cities across the world, with numbers on a daily basis mostly in single digits or low double digits in the weeks prior to the spike.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/covid-19-hong-kong-shut-bars-nightclubs-cases-jump-travel-bubble-13629234>

Coronavirus vaccine boss says 'dosing error' led to 90% success rate discovery

Mene Pangalos, head of AstraZeneca's non-oncology research and development, said a dosing mistake during late-stage trials for the Oxford University vaccine got the team over the line

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/coronavirus-vaccine-boss-says-dosing-23057639>

Vaccine Expert: Once A COVID Vaccine Is Available, 'Don't Overthink It. Don't Wait'

As coronavirus cases continue to surge both in the U.S. and around the world, there's promising news on the vaccine front. Pharmaceutical companies Pfizer, Moderna and, more recently, AstraZeneca have all announced that their vaccines have shown better-than-expected results. Dr. Peter Hotez, co-director of the Center for Vaccine Development at Texas Children's Hospital, says that a vaccine release could begin for selected populations by the middle of December — and that a broader vaccination effort could soon follow. "By the early part of next year, we're going to move pretty quickly, I think, in vaccinating a significant percentage of the [U.S.] population," Hotez says.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/11/24/938375308/vaccine-expert-once-a-covid-vaccine-is-available-dont-overthink-it-dont-wait>

Coronavirus vaccine: Transport staff and teachers should be prioritised

Key workers including transport staff and people from deprived areas should be among those included in the priority list for the Covid-19 vaccine, experts involved in health inequalities have said. Nicola Sturgeon this week set out the Scottish Government's plan to vaccinate 4.4million Scots over the age of 18. There are hopes that around 1million people could receive the jab before the end of January. Frontline health and social care staff, care home residents and staff and all those aged 80 and over will be the first to receive the vaccine.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18888564.coronavirus-vaccine-transport-staff-teachers-prioritised/>

Oxford coronavirus vaccine volunteer explains minimal side effect from injection

A volunteer who took part in the Oxford coronavirus vaccine trial has opened up about what it was like to take the injection and said that he noticed a very limited amount of side effects. Appearing on Lorraine today, volunteer Jack Sommers spoke about his experience on the trial. On Monday, it was revealed that the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine was revealed to have 70% efficacy. Speaking to host Lorraine Kelly via video link from Shropshire, Jack opened up about the minimal side effects he had experienced from the injection.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/oxford-coronavirus-vaccine-volunteer-explains-minimal-side-effect-from-injection/ar-BB1bj4Pq>

Moderna's chief scientist says its vaccine prevents coronavirus from making people sick - but the shot may NOT stop you from spreading the virus

Moderna's chief medical officer Tal Zaks told Axios the firm does not have data that shows whether their vaccine prevents people from spreading the virus. Moderna announced earlier this month its shot is 94.5% effective at preventing people from getting sick or severely ill from coronavirus in trials. But because the company did not test asymptomatic participants it doesn't know whether vaccinated people can be silent carriers and spreaders, Zaks said. He added that he believes the vaccine should prevent viral spread - but doesn't have the data to prove it

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-8982747/Modernas-covid-vaccine-NOT-block-covid-positive-spreading-it.html>

Nursing homes will be first to get COVID-19 vaccine in Spain

Elderly residents and staff in nursing homes will be the first to get vaccinated against the coronavirus in Spain, starting as early as January, Health Minister Salvador Illa said on Tuesday, unveiling a national vaccination plan. Other healthcare workers will be next in line, with a total of 18 groups of citizens being, one after the other, allowed to get the vaccine in one of 13,000 local public health centers. Spain expects to cover a substantial part of the population within the first six months of 2021. "The COVID-19 vaccine will be free," Illa told a news conference, adding vaccination would not be compulsory. "We're convinced that a vaccine is better accepted if it's voluntary."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-spain-vaccine/nursing-homes-will-be-first-to-get-covid-19-vaccine-in-spain-idUKKBN2841VQ>

Covid-19 vaccine: 'My son shouldn't miss school over my vulnerability'

A father with motor neurone disease is calling for the government to prioritise those with clinical vulnerabilities for the roll-out of the vaccine. Shaan has motor neurone disease and has been shielding with his family since March, meaning his five-year-old son has not been able to go to school or socialise with his friends. Shaan and his wife Jessica, from Walthamstow in east London, are calling on the government to prioritise people who are clinically vulnerable in the roll-out of any future Covid-19 vaccination programme.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-london-55024057>

Ford snaps up freezers to store COVID-19 vaccine for autoworkers

Workers at automotive assembly plants are considered essential in most US states, but are not at the top of the list for early vaccine distribution. Ford Motor Co said on Tuesday that it has ordered a dozen ultra-cold freezers that can safely store Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine, a move aimed at ensuring the United States automaker's workers have access to vaccines when they are rolled out nationally. Ford's purchase mirrors efforts by US states and cities to buy equipment to store millions of doses of Pfizer's vaccine at temperatures of -70C (-94F), significantly below the standard for vaccines of 2-8C (36-46F).

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/11/24/ford-orders-a-dozen-ultra-cold-freezers-for-pfizer-covid-vaccine>

'It's a great day': Oxford coronavirus vaccine volunteers on trial data

Dan McAteer describes his reaction more as a sense of relief than elation when his phone pinged on Monday morning with a push alert reporting that the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine has up to 90% efficacy. Several months on from becoming one of thousands of volunteers in trials of the Covid-19 vaccine, the 23-year-old student is trying to comprehend the news that people could be vaccinated as early as next month

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/23/great-day-oxford-coronavirus-vaccine-volunteers-react-trial-data-ast-zeneca-covid>

Hackers 'try to steal Covid vaccine secrets in intellectual property war'

State-sponsored hackers from China, Russia, Iran and North Korea are engaged in concerted attempts to steal coronavirus vaccine secrets in what security experts describe as “an intellectual property war”. They accuse hostile-state hackers of trying to obtain trial results early and seize sensitive information about mass production of drugs, at a time when a range of vaccines are close to being approved for the public. Previously the hackers’ primary intention was to steal the secrets behind the design of a vaccine, with hundreds of drug companies, research labs and health organisations from around the world targeted at any one time.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/22/hackers-try-to-steal-covid-vaccine-secrets-in-intellectual-property-war>

Exit Strategies

Coronavirus: French lockdown to ease after second peak passes

France will begin to ease its strict coronavirus restrictions this weekend, allowing non-essential shops to reopen, President Emmanuel Macron has said. People will also be able to share "moments with the family" over the Christmas period, Mr Macron announced. But he said bars and restaurants would have to remain closed until 20 January. France has reported more than 2.2 million cases and more than 50,000 confirmed coronavirus-related deaths since the start of the pandemic.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55062393>

Watchdog criticises poor planning that left UK without enough PPE as COVID-19 struck

Britain’s failure to stockpile key pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) before the coronavirus pandemic left supplies dangerously low and forced the government to pay five times the normal price to meet demand, the public spending watchdog said. About a third of doctors and nurses, including those working in the riskiest areas of hospitals with COVID-19 patients, complained they were given inadequate protective equipment as the pandemic swept across Britain earlier this year. There were insufficient supplies of gowns and visors despite warnings from some of the government’s top scientific advisers last year that they should be increased, the National Audit Office (NAO) said in a report.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-ppe/watchdog-criticises-poor-planning-that-left-uk-without-enough-ppe-as-covid-19-struck-idUKKBN285007>

The ‘daunting’ hurdles of distributing Covid-19 vaccines in America

James English has \$74,000 to figure out how to distribute the world’s first ultra-cold storage drug to a staff of skeptical and worn-out healthcare workers, as the major sources of supports to contain Covid-19 so far come to an end. English is the regional operations chief and health branch director for Covid-19 in Washoe county, Nevada, and is one of the hundreds of local public health directors across the US who will eventually help distribute Covid-19 vaccines. English faces difficulties likely to be encountered nationally, as the nation undertakes the most logistically challenging vaccination campaign in its history. “The largest hurdle - we have as a small health department - is we do multiple roles,” said English. “Our funding is very minimal.”

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/the-e2-80-98daunting-e2-80-99-hurdles-of-distributing-covid-19-vaccines-in-america/ar-BB1bjjZj>

Hundreds in NYC line up to get tested for COVID-19 ahead of Thanksgiving

Hundreds lined up outside COVID testing facilities Tuesday morning before they even opened their doors. In Brooklyn, dozens flocked to CityMD facilities in the early hours with long lines snaking through Flatbush, Williamsburg and Bushwick. Wealthy New Yorkers are avoiding the wait by paying line-waiters \$80 an hour to line up on their behalf. Gov. Cuomo warned New Yorkers in a press conference Tuesday not to be fooled by one negative test result. Americans across the country are clamoring to get COVID tests as they ignore the pleas of public health experts to cancel Thanksgiving travel plans

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8982329/Hundreds-NYC-line-tested-COVID-19-ahead-Thanksgiving.html>

Covid in Scotland: No changes to local levels after review

Scotland's local Covid-19 alert levels are to remain unchanged, with Nicola Sturgeon saying the government must follow a "cautious approach". Where each local authority area sits in the five-level system of measures is reviewed every Tuesday. The first minister said restrictions were "having an impact", but that no changes would be made this week. She said case numbers may be declining across Scotland, but it was important to "keep the virus at bay". And Ms Sturgeon said she was "hopeful" that a deal will be agreed later on Tuesday to ease curbs over Christmas in a "temporary and limited" way to allow more people to meet up.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-55042383>

Covid-19: England arrivals to be able to cut quarantine with private test

People arriving in England from abroad will be soon able to reduce their quarantine by more than half if they pay for a Covid test after five days, the transport secretary has announced. The rules will come into force from 15 December and the tests from private firms will cost between £65 and £120. Grant Shapps said the scheme would "bolster international travel while keeping the public safe". The travel industry welcomed the policy but described it as "long overdue". It follows Boris Johnson's announcement that England will come under "toughened" three-tiered regional restrictions when the lockdown ends on 2 December.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55052381>

Coronavirus: German states agree on Christmas rules

Tighten the screws in a bid to salvage some semblance of normalcy at Christmas: That seems to be the essence of a new COVID strategy for December reportedly developed by Germany's regional leaders.

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-germany-lockdown-covid/a-55699925>

Italy seeking EU rules for Christmas skiing to limit COVID-19 risk

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has warned Italians not to ski during the Christmas holidays to help curb a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 50,000 people in Italy. He also called on other European countries to agree on common rules for the sector to prevent cases being imported from abroad if Italy keeps its slopes closed - although neighbouring Austria has already expressed its reservations about the idea. Italy's ski resorts earn annual revenues of about 11 billion euros (\$13.06 billion), a third of which comes from the days Italians usually spend in the Alps and Dolomites at Christmas and New Year.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-italy-ski/italy-seeking-eu-rules-for-christmas-skiing-to-limit-covid-19-risk-idUKKBN28416P>

'We must do everything to avoid a third wave and lockdown,' says Macron

France will begin easing its Covid-19 lockdown this weekend so that by Christmas, shops, theatres and cinemas will re-open and people will be able to spend the holiday with the rest of their family, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday. In a televised address to the nation, Macron said the worst of the second wave of the pandemic in France was over, but that restaurants, cafés

and bars would have to stay shut until January. "We must do everything in our power to avoid a third wave and a third lockdown," the French president said.

<https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20201124-live-macron-addresses-the-nation-on-path-out-of-lockdown>

Crowds of up to 4,000 and grassroots sport to return after English lockdown

Crowds of up to 4,000 people will be allowed to return to sporting events in England from next week, and grassroots sport will also resume as part of an easing of coronavirus restrictions announced by the prime minister. The changes were greeted with widespread relief after weeks of concerted pressure from sporting bodies and the public, who had both argued the importance of being able to participate in sport during the pandemic and also of the ability to watch it safely. England is to return to a system of tiered restrictions from 2 December but gyms, pools, golf courses and leisure facilities will now be allowed to open in all tiers after the government accepted their positive impact on physical and mental health

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/nov/23/crowds-of-up-to-4000-and-grassroots-sport-to-return-once-lockdown-ends>

England gets new set of restrictions for end of COVID-19 lockdown

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson set out new measures on Monday to replace a COVID-19 lockdown in England from Dec. 2, reinforcing a previous regional approach to try to reopen businesses in areas where infection rates are lower. Just over two weeks after Johnson introduced a national lockdown in England to try to tame a spiralling increase in new coronavirus cases, he said the measures had reduced COVID infection rates and would be eased on Dec. 2 as promised. Johnson has been under pressure to scrap the lockdown from lawmakers in his Conservative Party, where many have threatened to vote against any new restrictions without more evidence of their effect in stemming infections.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-newmeasures-tough/pm-johnson-sets-out-new-measures-to-replace-covid-lockdown-idUKKBN28324H>

UK health minister says test and trace can't control COVID-19 alone

British health minister Matt Hancock said that 'test and trace' can not control coronavirus in the way that an effective system of mass testing can, as he defended the performance of the heavily criticised contact-tracing system. The test and trace system was inefficient and slow, Reuters found after speaking to tracers and analysing the data, making it inadequate to avoid a second wave and a new English national lockdown which started on Nov 5. "The test and trace programme, ahead of the second lockdown, was functioning to reduce transmission enormously," Hancock told lawmakers. "By the time of the second lockdown, it had already broken the chains of transmission hundreds of thousands of times."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-testing/uk-health-minister-says-test-and-trace-cant-control-covid-19-alone-idUKKBN2841HP?il=0>

Riding the CoronaCoaster of UK rules

In the beginning, there was "Stay at Home. Protect the NHS. Save Lives." That was the British government's simple slogan for its country-wide lockdown that began in March to try to stem the COVID-19 pandemic and avoid a collapse of the National Health Service's hospital system. Nothing has been simple ever since. In the ensuing months, the original slogan has been replaced by a series of new catchphrases, the "Rule of Six," a "Tiers" alert system, and ever-changing regulations for different parts of the United Kingdom that even British Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently called "confusing." "I like to follow the rules," says Joinal Abdin, 41, who lives near Oldham, in northern England. Does he understand them? "No. Half of the time I'm confused, to be honest with you."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-newwave-ru/riding-the-coronacoaster-of-uk-rules-idUKKBN28411N>

Making headlines: COVID-19 and gender inequality

We have repeatedly heard about how COVID-19 disproportionately affects women. While men are more likely to die from the virus, in many other respects, women are bearing the brunt of the pandemic's impact. The effects on women have been multiple: violence against women has increased, with incidents of domestic violence soaring. School closures, overburdened healthcare systems and social distancing measures have significantly increased many women's unpaid care and domestic loads at home, which, in turn, has made them less able to balance these responsibilities with paid work.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/11/24/making-headlines-covid-19-and-gender-inequality/>

Partisan Exits

Putin Can't Take Russia's 'Safe' Covid-19 Vaccine, Kremlin Says

President Vladimir Putin told fellow world leaders last week that both of Russia's Covid-19 vaccines, including one he championed as the world's first inoculation against the disease, are safe and effective. That doesn't mean he's taken a jab. "We have not yet begun widespread vaccination and the head of state can't take part in vaccination as a volunteer. It's impossible," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Tuesday, in response to a question on whether Putin had been inoculated. "The president can't use an uncertified vaccine." Russia has the world's fifth-highest number of cases globally, passing 2 million last week.

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/putin-can-t-take-russia-s-safe-covid-19-vaccine-kremlin-says-1.1526963>

Germany warns of Coronavirus vaccine race between rich and poor

Angela Merkel fears a global race between richer and poorer nations to access COVID-19 vaccines. She urged government leaders at an online meeting of the G20 to ensure a fair distribution of coronavirus vaccines among impoverished countries. "To halt the pandemic, every country needs to have access to and be able to afford the vaccine. The funds pledged so far are not yet enough to achieve this. I, therefore, appeal to you all of you to support this important initiative," she said. The chancellor made clear she would raise the issue with the global vaccine alliance GAVI. "This short-term assistance is in the interest of us all. And it is also in our interest to improve global pandemic preparedness in the long term. To this end, we need to sustainably strengthen the World Health Organization."

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2020-11/germany-warns-of-coronavirus-vaccine-race-between-rich-and-poor.html>

Coronavirus vaccines face trust gap in Black and Latino communities, study finds

In the US, if offered a coronavirus vaccine free of charge, fewer than half of Black people and 66 percent of Latino people said they would definitely or probably take it, according to a survey-based study that underscores the challenge of getting vaccines to communities hit hard by the pandemic. The survey released Monday is one of the largest and most rigorous to date. Other recent studies have also pointed to vaccine hesitancy in communities of color, but Monday's survey delved deeper into the reasons, polling respondents on a spectrum of questions to get at the roots of their distrust.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/11/23/covid-vaccine-hesitancy/>

Germany Warns of Anti-Semitism Among Lockdown Protests

A German government official warned Tuesday that anti-Semitism is emerging as a common position among people protesting pandemic lockdown measures who otherwise come from widely differing political backgrounds. Felix Klein, who was appointed in 2018 to head the government's efforts to combat anti-Semitism, said that hatred against Jews in Germany has increased during the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-11-24/germany-warns-of-anti-semitism-among-lockdown-protests>

Number 10 used apocalyptic Covid-19 graphs to 'frighten' public into lockdown, top statistician

Sir David Spiegelhalter suggested the Government tried to 'manipulate' Britons. Cherry-picked 'worst-case scenarios' to 'instill a certain emotional reaction.' No10 lambasted for its apocalyptic graphs and spurious data shown to public

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8979123/Number-10-used-apocalyptic-Covid-19-graphs-frighten-public-lockdown-statistician.html>

French shop owners pressure Macron to lighten virus lockdown

People in France may be able to go back to their favorite shops and attend religious services again next week, after a month of partial virus lockdown — but they'll probably have to wait until next year to savor wine and cheese in a local cafe President Emmanuel Macron is expected to lay out new rules Tuesday in France's virus strategy, after he imposed nationwide restrictions last month as virus infections, hospitalizations and deaths surged around Europe.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/french-shop-owners-pressure-macron-to-lighten-virus-lockdown-emmanuel-macron-services-shops-people-cheese-b1761058.html>

Pizza bar worker 'deeply sorry' over South Australia coronavirus lockdown

A pizza bar worker whose alleged deception sent South Australia into coronavirus lockdown has expressed "extreme remorse" — but the man's lawyer says some of the information provided by authorities has been inaccurate and unfair. Last week, SA health authorities said the Spanish national told contact tracers he had only ordered a pizza from the Woodville Pizza Bar when in fact he had worked there.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-24/pizza-worker-sorry-over-south-australia-coronavirus-lockdown/12914144>

Misinformation and fear could be coronavirus vaccine's biggest problem

These are just some of the things Londoners said to me when I asked them if they'd take a Covid vaccine. Perhaps they've joined the small but vocal minority claiming that the vaccine is a plot to insert surveillance microchips into the population, or maybe, like many thousands more, they simply worry the development of the jab has been rushed. We will probably never know, but while it's easy to dismiss as ridiculous some of the more extreme anti-vaccine sentiment out there — like anyone repeating the rumour spread by Russian bots that the vaccine will turn us into chimpanzees — the number of "vaccine hesitant" people is growing. Most of them are not cranks, just cautious — and, in a climate of fear and confusion, their trust in what they read in the papers or hear in government briefings is diminishing.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/covid-vaccine-misinformation-b77756.html>

In race for coronavirus vaccine, Russia turns to disinformation

When two COVID-19 vaccines were announced within a week of each other, everyone cheered that the end to the global pandemic was now in sight. Everyone, that is, except Russia. Since the summer, Moscow has conducted a global disinformation campaign aimed at both undermining vaccines produced in the West and promoting its own rival product, particularly to countries across the developing world, according to interviews with four national and European Union disinformation experts and a review of Kremlin-backed media outlets by POLITICO.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/covid-vaccine-disinformation-russia/>

Continued Lockdown

Covid-19: Bradford salon fined £17,000 for lockdown opening

In England, a hair salon owner is now facing £27,000 in fines for repeatedly opening in breach of Covid-19 lockdown rules. Sinead Quinn was working at Quinn Blakey Hairdressers in Oakenshaw, Bradford, on Saturday when Kirklees Council officers issued a £4,000 fine. The council found the

salon open again on Monday and Tuesday and issued two further £10,000 fines. It had £1,000 and £2,000 fines for previous breaches.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-55057700>

Pets at Home says pets have been 'a lifesaver' during lockdown

Animals have been "a lifesaver" for people struggling during Covid lockdown, according to retailer Pets at Home which has seen sales rise sharply. Chief executive Peter Pritchard said pets had played "an incredibly important role" through a period of "social loneliness". He added that during the early days of lockdown one of the few reasons people could go out "was to walk your dog". In the six months to 8 October, Pets at Home saw revenues rise by 5.1%.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55055609>

Child protection referrals surge after first lockdown as councils report rise in mental health issues

Child protection referrals have surged in the months following the UK's first lockdown as local councils report an increase in demand for mental health and family services, The Independent can reveal. New data shows more than 630 vulnerable young people a day were being referred to councils' children's services in July, August and September - marking an increase of 15 per cent - or 7,518 referrals - compared to the three previous months when schools and services.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-protection-referrals-lockdown-abuse-b1746017.html>

Restauranters Look To Australia For A Guide On Surviving A Winter Lockdown

In the US, as Covid-19 cases continue to rise by the day, hitting new mind-boggling heights, new dine-in ordinances are being introduced on state and country-wide levels and more states report considering closures by the day. Without bold Congressional action, restaurant and bar owners are left to their own devices to finagle new business approaches in an attempt to survive a challenging winter ahead. "Northern hemisphere restaurants would be wise to take a page from the playbook of some of their southern hemisphere counterparts," Juan Garcia, founder of restaurant rating and review site Foodporn tells me. "In Melbourne, Australia, for example, the entire winter months of July to October were spent in stage-four lockdown; meaning restaurants, cafes and bars were completely closed to dine-in customers. This forced a transformation never before seen in Melbourne hospitality."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/eveturowpaul/2020/11/23/restauranters-look-to-australia-for-a-guide-on-surviving-a-winter-lockdown/>

France's new COVID-19 cases slow again before possible lockdown loosening

French health authorities on Monday reported 4,452 new COVID-19 infections over the past 24 hours, down from Sunday's 13,157, with the daily increase decelerating for the fourth day in a row ahead of a possible loosening of the country's second lockdown. The Monday figure tends to dip as there are fewer tests conducted on Sundays. The seven-day moving average of new infections, which averages out weekly data reporting irregularities, stands at 21,918, dipping below the 22,000 threshold for the first time since Oct. 17. That figure had peaked at 54,440 on Nov. 7.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-france-infections/frances-new-covid-19-cases-slow-again-before-possible-lockdown-loosening-idUSP6N2HA010>

French business morale hits five-month low on new lockdown

French business confidence dropped in November to a five-month low as the country entered a new coronavirus lockdown, hitting the services sector particularly hard, a survey showed on Tuesday. INSEE, the official stats agency, said its monthly business climate index fell to 79 from 92 in October, the lowest reading since June, when France was still emerging from its first lockdown. French President Emmanuel Macron is due to announce on Tuesday evening a relaxation of the second lockdown following a decline in new case numbers since it was imposed on Oct. 30.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-france-economy/french-business-morale-hits-five-month-low-on-new-lockdown-idUKKBN2840VK>

Scientific Viewpoint

How viruses like Covid trick us into spending more time socialising

Can viruses such as the one that causes Covid-19 attack our brains and change our behaviour — thereby prolonging an outbreak? That's the suggestion from U.S. researchers who say that the coronavirus may be manipulating the behaviour of infected people, sometimes even before they show symptoms, so they become more sociable. In fact, such behaviour-changing effects of viruses — so-called behavioural host manipulation — are not new, and have previously been reported for the flu and rabies viruses, among others.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-8979219/How-viruses-colds-Covid-19-trick-spending-time-socialising.html>

Wealth of data to help understand Covid-19 spread 'not being utilised'

The UK is trailing behind other countries in making use of data to better understand the spread and economic impact of the coronavirus, a team of researchers have said. Aggregated and anonymised data from mobile networks on how people move around and payment transaction data already gathered by companies are just some of the ways that could help give a more accurate picture of the pandemic at national and local levels, the Data Readiness: Lessons from an Emergency report suggests.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/wealth-of-data-to-help-understand-covid-19-spread-not-being-utilised/>

Russia says its Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine is up to 95% effective

A coronavirus vaccine developed by Russia is up to 95% effective at stopping people developing Covid-19 symptoms, according to its developers. Second interim data from the Sputnik V vaccine appears to provide 91.4% protection 28 days after the first dose and the researchers say the figure is as high as 95% 42 days after the first dose.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/russia-says-its-sputnik-v-covid-19-vaccine-is-up-to-95-effective/>

Coronavirus vaccine rollout to start second week of December, CDC director says

CDC Director Dr Robert Redfield said he sees the firsts coronavirus vaccine doses being rolled out the second week of December. HHS officials also announced Tuesday that 6.4 million doses of Pfizer's shot would be released in their first distribution once it gets emergency approval. The FDA's advisory committee will meet to discuss whether to give emergency use authorization to Pfizer's vaccine on December 10. Operation Warp Speed says it is ready to roll a vaccine within 24 hours of its emergency approval. Speaking on Fox's The Daily Briefing, Dr Redfield also said that household gatherings are fueling the latest surge in coronavirus cases. Health and Human Services Secretary also said Tuesday that states will have the 'final say' who should be first priority to get vaccinated.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-8983081/U-S-officials-plan-release-6-4-mln-COVID-19-vaccine-doses-distribution.html>

Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID vaccine works — but scientists have questions

Early data indicate that the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab is effective, but dose makes a difference. Plus, the scientific dilemma posed by emergency vaccine approvals, and an AI that sums up papers in a sentence.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03328-8>

Bill Gates: 'Almost all' coronavirus vaccines will work by February

Bill Gates is feeling optimistic about coronavirus vaccine development. The first two vaccine candidates likely to receive FDA authorization, one from Pfizer and the other from Moderna, appear to be 95 percent effective against the virus. But the Microsoft co-founder and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation also has high hopes for vaccines that haven't yet made big headlines,

including those developed by AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson and Novavax. "Almost all the vaccines will work and with very high efficacy levels," Gates told CNN's Fared Zakaria in an interview on Sunday. "I'm optimistic that by February it's very likely that they'll all prove very efficacious and safe."

<https://www.cnet.com/news/bill-gates-says-almost-all-coronavirus-vaccines-will-work-by-february-2021/>

Politics, Science and the Remarkable Race for a Coronavirus Vaccine

The call was tense, the message discouraging. Moncef Slaoui, the head of the Trump administration's effort to quickly produce a vaccine for the coronavirus, was on the phone at 6 p.m. on Aug. 25 to tell the upstart biotech firm Moderna that it had to slow the final stage of testing its vaccine in humans. Moderna's chief executive, Stéphane Bancel, a French biochemical engineer, recognized the implication. In the race to quell the pandemic, he said, "every day mattered." Now his company, which had yet to bring a single product to market, faced a delay of up to three weeks. Pfizer, the global pharmaceutical giant that was busy testing a similar vaccine candidate and promising initial results by October, would take the obvious lead.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/21/us/politics/coronavirus-vaccine.html>

Plasma from recovered patients shows little benefit in those hospitalized with COVID-19: study

Using blood plasma from COVID-19 survivors to treat patients with severe pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus showed little benefit, according to data released on Tuesday from a clinical trial in Argentina. The therapy known as convalescent plasma, which delivers antibodies from COVID-19 survivors to infected people, did not significantly improve patients' health status or reduce their risk of dying from the disease any better than a placebo, the study published in The New England Journal of Medicine found. Despite limited evidence of its efficacy, convalescent plasma, which U.S. President Donald Trump touted in August as a "historic breakthrough," has been frequently given to patients in the United States.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-plasma/plasma-from-recovered-patients-shows-little-benefit-in-those-hospitalized-with-covid-19-study-idUKKBN2843AZ>

U.S. officials plan to release 6.4 mln COVID-19 vaccine doses in first distribution

U.S. officials said on Tuesday they plan to release 6.4 million COVID-19 vaccine doses nationwide in an initial distribution after the first one is cleared by regulators for emergency use. Officials from the government's Operation Warp Speed program told reporters that states and other jurisdictions had been informed on Friday of their estimated vaccine allocations in the first shipments so they can begin planning for how to best distribute it to their high-risk populations. The officials had previously said they anticipate 40 million doses will be distributed by year end, a number they reiterated on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa-vaccine-idUSL1N2IA20C>

COVID vaccination is the government's 'national commitment': Modi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi says providing the coronavirus vaccine is his government's "national commitment", and that the safety of all citizens will be assured. "Each State and stakeholder has to work as a team to ensure that this mission is systematic, smooth and a sustained effort," Modi said during a meeting with state chief ministers on the COVID-19 situation in which he told them national efforts would be in coordination with state governments.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/24/coronavirus-vaccination-governments-national-commitment-modi>

AstraZeneca shares fall after efficacy findings for Covid-19 vaccine

AstraZeneca shares fell after the drugmaker announced efficacy results for its Covid-19 vaccine that were below those reported by rivals Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. The shares ended the day 3.8% lower at £80. Results from the phase 3 trial showed the vaccine developed with the University of

Oxford can protect 70.4% of people from becoming ill and, in a surprise result, up to 90% if a lower first dose is used. This is lower than the 95% efficacy reported for vaccines developed by the US drugmaker Pfizer and the German biotech BioNTech, and the US biotech Moderna. Analysts said the AstraZeneca/Oxford results left some unanswered questions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/nov/23/astrazeneca-shares-fall-after-efficacy-findings-for-covid-19-vaccine-results>

AstraZeneca COVID vaccine latest to show high efficacy

In interim late-stage study findings, Oxford University today announced that the COVID-19 vaccine it is developing with AstraZeneca is highly effective, bringing the world promising news for the third time this month about a pandemic vaccine candidate. The latest vaccine news comes as COVID-19 levels surge in the United States and Europe, with fears that illness levels could jump again after Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday gatherings.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/11/astrazeneca-covid-vaccine-latest-show-high-efficacy>

3rd major COVID-19 vaccine shown to be effective and cheaper

Drugmaker AstraZeneca said Monday that late-stage trials showed its COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective, buoying the prospects of a relatively cheap, easy-to-store product that may become the vaccine of choice for the developing world. The results are based on an interim analysis of trials in the U.K. and Brazil of a vaccine developed by Oxford University and manufactured by AstraZeneca. No hospitalizations or severe cases of COVID-19 were reported in those receiving the vaccine.

<https://apnews.com/article/astrazeneca-vaccine-third-cheaper-oxford-c99d26eb2946f6fde45a1edc002ff028>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Kremlin says healthcare under heavy strain as COVID-19 deaths hit new high

The Kremlin said on Tuesday Russia's healthcare system was under heavy strain as authorities reported a record 491 deaths linked to COVID-19 and infections surged. Russia has resisted imposing national lockdown restrictions, as it did earlier this year, preferring targeted regional measures, even as thousands of cases are reported each day, with 24,326 new infections on Tuesday. "The healthcare system is working under heavy strain, but with the exception of a few regions...the situation remains under control," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-russia-cases-idUSKBN2840Q3>

Minneapolis doctor wipes away tears in describing Covid-19's toll on hospital workers

In the past seven days, Minnesota has had the fifth-most new coronavirus cases per capita in the country, behind only the Dakotas, Wyoming and New Mexico, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. The swell of new infections has pushed hospitals -- and perhaps more importantly, the people who make them go -- to the brink. Dr. Shirlee Xie took care of five patients with Covid-19 the last time she worked at her Minneapolis hospital. "I can't prevent anyone from getting Covid, all I can do is try to keep Covid from killing you," she said. "So we are not the front lines. We are the last line of defense, and so what we need is for people to step up and to wear masks and to distance from people and just try to keep themselves safe and everybody else safe."

https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/minneapolis-doctor-wipes-away-tears-in-describing-covid-19-s-toll-on-hospital-workers/ar-BB1bjT2W?fbclid=IwAR22zY3QuQzQ38TB9nI3_99MqVDGkqX_81sqMAT8SGBPK_lqwRgXQ5VE70k

Turkey's daily COVID-19 deaths hit a record high of 161 -ministry

Turkey's daily death toll from the coronavirus hit a record high of 161 on Tuesday, according to data from the Health Ministry, after the country introduced nationwide measures last week amid a surge in cases. The data showed 7,381 new COVID-19 patients were recorded in the country, while the overall death toll rose to 12,672. Since July, Ankara has only reported symptomatic COVID-19 patients, a move critics say hides the true scale of the outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-turkey-idUSA4N29K026>

Covid-19 is taking a devastating toll on Filipino American nurses

Nearly a third of the nurses who've died of coronavirus in the US are Filipino, even though Filipino nurses make up just 4% of the nursing population nationwide. A recent report from the largest nurses' union in the country revealed the disproportionate number of deaths. It's a jarring statistic researchers are working to understand and a tragedy families across the US and around the world are living with every day.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/24/health/filipino-nurse-deaths/index.html>

Resigned to the pandemic, Brits are now indifferent to the death toll

When Boris Johnson announced England's second national shutdown on October 31, my phone lit up as family, friends and colleagues in Australia shared disbelief over Britain's mounting death toll and expressed sympathy about facing another lockdown. They had good reason to raise the former - in the 25 days since, 8796 people have died from COVID-19 in the UK and about 34,000 were admitted to hospital. While deaths are not spiking as sharply as earlier this year, they are high and likely to stay high for the next few months. But this lockdown has looked and felt nothing like the one in April and May. As cases climbed, the public largely carried on with life. Something profound has happened: rightly or wrongly, most here no longer fear the virus. In the great balancing act between health and the economy, the scales are now overwhelmingly lean towards jobs and social cohesion.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/resigned-to-the-pandemic-brits-are-now-indifferent-to-the-death-toll-20201123-p56haj.html>

Stricter COVID-19 measures take effect in South Korea amid rise in cases

A stricter level of physical distancing restrictions went into effect in the greater Seoul area on Tuesday as health officials scrambled to contain what they have described as a third wave of COVID-19. The government raised its distancing level on its five-tier scale, from Level 1.5 to Level 2, as new cases continue to linger at the highest levels since August. South Korea saw more than 300 cases on Tuesday, most in the Seoul metropolitan region, where roughly half of the country's 52 million people live.

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2020/11/24/Stricter-COVID-19-measures-take-effect-in-South-Korea-amid-rise-in-cases/6251606207852/

The Virus Surge, Once Centered in the Midwest, Is Accelerating in 45 U.S. States

AstraZeneca said its vaccine candidate was up to 90 percent effective, suggesting that the world could eventually have at least three working vaccines. At the same time, the virus is accelerating across the U.S., and officials are imposing new restrictions to flatten the curve. When infections began rising sharply in the U.S. in September, the growth was driven largely by outbreaks in the Upper Midwest. States like North Dakota and Wisconsin soon became the hardest hit in the nation, relative to their size, and the region continues to struggle. Now, though, with the whole country's daily average of new cases is as high as it has ever been — over 171,000 — the most rapid growth is happening elsewhere.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/23/world/covid-19-coronavirus>

Europe weighs COVID-19 steps as global total tops 59 million

As some European countries see some promising signs that their latest lockdowns are slowing the pace of COVID-19, the progress raises new questions about how to unwind the measures in a way that prevents a third wave of infections at the start of the new year. Over the weekend and through today, the world added about 2 million cases, putting the global COVID-19 total just over the 59 million mark. The total today climbed to 59,004,131 cases, and 1,393,736 people have died from their infections, according to the Johns Hopkins online dashboard.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/11/europe-weighs-covid-19-steps-global-total-tops-59-million>

Japan Eyes Tighter Virus Steps as Severe Cases in Tokyo Jump

As Japan returned to work Tuesday following a holiday weekend, regional and national authorities moved toward boosting restrictions designed to contain the spread of a coronavirus surge. A campaign to spur domestic travel, which some have blamed for spreading infections, will be partly suspended. The metropolitan region of Osaka, where cases have spiked, plans to ask bars and restaurants to close early, while Tokyo was reported to be making plans for similar steps as serious cases jumped to a new high in the city. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike last week said that severe cases, rather than sheer number of infections, were her “red line” that would spur further action. Those cases, which the area defines as those on a ventilator or ECMO machine, jumped 24% overnight to a total of 51, the most Tokyo has seen during the pandemic.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-24/japan-eyes-tighter-regional-steps-to-contain-growing-virus-surge>

Japan pauses domestic travel push in two cities as COVID spreads

Japan paused its domestic “Go To Travel” promotion campaign in two cities following sharp rises in COVID-19 infections, a government minister said on Tuesday, a blow to Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga’s plan to help prop up regional economies. Critics of the programme had said it risked spreading the infection from major cities to the countryside. “We have agreed to temporarily exclude trips destined for the cities of Sapporo and Osaka from the travel campaign,” Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said on Tuesday. “Although we have tried to balance both economic revitalization as well as virus containment, we have made this decision at the local governors’ request,” Nishimura told reporters after a meeting with Prime Minister Suga and Tourism Minister Kazuyoshi Akaba.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-japan-travel/japan-pauses-domestic-travel-push-in-two-cities-as-covid-spreads-idUKKBN2840TB>

New Lockdown

All Hail The Lockdown

In a five-part series, made in lockdown, Ali Rae explores the complexities of our global response to the Covid-19 pandemic

<https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2020/all-hail-the-lockdown/index.html>

Amid lockdown worries, PM Modi holds key meet with CMs on corona surge

As the major Indian cities battle with the sharp rise in the fresh Covid-19 infections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday held a virtual meeting with several Chief Ministers to formulate the strategy for the coming days. The meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of Delhi, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh. The brainstorming session gains importance as it is not only a stock-taking meeting but more centred on making urgent plans to tackle the corona surges, especially in urban areas. While nothing official has been communicated so far, there is a buzz that the state, as well as the Centre, maybe thinking on something akin to a ‘mini lockdown’.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/health/amid-lockdown-worries-pm-modi-holds-key-meet-with-cms-on-corona-surge/2135207/>

No lockdown in Maharashtra, state Cabinet decides

In India, putting speculations to rest, the Maharashtra government has decided against imposing any lockdown in the state amid rising cases of the novel coronavirus. The decision was taken at a key cabinet meeting on Tuesday. The cabinet also ruled out clamping of a night curfew in the state.

<https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/maharashtra-lockdown-latest-news-uddhav-thackeray-night-curfew-final-decision-cabinet-meeting-667141>

Can India Afford Another Lockdown?

Several states across India have reimposed the lockdown restrictions with a sudden spurt in coronavirus cases. While the Delhi government has raised the fine for not wearing face masks and reverted to the earlier cap on the number of wedding guests, night curfews and Section 144 have returned in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and others. With these decisions, the reimposition of the total shutdown has started doing the rounds. Speculations are rife that PM Modi, after meeting the chief ministers on Tuesday, might announce another lockdown in states where the cases are rising.

<https://www.india.com/news/india/lockdown-india-latest-news-lockdown-again-in-november-shutdown-in-states-lockdown-restrictions-continue-latest-updates-pm-modi-announcement-on-lockdown-pm-cm-meeting-maharashtra-delhi-4220232/>