

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 2nd Dec 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **U.S. Covid-19 relief packages proposed**

The U.S. Congress introduced proposals on Tuesday to provide financial relief as negotiation began anew. [Some bipartisan members introduced a U.S.\\$908 billion package](#). Additional ideas for the proposal were on the table from other Senators, but it is thought that the 'competing ideas and limited time in this lame duck session may make passing a relief bill an uphill climb.'

#### **Heightened need for humanitarian aid because of Covid-19, UN predicts**

The United Nations anticipates a greater need for humanitarian aid in 2021 as a consequence of the pandemic. [One in 33 people globally may require assistance next year, a forty percent increase compared to 2020](#). This translates to a total of 235 million people, concentrated in countries such as the DRC, Ethiopia, Syria and Yemen.

#### **Bleach for Covid-19? Bolivian government seems to think so**

The new government in Bolivia is echoing misinformation campaigners as the health minister says consuming a bleach called chlorine dioxide is permissible. [The practice has no medicinal value and has been disavowed as dangerous by many leading health authorities](#), including the World Health Organization.

#### **Reuters poll suggests lasting Covid damage to the UK economy**

With swathes of the country in lockdown, [it could take as long as two years for the UK economy to return to its state before the pandemic](#), according to a Reuters poll of economists. The UK economy is expected to shrink by 11.2% this year, following the unprecedented 19.8 percent contraction in the second quarter.

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Lawmakers introduce bipartisan COVID-19 relief proposal with uncertain future in Congress**

In the U.S., negotiations restarted Tuesday and lawmakers introduced coronavirus relief proposals in the latest effort to break the logjam and reach a deal in the few remaining weeks a divided Congress has left in session. The day started with a bipartisan group of lawmakers introducing a roughly \$908 billion proposal intended as a temporary package that would run until April. It ended with two additional proposals, one offered privately by Democratic leaders to Republicans and a third that Republicans have approved with the White House and could be voted on by the Senate.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/12/01/lawmakers-introduce-bipartisan-covid-relief-proposal-congress/6475431002/>

#### **Tomelloso: Battered in first wave, Spanish town emerges scarred but safer**

Although Spain was struggling with one of Europe's most deadly outbreaks, Tomelloso was particularly hard-hit, losing almost one percent of its 36,000 residents in the first wave. During the second wave, it has been a completely different story, with the figures significantly lower, although

memories of the earlier nightmare remain all too fresh. "Around 300 people were buried in the local cemetery" in the first wave, Mayor Inmaculada Jimenez told AFP. Every day, they were burying 10, 11 or 12 people, it was incredibly hard." These days, as Spain and Europe grapple with a second wave, Tomelloso has stayed well out of the headlines, with just 13 deaths between May and September.

<https://today.rtl.lu/news/world/a/1622450.html>

### **Spain appeals for Covid 'common sense' after shopping crowd scenes**

The Spanish government has called on people to behave responsibly and use their "common sense" after pictures over the weekend showed the streets of Madrid and other big cities heaving with crowds despite the country's ongoing struggle with the second wave of the coronavirus. Spain has been in a state of emergency since the end of October and is subject to an overnight curfew. The prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, has asked people to drastically curtail their social lives and limit their movements for the common good. However, a combination of Black Friday, seasonal shopping and the switching on of Christmas lights appears to have brought large numbers of people out on to the streets of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Málaga over the weekend.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/30/spain-appeals-for-covid-common-sense-after-weekend-crowd-scenes>

### **France's Macron warns against going skiing in Switzerland**

France will apply restrictions to prevent vacationers from going to Swiss ski resorts, and French slopes will remain closed during the Christmas period amid the coronavirus pandemic, President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday. "If there are countries ... which maintain their ski resorts open, we will have to take control measures" to dissuade people to go to these areas and to be fair toward French ski resorts, Macron said. France has started relaxing lockdown measures on Saturday, but bars and restaurants will remain closed at least until Jan. 20.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/frances-macron-warns-skiing-switzerland-74481903>

### **OECD warns Australia not to withdraw economic support too early in pandemic recovery**

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has warned Australia not to withdraw fiscal and monetary policy support before the recovery from the economic shock associated with the coronavirus pandemic is "well entrenched". The new outlook published on Tuesday night notes the planned unwinding of Australia's "strong" fiscal support rolled out during the first wave of the pandemic "will be a headwind to higher GDP growth in the second half of 2021".

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/dec/01/oecd-warns-australia-not-to-withdraw-economic-support-too-early-in-pandemic-recovery>

### **Tradition of an eight-hour day five days a week will come to an end, report claims**

Britain's workers are unlikely to return to the traditional nine to five ever again and lockdown habits such as stockpiling could also become 'the new normal' once the pandemic is over, a new reports claims. In her report, titled Zoomsday Predictions, author and cultural commentator Marian Salzman said staff will continue to work the same hours but in a way that combines their personal and professional lifestyles - with many moving to a four-day week.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9004979/Tradition-eight-hour-day-five-days-week-come-end-report-claims.html>

### **Hospitals catch up with Covid-19 lockdown cancer backlog, Cancer Control Agency says**

In New Zealand, the country's hospitals have caught up with the cancer backlog caused by the Covid-19 lockdown in March and April, Te Aho o Te Kahu Cancer Control Agency chief executive Diana Sarfati says. Diagnostic services and cancer screening programmes stopped during lockdown as the health service prepared for the pandemic, and the Cancer Society in June warned 400 people could die if hospitals didn't act quickly. But unpublished figures for September show the number of

people diagnosed with cancer mirrors that of last year, indicating hospitals have worked through the backlog, Sarfati said.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/123562084/hospitals-catch-up-with-covid19-lockdown-cancer-backlog-cancer-control-agency-says>

### **Analysis: Could COVID knock out flu in Europe this winter?**

As Europeans brace for a grim winter with the threat of rising COVID-19 infections, minimal numbers of flu cases recorded so far point to a possible silver lining. Data available for Europe since the beginning of October, when flu case numbers usually start to ramp up, mirror shallow figures seen in the Southern Hemisphere earlier this year and in the United States where the flu season has also just begun. Some doctors say a combination of lockdowns, mask wearing and handwashing appear to have hampered transmission of the flu, while warning that the data should be treated with caution because the peak of the season is weeks or even months away. According to Flu News Europe, a joint monitoring platform of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the World Health Organization which collects samples in 54 European regions, only one person was diagnosed with flu out of 4,433 sentinel tests during Sept. 28-Nov. 22.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-europe-influenza-a/analysis-could-covid-knock-out-flu-in-europe-this-winter-idUKKBN28B531>

### **Exit Strategies**

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#### **After 4.2 million COVID-19 cases in November, U.S. pins hope on vaccine**

The United States entered the final month of the year hoping that promising vaccine candidates will soon be approved to halt the rapidly spreading novel coronavirus after 4.2 million new cases were reported in November. With outgoing President Donald Trump's coronavirus strategy relying heavily on a vaccine, the chief adviser of his administration's Operation Warp Speed program said on Tuesday that 20 million people could be vaccinated by the end of 2020, and that by the middle of 2021 most Americans will have access to highly effective vaccines. "Within 24 hours, maybe at most 36 to 48 hours, from the approval, the vaccine can be in people's arms," Moncef Slaoui, a former GlaxoSmithKline executive, said at an event conducted by The Washington Post newspaper.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa/after-4-2-million-covid-19-cases-in-november-u-s-pins-hope-on-vaccine-idUSKBN28B4YV>

#### **Covid-19: Students tested before travelling home**

The mass testing of university students for Covid-19, so they can go home for the Christmas break, has started in Canterbury. Those testing negative will be able to use the "travel window" between 3 and 9 December. Two tests must be taken 72 hours apart. "We're trying to ensure the safety of students returning to their families and not presenting a risk to them" said Simon Gwynne of Canterbury Christchurch University. The testing centre set up at the university will be open from 10:00 to 18:00 GMT every day until 8 December, with 900 students booked in on the first day. Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 must isolate for 10 days, with a community buddy system making sure they are looked after.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-55136146>

#### **Ethnic minorities could be prioritised for Covid-19 tests in Tier Three areas**

People might also be selected based on age group, job type or where they live. Local officials will be able to offer shopping vouchers to incentivise people. Tier 3 areas will be given access to rapid Covid tests when lockdown ends.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9004901/Ethnic-minorities-prioritised-Covid-19-tests-Tier-Three-areas.html>

#### **Ireland eases out of second lockdown**

Some non-essential retail and other businesses are reopening to the public as Ireland eases out of

its second lockdown. A Government decision to lift Level 5 restrictions will also see the hair and beauty industry and gyms and leisure centres open their doors after six weeks of closures. Restaurants and pubs that serve food will remain shut until Friday in line with the Government's plans to reopen on a phased basis. As Covid-19 restrictions ease country-wide, health chiefs have issued warnings not to gather in crowded areas.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/ireland-eases-out-of-second-lockdown-39812614.html>

### **Dublin has shopping fever as Ireland ends second virus lockdown**

Dublin thronged with face-masked Christmas shoppers on Tuesday as Ireland ended a second partial coronavirus lockdown, allowing non-essential retail to resume after six weeks of tough restrictions. Dozens queued for the mid-morning reopening of upmarket department store Brown Thomas, festooned with seasonal decorations in the epicentre of the capital's shopping district. Amidst tables of designer handbags one customer confided in staff that she had taken the morning off work to shop.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201201-dublin-has-shopping-fever-as-ireland-ends-second-virus-lockdown>

### **Chefs vs scientists - France's pandemic fight to keep eating out**

"Chez Françoise" is a discreetly located venue near the French parliament whose visitors' book boasts signatures from former leaders including Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. Options include a "Menu Parlementaire" - three courses including wild boar pate with chestnuts, veal and crepes suzette. In late September, as a second wave of COVID-19 infection loomed, government scientific advisers wanted new restrictions on bars, restaurants and cafes. Fearing his business would suffer, Pascal Mousset, who owns Chez Françoise and four other restaurants in the French capital, decided to seek help from an old contact. "For pity's sake, don't close Paris," Mousset texted to Alain Griset, a junior minister at the finance and economy ministry.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-restaurants/chefs-vs-scientists-frances-pandemic-fight-to-keep-eating-out-idUKKBN28B454>

### **COVID-19 will increase humanitarian needs in 2021: UN**

The coronavirus pandemic is pushing the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance to new highs, according to the United Nations, dramatically increasing the ranks of extreme poverty in just one year. One in 33 people will need aid to meet basic needs like food, water and sanitation in 2021, an increase of 40 percent from this year, the UN said on Tuesday in its Global Humanitarian Overview 2021. That translates to 235 million people worldwide, with concentrations in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia, it said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/1/un-pandemic-to-fan-surge-in-humanitarian-needs-in-2021>

### **US legislators float new \$908bn coronavirus aid package**

A bipartisan group of US legislators on Tuesday unveiled a \$908bn COVID-19 relief bill aimed at breaking a months-long deadlock between Democrats and Republicans over new emergency assistance for small businesses, unemployed people, airlines and other industries during the pandemic. The measure has not yet been written into legislation. Nor has it been embraced yet by the Republican Trump administration, Democratic President-elect Joe Biden or leaders in the Senate or House of Representatives, all of whom would be needed for passage.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/12/2/us-lawmakers-float-new-908bn-coronavirus-aid-package>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Bolivia's new government is encouraging people to take toxic bleach as a cure for COVID-19, a victory for a months-long disinformation campaign**

Bolivia's new health minister, Edgar Pozo, at a press conference Sunday said consuming toxic bleach chlorine dioxide as a COVID-19 treatment is now permitted. It has no medical value and is

potentially deadly if consumed, according to medical authorities including the FDA and WHO. Despite this, a determined campaign by advocates of the substance, also called Miracle Mineral Solution, persuaded many to take it. Business Insider previously reported how lawmakers in Bolivia embraced the substance despite warnings from the nation's own health ministry. But last month the old government lost power, allowing the newly-installed Pozo to effectively overturn that advice.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/bolivia-minister-says-toxic-mms-bleach-for-covid-19-2020-12>

### **Top US politician refuses to bring in lockdown or other Covid rules saying he wants to leave people alone**

One of America's most powerful politicians has refused to enact fresh lockdown measures after saying he wants to leave people alone to make responsible choices. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis – who has the final say on the Sunshine State's coronavirus rules – said Monday that he will not be enacting any lockdown measures, edicts which require people to wear masks in public, or school closures. DeSantis, one of President Trump's staunchest allies, told a press conference: 'No lockdowns, no fines, no school closures.' He previously lifted all rules, including a 50% capacity limit in bars and restaurants, in September.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/11/30/top-us-politician-refuses-to-bring-in-lockdown-or-other-covid-rules-saying-he-wants-to-leave-people-alone-13679432/>

### **UK leader touts local virus rules but pubs are in distress**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged lawmakers to vote Tuesday for a new set of coronavirus restrictions in England, saying the country must "hold our nerve" until vaccines are approved and distributed. England's current four-week national lockdown ends at midnight, and the government plans to replace it starting Wednesday with a three-tier regional system based on the severity of the outbreak in different parts of the country.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-leader-touts-local-virus-rules-but-pubs-are-in-distress-boris-johnson-lawmakers-change-pubs-nerve-b1764584.html>

### **Coronavirus England: 'Tenuous evidence' behind lockdown, says IEA**

Report by the Institute of Economic Affairs claimed outdated studies were used. Did not factor in 'Covid-secure' infection control measures hospitality adopted 'Cobbled together a handful of studies to give the veneer of science', report said

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9002281/Tenuous-science-used-justify-keeping-Englands-pubs-restaurants-locked-down.html>

### **Aviation tycoon worth £200m loses legal fight against coronavirus lockdown rules**

Simon Dolan, 51, was pursuing case against Matt Hancock and Gavin Williamson. He took case to Court of Appeal after High Court refused full hearing permission. Lord Burnett dismissed Mr Dolan's argument that the restrictions were unlawful. Mr Dolan stated he plans to seek permission to take case to the Supreme Court.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9005815/Aviation-tycoon-worth-200m-loses-legal-fight-against-coronavirus-lockdown-rules.html>

### **COVID-19: Protests and death threats in east German hotspot**

Hildburghausen in eastern Germany is a "coronavirus hotspot," where the rate of infection is particularly high – much higher than anywhere else in the state of Thuringia. And no one knows why that is. The town has a population of 63,000 and last week the statistical rate of new infections per 100,000 inhabitants reached 588.6. The district administrator imposed tough anti-corona measures, including shutting down the local schools. And the people of the town are obliged to wear masks wherever they go.

<https://www.dw.com/en/covid-19-protests-and-death-threats-in-east-german-hotspot/a-55782350>

### **What Germany's anti-lockdown protests reveal about the country**

In a recent Sunday, anti-lockdown protesters passed under my window, which looks out onto one of the main Berlin thoroughfares. They call themselves Querdenker, "lateral thinkers". To my untrained eye, not many of the demonstrators resembled fascists, although perhaps at least some of the shaved heads were concealed by beanies. There were teenagers, old women doddering along with walkers, and middle-aged men wearing face coverings declaring "fuck masks," accompanied by bored riot police. They were met by locals and black-clad anti-fascists banging pans and shouting "Nazis out!". The weekly protests attract a range of ideological tendencies, from sandal-clad hippies to "Reich citizens," an eccentric right-wing group which denies the legitimacy of the postwar Federal Republic. Others have no truck with such fringe groups but are worried about whether their livelihoods can survive the economic crisis, even though support for businesses and individuals is by European standards relatively generous in Germany. The peculiarity of the Querdenker - which remains a minority movement, with polls showing up to 85 per cent of Germans opposed - is that they present themselves not as infringers of the liberal constitutional order but as its defenders.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2020/11/what-germany-s-anti-lockdown-protests-reveal-about-country>

### **Masked Indian comic superhero fights Covid-19 fear**

India's first female comic superhero Priya, a gang-rape survivor who earlier campaigned against rape, acid attack and sex trafficking, is back to fight disinformation around the Covid-19 pandemic. In Priya's Mask, due to be launched on 2 December, the comic crusader joins hands with Jiya, the "Burka Avenger", a popular character from a Pakistani cartoon show, as the two go about trying to tackle the pandemic - and also the "infodemic", a major proliferation in fake news surrounding the coronavirus. With more than 9.4 million infections and 137,000 deaths, India has the second highest caseload globally. A strict nationwide lockdown that was imposed on 21 March delayed the spread for a while, but infections grew rapidly - and continue to do so - since restrictions were relaxed.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-55100084>

### **COVID-19: Boris Johnson says case for tier system is 'compelling' and promises £1,000 payment for 'wet pubs'**

Boris Johnson has said there is a "compelling case" for further coronavirus restrictions - as he promised pubs which do not serve food a one-off payment of £1,000 in December. Pubs which only sell drinks, or "wet pubs", will be unable to open if they are in Tier 2 or Tier 3 areas under the new system of restrictions from tomorrow. The prime minister made the announcement after saying the hospitality sector has been hit disproportionately hard in the pandemic.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-boris-johnson-announces-1-000-payment-for-wet-pubs-in-december-12148031>

### **Laurence Fox's disregard for lockdown is a slap in the face for NHS workers**

When actor Laurence Fox tweeted about inviting a 'large group over to lunch' and hugging them all during a pandemic, I was frustrated and disappointed. Not because I don't like hugs over lunch, but because it's irresponsible, ignorant, privileged and could dangerously incite others to behave the same way. As a doctor working in intensive care during the pandemic, Fox's words stung twice. First, for brazenly admitting to breaking lockdown rules but also criticising the NHS as being 'not fit for purpose'.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/12/01/laurence-foxs-disregard-for-lockdown-is-a-slap-in-the-face-for-nhs-workers-13680986/>

### **'We need support' - Portuguese restaurant owners stage lockdown hunger strike**

Nine restaurant, bar and nightclub owners began a fifth day of hunger strike on Tuesday outside Portugal's parliament in protest against coronavirus restrictions. "We need support ... to keep our heads above water," said Alberto Cabral, who runs a nightclub. The protesters - camping outside parliament and living off water, tea and coffee donated by their supporters - say they will not eat until they are met by the prime minister and economy minister. One more business owner joined



their strike on Sunday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-portugal-hunger-st/we-need-support-portuguese-restaurant-owners-stage-lockdown-hunger-strike-idUKKBN28B5B0?il=0>

### **Hungarian politician says he was present at Brussels party that breached lockdown rules**

A senior politician from Hungary's ruling party said he had been present at a house party in Belgium that was broken up by Brussels police last Friday for breaching lockdown rules but denied taking drugs. Jozsef Szajer, a leading light in Prime Minister Viktor Orban's ruling conservative Fidesz party and an ally for more than 30 years, quit as a European deputy on Sunday, citing unspecified moral reasons. In a statement on Tuesday, he apologised for any wrongdoing. "I regret that I broke the lockdown rules, that was irresponsible of me, and I will accept the sanctions that result," the statement said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-hungary-fidesz-mep/hungarian-politician-says-he-was-present-at-brussels-party-that-breached-lockdown-rules-idUKKBN28B5E0?il=0>

### **UK not planning vaccine passports for pubs, theatre, sports events**

Senior British minister Michael Gove said that the government was not planning a system of vaccine passports which would prevent those who hadn't had a COVID-19 jab from going to the pub or attending events. "I certainly am not planning to introduce any vaccine passports and I don't know anyone else in government (who is)," Gove told Sky News on Tuesday. The minister in charge of vaccines, Nadhim Zahawi, said on Monday that he expected people who refused the COVID-19 vaccine could find that they were refused entry to restaurants, bars, cinemas and sports venues. When asked about that, Gove said he did not think people would need a vaccine passport to go to the pub, the theatre or to sports events.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-not-planning-vaccine-passports-for-pubs-theatre-sports-events-idUKKBN28B3ZK?il=0>

### **UK economy won't reach pre-COVID-19 level for at least two years - Reuters poll**

Britain's economy will contract this quarter and it will take at least two years for GDP to reach pre-COVID-19 levels, according to a Reuters poll which also found London would agree a free-trade deal with the European Union.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-economy-poll-idUKKBN28C04A>

### **England faces regional COVID-19 restrictions despite lawmaker rebellion**

Parliament approved a system of regional COVID-19 restrictions for England on Tuesday despite a rebellion within Prime Minister Boris Johnson's own party which underlined growing unhappiness at his handling of the pandemic. More than 40% of people in England will be subject to the toughest tier of restrictions on their daily life from Wednesday, when the government shifts to its new approach after a month of national lockdown, with just 1% in the lowest band. "With the spread of the epidemic varying across the country, there remains a compelling case ... for regional tiers in England," Johnson told parliament, batting away criticism from unhappy lawmakers. The tiered system has ignited a rebellion in Johnson's party, with dozens of the 364 elected Conservatives criticizing the plan as draconian, badly implemented or based on insufficient evidence.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain/johnson-urges-mps-to-back-regional-covid-19-restrictions-idUKKBN28B50R>

### **Trump to meet COVID-19 vaccine makers, gov't officials next week**

The administration of United States President Donald Trump has invited vaccine manufacturers, drug distributors and government officials to a COVID-19 Vaccine Summit next week at the White House, Stat News reported on Tuesday, citing an invitation obtained by the news organisation. It is scheduled for December 8 and will be attended by Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and private-sector executives, the report said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/1/trump-to-meet-with-covid-vaccine-makers-distributors-reports>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Major study shows how many of us followed the rules for lockdown two**

A quarter of people have found it harder to follow rules during the UK's second lockdown, citing bad weather, feeling worn out and a sense of unfairness, a study has found. Some 24% of people are finding the second lockdown harder, 24% said the rules are easier to follow now and 48% said they are coping about the same, according to King's College London (KCL) research. The majority (82%) said they are being just as careful or more careful now about obeying the rules.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/major-study-shows-how-many-19376257>

### **Vulnerable children in lockdown 'national concern'**

The "invisibility of vulnerable children" during the pandemic should be a "matter of national concern," says England's chief inspector of schools. Amanda Spielman warns when many pupils were out of school in the lockdown, teachers might not have picked up early warning signs of abuse or neglect. The chief inspector says such children, at risk of harm, slipped out of sight. Launching her annual report, Ms Spielman says it should now be a priority to find such overlooked cases.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-55138429>

### **German Joblessness Fell in November Despite Second Lockdown**

Germany's labor market shrugged off a worsening pandemic and new restrictions, with unemployment unexpectedly declining for a fifth month in November. A drop of 39,000 left the total number of jobless people at 2.82 million, pushing the unemployment rate down to 6.1%. While companies are avoiding widespread dismissals in response to the country's second lockdown, they have grown reluctant to hire.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/global-economics/german-joblessness-fell-in-november-despite-second-lockdown>

### **Britons were the lockdown bingers of Europe, finds study**

Comfort-seeking Britons have eaten and drunk their way through more unhealthy snacks and alcohol during lockdown than their peers elsewhere in Europe, a study suggests. Overall, the survey of 5,000 consumers in 10 European countries found that lockdown restrictions may have caused lasting positive change in relation to food consumption, with significant shifts in shopping patterns, meal preparation and eating habits. In line with the rest of Europe, people in the UK increased their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables during the pandemic. However, the British are snacking and boozing more than people in other European countries

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/01/britons-were-the-lockdown-bingers-of-europe-finds-study>

### **Europe Keeps Schools Open, not Restaurants, Unlike U.S. cities**

As a second lockdown appeared inevitable amid skyrocketing coronavirus infections, the scientists advising the French government in October warned that keeping students in their classrooms meant it would take longer to tame the surge. The government kept the schools open anyway, even as the country became an epicenter of the second wave of the coronavirus in Europe. French leaders decided that they would try to subdue the surge, while also trying to minimize economic and academic damage by keeping children learning where they do it best: in school. Five weeks into a second nationwide lockdown, France, like much of Europe, has proved that it is possible to bring the rate of known infections down, even with schools open. It is a lesson that has been taken up late in the United States

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/30/world/europe/france-covid-schools.html>

### **One quarter of Britons found the second national lockdown harder to follow**

More than a quarter of Britons found it harder to follow the second lockdown compared to the first, a survey has revealed. The most common reasons for struggling were feeling fatigued by Covid



restrictions, a belief measures were unjust and bad weather restricting people from going outside and seeing friends and family. Experts feared that 'lockdown fatigue' would mean many Brits would defy the second shutdown and see loved ones anyway. But King's College London scientists found a 'remarkable resilience' in the British public, with 82 per cent still following the rules to the best of their abilities.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9001941/One-quarter-Britons-second-national-lockdown-harder-follow.html>

### **Merkel urges Germans to be careful or risk third coronavirus wave**

Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday that Germany could face a third wave of coronavirus infections if citizens are careless in the coming weeks. Germany's number of new infections has stabilized at a high level since a partial lockdown was imposed on Nov 2. to contain a second wave of coronavirus infections. But officials have said that progress was still fragile. "We'll have to be very, very careful during the winter," Merkel said in a virtual panel discussion with police officers. "Otherwise we'll end up directly in the next wave."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany-altmaier/merkel-urges-germans-to-be-careful-or-risk-third-coronavirus-wave-idUSKBN28A0J5>

### **Hospitality hit hardest as Austrian unemployment rises during lockdown**

Austrian unemployment rose in November as a coronavirus lockdown kicked in in the second half of the month, Labour Minister Christine Aschbacher said on Tuesday, with hospitality jobs especially hard hit. "The effects of the pandemic but also the global economic crisis that it caused are leaving deep marks on the job market," Aschbacher said, adding that public health measures were currently the top priority.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/instant-article/idUKKBN28B4ZJ>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Health-care workers and nursing home residents should be the first to get coronavirus vaccines, CDC advisory group says**

The first doses of a coronavirus vaccine should be given to an estimated 21 million health-care workers and 3 million residents and staff of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, a federal advisory panel recommended Tuesday afternoon. These groups were deemed the highest priority by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, because the vaccine will initially be in extremely short supply after it is cleared by federal regulators. Health-care personnel are a top priority because of their exposure to the virus and their critical role of keeping the nation's hospitals and clinics functioning. Residents and employees of long-term care facilities were prioritized because they account for nearly 40 percent of deaths from covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/12/01/vaccine-priority-groups-covid/>

### **EU Commission to authorise COVID-19 vaccines days after regulatory approval**

The European Commission is likely to give the final authorisation for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines days after the EU drug regulator approves them, a spokesman for the EU executive said on Tuesday. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said earlier on Tuesday it planned to decide whether to approve the vaccine being developed by Pfizer and BioNTech by Dec 29, and by Jan. 12 on the shot being developed by Moderna. "It's probably a matter of days. The goal is to do it rapidly," the spokesman told a news conference, adding the exact date depended on the EMA's possible authorisations.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-vaccines-idUSKBN28B4R7>

### **Pfizer, Moderna Request Covid-19 Vaccine Authorization in Europe**

Pfizer Inc. partner BioNTech and U.S. drugmaker Moderna Inc. both applied for their coronavirus

vaccines to be approved in the European Union, the EU's chief medicines regulator said Tuesday, with officials expected to make a decision on at least one of the vaccines by the end of the month. The announcement brings hope that the EU will soon be able to start vaccinating its 448 million people against a disease that has done some of its earliest and worst damage on the continent.

[https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-biontech-file-for-covid-19-vaccine-approval-in-europe-11606816904?mod=pls\\_whats\\_news\\_us\\_business\\_f](https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-biontech-file-for-covid-19-vaccine-approval-in-europe-11606816904?mod=pls_whats_news_us_business_f)

### **Leaked documents show China lied about Covid-19 case totals and mishandled pandemic**

China underreported Covid-19 numbers by more than half as it downplayed the severity of the virus and their failure to quickly diagnose cases in the early stages of the pandemic, according to leaked documents. A series of revelations in 117 pages of internal documents from the Hubei Provincial Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, obtained by CNN, shows how the Chinese Communist Party withheld vital information as the world grappled to contain the rapidly spreading virus. On 10 February, China publicly reported 2,478 new confirmed cases while privately documenting 5,918 new cases - a 139 per cent difference. On 17 February, China publicly reported new deaths in Hubei province, where the pandemic is believed to have originated in Wuhan, at 93 while privately reporting 196 - a difference of more than double.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/world/covid19-china-mishandle-pandemic-leaked-documents-b1764276.html>

### **Covid-19: Lung damage 'identified' in study**

Researchers made a mathematical model to find the daily disease growth rate European nations took 9 days to bring in lockdown from first death, on average In nine days, epidemic size grows by a factor of ten, the researchers say

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55017301>

### **Britain DID lockdown too late in March: UK's coronavirus epidemic grew five times more than the European average between first the Covid death and the start of lockdown, study ...**

Researchers made a mathematical model to find the daily disease growth rate European nations took 9 days to bring in lockdown from first death, on average In nine days, epidemic size grows by a factor of ten, the researchers say

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9005397/Number-Covid-deaths-Europe-increased-ten-fold-death-lockdown.html>

### **Germany says coronavirus vaccine will be safe**

The same rigorous approval standards are being applied to the coronavirus vaccine candidates as for other medicines, Germany's science minister has said, adding that any approved jab will be voluntary. Anja Karliczek said the key to gaining widespread public support for the immunisation is ensuring the same standards are applied across the board. Authorities will educate the public about any possible side effects that could occur after vaccination, including headaches, localised pain and fever. Vaccination against the virus will not be mandatory, Ms Karliczek said. The rapid pace of the vaccines' development is down to huge efforts by scientists, as well as early funding and experience from previous vaccines, Marylyn Addo, a doctor at Hamburg's UKE hospital who is working in vaccine trials, said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-covid-vaccine-approval-b1764467.html>

### **UEA study shows Chinese asymptomatic Covid-19 cases were not infectious**

Researchers from Norwich have found a mass screening programme of more than 10 million people in the Chinese city of Wuhan identified 300 asymptomatic Covid-19 cases - but none were infectious. But the University of East Anglia scientists stressed the findings do not show people who have coronavirus, but no symptoms, cannot pass on the virus. Mass testing took place over two weeks at the end of May - after the city's stringent lockdown was lifted in April. The study found no 'viable'

virus in the asymptomatic cases and their close contacts did not test positive. Prof Fujian Song, from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said: "The virus cultures indicated no viable virus in the identified asymptomatic cases. This means that these people were not likely to infect anyone else."

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/uea-study-hows-asymptomatic-covid-cases-in-wuhan-not-infectious-6569130>

### **Analysis: COVID-19 worsens Europe's inequalities in yet another way - the fertility gap**

"It's time to become a mum," was the push-notification hundreds of Portuguese women received on their cell phones last month. The text, sent by a private hospital in Lisbon trying to drum up clients for its maternity unit, caused outrage on social media, with some women saying that the middle of a pandemic and recession is the worst possible time to have a baby. Evidence suggests the coronavirus is deterring would-be parents from conceiving in most of Europe, but especially in the southern countries - from Italy to Greece - where safety nets are weakest and the birth rate was already in strong decline.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-births-analysis/analysis-covid-19-worsens-europes-inequalities-in-yet-another-way-the-fertility-gap-idUSKBN28B3XA>

### **Deliver a safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine in less than a year? Impossible. Meet Moncef Slaoui.**

In 2009, a flu pandemic was racing across the world when a venture capital firm that backs health care companies held its annual retreat. The meeting was a who's who of pharmaceutical and biotechnology executives - the top leaders of the top companies in the world.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/deliver-a-safe-effective-covid-19-vaccine-in-less-than-a-year-impossible-meet-moncef-slaoui/ar-BB1bwplw?fbclid=IwAR0Nr6m-9UWDCNfNpBINCjg5fwHU-MMkbuzDKIURpWJpAwiKv1yhqAagfQY>

### **Europe's medical agency eyes safety of two COVID-19 vaccines**

The European Medicines Agency has said it would convene a meeting on December 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved. The agency also said on Tuesday it could decide as early as January 12 whether to approve an experimental COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/1/europes-medical-agency-eyes-safety-of-two-covid-19-vaccines>

### **Novavax expects delayed U.S. COVID-19 vaccine trial to start in coming weeks**

Novavax Inc on Monday pushed back the start of a U.S.-based, late-stage trial for its experimental COVID-19 vaccine for the second time and now expects it to begin in the coming weeks instead of November. While the U.S. trial has been hampered by issues in scaling up the vaccine's manufacturing, Novavax has a late-stage study underway in the UK which finished enrollment on Monday. Shares of the U.S.-based company were up 10% in late-afternoon trading. The U.S. trial delay was not meaningful and it could provide more information into Novavax's "second-generation" vaccine that already lags behind larger rivals, said Cantor Fitzgerald analyst Charles Duncan.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-novavax-vaccine/novavax-expects-delayed-u-s-covid-19-vaccine-trial-to-start-in-coming-weeks-idUKKBN28A1E1>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Covid-19 death toll passes 1000 in Northern Ireland**

Coronavirus-linked deaths recorded by health officials in Northern Ireland have surpassed 1,000. Health minister Robin Swann said the region had passed a "sad milestone" after 15 further fatalities were reported on Tuesday, taking the toll collated by the Department of Health to 1,011. Another 391 confirmed cases of the virus were also recorded in the last 24-hour reporting period.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/uk/covid-19-death-toll-passes-1000-in-northern-ireland/>

### **How USA has become one giant hotspot: 1,172 Americans are now dying each day - an 80% increase in just one month - while hospitalizations soar to a record 96,000**

A new map from an internal federal government brief shows that 48 US states and the District of Columbia are marked as 'sustained hotspots' of coronavirus. Only two states on the map, dated November 29 and labeled 'not for distribution', did not fall in this category, which were Hawaii and Rhode Island. Another map from the brief also revealed the incidence rate of COVID-19 across the country is 336 cases per 100,000 people, up from 322 cases per 100,000 two weeks prior. Most US counties on the map had incidence rates of either 200-499 new cases per 100,000 or 500+ new cases per 100,000. It comes as the US hit a grim new record of 96,039 coronavirus hospitalizations across the nation. Hospitals in several states are beyond capacity with health officials blaming 'COVID fatigue' and travel that occurred over Thanksgiving.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9005605/Almost-county-America-coronavirus-hotspot-government-map-reveals.html>

### **Hospitalizations hit record 96,039 and rise in 41 states and America faces new restrictions**

Hospitals from Rhode Island to Alabama and Montana were beyond capacity. The pandemic now has no epicenter and is rampant across the whole country. Case loads rose in 41 states and the mayor of El Paso blamed 'COVID fatigue'; he said that many cases in his city had been traced back to large stores. Health officials are resigned to the situation worsening thanks to Thanksgiving and those who did travel for Thanksgiving are urged to assume they have COVID. The decision by more than a million to travel means Christmas will be miserable. On Monday Scott Atlas, Trump's favorite member of COVID taskforce, resigned. He has been strongly criticized for his skepticism about masks and lockdown.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9003923/Hospitalizations-hit-record-96-039-rise-41-states-America-faces-new-restrictions.html>

### **COVID-19: UK records another 13,430 cases and 603 deaths**

Another 13,430 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the UK, with 603 more having died after contracting the disease. The latest government figures bring the total number of coronavirus cases in the UK to 1,643,086 - and the total number of deaths within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test to 59,051. It is a slight rise from the 12,330 new cases that were posted on Monday, but a significant increase on the 205 deaths that were recorded.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-records-another-13-430-cases-and-603-deaths-12148119>

### **UK coronavirus death toll passes 75,000**

The UK's total Covid death toll has passed 75,000, according to a tally of all fatalities that mention the disease on death certificates. The grim milestone comes just over a month after the UK surpassed 60,000 deaths in late October, showing how the Covid death toll accelerated since September, having slowed during the summer. The figure is higher than the government's Covid death toll of 59,051. The latter figure only covers people who have died within 28 days of testing positive for the virus. Covid deaths have been recorded in almost every corner of the UK, with the Isles of Scilly the only local authority area in the country not to have had a coronavirus fatality.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/uk-coronavirus-death-toll-passes-75000/ar-BB1bwVct>

### **Another 603 Covid deaths recorded the day before lockdown lifts**

Another 603 UK coronavirus deaths have been reported today - hours before England comes out of its second national lockdown. The latest official figures show Covid-19 cases are continuing to drop, with another 13,430 people testing positive, bringing the total since the pandemic began to 1,643,086. The overall death toll for the UK now stands at 59,051, though separate figures from statistics agencies and more recent deaths suggest Covid-19 has been linked to some 74,000 deaths. Today's death toll, the highest since 696 reported deaths on November 25, is a significant rise on the past couple of days - but figures at the weekend are often lower since reporting can lag.

behind. However, they will still alarm scientists and those who fear a third national lockdown in England, which is set to return to a harsher tiered system from tomorrow.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/12/01/another-603-covid-deaths-recorded-the-day-before-lockdown-lifts-13683999/>

### **UK coronavirus hospital deaths soar by 422 on day before England lockdown ends**

England is preparing to exit a month-long full national lockdown but 99% of the population will remain in Tier 2 or 3 coronavirus measures from December 2 onwards

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/breaking-uk-coronavirus-daily-deaths-23097980>

### **One chart shows how bad Germany's second wave of the coronavirus is**

Germany was widely seen as a poster-child for its approach to tackling the coronavirus during the first wave of cases that emerged in Europe in the spring. Covid-19 cases in the country started to creep higher in October, however. This rise has been accompanied by an increasing daily death rate, on a 7-day average, which has now passed its April peak.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/01/germanys-second-wave-of-covid-19-has-been-worse-than-the-first.html>

### **In Europe's Nursing Homes, a Soaring Covid-19 Death Toll and the Pain of Isolation**

The coronavirus has resurged in Europe's nursing homes, killing thousands of older people and forcing facilities to make a difficult choice: impose another period of crushing isolation or risk greater exposure to the virus. Nursing home outbreaks have dashed hopes that their residents could be shielded from the virus when it is spreading quickly in society at large. As cases soared across Europe this fall, nursing home personnel and visitors brought the virus in with them despite strict sanitary rules, infecting tens of thousands of residents.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-europes-nursing-homes-a-soaring-covid-19-death-toll-and-the-pain-of-isolation-11606742116>

### **Austria set to bow to pressure on Covid risk with ski holiday ban**

Austria's government appears to have bowed to pressure from Germany, France and Italy and will ban skiing holidays over the Christmas break in an attempt to control the coronavirus pandemic, Austrian media is reporting. The decision, expected to be officially announced on Wednesday, follows heated disagreements between Berlin and Vienna. On Tuesday morning, Austria's tourist minister accused the German government of interfering in its domestic affairs after Angela Merkel said she had wanted a ban on skiing holidays. The chancellor secured the backing of the Italian and French governments as well as the leaders of the 16 German states.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/01/austria-set-to-bow-to-pressure-on-covid-risk-with-ski-holiday-ban>

### **Coronavirus: Netherlands makes face masks mandatory indoors**

The Netherlands has made it compulsory to wear a face mask in indoor public spaces in an effort to contain the spread of coronavirus. The country is one of the last in Europe to introduce such a measure. The rule will apply to those over the age of 13 in public buildings such as shops, railway stations and hairdressers from Tuesday. The Netherlands has been one of the countries worst affected by Europe's second wave of Covid-19. It broke daily case records throughout October, and the number of new confirmed infections in the country of 17 million has remained fairly stable at about 5,000 a day for several weeks.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55143938>

### **As the virus resurges, mental health woes batter France**

The panicked 22-year-old is led to Consultation Room No. 2, with its easy-mop floor and honeycombed meshing over the window. Behind her, the psychiatric emergency ward's heavy double doors — openable only with a staff member's key — thud shut. With anxious taps of her white sneakers, she confides to an on-duty psychiatrist how the solitude of the coronavirus lockdown and the angst of not finding work in the pandemic-battered job market are contributing to her

maelstrom of anxieties. She is unnerved that she is starting to obsess about knives, fearful that her mental health might be collapsing.

<https://apnews.com/article/international-news-france-coronavirus-pandemic-mental-health-99db6e83c092f426b453670fa1b95cd3>

### **WHO head hails first weekly decline worldwide in COVID-19 cases**

The World Health Organization chief is hailing the first weekly decline in global COVID-19 cases since September, citing the impact of measures mainly in hard-hit Europe and warning that “this is no time for complacency.” Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the “welcome news” still should be taken with caution and warned that death counts were still rising across the world — and cases were still rising in other parts of the world outside of Europe. “This is no time for complacency, especially with holiday season approaching in many cultures and countries,” he said.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/11/30/world/who-head-hails-first-weekly-decline-worldwide-covid-19-cases/>

### **New Lockdown**

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#### **Lockdown Restrictions May Return in Uttar Pradesh Soon**

Earlier states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Rajasthan had extended the lockdown restrictions in the containment zones till December 31.

<https://www.india.com/news/india/lockdown-uttar-pradesh-news-lockdown-restrictions-may-return-in-uttar-pradesh-soon-check-details-noida-gautam-buddh-nagar-lucknow-covid-19-restrictions-4234769/>