

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

7th Dec 2020

News Highlights

Covid-19 vaccine rollout in China covers a million

Health authorities in [China have reportedly vaccinated a million health workers and at-risk citizens against Covid-19 in an immunisation drive, according to the Associated Press](#). However, officials have yet to provide a evidence showing a comprehensive plan and data from the Chinese government is limited.

WHO unveils ambitious targets for vaccine doses in 2021

World Health Organization chief scientist, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, [has said WHO aims to have 500 million doses of a vaccine against the novel coronavirus ready to be rolled out by the end of the first quarter next year](#). The COVAX initiative, involves 189 countries to date and plans to vaccinate a fifth of the global population, targets those at high risk and frontline health workers.

Australia sees vaccine and anti-lockdown protests

In Melbourne and Victoria, [lockdown measures are broadly viewed as having contained Covid-19. Despite this, lockdown measures in Australia have seen protest](#). Hundreds gathered in Sydney at what they called a 'freedom rally,' even as restrictions relaxed. [Vaccines were also the target of protesters' ire during the rally](#), with claims that their development had been rushed.

Covid reinfections possible: WHO

The WHO has said immunity from Covid-19 after coronavirus infection is likely temporary. ['We're seeing data emerge that protection may not be lifelong, and therefore, we may see reinfections begin to occur'](#), said WHO official Mike Ryan. WHO researchers are studying the length Covid antibodies remain in the system after infection.

Lockdown Exit

China begins huge COVID-19 vaccine rollout, with doses reportedly already administered to 1 million citizens

Health officials in China have begun giving at-risk citizens emergency access to vaccine doses, according to a report. More than a million healthcare workers and others in at-risk groups have already received vaccines, The Associated Press reported Sunday. It detailed millions of orders from the country's provinces. Health officials in world's most populous country, which is home to almost 1.4 billion people, haven't yet released a comprehensive plan. Chinese government researchers are testing several vaccines from about a dozen countries, with a domestic vaccine from China Pharmaceutical Group, or Sinopharm, nearing final approval

<https://www.businessinsider.com/china-has-started-rollout-covid-19-vaccines-emergency-access-2020-12>

Covid-19: Children 'isolating three times in three months'

In Wales, there are calls for an alternative to school contact groups isolating for 14 days after a classmate tests positive. Some parents say their children have isolated three times in the past three months - and that it is detrimental to their wellbeing. A petition to the Senedd also says working

parents are suffering, with employers not always sympathetic if they have to stay home with children. The Welsh Government said it was working hard on testing developments.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55147677>

COVID-19: Christmas shoppers flood high streets in return after lockdown

Christmas shoppers flooded England's high streets for the first weekend since lockdown was lifted and non-essential stores were allowed to reopen. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, retail experts predicted £1.5bn would be spent in shops nationwide on Saturday. Taking advantage of the first non-working day to do their Christmas shopping, people flooded London's Regent Street and city centres in Manchester and York. Shoppers visiting Westfield, east London and stores in central Birmingham had to contend with hundreds of anti-lockdown protesters staging demonstrations against more potential restrictions next year.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-christmas-shoppers-flood-high-streets-in-return-after-lockdown-12152120>

China Gearing Up for COVID Vaccine Program

China is gearing up to roll out a huge coronavirus vaccine initiative. The Associated Press reports provincial governments across the country are placing orders for experimental, domestically made coronavirus vaccines, though health officials have yet to say how well they work or how they may reach the country's 1.4 billion people. The AP says more than a million Chinese health care workers have already received experimental vaccines under emergency use permission, but there have been no indications about possible side effects.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/china-gearing-covid-vaccine-program>

First week of eased restrictions in SA as state records no new cases of COVID-19

Hospitality venues in South Australia are bracing for a busy weekend after restrictions were eased, allowing twice as many people to be seated in pubs, bars and restaurants. The state's top police officer, Police Commissioner Grant Stevens, overruled health advice to increase the capacity in venues to one patron per two square metres, to help the state's economy during the Christmas trading period. The easing of restrictions come as SA records another day of zero cases of locally acquired COVID-19.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/coronavirus-south-australia-easing-restrictions-no-new-covid19-cases-recorded/2086be2f-d1ee-4329-abb7-b9093ad36b59>

How Melbourne and Victoria eliminated Covid-19 cases with a lockdown

In July and August, the Australian state of Victoria was going through a second Covid-19 wave. Local leaders set an improbable goal in the face of that challenge. They didn't want to just get their Covid-19 numbers down. They wanted to eliminate the virus entirely. By the end of November, they'd done it. They have seen no active cases for a full four weeks. Melbourne, the state's capital and a city with about as many people as the greater Washington, DC, area, is now completely coronavirus-free. Victoria's Covid-19 restrictions were controversial with some residents, but Australia in general enjoys more political homogeneity than the US does. That must make it easier to build solidarity for these extraordinary measures.

<https://www.vox.com/2020/12/4/22151242/melbourne-victoria-australia-covid-19-cases-lockdown>

First COVID-19 vaccines may reach Poland in January: PM's top aide

The first coronavirus vaccines could reach Poland in January, the Polish prime minister's top aide said on Friday, as emerging Europe's biggest country prepares to roll out its COVID-19 vaccination programme. Poland has ordered 45 million COVID-19 vaccines, and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has said the country intended to start vaccinating health workers, security forces and the elderly in February. "Similarly to other countries, it looks like the first batches of vaccine will reach Poland in January, because the approval process will take place in late December and early January," the prime minister's chief of staff Michal Dworzcyk told public broadcaster Polskie Radio

Program 1. Dworczyk added there may be around 8,000 vaccination points in Poland. "We want there to be a vaccination point in every community," he said. As of Thursday, Poland had reported 1,028,610 cases of the coronavirus and 18,828 deaths.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-poland/first-covid-19-vaccines-may-reach-poland-in-january-pms-top-aide-idUKKBN28E0TG>

Analysis: First U.S. delivery of COVID-19 vaccine will leave out many high-risk workers

The U.S. government's first shipment of millions of coronavirus vaccine doses to be divided among states and federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, will fall far short of protecting high priority groups such as healthcare workers, a Reuters analysis has found. Across the country, state health departments are preparing local hospitals for the first shipments of Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine if the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorizes it, possibly as early as mid-December.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccine-distributi/analysis-first-us-delivery-of-covid-19-vaccine-will-leave-out-many-high-risk-workers-idUKKBN28E1JP>

Nursing home residents added to first wave of Texans eligible for COVID-19 vaccine

Residents at nursing homes and assisted living facilities will be among the first wave of Texans eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, joining the ranks of healthcare workers already at the front of the line. State officials announced the addition Friday, while also unveiling plans to send the state's first 224,250 doses to hospitals, including nine in Dallas County.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2020/12/04/nursing-home-residents-added-to-first-wave-of-texans-eligible-for-covid-19-vaccine/>

COVID-19 crisis: Fewer women than men feel they can ask for raise

Ginning up the courage to ask for a raise is tough in any labour market, let alone one ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. But men are exhibiting more moxie than women when it comes to bargaining for better pay during the pandemic. That is the finding of a study released this week by Moody's Analytics and Morning Consult that surveyed 5,000 adult workers in mid-September.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/12/4/fewer-women-than-men-feel-they-can-ask-for-a-raise-during-covid>

WHO hopes to have 500 million vaccine doses via COVAX scheme in first quarter of 2021 - chief scientist

The World Health Organization hopes to have half a billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines available for distribution by the global COVAX initiative in the first quarter of 2021, its chief scientist said on Friday. To date 189 countries have joined the COVAX programme, which is backed by the WHO and seeks to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines. The United States is not among them, having secured bilateral deals. The initial COVAX plan is to vaccinate the 20% of populations at highest risk, including health workers and people aged over 65.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-who-covax/who-hopes-to-have-500-million-vaccine-doses-via-covax-scheme-in-first-quarter-of-2021-chief-scientist-idUKKBN28E2Q0?il=0>

COVID-19: Hackers targeted vaccine 'cold supply' chain network - state actors suspected

A cyber espionage campaign targeted at companies vital to the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines has been detected. According to an alert issued by the US government and a research blog published by IBM, the hacking campaign started in September. It targeted a range of organisations, including in government and across the energy and IT sectors, that are associated with the COVID-19 'cold supply' chain.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-hackers-targeted-vaccine-distribution-network-12149871>

Q&A: Cold chains, COVID-19 vaccines and reaching low-income countries | Imperial News

Many low-income countries lack the infrastructure to deliver vaccines effectively, so how can we

ensure COVID-19 vaccines are accessible for all? As COVID-19 vaccine candidates begin to show promising trial results, and as the Pfizer mRNA vaccine is approved for use in the UK, many are cautiously optimistic that they could hold the key to lower infection rates, fewer deaths, and at least a partial return to normalcy. However, many lower income countries lack the infrastructure and resources needed to distribute potential vaccines safely – with extra logistical challenges for vaccines stored at extremely cold temperatures – which could leave their populations just as vulnerable to COVID-19 as before.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/209993/qa-cold-chains-covid-19-vaccines-reaching/>

COVID-19: India says entire population may not need vaccinating

India may not need to vaccinate all of its 1.3 billion people if it manages to inoculate a critical mass and break the transmission of the coronavirus, senior government officials said on Tuesday. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who toured the facilities of three vaccine makers over the weekend, has emphasised the importance of a vaccine to rein in COVID-19.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/2/india-says-may-not-need-to-vaccinate-entire-population-to-control>

Exit Strategies

Covid-19 vaccine safety message 'vitaly important', UK health chief says

Public health messaging that people can have faith in the safety of coronavirus vaccines is “vitaly important”, the leader of the body that has approved the Pfizer jab has said. Dr June Raine, the chief executive of the UK’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), said of the Pfizer treatment that there “should be no doubt whatever that this is a very safe and highly effective vaccine”. Asked on the BBC’s Andrew Marr Show about how important the public health message is to make sure that people actually take the vaccine, she said: “It’s vitaly important. And I would really like to emphasise that the highest standards of scrutiny, of safety and of effectiveness and quality have been met, international standards.”

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/world/covid-19-vaccine-safety-message-vitaly-important-uk-health-chief-says/ar-B1bG5cn>

The first Covid-19 vaccine arrives in Scotland

The Scottish Government has announced that the first Covid-19 vaccine arrived in Scotland on Saturday. Health Secretary, Jeane Freeman, welcomed the news. Ms Freeman said: “I am pleased to announce that the vaccine is now in Scotland and being stored safely in order for vaccinations to begin on Tuesday. Science has given us hope and we are starting on a journey which will eventually allow us to escape this terrible virus. Following clinical advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) we will begin with those groups which have been prioritised to address 99 per cent of preventable deaths associated with Covid-19. These include the elderly, care home residents and staff, and frontline health and social care workers.

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2020/12/the-first-covid-19-vaccine-arrives-in-scotland/>

Covid: NHS rapid test use defended amid accuracy concerns

The mass use of rapid Covid tests has been defended by a senior NHS adviser, amid concerns over their accuracy. Dr Susan Hopkins, chief medical adviser to NHS Test and Trace, said the lateral flow tests could identify many cases of infection in people without symptoms. Speaking to the BBC, she accepted there had been “false negatives” but stressed the policy was a “game-changer”. A study found the tests missed 50% of cases and some scientists fear people could start to ignore health advice.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55198298>

Military planes could fly-in Covid-19 vaccine amid fears of post-Brexit delays

Military planes could fly-in the Covid-19 Pfizer vaccine amid fears of post-Brexit delays at Britain's

ports. The majority of doses for Pfizer's vaccine, which offers up to six months of immunity to the coronavirus, are being produced in the town of Puurs, Belgium. But as the Government tries to roll-out its vaccination scheme, the Department for Health and Social Care has had talks with the Ministry of Justice to ensure the doses can arrive on time.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9023071/Military-planes-fly-Covid-19-vaccine-amid-fears-post-Brexit-delays.html>

Covid-19 in Wales: Vaccinations will take months, minister says

In Wales, it could take months before some people receive a vaccine against Covid-19, according to the health minister. Vaughan Gething called on people to avoid "going back to the old normal before the vaccine has given us the protection we need". The first people to get the coronavirus vaccine in Wales will get the jab on Tuesday. Front-line NHS staff and the over 80s are at the top of the list for the vaccine. "It will take months with more than one vaccine needed to come on board before we can protect everybody," Mr Gething told BBC Radio Wales

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-55206307>

Coronavirus: NHS to begin vaccine rollout this week

The coronavirus vaccine is the "beginning of the end" of the epidemic in the UK, Prof Stephen Powis has said, as vaccinations begin on Tuesday. But the NHS England medical director warned the distribution of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine would be a "marathon not a sprint". It will take "many months" to vaccinate everybody who needs it, he said. Frontline health staff, those over 80, and care home workers will be first to get the Covid-19 vaccine. In England, 50 hospitals have been initially chosen to serve as hubs for administering the vaccine.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55202093>

COVID-19: US faces 'bleak future' unless swift action is taken on aid bill, Biden warns

Joe Biden has said he will not force Americans to take any vaccine - but did warn the country faces a "bleak future" unless swift action is taken to agree on a coronavirus aid bill. His comments come as the country is engulfed in a nationwide spike in the virus that is hampering its economic recovery. The president-elect also expressed concern that so far he has seen "no detailed plan" from the Trump administration on how to distribute an approved coronavirus vaccine.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-us-faces-bleak-future-unless-swift-action-is-taken-on-aid-bill-biden-warns-12151645>

Austria postpones some virus testing after huge snowstorm

Several communities in the Austrian Alps put mass coronavirus testing on hold Sunday and others were urged to do the same after a storm dumped huge amounts of snow, sending some avalanche warnings to their highest level. Some parts of the province of Tyrol saw 70 centimeters of snow fall overnight Friday into Saturday, and another 110 centimeters were expected on Sunday, Austria's APA news agency reported. Austria on Friday started a voluntary mass testing program that officials hope will prevent long, hard lockdowns in the future. Over the first two days, some 300,000 people were tested out of Austria's nearly 9 million. The government is hoping that several million will have been tested by mid December.

<https://apnews.com/article/italy-avalanches-storms-coronavirus-pandemic-austria-9add0e7cc8f0a7c6a4719ab0d8455e62>

Australia Probes How Two International Travelers Dodged Quarantine

Australian state police were to blame for two German nationals avoiding mandatory hotel quarantine upon arrival in Sydney before they took a flight to Melbourne. New South Wales Police reviewed the circumstances of the incident and identified they "had incorrectly allowed the two travelers to proceed to Melbourne," the force said in a statement Sunday. "Police practices and systems at the airport have also been reviewed and strengthened as a result of this incident."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-06/australia-probes-how-2-international-travelers-dodged-quarantine>

Coronavirus vaccine: First doses of Pfizer jab arrive in NI

The first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine have arrived in Northern Ireland. Nearly 25,000 doses arrived in Belfast on Friday - it is hoped it will be the first of several deliveries this month. Health Minister Robin Swann said confirmation of which groups will get the vaccine first is due next week. There will be dummy runs at various locations, and the first administration of the vaccine could happen early next week, BBC News NI understands.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-55190426>

PPE glut leaves UK manufacturers fearful for their future

When the UK government issued a desperate plea for British manufacturers to tackle a shortfall of urgently needed personal protective equipment for health staff as Covid-19 hit, James Eden answered the call. His clothing company, Private White VC, borrowed money for a new factory to make face masks and switched its lines to make hospital gowns, hiring dozens of staff, as the government announced it was aiming to source 70 per cent of its PPE domestically. But at the same time, ministers were awarding companies or middlemen with no prior experience in the field lucrative contracts to import the much needed equipment, often at inflated prices, creating a stockpile that has left nascent domestic producers without a market.

<https://www.ft.com/content/59c96a88-222c-495f-b414-9b2b70d7f102>

Covid: Argentina passes tax on wealthy to pay for virus measures

Argentina has passed a new tax on its wealthiest people to pay for medical supplies and relief measures amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Senators passed the one-off levy - dubbed the "millionaire's tax" - by 42 votes to 26 on Friday. Those with assets worth more than 200 million pesos (\$2.5m; £1.8m) - some 12,000 people - will have to pay. Argentina has recorded close to 1.5 million infections and almost 40,000 deaths from the coronavirus. It has been hit hard by the pandemic, becoming the fifth country worldwide to report one million confirmed cases in October despite only having a population of about 45 million people - making it the smallest nation at the time to surpass that figure.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-55199058>

More than half of Spaniards unwilling to take COVID-19 vaccine immediately, survey shows

More than half of Spaniards are not willing to get COVID-19 vaccine shots as soon as they are available, a survey showed on Friday as the government announced a target of 15-20 million vaccinations by mid-2021. Now several vaccines are in the works, one of the challenges for governments will be to convince a big enough share of their population to get vaccinated. Even in Spain, where vaccination rates are usually high, this will be an issue, as shown by the official poll by the Centre for Sociological Studies (CIS). About a third of the population would be ready to take the COVID-19 vaccine immediately, while 55.2% of them would rather wait to see any effects on others, the poll carried out on Nov. 23-26 amid 2,130 people, showed.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-spain-vaccine/more-than-half-of-spaniards-unwilling-to-take-covid-19-vaccine-immediately-survey-shows-idUKKBN28E1BL>

Virginia now set to receive 480,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses by end of December

The state of Virginia is now set to receive 480,000 COVID-19 vaccines by the end of December, as more specifics for the phase one rollout were released Friday. The number of doses is up significantly since Governor Northam's announcement earlier in the week that the state would receive 70,000 from Pfizer. On Friday, the state's health department announced that Moderna will also send vaccines to Virginia as part of the federal government's Operation Warp Speed plan for

distribution.

<https://www.nbc12.com/2020/12/04/virginia-now-expected-receive-covid-vaccine-doses-by-end-december/>

Why nursing home patients will get COVID-19 vaccines first

The roughly 3 million Americans who reside in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other group-care communities are an almost invisible population. This week, however, they were singled out for high-priority access to a most precious resource: some of the first doses of COVID-19 vaccine available in the United States. It's a distinction they'll share with the nation's 21 million healthcare workers, thanks to a vote by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, an expert panel that advises the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-12-04/nursing-home-patients-get-priority-for-covid-19-vaccines-even-tho-ugh-they-may-not-work>

HSE reveals specialist freezers for Covid-19 vaccines News

Specialist freezers to store Covid-19 vaccines have started to arrive in Ireland, the Health Service Executive chief Paul Reid revealed. He posted a photo on Twitter and explained: "We're preparing for the #COVID19 vaccine roll-out in Ireland. "At the HSE National Cold Chain Centre, we have received and are currently commissioning & validating a consignment of 9 x Ultra Low Temperature Freezers for storage of the vaccines at -75 degrees." It follows a press briefing yesterday during which Mr Reid said Ireland has the capacity to acquire 16 million doses of a Covid-19 vaccine. "Although there will be no shortage of the vaccine", he said, they will arrive at different stages, which "will require sequencing or prioritisation process which is currently being finalised".

<https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/12/04/1182350-hse-covid-vaccine/>

British Government to compensate people who suffer extreme Covid-19 vaccine side effects with payments of up to £120,000 under existing scheme for common jabs

People 'severely disabled' by the Covid-19 vaccine will get a £120k payment The government added the jab to the 1979 Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme People suffering at least 60 per cent disability will receive a tax-free lump sum Prof Jonathan Van-Tam said he was confident about the safety of the vaccine

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9016851/British-Government-compensate-people-suffer-extreme-Covid-19-vaccine-effects.html>

Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine arrives in Northern Ireland

Stocks of coronavirus vaccine have arrived in Northern Ireland ahead of the rollout of the jabs next week. The initial batch of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine was transported overnight from England. It has been taken to a central storage facility,

<https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2020/12/04/news/pfizer-vaccine-arrives-in-northern-ireland-2151442/>

Warner Bros to release all 2021 films on HBO Max and in cinemas on same day

Warner Bros will release all of its 2021 films, including Dune and The Matrix 4, online on the same day they hit cinemas. The move to put such major blockbusters straight on streaming service HBO Max is another blow to the struggling cinema industry, which has largely closed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Warner Bros said the one-year plan was in response to the "unprecedented times" of the outbreak, but the multiplexes will no doubt still be concerned about what it could mean for their future. They have been stung by a raft of delays to high-profile films in 2020, including the latest instalments in popular franchises such as Marvel and James Bond.

<https://news.sky.com/story/warner-bros-to-release-all-2021-films-on-hbo-max-and-in-cinemas-on-same-day-12150586>

'Not enough to go around': US states struggle to decide who should get Covid vaccine first

Colorado public health experts planning for an imminent Covid-19 vaccine recommended a vulnerable population living in crowded housing for early vaccination – the state’s prison and jail inmates. It is a population living in tight quarters where it’s almost impossible to social distance, and these institutions have seen some of the largest outbreaks of Covid-19 in the nation. For all those reasons, they were part of an early phase of the state’s vaccination plan. But inmates are not, as a rule, a politically popular constituency. “There’s no way it’s going to go to prisoners before it goes to people who haven’t committed any crime,” said Colorado’s Democratic governor, Jared Polis, this week, in contradiction to the state’s plan for how to distribute potential Covid-19 vaccines.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/03/us-states-struggle-covid-19-vaccine-planning>

Partisan Exits

COVID-19: Anti-lockdown and vaccine protests held across Australia

Anti-lockdown and vaccine protests have been held across Australia, with hundreds gathering in Sydney to hear from COVID-19 sceptics at a self-described “freedom” rally. The Sydney protest was observed by police but appeared to remain peaceful, with a NSW Police spokesperson confirming to NCA NewsWire there were no arrests. The rallies took place despite more significant easing of restrictions in NSW and Victoria following weeks of extremely low or zero case numbers. Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt told Sky News on Sunday morning he had complete confidence in the Therapeutic Goods Administration and medical experts, who had kept Australia safer than most countries in the world. He urged against complacency about COVID-19 and said it remained a contagious and deadly virus.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/breaking-news/antilockdown-and-vaccine-protest-in-sydney-proceeds-peacefully-despite-restrictions-easing/news-story/0e339e51d670e4dd5a3cbea77100f7a7>

German court upholds ban on coronavirus demonstration

Germany’s highest court upheld on Saturday a ban on a demonstration in the northern city of Bremen planned by opponents of lockdown measures aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus. Lower courts had already denied permission for the protest, planned for Saturday afternoon, at which 20,000 demonstrators were due to convene in the city centre of Bremen. Last month, German police unleashed water cannon and pepper spray in an effort to scatter thousands of protesters in Berlin angry about coronavirus restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-protests/german-court-upholds-ban-on-coronavirus-demonstration-idUSL1N2I06H>

German police break up banned coronavirus demonstration

German police intervened on Saturday to break up a demonstration by opponents of coronavirus lockdown measures in the northern city of Bremen after the protest was banned by the country’s highest court. Germany’s constitutional court upheld earlier rulings by lower courts that had already denied permission for 20,000 demonstrators to convene in the city centre of Bremen. However, hundreds of people still gathered, some of them opponents of the government’s coronavirus measures and others part of a counter-demonstration.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-protests/german-police-break-up-banned-coronavirus-demonstration-idINKBN28F0F1>

Coronavirus: Care homes to receive Pfizer vaccine within two weeks, says regulator

Care homes are set to receive deliveries of coronavirus vaccine within the next fortnight, after the UK’s medicines regulator gave approval for packs received by the NHS to be broken down into smaller batches for distribution. Residents and staff at care homes have been placed top of the priority list for the Pfizer/BioNTech jab, but prime minister Boris Johnson said that logistical difficulties were likely to delay the delivery of the life-saving vaccine. But now the chief executive of the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), June Raine, has said that doses

will “definitely” arrive at homes within the next two weeks. The problem arose because the vaccine shots arrive from manufacturers in Belgium in pizza box-style cases each containing 975 vials, which must be kept below -70 degrees celsius before use

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coronavirus-vaccine-pfizer-care-homes-mhra-b1766777.html>

Joe Biden: Covid vaccination in US will not be mandatory

President-elect Joe Biden says Americans won't be forced to take a coronavirus vaccine when one becomes available in the US. It comes as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for the first time urged "universal mask use" indoors, unless when Americans are at their own home. The CDC said the US had "entered a phase of high-level transmission" of the virus. On Friday the US recorded over 2,500 deaths and nearly 225,000 new cases. It has confirmed 14.3 million cases and more than 278,000 deaths.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-55193939>

Some Leeds vegans may shun Covid-19 vaccine due to animal testing

The testing of the Covid-19 vaccine on animals has caused controversy among some Leeds vegans. Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust is one of 50 trusts ready to roll out the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine from next week, with the most vulnerable first in the queue alongside frontline medical and care staff. The mass-vaccination of the public in Leeds is then expected to follow, starting early in the new year.

<https://www.leeds-live.co.uk/news/leeds-news/leeds-vegans-shun-covid-19-19399480>

The claim that Brexit helped secure a Covid-19 vaccine is dangerous to public health

That's the question being asked after Matt Hancock and Jacob Rees-Mogg falsely claimed Britain was only able to expedite the use of the vaccine thanks to Brexit (we are still, in the operation of our laws, institutions and businesses, EU members until the transition period ends on 31 January, and we have temporarily approved the vaccine under measures available to all EU states). It's a claim that neither Boris Johnson last night, nor Gavin Williamson this morning, were willing to support, with each finding different ways to avoid the question. Nonetheless, it has fuelled concerns about the speed of the process, including among Morning Callers, who sent more emails about this subject than I have ever received on a single topic, so I wanted to use today's email to explain in more detail why the British government has done this and what the consequences are, while hopefully reassuring readers.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2020/12/claim-brexit-helped-secure-covid-19-vaccine-dangerous-public-health>

With vaccines on the way, Mexico sees 'beginning of the end' of pandemic

Mexico is seeing “the beginning of the end” of the coronavirus pandemic with the first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, which should start arriving in the next few weeks and could continue coming for a year, the foreign ministry said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-vaccines-mexico/mexico-says-covid-19-vaccine-deliveries-could-run-through-dec-2021-idUKS0N2FS029>

Letitia Wright is slammed for posting video that questioned the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine

The British actress was slammed by her Marvel co-star Don Cheadle on Thursday She had posted YouTube clip that questioned the efficacy of the coronavirus jab She posted link to UK Youtuber and self-declared 'prophet' Tomi Arayomi's post Cheadle and hundreds of others called her out online for the 'hot garbage' claim Wright doubled down today, saying she wanted to raise her fears about vaccines

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9017455/Letitia-Wright-slammed-posting-video-questioned-efficacy-COVID-19-vaccine.html>

UK hopes for millions of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine doses this year - minister

Britain hopes that millions of doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine will be delivered by the end of the year but the total will depend on how quickly it can be manufactured, Britain's business minister Alok Sharma said on Friday. Britain approved Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday, jumping ahead of the rest of the world in the race to begin the most crucial mass inoculation programme in history. Last month Britain said it expected 10 million doses of the shot in 2020, but the government has said the pace of roll-out will be dependence on delivery. It has ordered 40 million doses in all, enough to vaccinate 20 million people.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain/uk-hopes-for-millions-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-doses-this-year-minister-idUKKBN28E0TW>

CHART: How Much COVID-19 Vaccine Has Each Country Claimed? : Goats and Soda

Health care workers first, along with residents and staff of nursing homes. Those people should receive the COVID-19 vaccine before anyone else, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. That recommendation applies to the U.S. But what about health care workers in other countries? Or the elderly with health conditions? Should a nurse in Peru, who's at high risk of catching the virus, be immunized before a person with low risk in the U.S. receives the vaccine? Niko Lusiani, a senior advisor with the global aid organization Oxfam, thinks that strategy makes sense both scientifically and morally.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/12/03/942303736/how-rich-countries-are-hoarding-the-worlds-vaccines-in-charts>

Continued Lockdown

More people signed off sick with mental health problems during lockdown, analysis reveals

The proportion of people applying for fit notes from their GP for mental health reasons jumped 6 per cent during lockdown in England, according to new research. It adds to growing concern the UK will see a surge in mental health problems as a result of the pandemic and the impact on society and the economy. The latest data on the number of statements of fitness to work signed by GPs, published by NHS Digital, shows mental health problems now account for almost four in 10 of all sick notes signed by GPs. The Centre for Mental Health think tank has warned the government needs to prepare for the aftermath of Covid-19.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-mental-health-gp-fit-notes-b1766400.html>

Victoria eases Covid restrictions again as it reaches 37 days without a case

Victoria has announced a significant easing of its Covid-19 restrictions in time for summer, allowing households to receive 30 visitors a day, relaxing mask-wearing rules, and increasing public gatherings to 100. Victoria, once the worst hit state in the country, has now had 37 straight days free of Covid-19. The result, praised by premier Daniel Andrews as "amazing" on Sunday, has allowed a further easing of restrictions. Victorians will, as of midnight local time, be allowed to have 30 visitors daily to their home from any number of other households, a doubling of the previous limit of 15.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/06/victoria-eases-covid-restrictions-again-as-it-reaches-37-days-without-a-case>

COVID-19 vaccine: 'We need to think of vaccination as a long trek to freedom' - Swann

A total of seven large-scale venues across the north are expected to be announced over the coming days which will deliver the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, over the coming weeks. The first batch of 25,000 vaccines, which have to be stored before use at -80 degrees Celsius, is expected to arrive next week following the approval for use earlier this week. It has been confirmed that those administering the vaccine and other health and social care workers, care home residents and people

aged over 80 will be prioritised first.

<https://www.derryjournal.com/health/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-we-need-think-vaccination-long-trek-freedom-swan-3057536>

Illinois to distribute first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine to 50 counties with highest death rates, possibly by mid-December

Illinois plans to distribute its initial allocation of roughly 109,000 doses of a new COVID-19 vaccine to the 50 counties across the state with the highest death rates from the virus, the state's top public health official said Friday. In the Chicago area, that includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties. It also includes Kankakee County but not McHenry. First, though, the Pfizer vaccine needs emergency use authorization from the federal Food and Drug Administration, which could come as soon as Thursday. If that happens, Illinois expects to receive its first shipment sometime during the week of Dec. 13.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-illinois-vaccine-update-20201204-7grdhuh7gzf5bif5tpmx5vdbj4-story.html>

'They don't need me now': COVID impact forcing Britons to food banks

British food banks are seeing more families needing their support as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic forces struggling people to seek help, charities and volunteers say. Lockdowns and other measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus have forced businesses to close or lay off staff. The rise in those out of work has resulted in more people turning to food banks, which provide emergency food supplies to families in need. "I was working part-time as a cleaner for evenings, and then when COVID started, we had to quit because everything was closed and our offices, they're not opening until 2021 because people can work from home," said Vilma Tunylaite, 40, queuing at a food bank in southwest London. "And me, they don't need me now."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-foodbanks/they-dont-need-me-now-covid-impact-forcing-britons-to-food-banks-idUKKBN28E0NN>

Wales to give citizens ID cards to prove they got the Covid vaccine

People in Wales will be given ID cards by the NHS after getting the coronavirus vaccine so they can prove they have had the jab, the Welsh government has announced. Welsh health minister Vaughan Gething said vaccinated people will receive a "credit-card sized" token, after the UK became the first nation to approve the jab developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. While plans for so-called "immunity passports" remain unclear in other parts of the UK, Welsh ministers believe new cards will help remind people to get the second part of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine. In a written statement Mr Gething said: "Those receiving a Covid-19 vaccination will be given a credit card-sized NHS Wales immunisation card which will have the vaccine name, date of immunisation and batch number of each of the doses given handwritten on them."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/covid-vaccine-wales-id-cards-immunity-passports-b1766172.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

Research into Covid-19 dog detectors begins

Dogs could be used in the fight against Covid-19 - by being trained to sniff out infected people. Researchers in Australia have begun to train 14 dogs in a feasibility study, and the animals could become part of the screening process for incoming visitors if successful. Studies have previously shown dogs can detect particular odours - known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) - which are produced by humans when they are suffering with a viral infection. Dr Anne-Lise Chaber of the University of Adelaide's School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences said the current training - in Adelaide and at the Australian Border Force's National Detector Dog Programme Facility - will test the accuracy of dogs detecting VOCs in sweat samples from people infected with coronavirus.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/research-into-covid-19-dog-detectors-begins/ar-BB1bFVfv>

The vaccine miracle: how scientists waged the battle against Covid-19

In the early afternoon of 3 January this year, a small metal box was delivered to the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre addressed to virus expert Prof Zhang Yongzhen. Inside, packed in dry ice, were swabs from a patient who was suffering from a novel, occasionally fatal respiratory illness that was sweeping the city of Wuhan. Exactly what was causing terrifying rises in case numbers, medical authorities wanted to know? And how was the disease being spread? Zhang and his colleagues set to work. For the next 48 hours, virtually non-stop, he and his team used advanced sequencing machines to unravel the RNA – the genetic building blocks – of the virus which they believed was responsible for the outbreak. Decoding the 28,000 letters of this RNA – which acts as letters of DNA do in a human – would give a precise indication of the new pathogen’s nature and behaviour.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/06/the-vaccine-miracle-how-scientists-waged-the-battle-against-covid-19>

Covid test-and-trace: Is backwards contact tracing the way forward?

Contact tracing is about detective work - and there are different ways to do it. If a person tests positive, forward contact tracing means finding all the people they could have passed the virus on to, and asking them to self-isolate. For backwards contact tracing, the aim is to find who gave the virus to the person who tested positive. The theory is that if they have already passed on the virus, they're more likely to have infected other people as well, because of how superspreading works. Then their contacts are found, and asked to self-isolate, too. If the effort is just on going forward, then "potentially a lot of cases won't have infected people", said Dr Adam Kucharski, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The result is a big part of the outbreak will be missed, he says. But because cases are often linked to superspreading events, going backwards could pick up infections that might otherwise be missed

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54648734>

New Zealand Covid minister urges patience in wait for vaccine approval

New Zealand’s Covid-19 minister has called for patience in the country’s vaccine roll-out programme, saying he was unlikely to follow the UK in using emergency provisions to fast-track approval. Covid-19 minister Chris Hipkins said: “We are in a slightly different position to other countries who are using emergency provisions to approve the vaccine, and in many cases those countries are doing that because they are suffering hugely from Covid, with thousands of people dying every day.”

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/new-zealand-covid-minister-urges-patience-in-wait-for-vaccine-approval/ar-B1bCC4A?pfr=1>

COVID-19 reinfections likely as antibody counts fall: WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that new data suggest individuals who were once infected with COVID-19 can be susceptible to secondary infections as antibodies die off. “We have seen the number of people infected continue to grow, but we’re also seeing data emerge that protection may not be lifelong, and therefore we may see reinfections begin to occur,” Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO’s health emergencies program, said per CNBC. “So the question is: What are the levels of protection in society?” Researchers at the WHO are now working to determine how long antibodies in response to COVID-19 last in the human system.

<https://thehill.com/changing-america/well-being/medical-advances/528828-covid-19-reinfections-likely-as-antibody-counts>

Coronavirus | Pfizer seeks emergency use authorisation for its COVID-19 vaccine in India

The firm, in its application submitted to the drug regulator, has sought permission to import the vaccine for sale and distribution in the country. Pfizer India has become the first pharmaceutical firm to seek from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) an emergency use authorisation for its

COVID-19 vaccine in the country, after its parent company secured such clearance in the UK and Bahrain. The firm, in its application submitted to the drug regulator, has sought permission to import the vaccine for sale and distribution in the country, besides waiver of clinical trials on Indian population in accordance with the special provisions under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, official sources said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pfizer-seeks-emergency-use-authorisation-for-its-covid-19-vaccine-in-india/article33262315.ece>

Indonesia receives first COVID-19 vaccine from China's Sinovac

Indonesia received its first shipment of coronavirus vaccine from China on Sunday (Dec 6), President Joko Widodo said, as the government prepares a mass inoculation programme. Jokowi, as the president is widely known, said in an online briefing that the country received 1.2 million doses from China's Sinovac Biotech, a vaccine Indonesia has been testing since August. He added that the government plans to receive another 1.8 million doses in early January. Late-stage trials of the Sinovac vaccine are also under way in Brazil and Turkey, with interim results on efficiency from Brazil expected by mid-December. Indonesia is also expected this month to receive shipments of raw materials to produce 15 million doses and materials for 30 million doses next month, the president said.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/indonesia-first-covid-19-vaccine-china-sinovac-jokowi-13713098>

Bahrain becomes second country to approve Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

Bahrain said it had approved the emergency use of a COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and German partner BioNTech. The approval on Friday makes Bahrain the second country in the world to grant an emergency use authorisation for the vaccine, the Bahraini national news agency BNA reported.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/4/bahrain-becomes-second-country-to-approve-pfizer-covid-19-vaccine>

Wuhan lockdown diarist Fang Fang on writing to preserve the truth

Chinese novelist Fang Fang was in a funk when she decided to become the unofficial chronicler of life under coronavirus-induced lockdown in Wuhan, the city in central China where the virus was first discovered in December 2019. At 10am on January 23, the government largely cut off the city's 11 million inhabitants from the rest of the world. Fang Fang, the pen name of Wang Fang, one of China's most celebrated writers, has lived in Wuhan since early childhood. The travel restrictions looked at the time like a drastic step. Across China, a population haunted by the Sars epidemic of 2003 cancelled Lunar New Year plans and began to obsess over this new public health crisis.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a8995095-7379-4e01-8070-2a54d4b47180>

'76 Days' review: Inside Wuhan hospitals during COVID-19

The first minutes of the experiential COVID-19 documentary "76 Days" are claustrophobic and disorienting — a feeling not unlike your first trip to the grocery store while wearing a mask. But it gets better. In the controlled chaos of a hospital's corridors, everyone is sheathed head to toe in PPE. We see a woman screaming to say goodbye to her father and having to be restrained. A crowd bangs on a door pleading to be let in as the hospital staff reassures them that they will all be admitted if they only remain patient.

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-12-05/review-76-days-documentary-coronavirus-wuhan>

CDC urges 'universal mask use' indoors for the first time in U.S.

The CDC suggested the universal use of face masks in a new report on Friday. The agency said proper face masks should be worn anywhere outside of an individuals' home. Report said the US has reached a 'phase of high-level transmission' amid the winter weather, holiday seasons and flu season. President-elect Joe Biden announced he will ask Americans to wear face masks for up to 100

days when inaugurated. Covid-19 deaths and hospitalizations have increased across the country. CDC said national forecasts predicted between 9,500 and 19,500 new Covid-19 deaths will be counted during the week ending December 26

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9020475/CDC-urges-universal-mask-use-indoors-time-U-S.html>

WHO pulled report on Italy's 'chaotic' first response to Covid-19

Italy's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was "improvised" and "chaotic" according to a World Health Organisation report that was taken down from the body's website just hours after publication in May. The assessment titled "An unprecedented challenge, Italy's first response to Covid-19" was completed by a group of pan-European WHO scientists led by Venice-based Francesco Zambon. It was published on the WHO's website on May 13, including an introduction written by Europe's WHO director, Hans Kluge, but was removed the next day. The WHO issued no public statement at the time to indicate that it had withdrawn the report or explain why. According to the 102-page document, seen by the Financial Times, Italy's decentralised approach to public health policy, as well as delays in testing and tracing potential Covid-19 infections, contributed to worsening the outcome of the first phase of the pandemic.

<https://www.ft.com/content/7c8633ea-87b3-4aa1-90b6-a15a089bc1c2>

Deadly COVID-19 outbreaks in two long-term care facilities could be linked to Washington state wedding, officials say | TheHill

A Washington state wedding last month that hosted more than 300 people may now be linked to deadly coronavirus outbreaks at two long-term care facilities, officials said Friday. The Nov. 7 wedding at a private location near Ritzville, Wash., first gained attention when nearly 40 attendees from the neighboring Grant County had tested positive for COVID-19 within 10 days of the event. Washington state health guidelines at the time limited wedding ceremonies to 30 people. The Grant County Health District is now saying that staff at two long-term care facilities who attended the wedding, which has been labeled by officials as a "super-spreader" event, contracted the virus. According to ABC News, health officials said that the staff members worked while they were contagious, before they were aware that they were carrying the infection.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/528913-deadly-covid-19-outbreaks-in-two-long-term-care-facilities-could-be>

Britain gets ready for roll-out of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine this week

Britain is preparing to become the first country to roll out the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine this week, initially making the shot available at hospitals before distributing stocks to doctors' clinics, the government said on Sunday. The first doses are set to be administered on Tuesday, with the National Health Service (NHS) giving top priority to vaccinating the over-80s, frontline healthcare workers and care home staff and residents. Britain gave emergency use approval for the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech last week - jumping ahead in the global race to begin the most crucial mass inoculation programme in history. In total, Britain has ordered 40 million doses - enough to vaccinate 20 million people in the country of 67 million.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-vaccine/britain-gets-ready-for-roll-out-of-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-this-week-idUSKBN28G005>

To roll out Covid-19 vaccines, vaccinate everyone in several hot zones

Dear CEOs of Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca, Thank you for rapidly mobilizing your scientific resources and your vaccine clinical trial networks. (We also thank Operation Warp Speed and others for organizing and underwriting your efforts to tame Covid-19.) Your vaccines are on the brink of crossing the finish line of approval, but the confusion surrounding the presidential transition has brought great uncertainty to the distribution plan.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/03/covid-19-vaccine-rollout-vaccinate-everyone-regional-hot-zones/>

Covid-19: Care home vaccinations to start 'within two weeks'

The coronavirus vaccine will "definitely" be ready to go into care homes in the next two weeks, the medicines regulator has said. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said it has approved the way doses will be distributed to homes. But it means care home residents and staff may not be the first to receive jabs, despite being the top priority. Vaccinations are expected to begin at 50 hospital hubs in England on Tuesday. NHS England also says GP-run vaccination centres will be up and running from 14 December and are expected to start inviting in patients aged over 80. Because of how the vaccine doses are packed, the regulator needs to approve the way in which they are broken down into smaller consignments for distribution to care homes, while ensuring that the vaccine stays at very cold temperatures.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55194988>

COVID-19 immunity 'could last three months after infection or vaccination'

People who receive a COVID-19 vaccination may have immunity for 90 days, the government's scientific advisers have said. In a paper considered by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), which also looked into the much-discussed concept of immunity certificates, the experts say that the length of immunity from "natural infection or vaccination is currently not known". However, they say that "waning immunity" is believed to partly cause other coronaviruses to reinfect after one to two years.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-immunity-certificates-to-exempt-people-from-restrictions-likely-to-be-possible-12151178>

Blood Tests Of Immune Response May Be Key To Future COVID-19 Vaccine Development : Shots - Health News

News today from Harvard's Center for Virology and Vaccine Research may help solve a problem that future COVID-19 manufacturers are sure to face: how to make sure that new and potentially better vaccines actually work without doing extremely large and expensive studies. Writing in the journal *Nature*, the researchers show that a certain class of antibodies in a monkey's blood predicted protection from COVID-19. If that hold true for humans, a relative simple blood test may show whether an experimental vaccine is working. Here's the dilemma: Once a vaccine is approved, it's unethical to test it against a placebo. Approving new vaccine would require researchers to compare two vaccines against each other, instead of having a vaccine and a placebo--which would take a lot more people than the 30,000 for the initial trials.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/12/04/942939137/immune-response-in-animals-good-news-for-covid-19-vaccine-development>

Multidose COVID-19 vaccines will test state tracking systems

When the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available in the United States, officials' first challenge is getting the people in the door for their shots. Then, they'll have a second problem: making sure they come back again to get a second dose of the same vaccine. With two two-dose vaccines headed for authorization, the logistical challenges of a vaccination program are only magnified. "You don't want to have someone get the first dose of one brand of vaccine, and a second dose of another," says Ben Moscovitch, project director of health information technology at The Pew Charitable Trusts. Assuming the Food and Drug Administration authorizes the vaccines after they review the data later this month, states will start to receive shipments of the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine on December 15th, and the Moderna vaccine on December 22nd. From there, it's up to states to distribute the vaccines. Both take two doses, given a few weeks apart, and both could be circulating at the same time. And that's just the two front-runners. Other multidose vaccines are still in the development pipeline.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/12/4/22153908/covid-vaccine-dose-tracking-digital-registry-fda>

Claims and counterclaims over alleged adverse reaction in covid-19 vaccine in India

The Indian manufacturer of the Oxford-AstraZeneca candidate vaccine against covid-19 (the Serum Institute of India) has threatened to claim Rs1bn (£10m; €11.2m; \$13m) in damages from a clinical trial volunteer who alleges he developed a neurological illness after receiving the vaccine and has claimed Rs50m compensation. The Serum Institute of India, which is also conducting a clinical trial to assess the vaccine's safety and immunogenicity in India, has said that the volunteer's claim is "malicious and misconceived" because he was specifically informed by the medical team that the complications he suffered were independent of the trial. Indian health officials said on 1 December—over six weeks after the volunteer reported the illness—that probes by the institutional ethics committee, the data safety monitoring board, and India's drug regulatory authority had found no correlation between the serious adverse event and the vaccine. Balram Bhargava, India's department of health research secretary and director general of the Indian Council of Medical Research, said: "The initial causality assessment findings did not necessitate the stoppage of the trial."

<https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m4734>

Moscow key workers register for jobs of Russian-made COVID-19 vaccine

Muscovites from high-risk groups such as healthcare workers began registering for jobs of a Russian-made COVID-19 vaccine on Friday, two days after President Vladimir Putin called for large-scale vaccinations. Sputnik V, one of two Russian-made vaccines to have received regulatory approval in Russia despite clinical trials being incomplete, requires two injections. Interim trials showed it is 92% effective at protecting people from COVID-19. Mass testing for the second Russian vaccine, EpiVacCorona, began on Monday. The online registration service allows Moscow residents in specified high-risk jobs and aged between 18 and 60 to book free vaccination appointments at 70 points around the city, starting from Saturday, the mayor's website said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-russia-cases/moscow-key-workers-register-for-jobs-of-russian-made-covid-19-vaccine-idUKKBN28E0VN>

Moderna CEO confident of producing 500 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in 2021

Moderna Inc will be able to produce 500 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in 2021, Chief Executive Officer Stéphane Bancel said on Friday. The company has submitted applications seeking emergency use authorization in the United States and the European Union after full results from a late-stage study showed the vaccine was 94.1% effective with no serious safety concerns. "For 500 million, I am very comfortable we are gonna get there (2021)," Bancel said at the Nasdaq Investor Conference.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-moderna/moderna-ceo-confident-of-producing-500-million-covid-19-vaccine-doses-in-2021-idUKKBN28E2RD>

Researchers hunt for clues in our blood to discover COVID-19 vaccines of the future

As these vaccines near the finish line, scientists will face a predicament: Successful authorization of the first vaccines will make it difficult, if not impossible, to continue to study COVID-19 vaccines of the future. Now, a group of researchers say they are zeroing in on a possible solution. By studying monkeys, they say they've identified a clue in our immune systems -- a signature that could show if a vaccine is working. If their results pan out in humans, the findings could help researchers side-step the need for massive, phase 3, placebo-controlled clinical trials, like the ones that are being conducted today for the current COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/researchers-hunt-clues-blood-discover-covid-19-vaccines/story?id=74531301>

Eceptionist launches self-service COVID-19 vaccine management tool

Global health care software provider Eceptionist has launched a new web-based solution to help private and public organizations manage COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Dubbed VaxManager, the

software as a service (SAAS) solution alleviates the administrative burden of managing COVID tests, flu shots, and other vaccines when they become available. VaxManager incorporates an organization's COVID guidelines into a test/vaccine request workflow to automatically screen and prioritize vaccine and test requests, the company said. The mobile-friendly platform also includes a self-registration and self-request portal for patients to ensure quick and easy onboarding. Automated appointment reminders, follow-up notifications, and post-testing and post-vaccine information make the software highly reliable and relevant for patients.

<https://www.itpro.co.uk/cloud/software-as-a-service-saas/358018/eceptionist-launches-self-service-covid-19-vaccine>

Norway to use three vaccines to stop COVID-19 from early 2021

Norway plans to use the three vaccines developed by Moderna, AstraZeneca, Pfizer and BioNTech in its first push to inoculate its population against COVID-19, Norway's health minister said on Friday. In the first quarter of 2021, Oslo expects to receive a total of 2.5 million doses, covering 1.25 million people - or 23% of the population, pending approval of the vaccines from European regulators. The doses would roughly cover the 1.3 million people in Norway who are considered in risk groups, Health Minister Bent Høeie said, while the 340,000 health personnel in contact with patients would have to wait.

<https://lta.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-norway-vaccine-idINKBN28E1AU>

Fortune or foresight? AstraZeneca and Oxford's stories clash on COVID-19 vaccine

The discrepancy, reported for the first time by Reuters, centres on the regimen administered to a smaller group of volunteers in the late-stage trials, of half a dose followed by a full dose. This diverged from the original plan of two full doses, given to the majority of participants. The half-dose pattern was found to be 90% effective, versus the 62% success rate of the two-full-dose main study, based on interim data. AstraZeneca's research chief told Reuters 10 days ago, when interim trial data was released, the half-dose was given inadvertently as a first shot to some trial participants, and emerged as a stroke of fortune - "serendipity" - that scientists expertly harnessed.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-astrazeneca-insigh/fortune-or-foresight-astrazeneca-and-oxfords-stories-clash-on-covid-19-vaccine-idUKKBN28D2A3>

China's COVID-19 Vaccine Development and Availability

China's COVID-19 vaccines expected to be rolled out soon; bulk manufactured and exported in 2021. China could likely mass inoculate citizens in any outbreak that crosses a certain threshold; country expected to develop herd immunity over longer term. Sinovac vaccine (in limited roll-out) costs RMB 400.

<https://www.china-briefing.com/news/chinas-covid-19-vaccine-development-and-availability/>

Pfizer chairman: We're not sure if someone can transmit virus after vaccination | TheHill

Pfizer chairman Albert Bourla told Dateline host Lester Holt that the pharmaceutical company was "not certain" if the vaccine prevented the coronavirus from being transmitted, saying, "This is something that needs to be examined." In a prime-time special titled "Race for a Vaccine" set to air Thursday, Holt questioned Bourla and other individuals involved in the development and distribution of the medicine. In November, Pfizer announced that its vaccine candidate had been shown to be more than 90 percent effective at preventing COVID-19 and has applied for emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

<https://thehill.com/news-by-subject/healthcare/528619-pfizer-chairman-were-not-sure-if-someone-can-transmit-virus-after>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Long a Holdout From Covid-19 Restrictions, Sweden Ends Its Pandemic Experiment

After a late autumn surge in infections led to rising hospitalizations and deaths, Sweden has

abandoned its attempt to combat the pandemic through voluntary measures.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/long-a-holdout-from-covid-19-restrictions-sweden-ends-its-pandemic-experiment-11607261658>

Most of California to be under stay-at-home orders as COVID-19 surges

California's two most densely inhabited regions and its agricultural breadbasket will be under stay-at-home orders by Sunday night as the COVID-19 pandemic strains hospitals in the most populous U.S. state, officials said. Designed to kick in when intensive care units in any of five regions have little remaining capacity, the order affecting Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley will close bars, hair salons and barbershops, and allows restaurants to remain open only for takeout and delivery service. The shutdowns, which go into effect at 11:59 pm Sunday, are triggered by an order announced Wednesday by Governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa/most-of-california-to-be-under-stay-at-home-orders-as-covid-19-surges-idUSKBN28F0WC>

South Korea to consider new curbs as coronavirus cases hit 9-month high

South Korea on Sunday reported 631 new coronavirus cases, the highest in nine months, ahead of an expected government decision on whether to further tighten social distancing curbs as health authorities struggle to contain a third wave of outbreaks. After implementing tighter restrictions on Saturday, the government is to decide on Sunday whether to impose new measures in a country that had seen initial success through aggressive contact tracing and other steps. The new cases bring the country's tally to 37,546, with 545 deaths, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported.

https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-southkorea-idUKKBN28G016?taid=5fcc59a179194100014acbea&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

COVID-19: How the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is being rolled out - and who will get it first

More details have emerged about who will be first to get the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine when the UK rollout begins next week. First doses of the highly anticipated jab reached Britain on Thursday after being brought through the Eurotunnel on lorries from Belgium. It is just the start of the huge and complex logistical and technical operation that lies ahead to protect those most vulnerable across the UK.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-how-the-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-is-being-rolled-out-and-who-will-get-it-first-12150269>

Southern California headed for strict COVID lockdown due to lack of ICU beds

More than 20 million people across 23 Southern California counties will be under one of the country's strictest COVID lockdowns beginning Monday morning. People in Los Angeles, San Diego, all surrounding counties and the state's Central Valley will be legally prohibited from gathering with anyone outside their immediate household, and nearly all businesses must close under the new stay-at-home order. The lockdown rules last at least three weeks, meaning they'll be in effect through Christmas. People wait in line to be tested for COVID-19 at a testing site in the North Hollywood section of Los Angeles on Saturday.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/southern-california-headed-for-strict-covid-lockdown-due-to-lack-of-icu-beds/ar-BB1bFsAt?fdhead=newflex-views>

Pennsylvania man begs for help in finding a new ICU bed for his mom with COVID-19

Shawn Rider posted to Facebook on Tuesday pleading for information on another Pennsylvania hospital that had a free ICU bed and an EMCO machine. His mother Karen had been on a ventilator due to COVID-19 since November 23 but her condition had deteriorated and she needed a transfer. A nurse at York hospital spotted his post and found the family an ICU bed. Karen was transferred the next day but is still in a serious condition. She has now been on an ventilator for 13 days Shawn has

continued to share her story as the family hopes people will 'take more precautions so they don't end up in the position we are in.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9021459/Pennsylvania-man-begs-help-finding-new-ICU-bed-mom-COVID-19.html>

`Biggest crisis` : South Korea tightens COVID-19 restrictions amid record high surge

After months of keeping the novel coronavirus spread under control, a new outbreak has scared the authorities of a threat bigger than the starting of the grim year. Following a sudden surge in the COVID-19 cases, South Korea has raised its coronavirus alert to the highest level in the capital city Seoul as the authorities believe this outbreak may take longer to be controlled. South Korea had been following the "trace, test and treat" approach for the past few months, and had managed to contain the spread of the deadly virus. Following a drop in cases, the country had reopened its economy, letting people step out to meet friends and go to work, and life was slowly returning back to normal.

<https://www.wionews.com/world/biggest-crisis-south-korea-tightens-covid-19-restrictions-amid-record-high-surge-347930>

UK reports 13,430 new COVID-19 cases, 603 deaths

Britain reported 15,539 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday and 397 new deaths within 28 days of a positive test result, both falls on the previous day's figures.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-cases/uk-reports-13430-new-covid-19-cases-603-deaths-idUKS8N2E307N>

Russia reports record 29,039 new COVID-19 cases

Moscow wants to vaccinate up to seven million people, its Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said, as Russia on Sunday reported yet another record high number of new COVID-19 cases. Moscow began distributing its Sputnik V COVID-19 shot via 70 clinics on Saturday to the most exposed groups, marking Russia's first large-scale vaccination against the disease. "In prospect, we have to vaccinate six to seven million people," Sobyenin told state TV Rossiya-1 in an interview published on Sunday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-russia-cases-idUSKBN28G07M>

COVID-19: Vaccine clinics open across Moscow to start issuing Sputnik V jab

Seventy COVID-19 clinics opened in the Russian capital on Saturday, three days after President Vladimir Putin ordered a "large-scale" immunisation programme that he claims will begin with two million doses being made available this week. The Sputnik V has not yet completed Phase 3 of its trials, unlike the vaccine produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, sparking widespread criticism it is not safe for use. The Moscow-based Gamaleya Institute, which is producing the vaccine, says an "advanced" study on 40,000 volunteers showed 91.4% efficacy after two doses.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-vaccine-clinics-open-across-moscow-to-start-issuing-sputnik-v-jab-12151770>

COVID-19: Vaccines will only have 'marginal impact' on NHS winter pressures, chief medical officers warn

COVID-19 will keep hospitals under continued strain in the coming months as new vaccines will only have a "marginal impact" on patient numbers over winter, the UK's chief medical officers have warned. In a letter written to healthcare colleagues, the group - which includes England's Professor Chris Whitty - also said that festive gatherings were likely to put additional pressure on the NHS. "Winter is always a challenging time for the NHS and wider health and social care service. This year will be especially hard due to COVID-19," it said.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-vaccines-will-only-have-marginal-impact-on-nhs-winter-pressure-chief-medical-officers-warn-12151571>

The Pro Cyclist Who Caught Covid Twice

Back in February, when the sports world was still wondering how severe an outbreak of something called Covid-19 might be, a Colombian cyclist named Fernando Gaviria was finding out for himself. Gaviria was doing his job, racing bikes in the United Arab Emirates, when he became one of the first international athletes to contract the coronavirus. The symptoms were harsh enough to land him in hospital for two weeks. "Back then we knew very little about the virus," he wrote in an email. By the time Gaviria was healthy enough to leave Abu Dhabi, his world was a more uncertain place. The sports calendar had been scrubbed. Entire countries were shutting down. But Gaviria's virus ordeal seemed to come with a personal silver lining. Prevailing wisdom suggested he'd at least be immune for the foreseeable future. That future lasted barely seven months. In October, Gaviria tested positive a second time. His reaction was sheer disbelief. "I was completely asymptomatic and felt OK," he wrote.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-pro-cyclist-who-caught-covid-twice-11606919308>

New Lockdown

California heads for Covid lockdown as US records 200,000 cases a day

As large parts of California went back into lockdown and healthcare systems in many states began to waver under the strain, new cases of Covid-19 in the US remained above 200,000 on Saturday, with more than 2,000 deaths. Members of the Trump administration's coronavirus task force heralded the imminence and efficacy of vaccines, but asked Americans to keep their guard up. Johns Hopkins University recorded 213,875 new cases, down from nearly 228,000 on Friday in a week of surging figures after a Thanksgiving lull in record-keeping. Amid figures worsened by holiday travel and gatherings whose full impact experts say is not yet apparent, there were 2,254 new deaths, making the full death toll 280,979 from nearly 14.6m cases.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/06/california-covid-lockdown-us-new-cases-hospitalisations-deaths-stay-at-home-order>

Germany's Bavaria region to tighten coronavirus lockdown

The southern German region of Bavaria, which has so far recorded the country's highest coronavirus death toll, announced on Sunday that it will impose a tougher lockdown from Wednesday until Jan. 5. People in Bavaria will only be able to leave their homes with good reason, state premier Markus Soeder told a news conference, adding that there would be some relaxation in the rules for Christmas but not for New Year celebrations. While Germany brought the pandemic under control in March and April, it is now dealing with a more deadly second wave and imposed a "lockdown light" at the start of November, closing restaurants and bars and limiting public gatherings. While daily infections are no longer rising as sharply as before, case numbers have stagnated at a high level, and Germany reported its highest single-day coronavirus death toll on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany/germanys-bavaria-region-to-tighten-coronavirus-lockdown-idUSL1N21M07N>

Portugal to ease COVID-19 rules for Christmas, but not New Year

Portugal will ease coronavirus rules over the Christmas period to allow people to visit loved ones, but measures will be reimposed a few days later to crack down on New Year's Eve parties, the government said on Saturday. While a ban on domestic travel will not be imposed between Dec. 23 and Dec. 26, Prime Minister Antonio Costa urged people to avoid spending too long in large festive gatherings without wearing a face mask. "It's essential that this Christmas is a time of sharing but that in this sharing there is no involuntary transmission of the virus," Costa told reporters as he announced the measures.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-portugal/portugal-to-ease-covid-19-rules-for-christmas-but-not-new-year-idUKKBN28F0K5>