

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

9th Dec 2020

News Highlights

First vaccines administered in UK

A ninety-year-old woman became the first person in the UK to be vaccinated against Covid-19. [The vaccination was the first of 800,000 doses of a Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine expected to be administered over the course of the next few weeks.](#) The milestone was labelled 'V-Day' and was labelled a turning point in the fight against the pandemic.

Biden pledges to vaccinate 100 million in first 100 days

President-elect Joe Biden has pledged to vaccinate 100 million Americans in the first 100 days of his presidency. [Biden has unveiled his task force to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and is appealing for Congress](#) to ensure funding is available for rollout of the vaccines throughout the United States.

Research offers good news on AstraZeneca vaccine

The AstraZeneca/University of Oxford vaccine is efficacious in preventing symptomatic Covid-19 infection and will make a substantial impact on reducing hospitalisations. [Efficacy data from Phase-III trials indicated the vaccine is approximately seventy percent effective.](#) However, further investigation is needed due to some incongruities in the results.

Japan unveils U.S.\$708 billion relief package

To stimulate its economy Japan has unveiled a U.S.\$708 billion fresh stimulus package. [Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga introduced the measure in the wake of the country's economy taking a hit during the pandemic,](#) though economic performance is improving. Relief measures thus far have totalled more than U.S.\$2.2 trillion.

Lockdown Exit

UK's chief science advisor says masks may be needed for another year - The Telegraph

People in the United Kingdom may have to wear face masks for another year despite the country's national vaccination programme getting under way, The Telegraph reported, citing chief scientific adviser Patrick Vallance. Restrictions may remain in place long after a full rollout of a vaccine, Vallance suggested, according to the report.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-mask/uks-chief-science-advisor-says-masks-may-be-needed-for-another-year-the-telegraph-idUKKBN28I37Z>

UK retail sales growth slows as November lockdown hits non-food sales - BRC

British retail sales growth slowed in November when non-essential stores shut as part of a four-week lockdown in England, but online sales were able to fill more of the gap than in the first lockdown in March, industry data showed on Tuesday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-retail/uk-retail-sales-growth-slows-as-november-lockdown-hits-non-food-sales-brc-idUKKBN28I00G?il=0>

Singapore 'cruise-to-nowhere' turns back after COVID-19 case aboard

A passenger aboard a Royal Caribbean 'cruise-to-nowhere' from Singapore has tested positive for COVID-19, forcing all guests to be quarantined in their cabins and the Quantum of the Seas ship to return to dock on Wednesday. Singapore has been piloting the trips, which are open only to residents, make no stops and sail in waters just off the city-state. There were around 2,000 passengers aboard at the time who have all been confined to their rooms. The global cruise industry has taken a major hit from the coronavirus pandemic, with some of the earliest big outbreaks found on cruise ships. In one case in February off the coast of Japan, passengers were stuck for weeks aboard the Diamond Princess with over 700 guests and crew infected.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-singapore-cruise/singapore-cruise-to-nowhere-turns-back-after-covid-19-case-aboard-idUKKBN28J078>

Tearful family reunions after WA ends border lockdown

Western Australia's hard border came down at midnight after a nine-month closure, marking another major milestone in Australia's fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Passengers were greeted by loved ones, some of whom told 9News they have not seen their family in over a year. "It's been 14 months since we have been together," one person said. Those who arrive in WA today will no longer need to complete the 14-day quarantine. However, visitors will need to complete a G2G declaration pass and undergo a health screening on arrival. Some may be asked to take a COVID-19 test.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/western-australia-borders-reopen-to-new-south-wales-and-victoria-in-coronavirus-milestone/a61745e2-3f22-4a68-95b3-20fa37c54fe0>

A year on, markets bustling in Chinese city where COVID-19 emerged

Hundreds of shoppers pack a wet market on a December weekday morning in the Chinese city of Wuhan, jostling to buy fresh vegetables and live fish, frogs and turtles. Almost a year since the city reported the world's first cases of COVID-19 in one of its handful of vast wet markets, and even as several other countries remain firmly in the grip of the subsequent pandemic, life in Wuhan has largely returned to normal. Wuhan has not recorded a new locally transmitted case in several months and is now indistinguishable from other Chinese cities with crowded shopping streets, traffic jams and tightly packed restaurants.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-wuhan-mood/a-year-on-markets-bustling-in-chinese-city-where-covid-19-emerged-idUSL4N2IO0FA>

Summer holidays and 'normal life' on horizon as health chiefs hail 'historic' Covid vaccine rollout

The UK's coronavirus vaccine tsar has said she expects families will be able to go on holiday next summer as the Covid jab started its historic rollout. Kate Bingham, chair of the coronavirus vaccine taskforce, said she expects by the summer that people will be in a "better place" to get on planes. She made the comments just hours after Margaret Keenan, 90, became the first person in the world to receive the Pfizer jab on what has been dubbed "V-Day". Ms Bingham told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "My gut feel is that we will all be going on summer holidays.

https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/holidays-travel-summer-covid-vaccine-normal-life-b217359.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1607419653

Biden, introducing health teams, vows 100 million COVID-19 vaccinations in first 100 days

President-elect Joe Biden on Tuesday laid out his plan to fight the coronavirus pandemic during his first 100 days in office, saying his administration would vaccinate 100 million Americans, push to reopen schools and strengthen mask mandates.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/usa-biden/biden-introducing-health-teams-vows-100-million-covid-19-vaccinations-in-first-100-days-idUKKBN28I1DR?il=0>

Testing times: More work needed on Astra/Oxford vaccine trials

Detailed results from the AstraZeneca/Oxford trials have been eagerly awaited after some scientists criticised a lack of information in their initial announcement last month. However, the Lancet study gave few extra clues about why efficacy was 62% for trial participants given two full doses, but 90% for a smaller sub-group given a half, then a full dose. "(This) will require further research as more data becomes available from the trial," the study said. Less than 6% of UK trial participants were given the lower dose regimen and none of them was aged over 55, meaning more research will be needed to investigate the vaccine's efficacy in older people who are particularly susceptible to COVID-19. Pooling the results, overall efficacy was 70.4%, the data on Tuesday showed. That is above the 50% minimum set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-astrazeneca-vaccine/testing-times-more-work-needed-on-astra-oxford-vaccine-trials-idUKKBN28I2AY>

Exit Strategies

'Turning point': 90-year-old first to receive approved COVID vaccine

UK health authorities have rolled out the first doses of a widely tested and independently reviewed COVID-19 vaccine, starting a global immunisation program that is expected to gain momentum as more serums win approval. The first shot came on Tuesday, local time, at one of a network of hospital hubs around the country where the initial phase of the program will be rolled out on what has been dubbed "V-Day."

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/turning-point-90-year-old-first-to-receive-approved-covid-vaccine-20201208-p56ls4.html>

U.K. Covid-19 Vaccine: What You Need to Know About the Immunization Campaign

The U.K. became the first Western country to start inoculating its population with a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc. and Germany's BioNTech SE. Maggie Keenan, 90 years old, received the first shot at a hospital in Coventry early Tuesday morning in a program that could provide a taste of the logistical challenges facing other countries, including the U.S., as they prepare to roll out their own large-scale vaccination plans.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/uk-vaccine-covid-news-update-11606905307>

Covid-19 vaccine: First person receives Pfizer jab in UK

A UK grandmother has become the first person in the world to be given the Pfizer Covid-19 jab as part of a mass vaccination programme. Margaret Keenan, who turns 91 next week, said the injection she received at 06:31 GMT was the "best early birthday present". It was the first of 800,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine that will be dispensed in the coming weeks. Up to four million more are expected by the end of the month. Hubs in the UK are starting the rollout by vaccinating the over-80s and some health and care staff. Senior NHS sources told the BBC "thousands of vaccinations" had taken place across the UK on Tuesday.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55227325?fbclid=IwAR2m9mhhep2SKHtnlyvabGNmydAtd-IAafc6iPt7qfEX9FrXenil-2BwvqqY>

Covid19 vaccinations begin in Scotland today - everything you need to know

The first of the long-awaited vaccinations against Covid-19 will be issued on Tuesday at hospitals across Scotland. It's a landmark day in the global battle against coronavirus which has raged throughout 2020. While it's a welcome breakthrough, it will take several months at least for the vaccination to be rolled out across all age groups.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/covid-vaccinations-begin-scotland-today-23129421>

GPs to prioritise elderly BAME patients for first Covid-19 vaccine batch

GPs have been instructed to prioritise patients from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in their first over-80s Covid-19 vaccination cohorts. Details outlined in a letter sent

yesterday from NHS England advise that GP practices must select and contact priority vaccination patients by tomorrow (9 December). GP sites selected to begin vaccinations next week, of which there are expected to be around 280, will each receive one batch of 975 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. If a Primary Care Network (PCN) designated site has more than 975 patients over 80 years of age, they must prioritise based on comorbidities and ethnicity. GP surgeries will be responsible for generating patient lists based on this new priority cohort definition.

<https://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/news/clinical-areas/immunology-and-vaccines/gps-to-prioritise-elderly-bame-patients-for-first-covid-19-vaccine-batch/>

Historic day as first Covid-19 vaccines delivered on Merseyside

The first vaccines against Covid-19 will be administered on Merseyside today. Hospital sites across our region will start to give people the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine that begins its national rollout today. The first batch of 800,000 doses of the vaccine are already being administered to top priority people - with 90-year-old Margaret Keenan the first person in the world to be vaccinated at the University Hospital in Coventry this morning. In Merseyside, the two main hospital sites where the vaccine will be delivered to people are Aintree Hospital and Clatterbridge Hospital in Wirral.

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/historic-day-first-covid-19-19417991>

Covid-19 vaccine: First jabs given in Newcastle and Middlesbrough

An 87-year-old grandfather who received one of the first coronavirus vaccines said he felt it was his duty to "do whatever I can to help". Dr Hari Shukla, who was given his jab at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, said "the whole world is looking at us to see how things go". The Pfizer/BioNTech jab is being given first to over 80s and some NHS staff. South Tees Hospitals Trust chairman Alan Downey said the first vaccinations had been a "huge logistical effort". One of the first to be given the jab at James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough was Margaret Dixon, from Redcar, who said she was "looking forward to being free and being able to go to the shops".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-55230948>

First Covid-19 vaccinations begin today in NHS Grampian region

The first vaccinations against Covid-19 are taking place today in the NHS Grampian region which covers Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen. Initial supplies of the Pfizer vaccine have been arriving at health boards across Scotland since the weekend and are being stored at the required ultra-low temperature. Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said: "This is obviously a very welcome milestone in our collective fight against the pandemic. "Science has given us hope and we are starting on a journey which will eventually allow us to return to the lives we want to lead. "Following clinical advice from the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation, we will begin with those groups which have been prioritised to address 99 per cent of preventable deaths associated with Covid-19. Initial supplies of the Pfizer vaccine have been arriving at health boards across Scotland since the weekend and are being stored at the required ultra-low temperature. Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said: "This is obviously a very welcome milestone in our collective fight against the pandemic.

<https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/first-covid-19-vaccinations-begin-today-in-nhs-grampian-region-220826/>

India's biggest challenge: how to vaccinate 1.3bn people against Covid-19?

India's claim to fame is staggering scale of its general elections, with 900 million voters mobilised across 1 million polling stations, to choose from 8,000 candidates across a landmass spanning 2,000 miles north to south and pretty much the same east to west. But now the country has to go one better. India must vaccinate 1.3bn people against Covid-19 - twice and twice as fast. With more than 9 million confirmed cases of coronavirus and a battered economy, how will the country meet this challenge? Prime minister Narendra Modi is confident. "We have a vast and experienced vaccination network and the country will capitalise on these advantages," he said recently.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/dec/08/indias-biggest-challenge-how-to-vaccinate-13bn-people-against-covid-19>

GPs could deliver COVID-19 vaccine to care homes from next week

GP-led sites could deliver COVID-19 vaccinations to care home residents as soon as next week, LMCs believe, as NHS England's medical director confirmed rollout to this group would start before Christmas. Scottish health minister Jeane Freeman said last week that in Scotland, vaccination of care home residents - the group identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) as the top priority - would start from 14 December. The Westminster government has yet to confirm when vaccination of care home residents will start in England - but a senior GP involved in rolling out the COVID-19 vaccination campaign has told GPonline that GP-led vaccination sites in the first wave set to start from next week could administer some vaccines in care homes.

<https://www.gponline.com/gps-deliver-covid-19-vaccine-care-homes-next-week/article/1702172>

Covid-19 lockdown restrictions to be eased for majority in Scotland

Covid restrictions will ease for the majority of Scots later this week, with cafes, restaurants, shops and hairdressers allowed to reopen from Friday and Saturday. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed on Tuesday that no area of Scotland will remain in Level 4 when changes come into force. A total of 11 Scottish council areas - including Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Stirling - have been under the toughest tier of restrictions in the country since November 20. They will now all move down to Level 3.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-12-08/covid-19-lockdown-restrictions-to-be-eased-for-majority-in-scotland>

Nicola Sturgeon announces level three lockdown for Glasgow to start on Friday

Level four lockdown will end in Glasgow on Friday. Nicola Sturgeon has just announced the city will shift to tier three, allowing all shops, restaurants and cafes to reopen. Hairdressers and gyms are also among the businesses permitted to start trading again, weeks after the Scottish Government imposed the strictest level of lockdown on 11 local authority areas in Scotland - including Glasgow City.

<https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/nicola-sturgeon-announces-level-three-19419110>

Sputnik vaccine aims to bolster Russia's geopolitical influence

Russia has sought to assert itself on the world stage through arms sales and energy exports, but the coronavirus pandemic has given Moscow another tool to win influence abroad: a vaccine. President Vladimir Putin's announcement in August that Russia had registered the world's first coronavirus vaccine, Sputnik V, was met with raised eyebrows. Scientists at home and abroad raised concerns that the jab had yet to complete mass trials and that crucial data about the vaccine had not been made public. The developers have since claimed that the vaccine has an efficacy of above 95% according to preliminary data from Phase 3 trials, but the full data has yet to be disclosed as the trials are ongoing

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/12/08/world/russia-vaccine-geopolitics/>

No active coronavirus cases in South Australia as restrictions set to ease

South Australia has no known active coronavirus cases for the first time in more than two months, with health authorities announcing restrictions on social gatherings will again be eased from next Monday. The state today recorded no new COVID-19 cases for the 10th consecutive day. The maximum number of people allowed at home gatherings will rise, while patrons will be able to stand up while drinking at hospitality venues. From Monday, the limit on the number of people allowed at private functions at licensed venues will increase from 150 to 200.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-08/no-active-coronavirus-cases-in-sa-as-restrictions-set-to-ease/12960028>

Pakistan's COVID vaccine drive needs antidote to conspiracy theories

Helping to lead a mass trial for a Chinese-made COVID-19 vaccine in Pakistan, a country where anti-vax sentiment can turn lethal and conspiracy theories are endemic, Dr. Mohsin Ali has heard all kind of questions from anxious, prospective volunteers. "Is this going to take away my reproductive ability? Is this going to kill me? Is there any 5G chip in this? And, is there a conspiracy to control people en masse?" he said, recounting the sometimes bizarre doubts clouding people's minds. "I get many questions like this," he told Reuters at Islamabad's Shifa International Hospital, before adding "I try to answer them with logic and on the level of the individual asking them. Some still refuse." The hospital is one of a number in Pakistan where phase III trials are underway for Chinese vaccine developer CanSino Biologics' Ad5-nCoV candidate.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-pakistan-vaccine/pakistans-covid-vaccine-drive-needs-antidote-to-conspiracy-theories-idUSKBN28I1B0>

Partisan Exits

Covid: Biden vows 100m vaccinations for US in first 100 days

US President-elect Joe Biden has set a goal of 100 million Covid vaccinations in his first 100 days in office. He said his first months in office would not end the outbreak and gave few details on rollout strategy but he said he would change the course of Covid-19. Introducing his health team for when he takes office on 20 January, he urged Americans to "mask up for 100 days". On Tuesday, a report paved the way for a Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to be approved and rolled out for Americans. President Donald Trump meanwhile attended a summit at the White House of his Covid vaccination programme called Operation Warp Speed and hailed the expected approval of vaccines.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-55238092>

Critics of hydroxychloroquine to treat Covid-19 are guilty of 'medical McCarthyism,' controversial doctor says

"Earlier this year, we faced a new, dangerously infectious virus, and such a health crisis - like any other crisis with an unknown and unproven enemy - cannot rely exclusively on the tried and true," Ramin Oskoui, vice president of the medical staff at Washington's Sibley Memorial Hospital, told a Senate subcommittee on Tuesday. "But it was worse than that. Affirmative steps to keep physicians and patients ignorant were taken." "Medical McCarthyism became the norm," he added, comparing criticism of medical experts and politicians who pushed malaria drugs like hydroxychloroquine to treat Covid-19 to the push by then-Senator Joseph McCarthy of accusing alleged communist sympathisers of treason. The use of anti-malarials and other drugs to treat Covid-19 has been roundly rejected by the US and Western medical community. Despite the president repeatedly pushing hydroxychloroquine, describing it as something of a Covid wonder drug, his own Food and Drug Administration in July said it was not suited to treat the respiratory disease.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/critics-of-hydroxychloroquine-to-treat-covid-19-are-guilty-of-e2-80-98medical-mccarthyism-e2-80-99-controversial-doctor-says/ar-BB1bKc5M>

Police raid home of Florida Covid-19 tracker creator

Florida police have raided the home of data scientist Rebekah Jones, who built the state's official Covid-19 database. Ms Jones has accused the US Department of Health of manipulating virus data in order to relax pandemic restrictions. She posted a series of videos of the raid on Twitter, in which armed officers seized her phone and laptop. Florida's law enforcement department said it was responding to a hack of the state's emergency health alert system. Ms Jones denies any involvement. Ms Jones was fired from her job at the Department of Health in May after making her accusations, and has since maintained her own database, independently tracking the spread of the virus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-55230764>

Covid: Did Boris Johnson order lockdown based on false data? | ITV News

When shaping policy to protect us from Covid-19, the government relies on data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to provide the scientific basis for its actions. The weekly ONS coronavirus survey is supposed to be the information gold standard - and in particular it underpinned Boris Johnson's controversial announcement at the end of October to put England back into national lockdown. No other course of action seemed sensible, given that the ONS survey on October 30 showed the incidence of coronavirus in the community in England had surged from 4.3 per 10,000 people on October 3 to 9.52 on October 17, the latest date for data then available. This was a terrifyingly fast doubling rate.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-12-08/covid-did-boris-johnson-order-englands-coronavirus-lockdown-based-on-false-data>

Amid resistance, California imposes strict stay-at-home orders

Most Californians faced heavy new restrictions on Monday aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19, while New York's governor threatened to ban indoor restaurant dining in New York City as the United States feared infections would continue skyrocketing. Restaurants in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area and the state's agricultural San Joaquin Valley shut for all but takeout and delivery. Playgrounds closed, stores reduced capacity and hair salons and barbershops shuttered. The moves affected about three-quarters of the nearly 40 million people in America's most-populous state. California Governor Gavin Newsom's order allowed some schools to continue to hold classes. But the Los Angeles Unified School District, the state's largest, closed campuses that had been partially open to offer in-person services and tutoring, affecting many special-needs students.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa/amid-resistance-california-imposes-strict-stay-at-home-orders-idUSKBN28H1HM>

Continued Lockdown

Masked dolls and anti-virus lab kits - toys reflect Spain and Portugal's Coronavirus Christmas

Children in Spain and Portugal could find that their Christmas presents this year reflect the coronavirus pandemic as dolls wearing face masks, kits for making personal protection items, and other toys adapted to fit the times fly off shop shelves. Millions of kids around the world were stuck in their homes during a series of lockdowns, and when they did emerge, they were often told to wear masks. So, as the holiday season approached, some toymakers gave their toys a twist. "I think it's a way of adapting to reality," said mum Reyes Lopez as she looked around a toy store in Madrid. "Dolls also have to represent society."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-spain-toys-idUSKBN28I13F>

What Has Lockdown Done to Us?

Drew Holden is a public affairs consultant in Washington, D.C., and a former Republican congressional staff member. He writes: " Research suggests that, to mitigate negative side effects, lockdowns should be well communicated and as short as possible. In many cities and states, one or both of these guidelines were ignored. When lockdowns seemed wanton and capricious, many Americans felt deceived. If new lockdowns are absolutely needed — something that the World Health Organization and some health experts believe is inadvisable — then policymakers must avoid both the reality and appearance of hypocrisy. This is particularly true because, unlike many other wealthy countries, the United States is not providing any type of ongoing direct aid to those who are struggling."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/08/opinion/covid-lockdown-isolation.html>

England's lockdown puts brakes on retail sales growth

The November lockdown in England brought to an end five months of strong retail sales but the consumer sector showed much more resilience than in the spring, with online purchases soaring and

strong spending on electronics and digital entertainment. Retail sales in the UK grew 0.9 per cent in November compared with the same month last year, down from a 4.9 per cent annual expansion in October, according to data compiled by the British Retail Consortium trade body in association with the consultancy KPMG. The overall near-stagnation masked widely different trends across the sector.
<https://www.ft.com/content/aca3f6e3-c5a2-45bc-bcd5-d17af31b29e3>

France, Germany and Italy agreed to keep their skiing resorts shut until January, sparking a row with Austria

It took a pandemic to silence Gerhard Schmiderer. For the past quarter-century, the now 70-year-old “DJ Gerhard” has blasted trashy hits for drunken après-skiers at MooserWirt, a bar in St Anton, an Austrian ski resort. This year, however, the speakers will be silent rather than blaring out yet another rendition of The Final Countdown, a raucous anthem sung by big-haired Swedes. The usual revellers dancing on tables in ski boots will be absent. The 500m run back to the resort will no longer be strewn with those who have quaffed too much and fallen over in the snow.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/world/france-germany-italy-skiing-resorts-shut-january-row-austria-coronavirus-risk-786418>

Germany speeds up disbursement of coronavirus aid in December

Germany is speeding up the disbursement of coronavirus aid for lockdown-affected firms this month by lifting the threshold of an initial payout which comes with less bureaucratic paperwork, government officials said on Tuesday. Chancellor Angela Merkel and state leaders have agreed to extend restrictive measures designed to stem a tide of new coronavirus infections until Jan. 10. The measures, which had been put in place since Nov. 2, have forced restaurants, bars, hotels, gyms and entertainment venues to close. But factories, shops and schools remain open.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-aid-idUKKBN28I1RG>

France may have to delay unwinding COVID-19 lockdown as cases plateau

France may have to delay unwinding some COVID lockdown restrictions next week after signs the downward trend in new cases has flattened out after shops were allowed to reopen late last month, two government sources said. France was far from hauling the number of daily new infections down to a target 5,000 and the risk of a rebound in the European Union’s second-biggest economy remained high, Jerome Salomon, the health ministry’s top official, said. The 5,000 threshold was an early condition of President Emmanuel Macron for replacing the lockdown with a nightly curfew, allowing cinemas and museums to reopen and ending the need for people to carry sworn affidavits outside their homes.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france/france-may-have-to-delay-unwinding-covid-19-lockdown-as-cases-plateau-idUKKBN28H0QR?il=0>

Scientific Viewpoint

AstraZeneca Covid-19 Vaccine Trial Data Underscore Safety, Range of Efficacy

Peer-reviewed data from late-stage human trials of a Covid-19 vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca PLC reaffirmed the shot’s strong safety results and provided some additional evidence that halving the first of two doses of the shot boosts its effectiveness. AstraZeneca and Oxford said the data gave them confidence to ask the U.K. and other countries for emergency-use authorization of the vaccine, but said regulators will have to decide which dosing regimen to approve. Last month, AstraZeneca and Oxford said trial data showed the vaccine was between 62% and 90% effective, but that the higher results were observed in a small subset of the wider trial.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-trial-data-underscore-safety-range-of-efficacy-11607443250>

Inovio sets new timeline for its experimental Covid-19 vaccine

Plymouth Meeting's Inovio Pharmaceuticals provides an updated timeline for its experimental Covid-19 vaccine and says it expects to play an important role in the battle against the coronavirus. On Monday, Inovio began phase-II testing of its DNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate, INO-4800.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2020/12/08/inovio-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-ino-4800.html>

Studies suggest AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine safe, effective

New results on a possible COVID-19 vaccine from Oxford University and AstraZeneca suggest it is safe and about 70% effective, but questions remain about how well it may help protect those over 55 — a key concern for a vaccine that health officials hope to rely on around the world because of its low cost, availability and ease of use. Still, experts say the vaccine seems likely to be approved, despite some confusion in the results and lower levels of protection than what some other vaccine candidates have shown.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/studies-suggest-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-safe-effective-74605477>

Oxford-Astra COVID-19 vaccine shows average 70.4% efficacy in pooled study

AstraZeneca and Oxford University have more work to do to confirm whether their COVID-19 vaccine can be 90% effective, peer-reviewed data published in The Lancet showed on Tuesday, potentially slowing its eventual rollout in the fight against the pandemic. Once seen as the frontrunner in the development of a vaccine against the coronavirus crisis, the British team was overtaken by U.S. drugmaker Pfizer, whose shots - with a success rate of around 95% - were administered to UK pensioners on Tuesday in a world-first hailed as V-Day. Detailed results from the AstraZeneca/Oxford trials have been eagerly awaited after some scientists criticised a lack of information in their initial announcement last month.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-astrazeneca-vaccin/testing-times-more-work-needed-on-astra-oxford-vaccine-trials-idUSKBN28I2AS>

FDA Review Of Pfizer Vaccine Data Confirms Protection Against Covid-19 Infection

"There are so many amazing facts in here," Akiko Iwasaki, an immunology professor at Yale said in a tweet about her review of the materials. Including, she continued, that "[p]eople who received the Pfizer vaccine are protected from Covid-19 as early as 12 to 13 days post first dose." These materials will be used by the FDA this Thursday at a meeting of the regulatory body's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee, which will use them to determine whether to grant an EUA. That decision could come as early as Thursday and, if granted, would mean that administration of the vaccine could begin in the United States. The two companies have already received similar authorization from the United Kingdom, where the first doses of the vaccine to the general population were administered Tuesday.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexknapp/2020/12/08/fda-review-of-pfizer-vaccine-data-confirms-protection-against-covid-19-infection/>

AstraZeneca reaffirms COVID-19 vaccine data after experts question results from manufacturing error; shown to be 70% effective

Data on a candidate COVID-19 vaccine made by AstraZeneca and Oxford University are strong enough to present to regulators in the U.K., Europe and elsewhere around the world, the collaborators said Tuesday, but they don't expect approval from the U.S. without more data from American volunteers. The team presented their data Tuesday in the medical journal, The Lancet, the first late-stage trial information to be published under peer review, with careful independent analysis.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/12/08/astrazeneca-oxford-covid-vaccine-effectiveness-reaffirmed-after-error/6488650002/>

Oxford Covid-19 vaccine has good safety record and efficacy - study

Interim results from pooled studies show the vaccine was 70.4% effective, on average, in preventing

coronavirus after two doses were given. For people given two full doses of the jab in one study, the vaccine was 62.1% effective. In a study where people received a half dose followed by a full dose, the vaccine was 90% effective. The overall efficacy of 70.4% is based on 11,636 volunteers across the United Kingdom and Brazil, and combined across three groups of people vaccinated. But on a day when the NHS started rolling out the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in older people, health staff and care home workers, the Oxford researchers said more detail is required on how effective their vaccine is in older adults.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/uk/oxford-covid-19-vaccine-has-good-safety-record-and-efficacy-study/>

Biden's Covid-19 Task Force Needs Behavioral Scientists

By now it's clear that bringing the pandemic under control will require a range of actions that can persuade people opposed to wearing masks, socially distancing, or getting vaccinated to change their behaviors. For this reason, President-elect Joseph Biden should add to his Covid-19 task force social and behavioral scientists who have the expertise to design and apply such interventions.

<https://hbr.org/2020/12/bidens-covid-19-task-force-needs-behavioral-scientists>

Could Slovakia's mass testing programme work in England?

The UK's response to the covid-19 pandemic has, on any measure, been unimpressive. In a recent assessment of G7 countries, it came out second worst in the cumulative number of deaths in relation to population, just behind Italy. It was worst in terms of the contraction of the economy. These facts were well known. What was new, and surprising, was that it had achieved these unenviable positions despite spending far more than most of the other countries. Using a measure based on the core budget deficit, it spent 80% more than the average among these industrialized countries, beaten only by Canada. Faced with this predicament, it is understandable that ministers would look elsewhere for ideas. At first it was Sweden, with Downing Street seeking advice from its chief epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell. Sweden's refusal to adopt the stringent measures imposed elsewhere had obvious attractions for a party committed to individual freedom, with ministers who had spent many years criticizing the "nanny state." Unfortunately, as the evidence from Stockholm accumulated, revealing a magnitude of economic decline similar to that in its locked down neighbours, but at a much higher cost in lives, the attraction waned, finally evaporating when the second wave, which advocates for the Swedish model predicted would not happen, became apparent.

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/12/07/could-slovakias-mass-testing-programme-work-in-england/>

Lockdowns work, says former AHS head who helped bring Australia's COVID cases under control

The first president of Alberta Health Services says Australia's strict lockdown shows it's possible to reach zero COVID-19 cases. He would know, as one of the authors of the report that guided the country's restrictions. "We eliminated the virus. The feeling of relief and celebration, how proud we were that we'd done it, after 110 days of lockdown, was immense ... and we're going back to normal. Since last night, I can have 30 people, I think, in my house, if I want to," Stephen Duckett said, speaking to CBC News from Melbourne. "The evidence is that there's no conflict between what's right for the economy, what's right for people's health ... people in hospital don't spend money." The health economist was hired as AHS's first president and CEO in 2009 — but shortly after his appointment, the province cut the newly created agency's budget by \$1 billion. He left in 2010.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/stephen-duckett-lockdown-1.5831808>

Sinovac vaccine shows up to 97 per cent efficacy in early trials, Bio Farma says

Indonesia's state-owned pharmaceutical company Bio Farma said on Tuesday that interim data on trials it was conducting on vaccines produced by the Chinese company Sinovac showed up to 97 per

cent efficacy. "Our clinical trial team found, within one month, that the interim data shows up to 97 per cent for its efficacy," said Iwan Setiawan, a spokesman for Bio Farma, at a news conference.

https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/sinovac-covid-19-vaccine-showing-up-to-97-per-cent-efficacy-in-early-trials-2020-1208-p56l5n.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1607417538

FDA staffers sing Pfizer/BioNTech COVID shot's praises ahead of key committee meeting

The FDA has released its internal review documents ahead of the closely watched COVID-19 vaccine advisory committee meeting scheduled for Thursday—and they bode well for Pfizer and partner BioNTech's prospects for securing a quick emergency use authorization (EUA). The FDA meeting briefing, published (PDF) on Tuesday, confirmed the efficacy and safety profile of Pfizer and BioNTech's BNT162b2, reiterating that the shot was 95% effective at preventing COVID-19 after two doses with no serious safety concerns.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/fda-internal-review-bodes-well-for-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-snagging-a-quick-eua>

Not enough Pfizer vaccine doses? Blame the feds, not the company: reports

Just as thousands of Brits were lining up to get Pfizer's mRNA COVID-19 vaccine yesterday, a troubling question emerged in the U.S.: Did the United States government fail to lock in enough doses of the vaccine to ensure a broad and quick rollout here? The short answer appears to be yes. And reviewers were full of praise for the vaccine's clinical program. BNT162b2's development has "ensured the highest compliance and quality standards while progressing expeditiously" to address the pandemic, the agency wrote in its executive summary. Statistical analysis suggests the vaccine's true efficacy is at least 90.3% with a possibility of hitting as high as 97.5%. Notably, the efficacy was consistently high at 94.7% for participants at 65 years of age or older. And even in those with underlying conditions who are considered at risk of developing serious COVID cases, the vaccine's efficacy stood strong at 95.3%.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/not-enough-covid-19-vaccine-doses-blame-feds-not-pfizer-reports>

Sinovac snags \$515M investment to double COVID-19 vaccine capacity as phase 3 readout nears

As the various COVID-19 vaccines move closer to the finish line, their developers have been raising money from investors or through advance government purchases to ramp up manufacturing. Now, a Chinese company has done the same for its candidate. Sinovac Biotech netted \$515 million in investment from local firm Sino Biopharmaceutical, which in exchange gets a 15.03% stake in Sinovac Life Sciences, a subsidiary of the Nasdaq-listed vaccine specialist. The money will help fund development, manufacturing and new production capacity for Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, CoronaVac, as well as other activities, Sinovac said Monday. Currently, Sinovac can make 300 million doses of CoronaVac a year. But the company hopes to finish building another production facility by the end of 2020 to boost annual capacity to 600 million doses, with the potential to expand output even further in the future. CoronaVac, an inactivated shot, is one of the front-running COVID-19 vaccines. It's actually been used in China in a secretive emergency use program. Meanwhile, it's undergoing phase 3 trials in Brazil, Chile, Turkey and Indonesia, with supply deals in place with these countries.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/sinovac-secures-515m-investment-to-double-covid-19-vaccine-capacity-as-phase-3>

Phase 3 trials show AstraZeneca COVID vaccine has up to 90% efficacy

The first full peer-reviewed results of phase 3 trials of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University show that it is safe and up to 90% effective in preventing infection, supporting regulatory submissions for emergency use. The interim analysis, published today in *The Lancet*, identified no severe coronavirus disease or hospitalizations in pooled results

from the 11,636 adults vaccinated in the United Kingdom and Brazil. Of the 11,636 adults, 131 (1.1%) had symptomatic COVID-19 more than 14 days after the second vaccine dose, including 30 of 5,807 (0.5%) in the COVID-19 vaccine group and 101 of 5,829 (1.7%) in the control group, indicating a vaccine efficacy of 70%

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/phase-3-trials-show-astrazeneca-covid-vaccine-has-90-efficacy>

FDA documents show Pfizer COVID vaccine protects after 1 dose

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) documents posted in advance of advisory group consideration of emergency use authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine revealed promising new findings, including strong protection after the first dose and protection in groups at risk for disease complications. The good news comes on the same day immunization with the vaccine began with much fanfare in the United Kingdom, where a 90-year-old woman who lives in Coventry was the first to receive it outside of a vaccine trial.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/fda-documents-show-pfizer-covid-vaccine-protects-after-1-dose>

FDA scientists endorse ‘highly effective’ Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine ahead of key panel

Scientists at the Food and Drug Administration endorsed the efficacy and safety of the Covid-19 vaccine from Pfizer and BioNTech in detailed documents released Tuesday, setting the stage for an emergency authorization as early as this week. The documents are a prelude to a Thursday meeting of outside experts, which is likely the final step before the FDA grants an emergency use authorization, or EUA. The FDA reviewers state that the two-dose vaccine was “highly effective” in preventing symptomatic Covid-19, and that the data “suggest a favorable safety profile, with no specific safety concerns identified that would preclude issuance of an EUA.” The data also suggest that the two-dose vaccine may begin preventing some Covid-19 cases after the first dose.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/08/fda-scientists-endorse-highly-effective-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-ahead-of-key-panel/>

Detailed data on AstraZeneca-Oxford Covid-19 vaccine show it has moderate efficacy

The Covid-19 vaccine being developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca appears to have moderate efficacy in preventing symptomatic illness, and may significantly reduce hospitalization from the disease, data from four clinical trials of the vaccine reveal. The highly anticipated publication of the data, released Tuesday in *The Lancet*, also point to some signals that deserve further exploration — the possibility of protection after a single dose and the suggestion that at least one dosing regimen may have led to a decrease the number of asymptomatic infections.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/08/detailed-data-on-astrazeneca-oxford-covid-19-vaccine-show-it-has-moderate-efficacy/>

Densely packed BAME communities in England bear brunt of Covid-19

Some of England’s most ethnically diverse areas have suffered up to four times more coronavirus infections than mostly white neighbourhoods only a few miles away, a Guardian analysis reveals, as health experts said the UK had paid the price for failing to tackle structural racism. A study of England’s 10 worst-hit council areas found huge disparities in the effect of Covid-19 on residents living alongside one another, with densely packed Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities bearing the brunt of the pandemic. In Blackburn with Darwen, which has experienced the UK’s highest coronavirus cases per capita, the contrast between neighbouring areas is stark. One in 10 people have had the virus in Bastwell, where 85.7% of residents come from a BAME background – four times higher than a neighbourhood five miles away where only 2% of people are non-white.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/07/densely-packed-bame-communities-in-england-bear-brunt-of-covid-19>

Turkey's domestic COVID-19 vaccine set for next stage of human trials

Officials say the Phase 1 human trials of ERUCOV-VAC developed at Erciyes University in central Turkey will conclude on Dec. 14. and that Phase 2 may begin two days later. If the vaccine is proven to be effective, it will be added to Turkey's growing arsenal of vaccines to put an end to the coronavirus outbreak in the country. Turkey announced it had received a shipment of the Chinese vaccine earlier. Ahmet Inal, deputy director of the university's research center where trials are being conducted, says they had 44 volunteers for the first phase, and they were planning to inoculate some 200 volunteers in the second phase. He noted that they have already received more than 100 volunteer applications.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/turkeys-domestic-covid-19-vaccine-set-for-next-stage-of-human-trials/news>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19 pandemic: As hospitals start to max out, medical workers beg for help

Dr. Cleavon Gilman served in the Iraq War, but he said that doesn't compare to the battle he's fighting as an emergency room physician in Arizona. "This pandemic is a lot worse than being in Iraq just because when you're in a war zone, you can leave that war zone. You can fly out of Iraq; you're OK here in the United States," the Yuma doctor said.

https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/covid-19-pandemic-as-hospitals-start-to-max-out-medical-workers-beg-for-help/ar-BB1bExIP?fbclid=IwAR3ASHbe1Q5WICT4c44jiMBIV_aprBMPHfxO9mTSJY2GKCrGd0RM7X68lLo

Matt Hancock urges Londoners to 'stick to the rules' as Covid cases rise

Matt Hancock issued an urgent appeal to Londoners today to "stick by the rules" after shock figures showed Covid-19 cases rising in 21 boroughs increasing the risk of Tier 3 for the city before Christmas. The Health Secretary also stressed that more people in the capital will end up in hospital and die because of the disease's spread. He spoke out after alarming data showed confirmed cases jumping by 46.7 in Haringey in the week to December 2, with many boroughs in east London also being particularly badly hit. Worryingly, much of the rise happened before lockdown ended last Wednesday. The coronavirus surge is all the more striking as just over a week earlier cases were falling in 30 out of 32 boroughs.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-tier-3-warning-coronavirus-cases-latest-figures-b216408.html>

Russian doctors demand probe into Covid-19 patients jumping from high rise buildings

Russia and Ukraine has seen a number of Covid-19 patients fall to their deaths The latest, one of Russia's oldest war heroes, had recently been discharged Russian doctors are now calling for an investigation into the suicide cases They want to look into whether Covid-19 can cause neuropsychiatric disorders

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9029597/Russian-doctors-demand-probe-Covid-19-patients-jumping-high-rise-buildings.html>

America's COVID-19 death toll now surpasses the April peak

The US recorded 1,404 deaths and 192,299 new coronavirus cases yesterday, while the number of people currently hospitalized reached a record 102,148 Deaths, which have been rising rapidly since last month, are now currently averaging 2,200 per day. During the initial peak of the virus in April, the highest seven-day rolling average was just over 2,000. In the last week, 15,658 Americans have died from COVID-19 - making it the deadliest week since April. Hospitalizations have consistently set single-day highs since late October and are currently rising in 31 states. In the last week, every state apart from Utah and Montana have reported an increase in deaths compared to the previous seven days. The Dakotas continue to record the most deaths per 100,000 across the country. Rhode Island

is currently the worst affected state with an average of 110 cases per 100,000 people in a week. It comes as alarming new red wave maps created by US government health officials show how surging COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths have engulfed the United States in the last four months. The data, included in the most recent White House task force situation report sent weekly to states, tracks the number of new COVID-19 admissions per 100 inpatient beds across the country.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9030471/Americas-COVID-19-death-toll-surpasses-April-peak.html>

More areas in England recording rise in Covid-19 case rates, figures show

A growing number of areas in England are seeing a rise in Covid-19 case rates. Seven days ago, just 21 out of a total of 315 local authority areas had recorded a week-on-week jump in rates. That figure now stands at 126. A majority of places are still recording a fall – but there is only one region, north-east England, where rates are coming down in all local areas.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/uk/more-areas-in-england-recording-rise-in-covid-19-case-rates-figures-show/>

Covid deaths climbed to highest number since May just before England's lockdown ended

As people welcome the news that a 90-year-old woman has become the first person in the world to receive a Covid-19 jab, stark new data has highlighted why the vaccine programme will be vital in the UK's ongoing fight against the coronavirus. Despite tough restrictions brought in across England and Wales in recent months, new figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that by the end of November the number of deaths from Covid-19 had reached the highest rate since May.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/covid-deaths-england-lockdown-end-november-statistics-figures-786782>

London's Covid cases are higher now than BEFORE England's lockdown

Matt Hancock has refused to rule out imposing Tier Three measures onto the capital a week before Christmas. Department of Health data shows infections in the city continued to rise during the four-week lockdown. But NHS hospital admissions and deaths from the virus are still flat-lining despite the surge in infections.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9029671/Londons-Covid-cases-higher-Englands-lockdown.html>

Covid-19: U.S. Surpasses 10 Million Coronavirus Cases as Global Cases Top 50 Million

The United States reported its 10 millionth coronavirus case on Sunday, with the latest million added in just 10 days, as most of the country struggled to contain outbreaks in the third and most widespread wave of infection since the pandemic began. More than 103,600 new cases were announced on Sunday, the fifth-highest total of the pandemic, according to a New York Times database, and the fifth day in a row the country exceeded 100,000 cases in a single day. Case reports have soared in the last week, shattering records. The seven-day average of new cases now exceeds 111,000 per day, far more than any other country. The United States accounts for about one-fifth of all reported coronavirus cases in the world, a total that has passed 50.2 million.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/08/world/covid19-coronavirus-live-updates>

Japan announces \$708bn in fresh stimulus as COVID-19 cases rise

Japan will compile a fresh economic stimulus package worth 73.6 trillion yen (\$708bn), Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said on Tuesday, signalling his resolve to pull the country out of its coronavirus crisis-induced slump. The new stimulus package will include fiscal spending worth around 40 trillion yen (\$384.2bn), Suga said in a meeting with ruling party executives. The government is set to finalise the stimulus package later on Tuesday, which would follow a combined \$2.2 trillion from two previous packages that focused on dealing with the immediate strain on households and business. The new economic measures would help push “new economic growth,” Suga said at the meeting. The package is likely to include subsidies and incentives to prod companies to boost green investment and spending on digitalisation, an area Suga has laid out as his key policy priorities.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/12/8/japan-announces-708-bn-in-fresh-stimulus-as-covid-cases-rise/>

London 'facing Tier 3 before Christmas' as figures shows rates are up in 21 boroughs

Londoners might be facing Tier Three lockdown restrictions just a week before Christmas as data shows infections are up in two thirds of the capital's boroughs. The latest Public Health England data shows infection rates are rising in the capital, with cases per person up by half in certain areas of the city. Some officials are reportedly now voicing concern about London. Rates in some areas were rising even before lockdown was lifted on December 2 - and before Londoners enjoyed the first weekend of slightly eased measures. Government officials are set to meet on December 16 to review tiers across the country - just over a week before Christmas Day.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/london-facing-tier-3-before-christmas-b209285.html>

US total tops 15 million as COVID-19 surge expands

More than 200,000 Americans are now testing positive for COVID-19 each day, on average, according to a CNBC analysis of Johns Hopkins data. Yesterday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released its most detailed report of hospital capacity yet, the first to show facility-level status, NPR reported. The HHS data show that for 126 US counties, the average hospital is 90% occupied. Yesterday, the United States reported 192,299 new cases and 1,404 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins tracker. And the COVID Tracking Project reported that 102,148 Americans are currently hospitalized for COVID-19.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/us-total-tops-15-million-covid-19-surge-expands>

New Lockdown

Germany inches towards stricter COVID-19 lockdown

Germany inched towards stricter measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus on Tuesday, as an eastern region said it would close schools and most businesses and the health minister warned a partial lockdown had not stopped the disease. Europe's biggest economy is struggling to squash new infections in a second wave of COVID-19 that is both proving far more difficult to tame than the first one and extracting a heavier human toll as daily deaths hit record highs. The governor of the eastern state of Saxony, which has the highest seven-day incidence rate per 100,000 residents anywhere in Germany, said schools and non-essential businesses will be shut from Dec. 14 as hospitals struggle to take in patients.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany/germany-inches-towards-stricter-covid-19-lockdown-idUKKBN28I0NN>

Experts urge Germany to impose strict coronavirus lockdown over Christmas

Germany should introduce stricter measures before and especially during the Christmas holidays to bring down stagnating coronavirus numbers, a group of experts said Tuesday. In a statement, the country's National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina recommended a two-phase "hard lockdown" until at least January 10. In the first phase, from December 14, the experts want Germans to reduce contacts and work from home while authorities should lift the requirement for children to attend school. In the second phase, from December 24 — when Christmas is traditionally celebrated in Germany — non-essential shops should close, larger gatherings should be banned and contacts reduced to a minimum

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-experts-christmas-lockdown-december-coronavirus-deaths/>

German leaders to discuss tighter COVID-19 measures this week

The German government and states will discuss tighter measures this week to suppress the COVID-19 virus, RBB broadcaster reported on Tuesday, citing the Brandenburg state premier Dietmar Woidke. Woidke said a number of state premiers would exchange views ahead of the meeting with the federal government. A partial lockdown and social distancing rules in place since

the start of November have slowed, but not stopped the spread of the disease.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany/german-leaders-to-discuss-tighter-covid-19-measures-this-week-rbb-idUSL8N2IO0V9>

Azerbaijan to introduce lockdown in major cities from Dec. 14

Azerbaijan will impose a strict lockdown in all of its major cities for just over a month from Dec. 14 to limit the spread of COVID-19, the government's emergency coronavirus department said on Tuesday. Azerbaijan already has a raft of restrictions in place but cases have roughly doubled in the past three to four weeks. Restaurants, cafes, beauty salons and shops are closed at weekends, with public transport not in operation.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-azerbaijan/azerbaijan-to-introduce-lockdown-in-major-cities-from-dec-14-idUSL8N2IO2KY>

Californians endure another lockdown as COVID-19 patients overwhelm hospitals

Most Californians face heavy new restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19, while New York's governor threatened to ban indoor restaurant dining in New York City as the United States feared infections would continue skyrocketing. Restaurants in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area and the state's agricultural San Joaquin Valley shut for all but takeout and delivery. Playgrounds closed, stores reduced capacity and hair salons and barbershops shuttered. The moves affected about three-quarters of the nearly 40 million people in America's most-populous state. California Governor Gavin Newsom's order allowed some schools to continue to hold classes.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa/californians-endure-another-lockdown-as-covid-19-patients-overwhelm-hospitals-idUSKBN28H1HM>