

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 11th Dec 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **Gates Foundation gives U.S.\$250m to global Covid response**

The global response to the Covid-19 pandemic has received a financial boost from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. [It announced a U.S.\\$250 million shot in the arm to boost the development and distribution of vaccines](#), therapeutics and tests. The donation is targeted at ensuring availability in low and middle-income countries, Melinda Gates said.

#### **Pfizer vaccine use not recommended yet for breastfeeding or pregnant women**

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or who plan to become pregnant, should not yet be given the new Pfizer vaccine against Covid-19, [Public Health England said](#). The vaccine has yet to be assessed as suitable for these groups and, [until there is further research on the matter, they should not receive the shot](#). Children under the age of sixteen and those with severe allergies should also not receive the vaccine at this moment.

#### **No emergency authorisation for vaccine in the EU**

The European Medical Agency has backed the EU's decision to not grant emergency use authorisation for a Covid-19 vaccine, even as countries like Canada and the UK have done so. [They will wait for conditional marketing authorisation \(CMA\) to ensure the vaccine is safe and allow mass roll-out across EU member states](#). 'While speed is of the essence, safety is our No1 priority,' said EMA director-general Emer Cooke

#### **Pandemic timeline in question following Italian study**

A study suggests that a young Italian boy is believed to have had Covid-19 in November 2019. [The findings cast doubt on the timeline of the pandemic](#). Originally, it was believed to have started in Wuhan, China in late December. Italy first reported a case of the disease in February 2020, but now it appears the virus may have been spreading in Europe months earlier than first thought.

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Europe can't ignore Global South in coronavirus vaccine race**

The news of ground-breaking vaccines that could spell the end of the global coronavirus pandemic was met with a collective sigh of relief in the West. But in the Global South, the overwhelming feeling was one of dread and anger at the new social chasm on the horizon: between the vaccine haves and have-nots. We know that vaccinating populations that are most at-risk will be key to meeting the challenges of the long year ahead and getting the pandemic under control. But under current vaccine distribution mechanisms such as the World Health Organization's COVAX initiative, which are commendable, there simply will not be enough vaccine doses to go around by the end of 2021. This is not only a moral issue. Failure to provide equitable access to the vaccine will have dire and long-lasting consequences for human health and make it more difficult to end the pandemic. The virus may even have a chance to mutate and become vaccine resistant, raising the possibility of

new waves of infection.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-coronavirus-vaccine-race-g20-global-south-covax/>

### **GPs across the country to start booking coronavirus vaccine appointments within days**

GPs across England will be starting to book coronavirus vaccination appointments over the coming days. As a million more doses are set to arrive in Britain next week, the elderly and care home workers will begin to receive letters organising their appointments. The jabs will come just days after vaccinations began in hospitals this week. According to Mirror Online, details of the next stage of the staggered rollout emerged as Prof Chris Whitty said social distancing restrictions could start being lifted once 20 million vulnerable Brits have been vaccinated. The Chief Medical Officer also offered hope of a return to normality before Spring

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/gps-across-country-start-booking-19430713>

### **DOD Unveils Its Coronavirus Vaccine Distribution Plan**

In the U.S., the Department of Defense aims to administer just under 44,000 doses of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine within 24 to 48 hours of authorization for emergency use. U.S. Food and Drug Administration officials have said they will make a decision soon after they hear from an advisory committee which meets Thursday. The vaccine will be distributed through 16 DOD installations, 13 in the U.S and three overseas. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Thomas McCaffery said some senior leaders will also receive the vaccine "as one way of helping to message the safety and efficacy, and underscore that we are encouraging all those eligible personnel to take the vaccine."

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/12/09/944840423/dod-unveils-its-coronavirus-vaccine-distribution-plan>

### **Few cases, outbreaks in UK schools reopened after lockdown**

A study in The Lancet Infectious Diseases found low COVID-19 case rates and outbreaks in schools and childcare centers that reopened after lockdown. Researchers used data from HPZone—a national online database for events that require public health management—to estimate the rates of SARS-CoV-2 infection and outbreaks among staff and students in a total of 57,600 schools attended by a median of 928,000 students per day. The researchers identified 113 single cases of COVID-19 infection, nine coprimary cases—two confirmed cases within 48 hours of one another, typically within the same household—and 55 outbreaks, defined as two linked cases leading to secondary diagnosed cases within 14 days in the same educational setting. Outbreaks were strongly correlated with local infection rates, showing a 72% increase in the risk of an outbreak for every five cases per 100,000 population increase in community incidence

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/few-cases-outbreaks-uk-schools-reopened-after-lockdown>

### **Alarming levels of hunger in India even post-lockdown, says survey**

In India, the hunger situation remains grave among the marginalised and vulnerable communities even five months after the lockdown has ended, with a large number of families going to bed without food, showed a 'Hunger Watch' survey conducted across 11 states. About 56 per cent of the respondents never had to skip meals before lockdown. In September and October, 27 per cent respondents went to bed without eating. About one in 20 households often went to bed without eating.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/dec/10/alarming-levels-of-hunger-in-india-even-post-lockdown-says-survey-2234211.html>

### **Why Australians are still waiting to come home**

COVID-19 has exposed many weaknesses in Australia's federation but nowhere is this more glaring than the debate over the failure to get Australians home by Christmas. On September 18, Scott Morrison said he wanted to "get as many people home, if not all of them, by Christmas", a line that

has stuck in people's mind. In truth, Morrison has not broken a promise. Since then, more than 32,000 Australian citizens and permanent residents have returned home - 8000 more than were registered at the time. But in that time the worsening international situation has increased the size of the problem. Three months ago there were about 24,000 Australians wanting to return home. Today that number has blown out to about 39,000.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/why-australians-are-still-waiting-to-come-home-20201210-p56mbg.html>

### **UK economic activity picks up after November lockdown - ONS**

More British people went out shopping and got in their cars over the past week following the end of a partial lockdown in England, official figures showed on Thursday. The proportion of British adults who went shopping for goods other than basic necessities rose by 5 percentage points to 18% in the week to Dec. 6, while traffic on Dec. 7 rose 7 percentage points from a week earlier, the Office for National Statistics said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-activity/uk-economic-activity-picks-up-after-november-lockdown-ons-idUKS8N2HE020>

### **Worldwide distribution of Covid-19 vaccines is crucial for the economy, Melinda Gates says**

As coronavirus vaccines begin rolling out — a crucial step in ending the pandemic that has killed more than 1.5 million people and caused economic pain around the globe — Melinda Gates is urging leaders of wealthy countries not to forget about the rest of the world. "Everybody needs this vaccine," Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, told CNN's Poppy Harlow in a broadcast interview Thursday. "If we only get it to the high-income countries, this disease is going to bounce around. We're going to see twice as many deaths. And our recovery of our economies is going to be much slower than if we get the vaccine out to everybody." The Gates Foundation on Thursday said it plans to commit an additional \$250 million to support the "research, development and equitable delivery" of tools to fight Covid-19, including tests, treatments and vaccines.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/10/business/melinda-gates-covid-vaccines/index.html>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Developing nations are first in line for China's Covid vaccines. Analysts question Beijing's intent**

As the vaccine race heats up, China has promised countries in Southeast Asia and Africa that they will be first in line when Beijing's home-grown vaccines are ready to be distributed — a move that's raised questions about China's intent. From Malaysia and the Philippines to a number of African countries, China has granted some developing nations priority access to the coronavirus vaccines it's currently developing. Chinese companies have also signed agreements with some of these developing nations to test and manufacture the vaccines. Experts say the moves could put pressure on some of these countries to support Beijing's commercial and political interests.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/12/10/covid-china-may-be-using-its-vaccines-to-expand-its-soft-power.html>

### **More than 5000 people receive first dose of Covid vaccine**

More than 5000 people in Scotland have received the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine, the First Minister confirmed. The rollout of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine began on Tuesday and those who will be administering the jabs were first in line to receive it. Andrew Mencnarowski, a clinical lead at NHS Lothian, was among the first to get the jab at the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh. Nicola Sturgeon said 5330 have now begun the process of vaccination as she spoke in the Scottish Parliament on Thursday.

<https://news.stv.tv/scotland/more-than-5000-people-receive-first-dose-of-covid-vaccine>

### **Medical racism could hold back the UK's Covid-19 vaccination drive**

After a year of wondering when – or if – it would ever happen, the first people to be vaccinated against Covid-19 in the UK have now received their initial doses. But not everyone in the UK will be lining up to get their shot. According to a survey of people in England conducted by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Public Health England, people from BAME backgrounds are almost three times more likely to reject a Covid-19 vaccine than those from white backgrounds. The same communities that disproportionately felt the worst impacts from Covid-19 are at risk of being left behind again.

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/coronavirus-vaccine-system-racism-uk>

### **Coronavirus: NHS Covid-19 app starts offering self-isolate payments**

An update to England and Wales's NHS Covid-19 contact-tracing app is adding a way to apply for a £500 grant if it gives a self-isolation order. Until now, those on low incomes were only offered the payment if they had been told to stay at home by human Test and Trace operators. The move comes at a time when the number of people testing positive for the coronavirus is on the rise again. Experts have suggested following the app's guidance could help reverse that.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-55259272>

### **Studies find Covid testing, exit strategies key to efficacy**

As local administrations in India prepare for a second wave, infections, two new studies that evaluated interventions such as lockdowns and travel restrictions in containing Covid-19, found that proper testing and exit strategies are crucial. "Imposing a lockdown during the first wave was a good decision, but the health care system wasn't prepared to handle the exit then. We found that exit strategies played a major role in the increase in the number of cases. The study showed that aggressive measures like lockdowns may be inherently enough to suppress an outbreak, however other measures need to be scaled up as lockdowns are relaxed. Premature withdrawal of lockdowns without adequately planned interventions for the post-lockdown phase may lead to the second wave," Giridara Gopal, co-author of the study told TNIE.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2020/dec/10/studies-find-covid-testing-exit-strategies-key-to-efficacy-2234183.html>

### **U.S. Ranks Behind EU, Australia, U.K. in Vaccine Buys But Says It Will Meet Goal**

Thirty-one countries around the globe have reserved more Covid-19 vaccine per capita than the U.S., according to a Bloomberg analysis of country vaccine agreements. The U.S. Operation Warp Speed program is credited with shaving years off the typical development timeline for vaccines that are now on the brink of being deployed. But after leading that effort, the U.S. has yet to exercise some options to lock down additional supplies that could offer extra insurance against manufacturing problems or scientific delays. The U.S. ranks 32nd in per-capita vaccine reservations. It is behind the 27 European Union countries that banded together to pre-order vaccines in larger quantities, and sandwiched between Chile and Japan in 31st and 33rd, respectively, according to Bloomberg's analysis.

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/u-s-ranks-behind-eu-australia-u-k-in-vaccine-buys-but-says-it-will-meet-goal-1.1534150>

### **Coronavirus: Ministers to meet before NI lockdown eases**

Stormont ministers have appealed to people in NI not to "get caught up in the Christmas spirit" with Covid-19 lockdown restrictions set to be eased. A two-week lockdown ends at 23:59 GMT, meaning hairdressers, shops and some hospitality businesses can reopen. First Minister Arlene Foster urged people to be "sensible" about limiting their social contacts. She said the executive was "disappointed" that transmission of the virus had not reduced significantly. Another 14 coronavirus-related deaths were recorded by Northern Ireland's Department of Health on Thursday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-55245757>

### **Gates Foundation commits another \$250 million to fight COVID-19**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has committed another \$250 million toward the development and distribution of COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines. The commitment is the foundation's largest single contribution to the medical response to the pandemic, it announced Wednesday. Melinda Gates told Yahoo Finance that some of the money will go toward procuring 200 million doses of vaccines and 120 million rapid response tests for non-first-world nations.

<https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/529637-gates-foundation-commits-another-250-million-to-fight-covid-19>

### **ECB unleashes \$600 billion in new stimulus to prop up Europe's economy**

The European Central Bank is expanding its huge money-printing program by hundreds of billions of euros, an attempt to prop up the economy as another wave of coronavirus rips through the region and threatens to derail its fragile recovery. The central bank said in a statement on Thursday that it would increase its asset purchases by €500 billion (\$605 billion), bringing the total stimulus program to €1.85 trillion (\$2.24 trillion). It also plans to extend purchases to at least the end of March 2022 and grant more subsidized loans to banks to stimulate lending.

[https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/10/economy/ecb-december-meeting-stimulus/index.html?utm\\_term=link&utm\\_source=twCNNi&utm\\_content=2020-12-10T16%3A44%3A02&utm\\_medium=social](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/10/economy/ecb-december-meeting-stimulus/index.html?utm_term=link&utm_source=twCNNi&utm_content=2020-12-10T16%3A44%3A02&utm_medium=social)

### **The challenge of selling the COVID-19 vaccine amid divisive politics**

It has become a mantra of sorts for the Biden transition team: "Vaccines don't save lives, vaccinations do." The idea is a powerful acknowledgement of the daunting task in front of the nation and incoming administration next year. Once approved and manufactured, getting these shots into people's arms will be a logistical undertaking so big it is hard to fathom. More, reassuring and persuading people to get in line for the new vaccine, after a transition in the White House and with rampant mistrust and misinformation in our politics, could be another challenge next year for President-elect Joe Biden and public health officials.

[https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/challenge-selling-covid-19-vaccine-amid-divisive-politics/story?id=74632612&cid=social\\_twitter\\_abcp](https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/challenge-selling-covid-19-vaccine-amid-divisive-politics/story?id=74632612&cid=social_twitter_abcp)

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Stealing to survive: More Americans are shoplifting food as aid runs out during the pandemic**

Early in the pandemic, Joo Park noticed a worrisome shift at the market he manages near downtown Washington: At least once a day, he'd spot someone slipping a package of meat, a bag of rice or other food into a shirt or under a jacket. Diapers, shampoo and laundry detergent began disappearing in bigger numbers, too. Since then, he said, thefts have more than doubled at Capitol Supermarket — even though he now stations more employees at the entrance, asks shoppers to leave backpacks up front and displays high-theft items like hand sanitizer and baking yeast in more conspicuous areas. Park doesn't usually call the police, choosing instead to bar offenders from coming back.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/12/10/pandemic-shoplifting-hunger/>

### **No, the COVID-19 Vaccine is not made from aborted babies...**

You may have seen a story doing the rounds on social media about the new Covid-19 vaccine being made from the cells of aborted babies. Like most rumours on social media, it is just not true. A simple way to check if a story is true is to look it up on Snopes – the fact-checking site

<https://sluggerotoole.com/2020/12/10/no-the-covid-19-vaccine-is-not-made-from-aborted-babies/>

### **Covid: 'How a picture of my foot became anti-vaccine propaganda'**

Patricia is suffering from an unexplained skin condition - but a misunderstanding about what might have caused it set off a chain of events that turned her foot into fodder for anti-vaccine activists.

The picture showed purple and red sores, swollen and oozing with pus. "Supposedly this is a [vaccine] trial participant," read the message alongside it. "Ready to roll up your sleeve?" Within a day, those same feet had been mentioned thousands of times on Instagram and Facebook. The picture went viral on Twitter as well.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-55179300>

### **Fauci is 'concerned' about possible allergies to Pfizer's covid shot**

Dr Anthony Fauci admitted that the allergic reactions to Pfizer's shot reported in the UK were 'obviously of some concern' during a Harvard forum Wednesday. He wasn't entirely surprised though, and said these types of responses are likely rare. Both people who suffered anaphylactic reactions in the UK had a history of general allergic reactions and carried rescue shots. Dr Fauci says it will likely only be other people with these types of allergies that are at possible risk. But he added the US may want to reconsider holding off on giving the shots to people in VAs, or having rescue shots on hand for vaccinations.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9036721/Fauci-concerned-possible-allergies-Pfizers-covid-shot.html>

### **DUP councillor says he won't take coronavirus vaccine claiming it 'contains tissue from aborted babies'**

A DUP councillor has said he will not take the coronavirus vaccine, claiming it "contains stem cells and tissue from aborted babies". John Carson's comments have been strongly condemned as "dangerous misinformation" and rejected by Stormont's Department of Health. The Mid and East Antrim councillor was asked on Facebook whether he would take the coronavirus vaccine, to which he replied: "Definitely no!!!" When a Facebook user then asked him why some people do not want the jab, he responded: "It contains stem cells and tissue from aborted babies."

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/dup-councillor-says-wont-take-19430014>

### **Scammers targeting elderly with promise of coronavirus vaccine**

Scammers are trying to use the Covid-19 vaccine rollout to take elderly people's money in one part of Wirral. Older residents in the New Ferry area are being targeted by con artists who ring them with an automated voice telling them they have been selected to receive the coronavirus vaccine and to press a number to arrange a booking. On its Facebook page, Wirral Council said elderly people with 0151 645 numbers were being targeted and scammers were calling them from the number 075374 00307. The authority's post added: "This is a scam. Pressing the number will allow them to charge your phone company and take a sum of money from your account. Please warn elderly vulnerable residents to be on their guard to avoid being scammed."

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/scammers-targeting-elderly-promise-coronavirus-19427190>

### **Germany notes 'violent potential' among anti-lockdown protesters**

Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the BfV, said large turnouts of the "Querdenker" (lateral thinker) movement — seen at recent anti-Corona-lockdown protests — harbored "intensified escalation potential." The Cologne-based office tasked with upholding Germany's post-war constitution told newspapers of the Funke Media Group on Thursday that this had been the case at large protests where far-right groups had urged attendance. Small rallies had also taken place and were largely peaceful, the BfV said, albeit adding that there had been "attacks" on police units and media representatives at large gatherings.

<https://www.dw.com/en/germany-notes-violent-potential-among-anti-lockdown-protesters/a-55891587>

### **Reasons why Victoria's lockdown challenge failed in the High Court**

A Victorian hotelier's bid to overturn the state's strict lockdown laws failed because there's no freestanding guarantee to freedom of movement, according to the country's highest court. Mornington Peninsula hotel owner Julian Gerner wanted the High Court to declare Victoria's strict lockdown — which lifted in October — invalid. His lawyer Bret Walker SC argued in November the strict

lockdown violated Australians' constitutional right to a "free and confident society".

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/breaking-news/reasons-why-victorias-lockdown-challenge-failed-in-the-high-court/news-story/ae2f8d7811e49eda9ca1f39dd792bfc8>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Pope's Midnight Mass to start early to respect COVID curfew**

Pope Francis will celebrate Midnight Mass earlier than usual to comply with Italy's anti-coronavirus curfew and will deliver his Christmas and New Year's blessings in ways that aim to prevent crowds from forming. The Vatican on Thursday released the pope's COVID-19 Christmas liturgical schedule. It said the pope's Dec. 24 Mass — which for years hasn't been celebrated at midnight at all but at 9:30 p.m. to spare pontiffs from the late hour — would begin at 7:30 p.m. this year. Italy has imposed a 10 p.m. nationwide curfew, as well as restaurant closures and other restrictions, to try to prevent crowds from forming following a surge of COVID-19 infections and deaths this fall.

<https://apnews.com/article/religion-pope-francis-italy-coronavirus-pandemic-f5172333372df1dcd72601e6081799a0>

### **Italians Will Be Frozen in Place This Christmas**

If U.S. states' lockdowns are too onerous for you, be thankful you're not in Italy. In November Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte promised that "if we respect the rules, we'll have a serene Christmas." Italians largely complied but didn't get their reward. Now Mr. Conte says it'll be "a different Christmas, but not less authentic." Covid-19 hit Italy early and hard. With more than 60,000 deaths and a case-fatality rate of 3.5% (compared with 1.95% in the U.S., 2.57% in Sweden and 2.4% in France), it is clearly a country where things went wrong. In the spring, when the epidemic was concentrated in the North, the country implemented the strictest lockdown in the Western world. It seemed to succeed, and Italians had an uneasy summer, with enclaves of normalcy. Some went to the beach; some hiked mountains; some even went clubbing. In October infections began to rise again.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/italians-will-be-frozen-in-place-this-christmas-11607534352>

### **'Lockdown Lite' Spares Economies but Doesn't End Pandemic**

Global stock markets cratered when the first wave of Covid-19 infections shut down economies around the world. The current wave by some measures is worse, but markets have barely shrugged. Partly that's because with effective vaccines headed for approval, the end of the pandemic is in sight. But it also is because governments have tried to apply the lessons of the spring by imposing shorter and less stringent restrictions, or none at all. The economic hit has thus been smaller and more manageable. "We've learned a whole lot in terms of how to deal with this pandemic," Gita Gopinath, chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, said in an interview Tuesday at The Wall Street Journal CEO Council annual summit.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/lockdown-lite-spar-es-economies-but-doesnt-end-pandemic-11607531785>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Biogen conference in Boston likely linked to 330,000 COVID-19 cases worldwide, researchers say**

It likely took just one of the 175 people gathered in February at a Biogen conference at the Boston Marriott Long Wharf hotel to ignite a COVID-19 wildfire. Within a week, attendees began falling ill. More than 99 would ultimately test positive. By then, many of them had hopped aboard planes to head home or even attend other conferences. And the spread only exploded from there. Researchers now believe roughly 330,000 COVID-19 cases across the nation and around the world can be traced back to the two-day Boston conference, according to a new study published Thursday in the journal Science. The study estimates some 96,360 of the cases with a genetic link to the Biogen conference were discovered in Florida, several hundred miles from the waterfront lobby and banquet rooms in Boston that served as the perfect incubator for an eager virus to multiply.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/biogen-conference-in-boston-likely-linked-to-330000-covid-19-cases-worldwide-researchers-say/ar-BB1bPuCT>

### **How does Oxford University's coronavirus vaccine work and how is it different to Pfizer and Moderna's?**

Results showing the effectiveness of the University of Oxford's coronavirus vaccine are expected to be released in the coming weeks. In the meantime, phase two trial data released on Thursday suggested the jab produces a strong immune response in older adults. And according to the researchers, volunteers in the trial demonstrated similar immune responses across all three age groups (18-55, 56-69, and 70 and over).

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/how-does-vaccine-coronavirus-oxford-work-b73816.html>

### **Moderna begins study of COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents**

Moderna Inc said on Thursday it had dosed the first participants in a mid-to-late stage study testing its COVID-19 vaccine candidate in adolescents aged 12 to less than 18, and aims for data ahead of the 2021 school year. The trial will enroll 3,000 healthy participants in the United States and will assess the safety and effectiveness of two doses of the company's vaccine candidate, mRNA-1273, given 28 days apart. Moderna has submitted applications seeking emergency use authorization (EUA) in the United States and EU after full results from a late-stage study showed the vaccine was 94.1% effective in adults with no serious safety concerns. Rival Pfizer/BioNTech have also sought EUA after their coronavirus vaccine's two-dose regimen proved 95% effective against COVID-19 and had no major safety issues.

<https://www.pharmalive.com/moderna-begins-study-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-adolescents/>

### **COVID-19 vaccine not advised for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding**

The new Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has "not yet been assessed in pregnancy", according to Public Health England.

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/health/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-not-advised-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-3063695>

### **Brazil health regulator sets rules for COVID-19 vaccine emergency use**

Brazil's health regulator Anvisa decided on Thursday to allow temporary emergency use authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines and set rules for companies to apply for the option that did not exist in the country now facing the world's third worst coronavirus outbreak. The decision will potentially allow emergency use of vaccines that are being tested in Brazil by AstraZeneca, Pfizer Inc, Johnson & Johnson's pharmaceutical subsidiary Janssen, and China's Sinovac Biotech.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-brazil-regulator/brazil-health-regulator-sets-rules-for-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use-idUKL1N2IQ1VC>

### **Coronavirus vaccine: Expert addresses Warfarin concerns**

Patients who take blood thinning drugs for heart problems have been reassured that the Covid-19 vaccine should not cause adverse effects if their condition is stable. Anti-coagulant treatments including Warfarin are prescribed to patients at increased risk of strokes or those who have a metal heart valve or those with conditions including Atrial Fibrillation. Like most vaccines, the coronavirus vaccine is injected into the muscle of the upper arm and may bleed more than injections that are given under the skin but less than those that are administered into a vein.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18935567.coronavirus-vaccine-expert-addresses-warfarin-concerns/>

### **U.S. FDA advisory panel meets on Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine**

Pfizer Inc said on Thursday it planned to file for full U.S. approval of its experimental coronavirus vaccine by April next year, even as the vaccine awaits emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The remarks were made by Pfizer executive William Gruber at a

meeting of independent U.S. FDA advisers that are weighing emergency authorization of the vaccine made by Pfizer and German partner BioNTech SE.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-pfizer-vaccine/update-1-u-s-fda-advisory-panel-meets-on-pfizers-coronavirus-vaccine-idUKL1N2IQ16T>

### **Saudi registers Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for import, use - SPA**

Health authorities in Saudi Arabia have registered the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for import and use in the country, state news agency SPA said on Thursday. Saudi Arabia's Food and Drug Agency registered the vaccine. Procedures necessary for its import and use will begin, the statement said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-saudi-vaccine-int-idUSKBN28K1ES>

### **Nigeria Plans to Approve Covid-19 Vaccine Early Next Year**

Nigeria expects to license by April one of the vaccines under development globally for Covid-19, the West African nation's drugs regulator said. "We are looking at the end of the first quarter of next year or the beginning of the second quarter" to approve a shot for use in Nigeria, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Director-General Mojisola Adeyeye said in an interview on Wednesday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-10/nigeria-plans-to-approve-covid-19-vaccine-early-next-year>

### **The Coronavirus Vaccines Were Developed in Record Speed. Now, the Hard Part.**

Dr. Walensky's study found that the most important factor in a given vaccine's success is not necessarily how well that vaccine works. It's everything else: how quickly and strategically the vaccine is distributed across the country, how well received it is and whether people continue to abide by other edicts, like mask wearing and physical distancing. "We find that factors related to implementation will contribute more to the success of vaccination programs than a vaccine's efficacy as determined in clinical trials," Dr. Walensky and her co-authors wrote.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/09/opinion/coronavirus-vaccine-distribution.html>

### **EU regulator rejects need for emergency authorization of coronavirus vaccine**

The head of the European Medicines Agency is standing by the EU's decision to wait for a conditional marketing authorization (CMA) before using coronavirus vaccines on the public. "While speed is of the essence, safety is our No. 1 priority," Emer Cooke, the agency's new executive director, told the European Parliament's health committee today. "These vaccines will be given to millions of people in the EU, and we are keenly aware of the huge responsibility we have to get these recommendations right to protect the European population." She noted the agency is "aware of" the decisions by the U.K. and Canada to approve the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine with the faster process of an emergency authorization. The U.S. could follow suit later today.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-regulator-rejects-need-for-emergency-authorization-of-coronavirus-vaccine/>

### **Covid vaccine from China's Sinopharm is 86% effective, says UAE**

The United Arab Emirates, the first foreign country to approve a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Chinese state-owned pharmaceutical group Sinopharm, said it had 86 per cent efficacy, according to interim results of a phase 3 trial. The announcement is a boost for Beijing's ambitions to establish its pharmaceutical companies as global leaders in developing and distributing vaccines and comes after the release of final stage results from western frontrunners Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca/Oxford. Chinese developers were forced to carry out phase 3 trials overseas because the virus is now almost fully under control in China.

<https://www.ft.com/content/1ef92350-3519-4522-9f80-94eec14fa588>

### **Novavax Covid vaccine trial recruits in Oxfordshire**

People in Oxfordshire are among volunteers recruited for another promising Covid vaccine. US

biotech company Novavax is running trials in Oxford as part of more than 15,203 participants recruited across the UK. It is the largest double blind, placebo-controlled Covid-19 vaccine trial to be undertaken in the country so far. It comes as the first Pfizer vaccinations against coronavirus were carried out in the city this week and new analysis of the Oxford University candidate showed it was 'safe and effective'.

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18932769.another-covid-vaccine-trial-recruits-oxfordshire-volunteers/>

### **Three groups of people urged to avoid the coronavirus vaccine**

Three types of people who have been urged not to have the coronavirus vaccine have been revealed as hospital inoculations continue. The news of three groups unable to be vaccinated come as England's Chief Medical Officer attempts to dispel anti-vax myths. Professor Chris Whitty has said he will take any Covid-19 vaccine offered to him, adding it is a "society" and "political" decision as to when restrictions are lifted. England's chief medical officer told MPs he would be keen to have a jab to protect himself, as the NHS vaccination programme continues across the UK.

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/three-groups-people-urged-avoid-19430793>

### **Even people with moderate cases of Covid-19 can suffer STROKES and seizures, study suggests**

Moderate cases of Covid-19 which do not require treatment in intensive care can still lead to strokes and seizures, according to a new study. Researchers looked at the cases of 921 people who were admitted to a hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, between April and July. Seventy-four had both Covid-19 and also underwent a neurologic examination. The study reveals symptoms such as stroke and seizures as well as inflammation may be more common than previously believed, irrespective of Covid-19 severity.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/people-with-moderate-cases-of-covid-19-can-suffer-strokes/ar-BB1bOP8W>

### **Covid-19: The mask-wearing US city that bucked the trend**

A major factor in the decision was keeping the university - South Dakota State - open for teaching and therefore retaining the large student population during the autumn, adds Mr McMacken. The requirements for mask use were brought in by the city of Brookings but they don't apply across the entire county of the same name. Our data is for the county, not the city, so it has its limitations. Brookings County now has the lowest infection rate out of the five most populous South Dakota counties.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/55216518>

### **Could England have avoided second lockdown by sticking to tiers?**

ENGLAND didn't need a second lockdown because daily covid-19 cases were already peaking under previously imposed regional restrictions, according to a researcher leading a popular symptom-tracking app. "It was unnecessary, if you looked at the latest data on the curves," says Tim Spector at King's College London, who oversees the Covid Symptom Study. Other researchers disagree, however....

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24833125-100-could-england-have-avoided-second-lockdown-by-sticking-to-tiers/>

### **Air pollution roars back in parts of UK, raising Covid fears**

Air pollution in many towns and cities across the UK now exceeds pre-pandemic levels, exacerbating the risk of Covid-19 and putting the health of millions of people at risk. A study published on Thursday says that although air quality improved dramatically in the first half of the year as the country went into lockdown, pollution now meets or exceeds pre-Covid levels in 80% of the 49 cities and large towns that were analysed. There is growing evidence that exposure to toxic air increases the risks from Covid-19 and the authors of the study say their findings underscore the need for local councils to do more to reduce car use and improve air quality by prioritising walking and cycling.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/10/air-pollution-roars-back-in-parts-of-uk-raising-covid-fears>

### **New study shows boy, 4, had Covid in Italy in November 2019**

Researchers say an Italian boy tested positive for coronavirus in November 2019 – a revelation which has dramatic implications for the timeline of when the virus was spreading. The Covid-19 outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December last year – although Chinese authorities now admit there were cases dating back to November, amid global scepticism about whether the country has been open about what it knew and when. The study in Italy adds to evidence that the virus may have been spreading far earlier than initially thought and even around Europe in autumn 2019 – months before the first official Italian case in February 2020.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/12/10/new-study-shows-boy-4-had-covid-in-italy-in-november-2019-13729642/>

### **Covid Pandemic: How South Korea Contained the Coronavirus Without Lockdowns**

Park Young Joon was worried that South Korea could lose control. As director for epidemiological investigations at the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, he'd been dispatched to Daegu, a city of 2.5 million in the south, to deal with an urgent situation. A rash of novel coronavirus cases had just emerged among members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, an obscure and secretive religious group whose services involve close physical contact. The first congregant tested positive on Feb. 17, becoming South Korea's 31st Covid-19 patient. Soon the number of new daily cases was in double digits, then triple—evidence that an exponential outbreak was in progress. "I remember seeing the triple-digit cases," Park says, speaking through a translator, "and thinking to myself that this must be what people mean when they use the word 'surge.'"

<https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2020-south-korea-covid-strategy/>

### **How kids' immune systems can evade COVID**

Young children account for only a small percentage of COVID-19 infections<sup>1</sup> — a trend that has puzzled scientists. Now, a growing body of evidence suggests why: kids' immune systems seem better equipped to eliminate SARS-CoV-2 than are adults'. "Children are very much adapted to respond — and very well equipped to respond — to new viruses," says Donna Farber, an immunologist at Columbia University in New York City. Even when they are infected with SARS-CoV-2, children are most likely to experience mild or asymptomatic illness<sup>2</sup>.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03496-7>

### **U.S. FDA advisers overwhelmingly back authorizing Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine**

A panel of outside advisers to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Thursday voted overwhelmingly to endorse emergency use of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine, paving the way for the agency to authorize the shot for a nation that has lost more than 285,000 lives to COVID-19. The FDA is widely expected to authorize emergency use in days. Distribution and inoculations in the United States are expected to begin almost immediately thereafter. The committee voted 17-4 that the known benefits of the vaccine outweighed the risks of taking the shot for individuals 16 and older, with 1 member of the panel abstaining. "This is a historic moment," Eric Dickson, chief executive of UMass Memorial Health Care, who was not on the advisory panel, said after the vote. He called the vaccine from Pfizer and German partner BioNTech "the best solution to get us out of our current situation and help us save lives."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-pfizer-vaccine/u-s-fda-advisers-overwhelmingly-back-authorizing-pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-idUKKBN28K2PN?il=0>

### **'We should have been much tougher' : Sturgeon admits mistakes in Scotland's pandemic response as studies show travel caused second wave**

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has acknowledged mistakes "will have been made" in Scotland's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as a new report shows the country was close to eliminating the virus during the first lockdown, but national and international travel re-seeded it.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/we-should-have-been-much-tougher-sturgeon-admits-mistakes-scotlands-pandemic-response-studies-show-travel-caused-second-wave-3062745>

### **South Korea study shows how coronavirus spreads indoors**

The study — adding to a growing body of evidence on airborne transmission of the virus — highlighted how South Korea's meticulous and often invasive contact tracing regime has enabled researchers to closely track how the virus moves through populations. "In this outbreak, the distances between infector and infected persons were ... farther than the generally accepted 2 meter [6.6-foot] droplet transmission range," the study's authors wrote. "The guidelines on quarantine and epidemiological investigation must be updated to reflect these factors for control and prevention of COVID-19."

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-12-09/five-minutes-from-20-feet-away-south-korean-study-shows-perils-of-indoor-dining-for-covid-19>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Covid-19 could 'run out of control' over winter without caution, Sturgeon warns**

The First Minister has come in for fierce criticism for keeping the city under Level 3 restrictions – the second toughest level available in Scotland's five-tier system. She argued if the Scottish Government does not apply "real caution" when considering these issues there is a risk Covid-19 infections could rapidly spiral. Both Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard and Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie challenged the First Minister on the failure to move Edinburgh to Level 2 – something many had expected to happen this week. Ms Sturgeon warned going down a level and easing restrictions "gives the virus more opportunity to spread".

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/scotland/covid-19-could-run-out-of-control-over-winter-without-caution-sturgeon-warns/>

### **Mexico's coronavirus czar faces criticism as COVID-19 surges**

There's hardly a Mexican who doesn't know Hugo López-Gatell Ramírez by now. Mexico's undersecretary of prevention and health promotion has sat across from reporters at 7 p.m. sharp almost every single night since late February to update them, and the country, on the toll of the coronavirus pandemic. His firm demeanor, careful speech, and courteous personality have made his televised coronavirus press briefings even more popular than those of the country's president. But as COVID-19 deaths in Mexico continue to soar—surpassed only by the United States, Brazil, and India—many have questioned López-Gatell Ramírez's leadership. Critics accuse him of undercounting the true numbers and mishandling the nation's response. In early August, the governors of nine Mexican states demanded his resignation. His defenders, though, say he's making sound decisions based on science and doing the best he can with the resources at his disposal.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/12/mexico-s-coronavirus-czar-faces-criticism-covid-19-surges>

### **Coronavirus: 'London must enter tier 3 now' warn experts**

London should be placed in tier three "now" to avoid a spike in deaths over Christmas, experts have warned. The city saw a spike in Covid-19 cases at the end of England-wide lockdown on 2 December, new figures have revealed. Government officials are due to meet on 16 December to review what tier each area should be allocated. Prof John Ashton, author of *Blinded by Corona*, said "if London doesn't want hospitals to be full over Christmas the government need to get a grip today". "Deaths will start going up during the Christmas period and new year unless something is done," said Prof Ashton, a former regional director of public health for north-west England.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-55245417>

### **Global cases stabilizing, but COVID deaths continue to climb**

Global incidence of new COVID-19 cases remained high but stable for the second week in a row,

while global coronavirus deaths increased, according to the latest weekly epidemiologic update from the World Health Organization (WHO). Meanwhile, with the United Kingdom's vaccination campaign in its second day, UK health officials said today that people with a significant history of allergic reactions to food, medicine, or vaccines should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine from Pfizer-BioNTech following allergic reactions in two health workers.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/global-cases-stabilizing-covid-deaths-continue-climb>

### **Compromise lockdown struggles to subdue Germany's Covid second wave**

In the spring, Germany was praised as a pandemic role model for its Covid-19 crisis management: its low fatality and high testing rates and efficient hammering of the curve were the envy of much of the rest of the world. But this winter the virus is exposing the weaknesses as well as strengths of Germany's consensus-based federal system, as its "compromise lockdown" struggles to subdue the second wave. While the German infection rate remains below the EU average, the numbers have taken a "worrying" turn for the worse, as Lothar Wieler, the head of the country's disease control agency, warned on Thursday.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/10/compromise-lockdown-struggles-to-subdue-germany-covid-second-wave>

### **French to find out if virus surge will ruin Christmas holidays**

With just two weeks to go until Christmas, French people were on Thursday nervously awaiting news by the Prime Minister on whether lockdown restrictions will be relaxed as planned. Failure to adequately stem the number of coronavirus cases has fuelled fears that Jean Castex will scupper end-of-year festivities at a press conference set for 6pm. Under plans laid out in November, cinemas and theatres are due to reopen on 15 December, with a night-time curfew replacing a nationwide lockdown – allowing people to travel to see loved ones over the holidays.

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20201210-french-to-find-out-if-virus-surge-will-ruin-christmas-holidays-jean-castex-lockdown-deconfinement>

### **Covid-19: Second wave wouldn't be unexpected, but hard lockdown a 'blunt tool', says top expert**

Many countries are experiencing a second Covid wave, and scientists are worried that SA is heading in the same direction. However, implementing another hard lockdown is impractical as the first one pretty much proved unsuccessful in containing the spread of the virus.

<https://www.news24.com/health24/medical/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/covid-19-second-wave-wouldnt-be-unexpected-but-hard-lockdown-a-blunt-tool-says-top-expert-20201209>

### **Japanese medical community despairs at public's lack of concern for mounting virus wave**

The air has shifted -- and many in the medical community are concerned by the changes in attitudes toward the coronavirus they're seeing in society at large. Compared to the first wave of infections, in which the whole country got in the mood to limit its activities, now people are more relaxed, with some shops even refusing to comply with requests to reduce their business hours. Disparities in the way ordinary people and medical professionals perceive the threat are widening.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20201210/p2a/00m/0dm/018000c>

### **Covid-19 Surge Hits South Korea and Japan, After They Had Contained Virus**

Some Asian countries that have been among the world's most successful at containing Covid-19 are now struggling to beat back a winter resurgence, a sign of how elusive sustained progress can be until a vaccine gets rolled out widely. On Wednesday, South Korean President Moon Jae-in convened an emergency meeting after the country saw a nine-month peak of 686 cases that has forced officials to use shipping containers to address a hospital-bed shortage. Japan on Wednesday recorded 2,810 new cases, the government said, its highest daily total yet. Vietnam reported community infections for the first time in around three months, prompting authorities to suspend all

inbound commercial flights. Hong Kong, which had taken daily infections down to single digits, has seen cases surge past 100, requiring the reintroduction of limits on dine-in restaurant service and gym closures. Several regions of Malaysia went into lockdown after cases doubled within a month.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-surge-hits-parts-of-asia-seen-as-pandemic-success-stories-11607523625>

### **U.S., Breaking a Record, Tops the 3,000 Daily Death Mark**

Just one week after the United States broke a daily record for coronavirus deaths, it did so again on Wednesday, when officials across the country reported at least 3,011 new fatalities. Last week's record — 2,885 deaths reported in a single day — was a milestone because not since the pandemic's first peak, in spring, had so many deaths been reported. The high point then was 2,752 deaths, on April 15. As a brutal surge gathers speed across the country, the country went on last week to record its most coronavirus-related deaths over a seven-day period.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/12/09/world/covid-19-coronavirus>

### **'We need help,' says Stockholm healthcare chief as COVID fills intensive care wards**

The head of Stockholm's health service appealed to national authorities on Wednesday to send specialist nurses and other hospital staff as it struggles to cope with a second wave of COVID infections that has filled intensive care wards in Sweden's capital city. Sweden, which has not opted for the kind of lockdown adopted by many other European nations, has suffered many times more COVID-19 deaths per capita than its Nordic neighbours, with the total reaching almost 7,300 on Wednesday. Stockholm and the surrounding region are among the areas hardest hit with 2,836 deaths. Infection rates are picking up again after a lull in the summer and autumn, and intensive care wards are now full.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-sweden-hospitals/we-need-help-says-stockholm-healthcare-chief-as-covid-fills-intensive-care-wards-idUKKBN28J256?il=0>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **U.S. Jobless Claims Surge to 853000 Amid Covid Lockdowns**

U.S. unemployment benefit applications exceed expectations last week, reflecting the impact of lockdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic. Bloomberg's Michael McKee reports on "Bloomberg Surveillance."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2020-12-10/u-s-jobless-claims-surge-to-853-000-amid-covid-lockdowns-video>

### **More California Counties on Lockdown as COVID-19 Explodes**

California's coronavirus surge has caused so many hospitalizations and deaths that the numbers brought usually stoic public health officers in major metropolitan areas to pleas — and even near to tears — as they urged people to heed safety rules. Los Angeles County, the nation's largest with 10 million residents, had a "devastating increase in deaths" from about a dozen a day in mid-November to an average of 43 a day this week, the county's health director, Barbara Ferrer, said Wednesday. "Over 8,000 people who were beloved members of their families are not coming back," Ferrer said in a choked voice. She called the deaths "an incalculable loss to their friends and their family and the community."

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/california/articles/2020-12-10/more-california-counties-on-lockdown-as-covid-19-explodes>

### **Berlin seeks tighter lockdown to rein in pandemic**

Berlin wants to close shops and extend the school Christmas holidays to try to get the coronavirus pandemic under control, the mayor of the German capital said on Thursday as the country reported a new record number of cases of COVID-19. Berlin's mayor Michael Mueller said he would seek the approval of the city's parliament next Tuesday to close stores apart from supermarkets until Jan. 10,

and also to extend the school break until that date or put lessons online for a week. Germany's coronavirus cases rose by 23,679 on Thursday to 1,242,203, setting a new record daily rise, while the death toll increased by 440 to 20,372, according to data from the Robert Koch Institute for Infectious Diseases (RKI).

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-rki/berlin-seeks-tighter-lockdown-to-rein-in-pandemic-idUKKBN28K0WR>

### **Denmark widens coronavirus lockdown after record infections**

Denmark said on Thursday it will expand lockdown measures announced earlier this week to more cities, placing almost 80% of the population under the tight restrictions after registering its highest number of new daily infections yet. "There is widespread infection throughout society and incipient pressure on the hospital system," Health Minister Magnus Heunicke told reporters, adding a further rise in infections in the coming days is expected.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-denmark/update-2-denmark-widens-coronavirus-lockdown-after-record-infections-idUSL1N2IQ101>

### **Ukraine will introduce tight lockdown restrictions in January**

Ukraine will introduce tight lockdown restrictions in January, hoping to stop the rapid spread of coronavirus infection, Prime Minister Denys Shmygal said on Wednesday. The measures, which include the closure of schools, cafes, restaurants, gyms and entertainment centres and a ban on mass gatherings, will be in force from Jan. 8 to 24, Shiygal told the televised government meeting. The government last month introduced a lockdown at weekends, closing or restricting most businesses except essential services such as grocery shops, pharmacies, hospitals and transport. It lifted the restrictions on Dec. 2

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-ukraine-lockdown/ukraine-will-introduce-tight-lockdown-restrictions-in-january-idUSS8N2EG08A>