

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

29th Sep 2021

One Minute Overview

COVID-19: Scotland delays enforcement of vaccine passport scheme - Scotland's new vaccine passport scheme for entry into nightclubs and large events will not be enforced until two weeks after it is introduced. From 5am on Friday, people going to venues open after midnight with alcohol, music and dancing will need proof they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. But [First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said venues which fail to obey the new rules will not face punishment for another 17 days](#). Ms Sturgeon said she had made the change after listening to the 'reasonable concerns of business'.

Brazil hospital chain hid COVID-19 deaths, whistleblowers' lawyer tells Senate - A Brazilian hospital chain tested unproven drugs on elderly COVID-19 patients without their knowledge as part of an effort to validate President Jair Bolsonaro's preferred 'miracle cure,' a lawyer for whistleblowing doctors told senators on Tuesday. [At least nine people died of COVID-19 during the trials at the Prevent Senior hospital chain from March to April 2020, but their charts were altered to hide the cause of death, lawyer Bruna Morato told a Senate inquiry](#). Prevent Senior rejected the accusations as unfounded and said it had 'rigorously reported' all deaths. It added in a statement that 7% of the 56,000 COVID-19 patients it treated had died, a better record than other public and private hospitals.

Boris Johnson meets with members of the Covid-19 Bereaved Families group for first time... 18 months after first death to the virus was recorded in UK - Boris Johnson is meeting a group of families bereaved by coronavirus - more than a year after he first promised to do so - with the PM to be told by campaigners: 'If we'd been listened to - other lives might have been spared'. [The Prime Minister held a private meeting with members of the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group in the Downing Street garden this afternoon, with each person attending carrying an A4 photo of the loved-one they lost](#). Families have asked for it to take place outdoors with social distancing and said they would tell Mr Johnson how their loved ones caught the virus and died, and repeat their calls for a public inquiry to start.

Sydney's unvaccinated warned of social isolation when COVID-19 lockdown ends - Sydney residents who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 risk being barred from various social activities even when they are freed from stay-at-home orders in December, New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian warned. [Under a roadmap to exit lockdown in Australia's biggest city, unvaccinated people are already subject to delays in freedoms that will be gradually granted to inoculated residents between Oct. 11 and Dec. 1](#). Berejiklian said people who choose not to be vaccinated could be barred entry to shops, restaurants and entertainment venues even after the state lifts all restrictions against them on Dec. 1.

Hospitals fear staffing shortages as vaccine deadlines loom - Hospitals and nursing homes around the U.S. are bracing for worsening staff shortages as state deadlines arrive for health care workers to get vaccinated against COVID-19. [With ultimatums taking effect this week in states like New York, California, Rhode Island and Connecticut, the fear is that some employees will quit or let themselves be fired or suspended rather than get the vaccine](#). "How this is going to play out, we don't know. We are concerned about how it will exacerbate an already quite serious staffing problem," said California Hospital Association spokesperson Jan Emerson-Shea, adding that the organization "absolutely" supports the

state's vaccination requirement.

Egypt allows immediate COVID-19 vaccination amid fourth wave - Egypt is now providing immediate COVID-19 vaccinations at youth centres across the country without prior online registration, a step aimed at encouraging vaccinations and relieving pressure on hospitals and health units amid a fourth wave of infections. Nearly 270 youth centres are now open for citizens to get COVID-19: the health ministry said, bringing the total number of vaccination sites across the country to 1,100. [The move is part of the 'Together We Are Assured' campaign, launched by the health ministry in mid-September, that allows citizens to register and receive vaccinations immediately after complaints of a large time difference between the two steps.](#)

COVID-19: Younger children 'more hesitant than older teenagers to get jabbed' as researchers call for better vaccine messaging - The findings by researchers at the University of Oxford, University College London (UCL) and the University of Cambridge follow the government's confirmation earlier this month it would widen the vaccination programme to all 12 to 15-year-olds. [More than 27,000 students in England, aged between nine and 18, took part in the survey which showed that 50% were willing to have a coronavirus vaccination, 37% were undecided while 13% wanted to opt out.](#) Just over a third (36%) of nine-year-olds were willing to have a jab, compared with 51% of 13-year-olds and 78% of 17-year-olds.

India allows Serum Institute to enrol 7-11 year olds in COVID-19 vaccine trial - India's drug regulator on Tuesday allowed vaccine maker Serum Institute to enrol [kids aged 7-11 years for its trial of U.S. drugmaker Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine, as the country prepares to protect children from the novel coronavirus.](#) The South Asian nation has already administered more than 870 million doses to adults among its population of nearly 1.4 billion.

COVID-19: One in 10 secondary school pupils with coronavirus suffered ongoing symptoms, ONS research finds - More than one in 10 secondary school students and over a third of school staff who have had COVID-19 have suffered ongoing symptoms, new research has found. [Staff and pupils commonly reported weakness and tiredness, while staff were more likely to experience shortness of breath, according to a small study of schools in England.](#) The Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 35.7% of staff and 12.3% of students, who previously tested positive for COVID-19, reported experiencing ongoing symptoms more than a month after contracting the virus.

Smokers up to 80% more likely to be admitted to hospital with Covid, study says - Smokers are 60%-80% more likely to be admitted to hospital with Covid-19 and also more likely to die from the disease, data suggests. [A study, which pooled observational and genetic data on smoking and Covid-19 to strengthen the evidence base, contradicts research published at the start of the pandemic suggesting that smoking might help to protect against the virus.](#) This was later retracted after it was discovered that some of the paper's authors had financial links to the tobacco industry.

Two Europes: Low vaccine rates in east overwhelm ICUs - Around 72% of adults in the 27-nation European Union have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but a stubbornly low uptake of the shots in some eastern EU nations now risks overwhelming hospitals amid a surge of infections due to the more contagious delta variant. [Bulgaria and Romania are lagging dramatically behind as the EU's two least-vaccinated nations, with just 22% and 33% of their adult populations fully inoculated.](#) Rapidly increasing new infections have forced authorities to tighten virus restrictions in the two countries, while other EU nations such as France, Spain, Denmark and Portugal have all exceeded 80% vaccine coverage and eased restrictions.

Russia reports its worst single-day Covid-19 death toll since start of pandemic - Russia

reported its highest Covid-19 death toll in a single day on Tuesday with 852 coronavirus-related deaths recorded in the past 24 hours, according to the country's coronavirus response center. [The previous all-time high was recorded four days ago, on September 24, when 828 deaths were registered.](#) Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov acknowledged the country's regions had seen an increase in coronavirus cases while speaking to journalists on Tuesday.

Lockdown Exit

Vaccine Mandate Leads Thousands of New York Health Workers to Get Vaccinated

When New York State officials issued a sweeping coronavirus vaccine mandate for health care workers in August, they expressed confidence that it would pressure reluctant doctors, nurses and support staff to get the shot. On Monday, as the deadline for vaccinations for about 600,000 nursing home and hospital workers arrived, it seemed that bet had proved to be at least partially correct. With just days or even hours to spare, thousands of health care workers got inoculated, according to health officials across the state.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/28/nyregion/vaccine-health-care-workers-mandate.html>

Behind Israel's Swift Rollout of Covid-19 Vaccine Boosters

In late July, dozens of Israeli scientists and government health officials were locked in a marathon video call where they examined new data indicating that the effectiveness of the Covid vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE was waning. Infections from the new Delta variant were increasing, and growing numbers of people were falling seriously ill, even those who had had both shots of the vaccine. Lives were potentially on the line. Within days of the midnight vote that decided to distribute a third shot, the first of millions of booster shots were administered, months before the U.S. or any other country would take the same step. "It was a really tough discussion," said epidemiologist Gili Regev-Yochay, who presented key research on the effectiveness of booster shots. "[But] it was a decision that was reached essentially with one voice."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/behind-israels-swift-rollout-of-covid-19-vaccine-boosters-11632821987>

New York's Covid-19 Vaccine Mandates Are Working, Officials Say

New York Governor Kathy Hochul says a Covid-19 vaccine mandate for health workers that went into effect this week is working to boost vaccination rates, providing a road map to other states that are trying to fight the highly transmissible delta variant. About 92% of nursing home staff in New York had received at least one vaccine dose as of Monday evening, up from 82% on Sept. 20 and 71% when Hochul was sworn in on Aug. 24, according to the governor's office. And 85% of hospital staff were fully inoculated, up from 84% on Sept. 22 and 77% on Aug. 24, according to state data.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-28/new-york-s-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-are-working-officials-say>

Defying Delta: Back to school goes better than feared

School for children in many nations has been underway for more than a month and fears the Delta coronavirus variant would derail in-person learning have largely proven unfounded. In a dozen countries with high vaccination rates in Asia, Europe and the United States, case rates that surged in August have mostly fallen back, according to local data and officials. The jury is out on how much this is due to seasonal factors amid a global decline in cases, and how much it is linked to vaccinations and other preventative measures. Public health experts say they will continue to watch for signs of an increase in cases as winter approaches.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/defying-delta-back-school-goes-better-than-feared-2021-09-28/>

COVID-19: Scotland delays enforcement of vaccine passport scheme

Scotland's new vaccine passport scheme for entry into nightclubs and large events will not be

enforced until two weeks after it is introduced. From 5am on Friday, people going to venues open after midnight with alcohol, music and dancing will need proof they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. But First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said venues which fail to obey the new rules will not face punishment for another 17 days. Ms Sturgeon said she had made the change after listening to the "reasonable concerns of business".

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-scotland-delays-enforcement-of-vaccine-passport-scheme-12420520>

Covid-19: Unlocking options 'limited' by jab passport delay

In Northern Ireland, a delay by the executive in agreeing a Covid-19 vaccine certification policy has "significantly limited" the options for easing restrictions, the health minister has said. In a letter to the first and deputy first ministers, Robin Swann said he was frustrated by the lack of progress. He asked as a "matter of urgency" that the Executive Office brings forward a paper "without further delay". He said people would lose out if that did not happen. The absence of vaccine certification could leave them disadvantaged "when they travel to neighbouring jurisdictions where such schemes are mandatory", he said

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-58717676?at_custom2=twitter&at_custom1=%5Bpost+type%5D&at_campaign=64&at_custom4=A404A624-203D-11EC-9EE9-25F04744363C&at_medium=custom7

Boris Johnson meets with members of the Covid-19 Bereaved Families group for first time... 18 months after first death to the virus was recorded in UK

Boris Johnson is meeting a group of families bereaved by coronavirus - more than a year after he first promised to do so - with the PM to be told by campaigners: 'If we'd been listened to - other lives might have been spared'. The Prime Minister held a private meeting with members of the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice group in the Downing Street garden this afternoon, with each person attending carrying an A4 photo of the loved-one they lost. Families have asked for it to take place outdoors with social distancing and said they would tell Mr Johnson how their loved ones caught the virus and died, and repeat their calls for a public inquiry to start.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10037357/Boris-Johnson-meets-members-Covid-19-Bereaved-Families-group-time.html>

Sydney's unvaccinated warned of social isolation when COVID-19 lockdown ends

Sydney residents who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 risk being barred from various social activities even when they are freed from stay-at-home orders in December, New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian warned. Under a roadmap to exit lockdown in Australia's biggest city, unvaccinated people are already subject to delays in freedoms that will be gradually granted to inoculated residents between Oct. 11 and Dec. 1. Berejiklian said people who choose not to be vaccinated could be barred entry to shops, restaurants and entertainment venues even after the state lifts all restrictions against them on Dec. 1.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sydneys-unvaccinated-warned-social-isolation-when-lockdown-ends-2021-09-28/>

Brazil hospital chain hid COVID-19 deaths, whistleblowers' lawyer tells Senate

A Brazilian hospital chain tested unproven drugs on elderly COVID-19 patients without their knowledge as part of an effort to validate President Jair Bolsonaro's preferred 'miracle cure,' a lawyer for whistleblowing doctors told senators on Tuesday. At least nine people died of COVID-19 during the trials at the Prevent Senior hospital chain from March to April 2020, but their charts were altered to hide the cause of death, lawyer Bruna Morato told a Senate inquiry. Prevent Senior rejected the accusations as unfounded and said it had "rigorously reported" all deaths. It added in a statement that 7% of the 56,000 COVID-19 patients it treated had died, a better record than other public and private hospitals.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/brazil-hospital-chain-hid-covid-19-deaths-whistleblowe>

Exit Strategies

Yemen uses UN speech to call for more COVID-19 vaccines

The top diplomat of Yemen's internationally recognized government said Monday his conflict-torn country needs millions more coronavirus vaccines to ensure some of the world's poorest are not left behind. In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak said the roughly 1 million doses Yemen was given are not enough to vaccinate even the most vulnerable portions of its population. Yemen has a long way to go toward vaccinating the majority of its some 30 million people, most of whom are facing multiple humanitarian crises, including poverty, hunger and poor access to adequately run hospitals. Yemen's government has received just roughly 500,000 doses so far this year through the COVAX initiative, and the rest through direct donations from other countries. "These amounts are still not enough to cover the targeted groups," Bin Mubarak said. "We hope that the donating countries will contribute to increasing the number of vaccines so that no one is left behind."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/yemen-saudi-arabia-united-nations-general-assembly-houthi-sanaa-b1927924.html>

Australia is still 56th in the world for coronavirus vaccination coverage — but it's clawing its way up

Australia is clawing its way up from the bottom of the pack of wealthy nations in the COVID-19 vaccination race. After months spinning its wheels near the start line, we are now roaring towards the vaccination levels that will allow a safer re-entry into the world. But there is still a distance to go. Of all the nations home to at least 500,000 people, Australia currently ranks 48th on partial vaccination levels, according to the latest data compiled by Our World In Data. Australia is 56th in the world for full vaccination coverage. Among the relatively wealthy OECD nations, Australia still ranks near the bottom of the pack. But the nation is now clambering upwards, with one of the fastest vaccination speeds in the world.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-28/australia-covid-vaccine-rate-among-worlds-fastest/100495578>

For many families, the countdown has begun to coronavirus vaccines for younger children

For almost a year, Whitney Kuhn has been trying to escape the grip of long-haul symptoms after contracting covid-19. And she has not stopped worrying about how to protect her 10-year-old son, Tyler, from the illness she experienced. She has been too anxious to go on family vacations, visit relatives for the holidays or even take Tyler to the grocery store. She has pulled him from basketball — his favorite sport — and other extracurriculars. And when he had to return to school, she could only hope his classmates wore their masks the right way.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/09/27/kids-covid-vaccine/>

New York can move forward with coronavirus vaccine mandate for school workers, judges say

A federal appeals court Monday made way for New York Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) to implement a coronavirus vaccine mandate for all school employees, ruling against four educators who had sued to stop it. The court decision marks a major victory for the nation's largest school system, which employs 150,000 people and educates over 1 million students in a city gutted by the coronavirus last year. Unlike most other cities, New York's mandate does not allow employees to submit to regular testing as an alternative to getting a vaccine. The city's mandate would have required all school employees to show proof of at least one shot by midnight Monday. But on Friday, a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit issued an injunction temporarily halting the requirement.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/09/27/nyc-schools-covid-vaccine-mandate-staff/>

Cuba begins commercial exports of its COVID-19 vaccines

Cuba has begun commercial exports of its homegrown COVID-19 vaccines, sending shipments of the three-dose Abdala vaccine to Vietnam and Venezuela. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel announced the arrival of vaccines in Vietnam on his Twitter feed on Sunday. The official Cubadebate news website said the shipment included 900,000 doses bought by Hanoi and 150,000 more donated by Cuba. Vietnam's President Nguyen Xuan Phuc visited Cuba last week and toured the laboratory that produces the vaccine, announcing an agreement to buy at least five million doses. As two of the last five Communist countries in the world, Cuba and Vietnam have maintained longstanding ties.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/28/cuba-begins-commercial-exports-of-its-covid-19-vaccines>

Egypt allows immediate COVID-19 vaccination amid fourth wave

Egypt is now providing immediate COVID-19 vaccinations at youth centres across the country without prior online registration, a step aimed at encouraging vaccinations and relieving pressure on hospitals and health units amid a fourth wave of infections. Nearly 270 youth centres are now open for citizens to get the vaccines, the health ministry said, bringing the total number of vaccination sites across the country to 1,100. The move is part of the "Together We Are Assured" campaign, launched by the health ministry in mid-September, that allows citizens to register and receive vaccinations immediately after complaints of a large time difference between the two steps.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/egypt-allows-immediate-covid-19-vaccination-amid-fourth-wave-2021-09-28/>

People in the Northeast could prevent a Covid-19 surge like the one in the South by following these measures, Fauci says

As weather grows colder and children spend more time in school, a surge of Covid-19 cases like the one in the South could be in store for the Northeast, but it is not too late to get ahead of it, Dr. Anthony Fauci said. "It is within our power, and within our grasp, to prevent that from occurring," Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told CNN on Monday. The way to do it, he said, is by utilizing mitigation measures such as wearing masks indoors and in schools, as well as increasing vaccination rates. The idea of vaccine mandates for schools and businesses has sparked debate through much of the country, but with the spread of the Delta variant, more leaders are adopting such methods.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/28/health/us-coronavirus-tuesday/index.html>

Japan to lift emergency COVID-19 curbs, but gradually

Japan will lift a coronavirus state of emergency in all regions on Thursday for the first time in nearly six months, as the number of new cases and deaths falls and the strain on the medical system eases, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said. Daily cases have fallen nationwide from more than 25,000 last month to 1,128 on Monday, but the opening will be gradual with some curbs on restaurants and large-scale events staying in place for about a month.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-seeks-end-covid-19-state-emergency-this-month-minister-2021-09-28/>

Hospitals fear staffing shortages as vaccine deadlines loom

Hospitals and nursing homes around the U.S. are bracing for worsening staff shortages as state deadlines arrive for health care workers to get vaccinated against COVID-19. With ultimatums taking effect this week in states like New York, California, Rhode Island and Connecticut, the fear is that some employees will quit or let themselves be fired or suspended rather than get the vaccine. "How this is going to play out, we don't know. We are concerned about how it will exacerbate an already quite serious staffing problem," said California Hospital Association spokesperson Jan Emerson-Shea,

adding that the organization “absolutely” supports the state’s vaccination requirement.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-new-york-california-health-d039cd2901289e1b48d8ef6657f157d2>

Biden, McConnell get COVID-19 boosters, encourage vaccines

Seventy-eight-year-old Joe Biden and 79-year-old Mitch McConnell got their booster shots Monday, the Democratic president and the Republican Senate leader urging Americans across the political spectrum to get vaccinated or plus up with boosters when eligible for the extra dose of protection. The shots, administered just hours apart on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue, came on the first workday after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration recommended a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine for Americans 65 and older and approved them for others with preexisting medical conditions and high-risk work environments.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-joe-biden-health-jill-biden-f8fb7ffbe139df8d4b94f1a46cc3cea0>

With one simple decision, the Canadian government can save lives

With one simple decision, the Canadian government can save lives. This is the message I want to bring to Canada’s newly re-elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. On May 11 of this year, the Plurinational State of Bolivia signed an agreement with the Canadian manufacturer “Biolyse Pharma” to produce 15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines using the Jensen vaccine formula of the North American company Johnson and Johnson. The implementation of this agreement depends on the Canadian government carrying out the necessary procedures so that the vaccines can be produced under the compulsory licensing mechanism established by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/9/28/the-canadian-government-can-save-bolivian-lives>

Ireland to donate 335,500 doses of Covid-19 vaccines to Uganda

Ireland is to donate 335,500 doses of Covid-19 vaccines to Uganda, it has been announced. This donation is in addition to the one million Covid-19 vaccines that Ireland has already committed to donate via Covax, which aims to guarantee fair and equitable vaccine access for every country in the world. Along with this donation of vaccines to Uganda, Ireland is also donating all of the consumables needed to support the administration of 335,500 doses (plus a consumables contingency).

https://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-donating-covid-vaccines-uganda-5560370-Sep2021/?utm_source=twitter_short

Partisan Exits

How Covid Misinformation Created a Run on Ivermectin

For months, the veterinary center in West Point, Miss., had watched its supplies of the drug dwindle. Dr. Karen Emerson, the veterinarian who owns the hospital, started the year with one 500-milliliter bottle of ivermectin, which she uses to kill parasites in dogs, chickens and other patients. But as the bottle emptied and her staff tried to find more, they were able to obtain only a 50-milliliter vial. Everyone else told them: None available. So Dr. Emerson began rationing the medicine to give to snakes and other exotic animals for which she had no other deworming treatment. She told dog owners to pay for a more available replacement drug that can cost seven times as much.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/28/technology/ivermectin-animal-medicine-shortage.html>

Ford says U.S. salaried employees required to disclose COVID-19 vaccination status

Ford Motor Co became the second Detroit automaker to ask U.S. salaried employees to reveal their vaccination status against COVID-19 in a bid to comply with wider federal guidelines. Ford said salaried employees were required to submit their vaccination status against COVID-19 by Oct. 8 but the process was voluntary for its hourly employees represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. The automaker's move comes as the Biden administration pursues sweeping measures to

increase vaccination coverage in the United States, while pushing large employers to have their workers inoculated or tested weekly

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/ford-says-us-salaried-employees-required-disclose-covid-19-vaccination-status-2021-09-28/>

Connecticut doctor's license suspended for providing blank, signed Covid-19 exemption forms, health department says

A Connecticut doctor's state physician and surgeon license has been suspended for providing blank, signed exemption forms related to the Covid-19 vaccine, Covid testing, general vaccines and medical opposition to wearing facial masks, the state Department of Public Health said. Connecticut's Medical Examining Board suspended the license through a unanimous decision last week, the department said in a news release. Retired physician Sue McIntosh of Durham, who is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, was giving signed forms to people without physically meeting them or examining them, the department said. She would provide the exemption forms to anyone who provided a self-addressed stamped envelope requesting one, they said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/28/us/connecticut-doctor-license-suspended-covid-forms/index.html>

COVID-19: Younger children 'more hesitant than older teenagers to get jabbed' as researchers call for better vaccine messaging

The findings by researchers at the University of Oxford, University College London (UCL) and the University of Cambridge follow the government's confirmation earlier this month it would widen the vaccination programme to all 12 to 15-year-olds. More than 27,000 students in England, aged between nine and 18, took part in the survey which showed that 50% were willing to have a coronavirus vaccination, 37% were undecided while 13% wanted to opt out. Just over a third (36%) of nine-year-olds were willing to have a jab, compared with 51% of 13-year-olds and 78% of 17-year-olds.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-younger-children-more-hesitant-than-older-teenagers-to-get-jabbed-as-researchers-call-for-better-vaccine-messaging-12419906>

New Austrian anti-lockdown party seeking more seats after election coup

A new Austrian political party that opposes lockdowns, compulsory mask-wearing and other coronavirus restrictions hopes to spread across the country after surprisingly securing seats in one of Austria's nine provincial parliaments on Sunday. People Freedom Fundamental Rights (MFG), a newly created party that campaigned online and with a tour of bars and restaurants, stunned many observers by securing 6.2% of the vote in Upper Austria's election on Sunday, above the 4% threshold required to enter the provincial parliament. The province of Upper Austria, home to Linz, the country's third-biggest city, and bordering Germany and the Czech Republic, is home to much of Austria's heavy industry.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/new-austrian-anti-lockdown-party-seeking-more-seats-after-election-coup-2021-09-27/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Sanofi Ends a Covid-19 Vaccine Effort, Saying Market Is Already Well Served

Sanofi SA won't proceed with the development of one of its experimental Covid-19 vaccines, saying it didn't make sense to go forward in an already-crowded market. The decision comes despite promising early results for the shot. The French healthcare giant said Tuesday that the vaccine—a so-called mRNA shot that uses the same technology as shots developed by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc.—produced neutralizing antibodies against the virus in early-stage clinical trials. But it said it had decided not to proceed with larger studies, called Phase 3 trials, which would be required to win regulatory approval. Thomas Triomphe, head of Sanofi's vaccine business, said it didn't make sense to pursue the mRNA vaccine when the market was already well served. Instead, Sanofi will pivot its

mRNA research efforts toward other infectious diseases. It is already conducting early-stage clinical trials on an experimental mRNA shot against flu.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/sanofi-targets-2022-initiation-of-clinical-studies-for-an-influenza-vaccine-with-modified-mrna-11632809526>

South Africa, Oxfam call for fairer trade rules in response to pandemic

South Africa's president and the head of Oxfam heaped pressure on World Trade Organization members and manufacturers to allow fairer access to COVID-19 vaccines on Tuesday, including through a waiver on intellectual property rights. At a WTO public event on trade and COVID-19 also attended by German vaccine maker BioNTech, Cyril Ramaphosa said a waiver on patents was needed to save millions of lives during the pandemic,

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/wto-chief-says-trade-must-do-more-address-devastating-vaccine-inequity-2021-09-28/>

FOCUS-COVID-19 pill developers aim to top Merck, Pfizer efforts

As Merck & Co and Pfizer Inc prepare to report clinical trial results for experimental COVID-19 antiviral pills, rivals are lining up with what they hope will prove to be more potent and convenient oral treatments of their own. Enanta Pharmaceuticals, Pardes Biosciences, Japan's Shionogi & Co Ltd and Novartis AG said they have designed antivirals that specifically target the coronavirus while aiming to avoid potential shortcomings such as the need for multiple pills per day or known safety issues. Infectious disease experts stressed that preventing COVID-19 through wide use of vaccines remains the best way to control the pandemic. But they said the disease is here to stay and more convenient treatments are needed

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/focus-covid-19-pill-developers-110000105.html>

Brazil to give COVID-19 booster shots to people over 60 years old

Brazil will provide COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to all its people over 60-years-old, Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga said on Tuesday. Queiroga said in a tweet that the decision comes in line with progress in the country's vaccination program. About 7 million Brazilians could get the booster shot under these conditions, he said. Brazil had already started giving booster shots to people over 70-years-old and healthcare workers. According to Health Ministry data, about 600,000 booster shots have been administered up to now.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-provide-covid-19-booster-shots-all-people-over-60-years-old-2021-09-28/>

Pfizer submits data for COVID-19 vaccine use in younger kids

Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE on Tuesday submitted initial trial data for their COVID-19 vaccine in 5-11 year olds and said they would make a formal request to U.S. regulators for emergency use in the coming weeks. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said earlier this month it would look to complete its data review for this age group as quickly as possible, likely in a matter of weeks rather than months. That could mean an authorization of the shot for children by the end of October, sources have told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-seeks-fda-clearance-covid-19-vaccine-younger-children-2021-09-28/>

India allows Serum Institute to enrol 7-11 year olds in COVID-19 vaccine trial

India's drug regulator on Tuesday allowed vaccine maker Serum Institute to enrol kids aged 7-11 years for its trial of U.S. drugmaker Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine, as the country prepares to protect children from the novel coronavirus. The South Asian nation has already administered more than 870 million doses to adults among its population of nearly 1.4 billion.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/india-allows-serum-institute-enrol-7-11-year-olds-covid-19-vaccine-trial-2021-09-28/>

Early data shows ButanVac vaccine induces potent immune response

Developed by the Sao Paulo-based Butantan Biological Institute, the ButanVac coronavirus vaccine showed "an acceptable safety profile and potent immunogenicity" in clinical trials held in Thailand. The study showed that there were "no vaccine-related serious adverse events." The vaccine is also being tested in Brazil and Vietnam, but trial data from the two countries have not been made available so far.

<https://brazilian.report/liveblog/2021/09/28/early-data-butanvac-immune-response/>

Half of young people willing to get Covid jab - study

Half of children and young people aged nine to 18 are willing or eager to be vaccinated against Covid, a large survey in England suggests. It is one of the first polls to ask pupils, rather than parents, their views on teenage Covid jabs. Carried out during the summer term, the responses from more than 27,000 students at 180 schools reveal half would opt to get protected. More than a third were undecided and just over one in 10 would decline. The findings, published in the journal *EClinicalMedicine*, were carried out before the UK recommended all children aged 12 to 15 should be offered one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid jab.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-58705932>

COVID-19 pill developers aim to top Merck, Pfizer efforts

As Merck & Co and Pfizer Inc prepare to report clinical trial results for experimental COVID-19 antiviral pills, rivals are lining up with what they hope will prove to be more potent and convenient oral treatments of their own. Enanta Pharmaceuticals, Pardes Biosciences, Japan's Shionogi & Co Ltd and Novartis AG said they have designed antivirals that specifically target the coronavirus while aiming to avoid potential shortcomings such as the need for multiple pills per day or known safety issues.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-19-pill-developers-aim-top-merck-pfizer-efforts-2021-09-28/>

A pill to treat Covid-19: 'We're talking about a return to, maybe, normal life'

Within a day of testing positive for covid-19 in June, Miranda Kelly was sick enough to be scared. At 44, with diabetes and high blood pressure, Kelly, a certified nursing assistant, was having trouble breathing, symptoms serious enough to send her to the emergency room. When her husband, Joe, 46, fell ill with the virus, too, she really got worried, especially about their five teenagers at home: "I thought, 'I hope to God we don't wind up on ventilators. We have children. Who's going to raise these kids?'" But the Kellys, who live in Seattle, had agreed just after their diagnoses to join a clinical trial at the nearby Fred Hutch cancer research center that's part of an international effort to test an antiviral treatment that could halt covid early in its course.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/27/health/covid-treatment-pill-khn-partner/index.html>

Pfizer/BioNTech submit initial data on Covid-19 vaccine for people ages 5 to 11 to FDA, but aren't seeking EUA yet

Pfizer and BioNTech said Tuesday they have submitted Covid-19 vaccine data on children ages 5 to 11 to the US Food and Drug Administration for initial review, but are not yet seeking emergency use authorization. A formal submission to request EUA for the vaccine is expected to follow in the coming weeks, the companies said in a statement. Submissions to the European Medicines Agency and other regulatory authorities are also planned, they said. This is the first submission of data to the FDA for a Covid-19 vaccine for younger children. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is approved for people age 16 and older and has an EUA for people ages 12 to 15.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/28/health/pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-ages-5-to-11/index.html>

Pfizer Submits Favorable Initial Data To The FDA On Kids' COVID-19 Vaccine Trial

Pfizer and BioNTech are another step closer to seeking authorization for young children to receive

the COVID-19 coronavirus vaccine, submitting data to the Food and Drug Administration that shows a "robust" antibody response and "favorable" safety outcomes in kids ages 5 to 11 who received the two-dose regimen in clinical trials. The companies plan to submit a formal request for emergency-use authorization of the vaccine for that age range "in the coming weeks," they said Tuesday. News of the data submission comes a week after Pfizer announced promising results from the trials, which have been closely watched by parents eager to protect their children from the coronavirus. COVID-19 has now killed more than 690,000 people in the U.S., with millions more sickened by the disease.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/09/28/1041100773/pfizer-fda-kids-covid-coronavirus-vaccine-authorization-results>

Smokers up to 80% more likely to be admitted to hospital with Covid, study says

Smokers are 60%-80% more likely to be admitted to hospital with Covid-19 and also more likely to die from the disease, data suggests. A study, which pooled observational and genetic data on smoking and Covid-19 to strengthen the evidence base, contradicts research published at the start of the pandemic suggesting that smoking might help to protect against the virus. This was later retracted after it was discovered that some of the paper's authors had financial links to the tobacco industry.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/27/smokers-much-more-likely-to-be-admitted-to-hospital-with-covid-19-study-suggests>

Sanofi ditches mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after rivals' success

Sanofi is dropping plans for its own mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine because of the dominance achieved by BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna in using the technology to fight the pandemic, the company said on Tuesday. The move highlights the challenges of competing in particular with pioneer BioNTech, which rose from obscurity through its alliance with pharma major Pfizer last year. They have delivered close to 1.5 billion doses so far to become the Western world's largest COVID-19 vaccine maker.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/frances-sanofi-announces-positive-update-mrna-based-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-2021-09-28/>

COVID-19: One in 10 secondary school pupils with coronavirus suffered ongoing symptoms, ONS research finds

More than one in 10 secondary school students and over a third of school staff who have had COVID-19 have suffered ongoing symptoms, new research has found. Staff and pupils commonly reported weakness and tiredness, while staff were more likely to experience shortness of breath, according to a small study of schools in England. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimates that 35.7% of staff and 12.3% of students, who previously tested positive for COVID-19, reported experiencing ongoing symptoms more than a month after contracting the virus.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-one-in-10-secondary-school-pupils-with-coronavirus-suffered-ongoing-symptoms-ons-research-finds-12420369>

Covid-19 may stay with us forever

The major problem is that the rise of more infectious strains of Sars-CoV-2 have quashed hopes of herd immunity, even in countries with high vaccine uptake. Scientists such as Francois Balloux, who directs the UCL Genetics Institute, say that this outcome was inevitable as soon as Covid-19 became a truly global pandemic. "I believe the opportunity for global eradication was gone very, very early in the pandemic," says Balloux. "You can eliminate it locally, but as long as there's a focus somewhere in the world, whether that's Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, it will eventually come back. As of February 2020, it was clear that elimination would not be possible."

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/covid-19-endemic-disease>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Romania Reports Most Daily Covid-19 Cases Since Pandemic Began

Romania reported a record number of daily coronavirus infections as it suffers the consequences of having the European Union's second-least-vaccinated population. More than 11,000 new Covid-19 cases were recorded in the past 24 hours, data released Tuesday showed. Large cities including Bucharest are approaching infection rates that will lead to new restrictions, including a weekend curfew and online schooling. With the government struggling to boost the number of intensive-care beds available for virus patients, another 208 deaths were also reported since Monday. That brings total fatalities to more than 36,000, with the worst toll coming in the past three months.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-28/romania-reports-most-daily-covid-19-cases-since-pandemic-began>

India reports lowest daily COVID cases, deaths since March

India has reported its lowest daily numbers of COVID-19 infections deaths in more than six months. The death toll of 179 COVID deaths, reported on Tuesday, is the lowest daily figure since the middle of March and takes the total to 447,373.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/28/india-reports-lowest-daily-covid-cases-deaths-since-march>

Covid-19: NI records four more coronavirus-linked deaths, 1,078 cases

Four more coronavirus-related deaths have been reported in Northern Ireland on Monday. Deaths are measured by recording those who died within 28 days of receiving a positive result in a test for coronavirus. The total number of deaths linked to Covid-19 in Northern Ireland since the start of the pandemic is 2,552. Another 1,078 cases of coronavirus were reported on Tuesday, up from 903 on Monday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-58718471>

COVID-19: UK records another 37,960 coronavirus cases and 40 related deaths

The UK has recorded another 37,960 coronavirus cases and a further 40 related deaths in the latest 24-hour period. The figures compare with the 32,417 cases and 58 deaths within 28 days of a positive test reported on Sunday. This time last week, the UK recorded 36,100 daily cases and 49 coronavirus-related deaths, with 7,774 COVID patients in hospital at the time. The latest available data showed there were 6,865 people with the virus in hospital on Friday.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-records-another-37-960-coronavirus-cases-and-40-related-deaths-12419828>

Russia reports its worst single-day Covid-19 death toll since start of pandemic

Russia reported its highest Covid-19 death toll in a single day on Tuesday with 852 coronavirus-related deaths recorded in the past 24 hours, according to the country's coronavirus response center. The previous all-time high was recorded four days ago, on September 24, when 828 deaths were registered. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov acknowledged the country's regions had seen an increase in coronavirus cases while speaking to journalists on Tuesday.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/28/europe/russia-covid-19-death-toll-record-intl/index.html>

After government pledge of 'best summer ever,' COVID swamps Alberta hospitals, premier

Premier Jason Kenney promised Albertans the "best summer ever" when he lifted most COVID-19 public health restrictions on July 1, but a surge in infections has overwhelmed the province's hospitals and left him fighting to save his political career. The western Canadian province is often called "the Texas of the North" for its oil and gas wealth, cowboy culture and conservative, independent mindset. As in Texas, COVID-19 has run rife in Alberta, which has the highest rate of active infections among Canada's 10 provinces, at nearly four times the national average. It and neighboring Saskatchewan also have the country's lowest vaccination rates.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/after-government-pledge-best-summer-ever-covid-swamps-alberta-hospitals-premier-2021-09-28/>

Two Europes: Low vaccine rates in east overwhelm ICUs

Around 72% of adults in the 27-nation European Union have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but a stubbornly low uptake of the shots in some eastern EU nations now risks overwhelming hospitals amid a surge of infections due to the more contagious delta variant. Bulgaria and Romania are lagging dramatically behind as the EU's two least-vaccinated nations, with just 22% and 33% of their adult populations fully inoculated. Rapidly increasing new infections have forced authorities to tighten virus restrictions in the two countries, while other EU nations such as France, Spain, Denmark and Portugal have all exceeded 80% vaccine coverage and eased restrictions.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-pandemics-bulgaria-bucharest-a7541bb8eb92fdc7756983cbf2371a6c>