

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

20th Oct 2021

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Lockdown Exit

Bolsonaro's Pandemic Handling Draws Explosive Allegation: Homicide

A Brazilian congressional panel is set to recommend mass homicide charges against President Jair Bolsonaro, asserting that he intentionally let the coronavirus rip through the country and kill hundreds of thousands in a failed bid to achieve herd immunity and revive Latin America's largest economy. A report from the congressional panel's investigation, excerpts from which were viewed by The New York Times ahead of its scheduled release this week, also recommends criminal charges against 69 other people, including three of Mr. Bolsonaro's sons and numerous current and former government officials.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/19/world/americas/bolsonaro-covid-19-brazil.html>

New York City Schools Data Shows Few Covid Cases

When roughly one million public school students returned to classrooms in New York City last month amid the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant, families and educators expressed profound concern. But for the past five weeks, case counts have remained low. The average weekly positive rate among students in public schools is 0.25 percent — well under the city's daily average rate of 2.43 percent. Experts, however, say the city may not be testing enough students.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/10/19/nyregion/nyc-schools-covid-testing-data.html>

Covid Made London and Paris Cheaper — for the Rich

Yes, remote work has decreased demand for office space, and should eventually soften housing demand too, but it's not happening yet. Plus, look at city streets and you'll see how the splendid isolation of the elite, suburban "Zoomocracy" is already starting to backfire: The shift to "hybrid" home and office working has drivers commuting into town at ever more random times. Traffic congestion over the past month in Paris and London has been even worse than the comparable period in 2019, according to TomTom. Cities, after all, are still where the jobs are, especially when it comes to high-skill services — Google Inc. recently announced a 7 million square-foot campus in San Jose.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-10-19/covid-didn-t-make-the-dream-of-cheaper-london-paris-come-true>

200 Queenslanders may die of COVID-19 when borders reopen, modelling predicts

COVID-19 modelling suggests about 200 people in Queensland could die in just the first three months after borders reopen to New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. The modelling by QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, based on vaccination levels of 80 per cent in those aged 16 and older, predicts deaths would be "heavily skewed" towards the elderly. Since the pandemic began more than 20 months ago, Queensland has recorded 2,071 known cases of the virus and seven deaths.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-19/qld-coronavirus-covid-modelling-border-roadmap/100548868>

No special deals to allow unvaccinated players at Australian Open: official

Australia's Victoria state will not do special deals with unvaccinated athletes to allow them to compete at major events, an official said on Tuesday, putting Novak Djokovic's Australian Open title defence and bid for the Grand Slam record in doubt. World number one Djokovic, level on 20 Grand Slam titles with Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal, declined to reveal his vaccination status again this week and said he was unsure if he would defend his Australian Open crown as authorities work out COVID-19 restrictions for the tournament. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said he opposed special arrangements to let unvaccinated athletes compete in the state, which is scheduled to host the Grand Slam at Melbourne Park in January. "On the question of vaccination, no," he told a media briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/no-special-deals-allow-unvaccinated-players-australian-open-official-2021-10-19/>

'Make a gesture of humanity': Pope Francis urges drug makers to release Covid-19 vaccine patents

Amid controversy over global access to Covid-19 vaccines, Pope Francis lent his moral authority to the debate and urged drug makers to make their intellectual property available so that other companies can manufacture enough shots for low and middle-income countries. In a video address to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, the Pope made a simple, straightforward plea: "I ask all the great pharmaceutical laboratories to release the patents. Make a gesture of humanity and allow every country, every people, every human being, to have access to the vaccines. There are countries where only 3% or 4% of the inhabitants have been vaccinated." His remarks came as the pharmaceutical industry continues to resist pressure at the World Trade Organization to agree to a temporary waiver of intellectual property for Covid-19 medical products. Despite support from the Biden administration, a proposal made a year ago has stalled amid objections from the European Union and some countries where several large drug makers are based.

<https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2021/10/18/pope-francis-covid19-vaccine-patents-pfizer-moderna/>

Exit Strategies

India delays COVID-19 vaccine supplies to WHO-backed COVAX, sources say

India has delayed committing supplies of vaccine to the COVAX global sharing platform, two sources told Reuters on Tuesday, a day after one of its key backers, the WHO, said the agency could not "cut corners" to approve a domestically developed vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-delays-covid-19-vaccine-supplies-who-backed-covax-sources-say-2021-10-19/>

It is 'critical' that booster jabs are accelerated - Neil Ferguson

It is "critical" that the Covid booster programme is accelerated, a leading member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) has said. Professor Neil Ferguson, from Imperial College London said there is a need to speed up boosters and the vaccination of teenagers, who he suggested should be given two doses of a jab to block infection and transmission. It came as NHS England chief executive Amanda Pritchard said that, to "make the most of half-term", the national booking service will be open for 12 to 15-year-olds to book their jabs at existing vaccination centres.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/nhs-england-plan-b-scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-imperial-college-london-israel-b961223.html>

WHO-led program aims to buy antiviral COVID-19 pills for \$10

A World Health Organization-led programme to ensure poorer countries get fair access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments aims to secure antiviral drugs for patients with mild symptoms for as little as \$10 per course, a draft document seen by Reuters says. Merck & Co's experimental pill molnupiravir is likely to be one of the drugs, and other drugs to treat mild patients are being developed. The document, which outlines the goals of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) until September next year, says that the programme wants to deliver about 1 billion COVID-19 tests to poorer nations, and procure drugs to treat up to 120 million patients globally, out of about 200 million new cases it estimates in the next 12 months.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/exclusive-who-led-programme-aims-buy-antiviral-covid-19-pills-10-document-2021-10-19/>

Seniors are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19. So far, 1 in 7 have gotten a booster shot of vaccine

As the US tries to stave off another Covid-19 surge this winter, health experts encourage anyone who is eligible to get a booster dose of vaccine do so. About 10.7 million people have received a booster shot, including roughly 15% of seniors ages 65 and up, according to data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. So far, only the Pfizer vaccine has been authorized for use as a booster for certain high-risk groups who received two doses of the Pfizer vaccine at least six months ago, the US Food and Drug Administration said. Advisers to the FDA recently recommended booster doses for some people who got the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/19/health/us-coronavirus-tuesday/index.html>

Germany may miss COVID-19 vaccine donation goal, blames manufacturers

Germany may miss its target to donate 100 million COVID-19 vaccine doses this year due to conditions imposed by manufacturers and delivery shortfalls, a health ministry official said in a letter to Brussels seen by Reuters. The 100 million doses account for half of the total promised by European Union member states to poorer countries this year, according to the European Commission. But on Oct. 19, the foreign office said Germany had only donated just over 17% of that amount

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/exclusive-germany-may-miss-covid-19-vaccine-donation-goal-blames-manufacturers-2021-10-19/>

Covid-19: Face coverings compulsory in NI for autumn/ winter

Wearing face coverings in crowded indoor spaces will remain a legal requirement in Northern Ireland throughout autumn and winter. It is part of the executive's winter Covid contingency plans, outlined on Tuesday. First Minister Paul Givan said there would also be a "focus on flexible and hybrid working" in workplaces. He also set out a range of options if Covid cases rise sharply or hospital pressures become "unsustainable". Mr Givan said potential measures included deploying Covid vaccine passports in "higher risk settings", if considered appropriate.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-58964722>

Covid-19: Irish press pause on some Covid-19 reopening plans

The Republic of Ireland is to pause some of the measures that had been planned for the reopening of society on Friday 22 October. It follows a rising number of Covid-19 cases in hospitals. The slight pause comes after a recommendation from the country's National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). It is being made even though 89% of those aged over 12 are vaccinated. Cabinet ministers have decided to continue the use of Covid certificates for the hospitality sector and for entrance to night clubs which will now open for the first time since March 2020.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-58964713>

No special deals to allow unvaccinated players at Australian Open: official

Australia's Victoria state will not do special deals with unvaccinated athletes to allow them to compete at major events, an official said on Tuesday, putting Novak Djokovic's Australian Open title defence and bid for the Grand Slam record in doubt. World number one Djokovic, level on 20 Grand Slam titles with Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal, declined to reveal his vaccination status again this week and said he was unsure if he would defend his Australian Open crown as authorities work out COVID-19 restrictions for the tournament

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/no-special-deals-allow-unvaccinated-players-australian-open-official-2021-10-19/>

Ireland to allow nightclubs to reopen, but keeps some COVID curbs

Ireland will allow nightclubs to reopen for the first time since March 2020 but stepped back on Tuesday from plans to drop almost all COVID-19 restrictions in response to a rise in infections in one of the world's most vaccinated countries. After imposing one of Europe's toughest lockdown regimes, the government had hoped to lift most curbs this week including the need for physical distancing and requirement for vaccine certificates in bars and restaurants. Those measures will instead be extended until February, as will a requirement that bars and restaurants operate table service only. Those attending nightclubs must wear facemasks except when eating, drinking and dancing.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ireland-allows-nightclubs-reopen-keeps-some-covid-19-curbs-2021-10-19/>

New Zealand hits virus high, pushes vaccination as way out

New Zealand counted its most new coronavirus cases of the pandemic Tuesday as an outbreak in its largest city grew and officials urged vaccinations as a way out of Auckland's two-month lockdown. Health officials found 94 new local infections, eclipsing the 89 that were reported twice during the early days of the pandemic 18 months ago. Most of the new cases were in Auckland, but seven were found in the nearby Waikato district. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said lockdown rule-breakers were contributing to the spread of infections and noted that many of the new cases had been detected among younger people. "I know the highs and lows of cases is incredibly hard on people, particularly those in Tamaki Makaurau," Ardern said, using the Indigenous Maori name for Auckland. "I just wanted to reinforce again that we're not powerless. We do have the ability to keep cases as low as we can."

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-new-zealand-pandemics-ad47f457c0461259b70dc1849e2dbf2e>

UK faces calls for 'Plan B' with virus cases high and rising

Life has returned to normal for millions in Britain since coronavirus restrictions were lifted over the summer. But while the rules have vanished, the virus hasn't. Many scientists are now calling on the government to reimpose social restrictions and speed up booster vaccinations as coronavirus infection rates, already Europe's highest, rise still further. The U.K. recorded 43,738 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, slightly down from the 49,156 reported Monday, which was the largest number since mid-July. New infections have averaged more than 44,000 a day over the past week, a 16% increase on the week before. Last week, the Office for National Statistics estimated that one in 60 people in England had the virus, one of the highest levels seen in Britain during the pandemic.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-pandemics-london-coronavirus-vaccine-21f5bc7771f20b886fbe517dd9154f01>

UK under pressure to reimpose restrictions as COVID cases soar

Many scientists are pressing the British government to reimpose social restrictions and speed up booster vaccinations as coronavirus infection rates, already Europe's highest, rise still further. The

United Kingdom recorded 49,156 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, the largest number since mid-July. New infections averaged 43,000 a day over the past week, a 15 percent increase compared with the week before. Last week, the Office for National Statistics estimated that one in 60 people in England had the virus, one of the highest levels seen in Britain during the pandemic. In July, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government lifted all the legal restrictions that had been imposed more than a year earlier to slow the spread of the virus, including face coverings indoors and social distancing rules. Nightclubs and other crowded venues were allowed to open at full capacity, and people were no longer advised to work from home if they could. Some modellers feared a big spike in cases after the reopening. That did not occur, but infections remained high, and recently have begun to increase.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/19/uk-under-pressure-to-reimpose-restrictions-as-covid-cases-soar>

'They rushed the process': Vaccine maker's woes hamper global inoculation campaign

The world's vaccine distributor has been counting on U.S. companies to provide more than 2 billion doses to lower and middle-income countries by the end of 2022 — a crucial step in ending the Covid-19 pandemic. But the campaign run by the international consortium known as COVAX, which has already been delayed significantly because of production lags, is now likely to fall short by more than 1 billion doses as a key supplier faces significant hurdles in proving it can manufacture a shot that meets regulators' quality standards, according to three people with direct knowledge of the company's problems. The delay, which was confirmed by three other people familiar with the discussions between Maryland-based Novavax and the Biden administration, represents a major setback in the effort to vaccinate the world in the wake of new, more transmissible variants.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/19/novavax-vaccine-rush-process-global-campaign-516298>

Partisan Exits

New York's \$2 Billion Fund for Undocumented Workers Runs Dry

Earlier this year, New York created a \$2.1 billion fund to help undocumented immigrants and others who weathered the pandemic without access to government relief. The Excluded Workers Fund, by far the biggest of its kind in the country, was intended to provide eligible workers with one-time payments to help cover costs associated with joblessness, such as back rent and medical bills. But just a few months after the state began accepting applications, the fund is about to run out of money, following a blitz in claims and a speedy distribution of aid. State authorities announced they would stop accepting new applications as of Oct. 8, adding that even those who had applied in the two weeks before that deadline might not be approved.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/19/nyregion/new-york-excluded-workers-fund.html>

Washington State head football coach ousted after refusing Covid-19 vaccine

Washington State University's head football coach, Nick Rolovich, and four assistant coaches are losing their jobs because of not complying with the state's Covid-19 vaccine mandate, the university's athletics department said Monday.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/10/18/sport/nick-rolovich-washington-state-football-coach-covid/index.html>

Religious exemptions threaten to undermine US Covid vaccine mandates

Epidemiologists are concerned that the loophole will embolden the vaccine-hesitant to evade requirements and undermine the state's progress against the pandemic. And lawyers and legal experts are bracing for a deluge of complaints over the blurry lines that define "sincerely held" objections to the vaccine. Many parents and even some teachers have raised opposition to the mandates, with walkouts and protests already taking place across the state. In rural northern California and conservative patches of the south, parents picketed against the public health measures on Monday, insisting that they wouldn't "co-parent with the government". Last week, teachers at a school district in Los Angeles who were denied religious exemptions demonstrated

outside the headquarters.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/19/religious-exemptions-us-covid-vaccine-mandates-california>

Australian state could fire more than 40 police staff for refusing a Covid-19 vaccine

A total of 43 police staff in the Australian state of Victoria have been stood down from duty and could face being fired after they failed to comply with a Covid-19 vaccine mandate, Victoria Police said. Under Victorian state law, all emergency service workers including police officers were set an October 15 deadline to book a vaccination, and must receive their first dose by Friday. In a statement sent to CNN on Tuesday, Victoria Police said 34 police officers and nine public safety officers who had "not complied with the vaccination direction" had been stood down from active service while they are investigated by the state's Professional Standards Command.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/18/australia/australia-victoria-police-covid-19-vaccine-intl-hnk/index.html>

Politics derails debate on immunity you get after recovering from Covid-19

"It's hard to know where the data will finally land, and it's hard to know where the shouting will land," said Wendy Parmet, a Northeastern University law professor who has written extensively about the legality of government-imposed quarantines and vaccine mandates. "People on the right scream, so people on the left say no. We're in this horrible, awful feedback loop of vitriol right now." There's still no scientific consensus about the exact strength or durability of the natural immunity a person gains when they recover from Covid-19, or how much it varies from person to another.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/19/politics-is-derailing-a-crucial-debate-over-the-immunity-you-get-from-recovering-from-covid-19/>

Workers denied COVID-19 vaccine exemptions sue hospital

Several employees at the largest hospital system in Massachusetts say in a lawsuit that they were subjected to discrimination and retaliation in violation of federal law when their requests for medical or religious exemptions from the organization's COVID-19 vaccine mandate were denied. The federal suit was filed Sunday by eight workers at Mass General Brigham. Attorneys for the workers said in a memo attached to the lawsuit that they are not challenging the legality of the vaccine mandate, but are attempting to "prevent discrimination and retaliation based on religion or disability." "Defendant's offering of medical and religious exemptions was illusory and not based in accordance with federal law," the suit says.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-religion-discrimination-massachusetts-acf4c6403c26fc4f8938dc92d6879ac0>

Italy's president criticizes violent COVID-19 pass protests

Italy's president on Monday strongly criticized the violence that has erupted amid protests over the country's new coronavirus workplace health pass requirement, saying it appeared aimed at jeopardizing Italy's economic recovery. President Sergio Mattarella spoke out as riot police again clashed with protesters at the port in the northern city of Trieste at times using water canons to push them back. The protesters, who have included right-wing agitators in previous episodes, oppose Italy's Green Pass requirement. Italy on Friday became the first major European economy to require all workers — from hairdressers to factory workers — to present proof of vaccination, a negative test within the past 48 hours or proof of having been cured recently of COVID-19 to enter workplaces. The pass had already been required to enter indoor venues like restaurants, museums and theaters, or for long-distance domestic travel.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/italy-rome-sergio-mattarella-trieste-b1940353.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine highly protective in 12-18 age group - U.S. CDC study

The Pfizer Inc/BioNTech SE COVID-19 vaccine was 93% effective in preventing hospitalizations

among those aged 12 to 18, according to an analysis released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Tuesday. The study was conducted between June and September, when the extremely contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus was predominant. Yet, the data from 19 pediatric hospitals showed that among the 179 patients who were hospitalized for COVID-19, 97% were unvaccinated, providing reassurance of the vaccine's efficacy.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizerbiontech-covid-19-vaccine-highly-protective-12-18-age-group-us-cdc-study-2021-10-19/>

WHO defends delay in approving India's Covaxin jab: 'We are aware that many are waiting'

The World Health Organisation has defended its decision to delay the approval of India's homemade coronavirus vaccine Covaxin and said that it cannot cut corners in its process. The international health body said that it was looking for "one additional piece of information" from Bharat Biotech, the Hyderabad-based company which created the vaccine. The vaccine, which was India's first indigenously made Covid jab, is one of three currently being used in the country's Covid-19 inoculation drive. India's drugs control body had approved the restricted emergency use of Covaxin in January. It accounts for 11 per cent of the 980 million doses administered in the country so far.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/who-india-covaxin-approval-delay-b1940851.html>

Oxford scientists working on new Covid vaccine to target Delta variant

A new and modified version of the Oxford vaccine is being developed to target the Delta coronavirus variant, The Independent understands. Early work has been started by members of Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert's team at the University of Oxford – the same scientists behind the AstraZeneca jab first rolled out in January. A source told The Independent the new vaccine was being designed with the aim of "having something on the shelf ready to scale up – if it's needed". Although the UK's vaccine programme was singled out as a success in a recent report which largely condemned the government for its handling of Covid-19, scientists have insisted there is still more to be done in better protecting the nation, with large pockets of the population and certain communities still not fully vaccinated.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/covid-vaccine-delta-oxford-latest-b1925631.html>

Atea plunges after COVID-19 treatment fails to help patients in study

Atea Pharmaceuticals Inc's experimental COVID-19 antiviral pill, being developed with Roche, failed to help patients with mild and moderate COVID-19 in a small study of mostly low-risk patients, driving the U.S. drugmaker's shares down more than 65% on Tuesday. The trial results puts Atea and Roche far behind U.S.-based Merck & Co Inc (MRK.N) in the race to a pill to treat COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/atea-pharmas-covid-19-treatment-fails-meet-study-goal-2021-10-19/>

Covid-19: New mutation of Delta variant under close watch in UK

Officials are keeping a close watch on a new descendant of the Delta variant of Covid that is causing a growing number of infections. Delta is the UK's dominant variant, but latest official data suggests 6% of Covid cases that have been genetically sequenced are of a new type. AY.4.2, which some are calling "Delta Plus", contains mutations that might give the virus survival advantages. Tests are under way to understand how much of a threat it may pose. Experts say it is unlikely to take off in a big way or escape current vaccines.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-58965650>

US expected to authorize mix-and-match COVID booster shots

Federal regulators are expected to authorize the mixing and matching of COVID-19 booster doses this week in an effort to provide flexibility as the campaign for extra shots expands. The upcoming announcement by the Food and Drug Administration is likely to come along with authorization for

boosters of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson shots and follows the OK for a third dose for the Pfizer vaccine for many Americans last month. The move was previewed Tuesday by a U.S. health official familiar with the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly ahead of the announcement. The FDA was expected to say that using the same brand for a booster was still preferable, especially for the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna that have proved most effective against the coronavirus. The agency was still finalizing guidance for the single-shot J&J vaccine.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-4e59c84da515da1b2977e6064512f158>

Does getting the flu with COVID double your risk of death?

Globally, an estimated 290,000 to 650,000 people typically die each year from seasonal flu. Last year, however, was different. The northern hemisphere winter of 2020-21 saw some of the lowest recorded flu death rates. Scientists believe this was mainly due to restrictions put in place at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, most notably less mixing of people in indoor spaces, social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing. Many countries, including the United Kingdom, also saw record numbers of people come forward for the flu vaccine during this time – motivated in part by fears of contracting COVID and flu at the same time. The result was fewer flu cases, hospitalisations, and deaths compared with previous flu seasons. But as most of the developed world is now fully vaccinated against COVID, and governments are focused on reversing some of the economic damage of the pandemic, many social distancing measures have been lifted. In England alone, despite nearly 40,000 new cases of COVID per day, almost all protective measures to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease have been lifted.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/10/19/does-getting-the-flu-with-covid-double-your-risk-of-death>

Atea's antiviral pill fails to clear Covid-19, forcing a re-think

Atea Pharmaceuticals said Tuesday that its antiviral pill for Covid-19 failed to combat the virus in a mid-stage trial, leading the company to delay its pivotal study by a year. The disappointing news follows a far more hopeful October update from Merck, whose similar antiviral reduced the chances that patients newly diagnosed with Covid-19 would be hospitalized by about 50% in a Phase 3 study. There is a desperate need for treatments for early Covid that can be taken as pills. Current treatments, such as remdesivir and monoclonal antibodies, are generally given intravenously or as injections, and are difficult to distribute to large numbers of people. The hope is that pills to treat Covid could be given widely in order to prevent infected people from progressing to severe disease, hospitalization, or death.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/19/ateas-antiviral-pill-fails-to-clear-covid-19-forcing-a-re-think/>

Mix-and-Match Covid Boosters: Why They Just Might Work

Immunizations typically consist of two or more doses of the same vaccine. The Moderna vaccine, for example, is administered in two identical shots of mRNA, separated by four weeks. A double dose can create much more protection against a disease than a single shot. The first dose causes the immune system's B cells to make antibodies against a pathogen. Other immune cells, called T cells, develop the ability to recognize and kill infected cells. The second shot amplifies that response. The B cells and T cells dedicated to fighting the virus multiply into much bigger numbers. They also develop more potent attackers against the enemy.

nytimes.com/2021/10/19/health/covid-vaccine-mix-match.html

Why COVID boosters weren't tweaked to better match variants

More COVID-19 booster shots may be on the way -- but when it's your turn, you'll get an extra dose of the original vaccine, not one updated to better match the extra-contagious delta variant. And that has some experts wondering if the booster campaign is a bit of a missed opportunity to target delta and its likely descendants. "Don't we want to match the new strains that are most likely to circulate

as closely as possible?” Dr. Cody Meissner of Tufts Medical Center, an adviser to the Food and Drug Administration, challenged Pfizer scientists recently.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-business-health-1810900835cdc9f58cb4384ca5fcf03e>

Pharma FDA delays decision on Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine in 12-17 age group because of myocarditis concerns: WSJ

After reports in four Nordic countries of the heart inflammation condition myocarditis, the FDA has delayed a decision on the Moderna COVID-19 shot for kids between the ages of 12 to 17, The Wall Street Journal reports. This month the shot was closing in on a nod, the newspaper reports, but now officials are taking a closer look at the vaccine's safety profile. The move comes after four countries—Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden—recommended against use of the Moderna shot by those under the age of 30. Some countries have said that young people should instead get the Pfizer vaccine. The concerns could lead the Pfizer shot to become the vaccine of choice for kids in that age group in the U.S. The company won FDA authorization for the 12 to 15 age group in May and has steered largely clear of myocarditis concerns in recent weeks. More than 12 million people ages 12 to 17 in the United States have received the Pfizer vaccine, according to the CDC.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/fda-delays-nod-for-moderna-s-covid-19-vaccine-12-17-year-olds-because-myocarditis-concerns>

Pfizer, Moderna will rake in a combined \$93 billion next year on COVID-19 vaccine sales: report

If you think Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are making a fortune on COVID-19 vaccine sales this year, just wait for 2022. The messenger RNA shot producers are projected to break the bank next year, generating combined sales of \$93.2 billion, nearly twice the amount they are expected to rake in this year, says Airfinity. The health data analytics group puts total market sales for COVID-19 vaccines in 2022 at \$124 billion, according to data seen by The Financial Times. Pfizer vaccine sales will reach \$54.5 billion in 2022 and Moderna's will hit \$38.7 billion, Airfinity predicts. The estimates blow the consensus figures of \$23.6 billion for Pfizer and \$20 billion for Moderna out of the water.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-moderna-will-rake-a-combined-93-billion-next-year-covid-19-sales-says-analytics-group>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Romania Reports Highest Daily Covid-19 Cases, Deaths on Record

Romania reported the highest number of deaths from Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic, forcing the country to seek assistance from the World Health Organization in an attempt to limit the burden on already overwhelmed hospitals. The country is paying the price for having the European Union's second-lowest vaccination rate, reporting 561 fatalities in the past 24 hours. That brings the toll to more than 42,000. New infections, at almost 19,000 since Monday, also reached a new high. A crisis expert from the WHO will meet in the coming days with the Romanian authorities to try to find solutions to the escalating situation. President Klaus Iohannis, government officials and health experts will on Wednesday also discuss potential tougher restrictions to try to limit the spread of the virus and the loss of life.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-19/romania-reports-highest-daily-covid-19-cases-deaths-on-record>

Ireland Slows Reopening Plan as Coronavirus Cases Increase

Ireland's government moved to further loosen pandemic restrictions, though it will retain more rules than planned amid a surge in cases and hospitalizations. Bars and restaurants will be allowed to resume normal opening hours, but they will still be limited to table service only and customers will need to show proof of vaccination. Full attendance will be permitted at outdoor events and religious ceremonies, though indoor concerts must be all seated. Other restrictions -- including social

distancing and masks -- are set to remain in place until at least February, while a full return to the office won't happen until next year.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-19/ireland-slows-reopening-plan-as-coronavirus-cases-increase>

China Outbreak Tied to Rule-Breaking Couple Reaches Beijing

China's latest Covid-19 outbreak, centered around a rule-breaking elderly couple enjoying China's tourist sites, has now spread to the closely-guarded capital city of Beijing and possibly beyond. The flareup that surfaced over the weekend has been tied to two retired university lecturers from Shanghai who started a road trip with several others through the nation's scenic northwestern provinces in early October, according to media reports. The pathogen proliferated, sparking a handful of local cases in northwestern provinces in recent days. One traveler from Gansu -- a close contact of an infected patient -- was diagnosed in Beijing on Monday. It's the city's first case since a widespread outbreak caused by the highly infectious delta variant this summer prompted officials to scrap travel there to stop further transmission. Authorities have now sealed off apartment buildings and other related venues, according to a statement Tuesday from local health officials.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-19/rule-breaking-couple-at-center-of-china-s-latest-covid-outbreak>

As Covid cases drop in Georgia and Florida, some states with colder weather see an increase

Southern states, many of which have been hotspots, are now starting to see a decrease in Covid-19 cases while many states that have started experiencing cold weather -- mostly in the North and Midwest -- are seeing an uptick, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. New cases in Georgia and Florida are down 37% and 25%, respectively, compared to last week, JHU data showed. Both states had among the 10 lowest case rates in the past week. But a handful of states -- in regions where cold weather has set in -- are seeing an increase. This pattern is similar to what happened last year.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/18/health/us-coronavirus-monday/index.html>

Romania's COVID-19 deaths hit record as intensive care beds run out

Romania reported record numbers of daily coronavirus deaths and infections on Tuesday, as a hospital system stretched to breaking point by the EU's second-lowest vaccination rate ran out of intensive care beds. New infections in the preceding 24 hours topped 18,800 while 574 people died of the virus, official data showed. With emergency beds fully occupied across the country, television footage from Bucharest hospitals showed patients lying on mattresses on the floor or holding oxygen tanks on crowded benches in hallways. Morgues were also running at full capacity.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/romania-reports-record-number-deaths-covid-19-infections-2021-10-19/>

New Zealand reports record Covid cases as experts sound warning over health system

Case numbers in New Zealand are expected to continue to rise in the coming weeks. "We always know that a single day is just a point on a graph on a trend curve," said epidemiologist prof Michael Baker. "But taken with the other points [we've seen], we're going to be in three digits soon - if not tomorrow then this week, probably." Health officials have so far been unable to link more than half of the cases announced on Tuesday to existing infections. The concerning rise in unlinked cases could indicate further, undetected spread in the community. Ardern said the outbreak had spread across the city, and there were now cases in 124 Auckland suburbs. "There's not much margin for error at the moment, in terms of the race between our vaccination program and the outbreak," said Shaun Hendy, an epidemiologist and modeler for Te Pūnaha Matatini, on whom the government has previously relied for outbreak modeling. "It could go either way at this stage. If we don't see numbers starting to stabilize or pull down in a couple of weeks, it's likely that we're looking at a much longer outbreak."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/19/new-zealand-covid-cases-rise-to-new-record-as-young-people-bear-b>

[runt-of-infections](#)

UK keeping a very close eye on rising COVID-19 infections - PM spokesperson

Britain's government is keeping a "very close eye" on rising level of COVID-19 infections, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesperson said, after infections rose to the highest level since lockdown restrictions were eased in the summer. The number of cases in Britain are currently much higher than in other western European countries and have risen by more 60% in the last month. The spokesperson said Johnson told his cabinet that the government has a plan in place to deal with COVID and deaths from the disease are broadly flat.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-keeping-very-close-eye-rising-covid-19-infections-pm-spokesperson-2021-10-19/>

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UK, Eastern Europe battle rising COVID

The UK government reported 49,156 cases today, up more than 15% from the previous week and the highest number since mid-July when the country was still in lockdown. Case rates are highest in those ages 10 to 19 and lowest in adults ages 80 and older, according to the country's Health Security Agency (HSA) weekly update. Hospital admissions rose slightly and were highest in people age 85 and older. In the HSA update, Incident Director William Welfare, MBBS, MPH, said case rates across the country are high and slowly rising. He urged people to take precautions as winter approaches, get vaccinated against COVID-19 and flu, and get tested if symptoms arise.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/10/uk-eastern-europe-battle-rising-covid>

New Zealand reports record daily cases as Delta spreads

New Zealand recorded on Tuesday the highest number of daily cases since the pandemic began last year, as the Delta variant of the coronavirus spreads in its biggest city Auckland. The South Pacific nation reported 94 new COVID-19 infections on Tuesday, of which 87 were in Auckland, taking the total number of cases in the current outbreak to 2,099. There have been 28 deaths in total due to COVID-19 and 38 people are hospitalised over the virus. Once the poster child for stamping out COVID-19, New Zealand has been fighting a Delta outbreak that has spread across Auckland and its neighbouring regions despite tough lockdown and border closures.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-reports-record-daily-cases-delta-spreads-2021-10-19/>

New Lockdown

Russia proposes week-long workplace shutdown as COVID deaths hit new record

Moscow's mayor announced four months of stay-home restrictions for unvaccinated over-60s on Tuesday and the Russian government proposed a week-long workplace shutdown as the national death toll from COVID-19 hit yet another daily high. The moves reflected a growing sense of urgency from the authorities as they confront fast-rising cases and widespread public reluctance to get injected with the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine. Moscow, a city of 12.7 million, ordered people over the age of 60 to stay home for four months starting on Oct. 25 unless they are vaccinated or have recovered from COVID, and for businesses to move at least 30% of their staff to remote work.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russian-region-runs-out-hospital-beds-covid-19-deaths-hit-record-2021-10-19/>

Two northern Chinese areas enforce lockdown in COVID-19 outbreak

China reported nine new domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases on Oct. 18, the highest daily tally since the end of September, with the latest outbreak prompting two northern border areas to enforce a lockdown. Under a national policy of zero tolerance of domestic coronavirus clusters, cities with new infections have quickly tracked down and tested contacts of infections and sealed off higher-risk areas. Five of the nine new local cases were found in the northwestern city of Xian in Shaanxi province, and two were in the northern Chinese region of Inner Mongolia, data from the

National Health Commission (NHC) showed on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinese-northern-city-soft-lockdown-amid-latest-covid-19-outbreak-2021-10-19/>