

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

1st Nov 2021

England's COVID prevalence rises to highest since start of year, ONS says - [The prevalence of COVID-19 infections in England hit its highest level since the start of the year, reaching around 1 in 50 people in the week ending Oct. 22, Britain's Office for National Statistics said on Friday](#)

New Delta variant spotted in Australia for first time - [The first case of a new COVID-19 variant that is now the fastest-growing coronavirus strain in the UK has been detected in Australia, but virologists say there is no reason to slow reopening plans. The variant, known as AY.4.2., was uncovered in hotel quarantine in NSW and is so far the only case detected.](#)

Tiny Pacific Island Nation of Tonga Has Had No Covid, Until Now - [For almost two years, the Kingdom of Tonga has watched on as Covid-19 spread to almost every corner of the world, except its own. On Friday, that remarkable virus-free streak came to an end when Prime Minister Pohiva Tu'ionetoa said the country of some 100,000 people had found its first confirmed Covid case, local media reported](#)

G20 wants 70% of world vaccinated by mid-2022, sets up pandemic task force - [Finance and health ministers from the world's 20 biggest economies \(G20\) said on Friday they would take steps to ensure 70% of the world's population is vaccinated against COVID-19 by mid-2022 and created a task force to fight future pandemics.](#)

Singapore Turns F1 Pit Building Into Temporary Hospital for Covid Patients - [Singapore's large F1 pit building, normally used for the high-profile Grand Prix races that have been canceled a second year running due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is being converted into a medical facility for coronavirus patients, the Straits Times reported.](#)

As vaccination mandate looms, New York prepares for shortage of firefighters, police - [New York City officials on Friday were preparing for shortages of firefighters, police officers and other first responders as a showdown looms between the city and its unvaccinated uniformed workforce, who face a 5 p.m. deadline to be immunized.](#)

Sweden acted too slowly as pandemic swept country, commission finds - [Sweden's response to the spread of coronavirus was too slow and preparations to handle a pandemic were insufficient, a commission investigating the country's response to COVID-19 said on Friday.](#)

Brazil senators back criminal charges against Bolsonaro - [Brazilian Senate commission approved a damning report on Tuesday that recommends criminal charges be brought against President Jair Bolsonaro, including crimes against humanity, for his Covid policies. Seven of the panel's 11 senators voted to endorse the text - presented last week after a six-month investigation into Brazil's pandemic response - which also calls for the indictment of 77 other people](#)

Needle-free vaccine patches coming soon, say researchers and makers - [Effective vaccines, without a needle: Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, researchers have doubled down on efforts to create patches that deliver life-saving drugs painlessly to the skin, a development that could revolutionise medicine.](#)

Malaysia to buy Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 - [Malaysia said on Friday it would proceed with the procurement of the Pfizer and BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children, following a United](#)

[States expert panel's recommendation for the shot to be authorised for those aged five to 11. A panel of advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration voted on Tuesday to recommend the authorisation, saying the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks.](#)

Moderna Told FDA Needs More Time to Assess Vaccine for Teenagers - [Moderna Inc. said it was notified that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will require additional time to complete its assessment of the company's Emergency Use Authorization request for its Covid vaccine kids aged 12 to 17 years old.](#)

Poland's tally of COVID-19 infections crosses 3 mln - [Poland's total number of COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic passed 3 million on Friday, health ministry data showed, with daily cases hitting their highest in the fourth wave as a spike in infections gathers pace.](#)

World could go 'back to square one' with new COVID-19 strains without more vaccine aid - [Australia has been urged to ramp up its COVID-19 vaccine aid to developing countries and encourage other nations to do the same at this weekend's summit of global leaders to reduce the risk of dangerous new strains emerging. Research commissioned by UNICEF Australia ahead of the G20 meeting of the world's major economies shows Australia's per capita vaccine supply is nine times higher than doses delivered per capita to Sub-Saharan Africa.](#)

Lockdown Exit

Vote, vaccinate and get vouchers: Government incentivises voter turnout

Voters who turnout to cast their ballot can also receive their Covid-19 vaccine and if they are over the age of 60, receive a R100 grocery voucher. Health Minister Joe Phaahla said in a media briefing on Friday that there would be 1 000 vaccination pop-ups at voting stations across the country. "We are very pleased with the partnership with which we've agreed on with the Independent Electoral Commission to vaccinate on election day. The sites will be set up in the voting precinct but outside the area demarcated strictly for voting so that the vaccination site will not interfere with the main purpose of the day," he said. The vaccination pop-ups will mainly be set up in areas where the uptake of vaccination has not been very good up to now. The list of vaccination sites can be found on the SA Coronavirus website.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/covid19/vote-vaccinate-and-get-vouchers-government-incentivises-voter-turnout-fbc86aa5-e63e-4942-8b8e-29723d032cf1>

Gordon Brown's Covid vaccine plea to help developing countries

Gordon Brown on Friday called on the Government to urgently speed up plans to fund covid vaccination programmes in developing countries. The former prime minister and chancellor said wealthier countries are being "too slow" in sending unused jabs overseas. He has organised a letter signed by 160 global leaders calling on richer countries to share their surplus doses. It argues unless action is taken at the G20 summit, hundreds of thousands of lives could be lost.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newslondon/gordon-brown-e2-80-99s-covid-vaccine-plea-to-help-developing-countries/ar-AAQ5Vjb>

New Delta variant spotted in Australia for first time

The first case of a new COVID-19 variant that is now the fastest-growing coronavirus strain in the UK has been detected in Australia, but virologists say there is no reason to slow reopening plans. The variant, known as AY.4.2., was uncovered in hotel quarantine in NSW and is so far the only case detected. But experts expect more to follow as Australia prepares to open its international borders.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/new-delta-variant-spotted-in-australia-for-first-time-20211029-p594di.html>

Denmark Will More Than Double Testing as Virus Numbers Rise

Denmark, which has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, will more than double its testing capacity after the number of virus infections has jumped in recent weeks. Denmark will

increase so-called PCR tests to about 150,000 a day from currently 100,000 and will also re-introduce private quick-test facilities, which will be able handle about 100,000 tests daily, health authorities said in a statement on Friday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-29/denmark-will-more-than-double-testing-as-virus-numbers-rise>

Russia Suffers Deadliest September Since World War II With Covid Untamed

Russia suffered its deadliest September since World War II, according to figures published Friday, even before the peak of its current wave of the Covid-19 pandemic forced authorities to order non-working days for the first week of November. There were 44,265 deaths associated with the virus last month, bringing the pandemic's total to nearly half a million, according to Federal Statistics Service data published late Friday. That contributed to the highest number of September fatalities since the war, said Alexei Raksha, a demographer who left the agency last year after a dispute over its coronavirus numbers.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-29/russia-suffers-deadliest-sept-since-world-war-as-covid-untamed>

England's COVID prevalence rises to highest since start of year, ONS says

The prevalence of COVID-19 infections in England hit its highest level since the start of the year, reaching around 1 in 50 people in the week ending Oct. 22, Britain's Office for National Statistics said on Friday. The prevalence of infections rose for a fifth straight week, having been at 1 in 55 people in the previous week, the ONS said. Prevalence was last at 1 in 50 people in the week ending Jan. 2, shortly before England began a third national lockdown. The reproduction "R" number was also estimated to be slightly higher.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/englands-covid-prevalence-rises-new-highest-level-since-january-ons-says-2021-10-29/>

Covid booster jabs offered a month earlier for UK care home residents

Care home residents and some vulnerable people will be able to get their Covid booster vaccine a month early, ministers have announced, in an effort to boost immunity during the winter. Currently the wait between second and third doses is six months, but medics will be able to decide to reduce it to five for care home residents and people who are housebound who are offered their flu jab at that point, so they can receive both vaccines together. For people who are about to receive immunosuppressive treatment that would hinder their immune system, the wait for a booster will be cut even further, to four months.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/oct/29/covid-booster-jabs-offered-a-month-earlier-for-uk-care-home-residents>

Australia's Melbourne Back to the Races, Shops as Vaccination Rate Hits 80% | World News | US News

Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city which has endured nearly nine months of lockdowns since the start of the pandemic, saw people flocking to shops and gigs for the first time in months on Saturday as public health curbs eased.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-10-29/australias-melbourne-back-to-the-races-shops-as-vaccination-rate-hits-80>

Exit Strategies

Thailand's Big Reopening Set to Test Pandemic-Era Tourism

Thailand is ending quarantine for vaccinated visitors from more than 60 countries, the biggest reopening gamble in Asia and one that could mark a turning point for the revival of mass tourism during the pandemic. Starting Monday, fully-vaccinated travelers flying in from the U.S., China, Singapore, Japan, India and most of Europe will be able to freely tour Thailand's sandy beaches,

temples and tropical islands after testing negative for Covid on arrival. Inoculated visitors from countries not on the list can travel to Bangkok and 16 other regions, but they will be confined to their initial destination for the first seven days before being allowed to travel elsewhere.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-31/thailand-s-big-reopening-set-to-test-pandemic-era-tourism>

More NYC Workers Get Shots; Europe Starts Boosters: Virus Update

Vaccination rates among New York City's police, fire and sanitation departments rose as workers faced possible suspension on Monday. The city is bracing for service gaps, with tens of thousands of essential public workers still not vaccinated under the mandate imposed by Mayor Bill de Blasio.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-30/fda-backs-shots-for-kids-russia-s-deadly-month-virus-update>

S.Korea eases curbs in first step toward 'living with COVID-19'

South Korea said on Friday it will drop all operating-hour curbs on restaurants and cafes and implement its first vaccine passport for high-risk venues such as gyms, saunas and bars, as it tries to "live with COVID-19". The first phase will go into effect on Monday and last for a month, officials said, with plans calling for all restrictions to be scrapped by February. "Beginning November 1, our community will take the first step of resuming our normal life," Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum said at a televised government meeting. "However, we must be aware that this doesn't mean the fight against coronavirus is over, but a new beginning."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-loosens-restrictions-first-step-toward-living-with-covid-19-2021-10-29/>

Covid bioweapon claims 'scientifically invalid', US intelligence reports

Allegations that the Covid-19 virus was designed as a bioweapon – a theory aired by some senior Republicans – are based on “scientifically invalid claims” whose proponents “are suspected of spreading disinformation”, the US intelligence agencies have reported. Most of the 17 US agencies also agree that the virus had not been genetically engineered, while observing it is becoming increasingly difficult to detect signs of such tampering. However, the intelligence community is still divided on the question of whether the virus was spread by animal-to-human transmission or as the result of a lab accident, concluding that that may never be known barring a dramatic breakthrough in Chinese cooperation. A summary of the findings were first published by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) in August, but on Friday the ODNI published a fuller version of the study, giving explanations for their agencies' conclusions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/29/us-intelligence-report-covid-origins>

As COVID cases fall, Halloween brings more fun and less fear

Witches and warlocks, ghosts and ghouls can breathe a little easier this year: Coronavirus cases in the U.S. are generally on the decline, and trick-or-treaters can feel safer collecting candy. And while a new poll indicates Halloween participation is rebounding but still short of pre-pandemic levels, an industry trade group says people who are celebrating are driving record-level spooky spending this year. Sales of candy, costumes and décor are up at least 25% over last year and are predicted to set a new high, between \$10 to \$11 billion, said Aneisha McMillan, spokeswoman for the trade group Halloween and Costume Association.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/as-covid-cases-fall-halloween-brings-more-fun-and-less-fear/ar-AA06qtR>

Tiny Pacific Island Nation of Tonga Has Had No Covid, Until Now

For almost two years, the Kingdom of Tonga has watched on as Covid-19 spread to almost every corner of the world, except its own. On Friday, that remarkable virus-free streak came to an end when Prime Minister Pohiva Tu'ionetoa said the country of some 100,000 people had found its first confirmed Covid case, local media reported. The infection was in a passenger on a plane from Christchurch, New Zealand, about 2,400 kilometers (1,500 miles) southwest of Tonga. The person is in mandatory hotel quarantine, but was among 215 people on the aircraft, website Matangi Tonga

said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-29/this-tiny-pacific-island-nation-has-had-no-covid-until-now>

Singapore Turns F1 Pit Building Into Temporary Hospital for Covid Patients

Singapore's large F1 pit building, normally used for the high-profile Grand Prix races that have been canceled a second year running due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is being converted into a medical facility for coronavirus patients, the Straits Times reported. The building has been identified as a suitable temporary venue because it has ready facilities and isn't being used for F1 race activities, Ong Ling Lee, director of sports at the Singapore Tourism Board, told the Straits Times, adding that the place had been used for swab tests last year.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-29/singapore-is-converting-f1-pit-building-into-covid-facility-st>

Australia Covid-Zero Approach Changes as Borders, Travel Opens Up

Like many in Australia, Maherou Arona saw the coronavirus as a distant threat, at worst, long after it became a daily reality in most of the world. Following a month and a half of lockdown, the Sydney suburb where the 53-year-old social worker lives returned mostly to normal in May 2020. Protected by a hermetically sealed border, people there and in the rest of the country lived for the next year largely as they had before Covid-19. They could holiday on the beaches of Byron Bay and Noosa, pack into pubs and cafes, and even see Hamilton onstage. Few were in a hurry to get vaccinated, and the national government, led by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, didn't seem to view distributing shots as urgent. While there were some setbacks, including a surge of cases that threw Melbourne into a lengthy second lockdown, Australians essentially skipped the trauma that was transforming societies elsewhere.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-10-28/australia-covid-zero-approach-changes-as-borders-travel-opens-up>

No crowd surfing, orderly queues: Ireland lays down new COVID-19 rules

Crowd surfing will not be permitted at concerts in Ireland and nightclub goers must form a socially distanced queue to buy drinks, under new guidelines issued by the government for recently reopened venues. Irish nightclubs opened their doors for the first time since March 2020 last weekend, while theatres and concert venues also returned to full capacity as the government lifted most curbs that had made up one of Europe's toughest lockdown regimes.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/no-crowd-surfing-orderly-queues-ireland-lays-down-new-covid-19-rules-2021-10-29/>

First COVID-19 shot for young kids could get U.S. FDA authorization on Friday

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday authorized the Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE coronavirus vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years, making it the first COVID-19 shot for young children in the United States. The shot will not be immediately available to the age group. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still needs to advise on how the shot should be administered, which will be decided after a group of outside advisers discuss the plan on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-fda-expected-authorize-first-covid-19-vaccine-young-children-friday-nyt-2021-10-29/>

As vaccination mandate looms, New York City prepares for shortage of cops, others

New York City officials on Friday were preparing for shortages of firefighters, police officers and other first responders as a showdown looms between the city and its unvaccinated uniformed workforce, who face a 5 p.m. EDT deadline to be immunized. De Blasio, who announced the mandate nine days ago, said officials would manage any staffing gaps with overtime and schedule changes and by enlisting private ambulance companies to cover for the city's paramedics.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/vaccination-mandate-looms-new-york-city-prepares-shortage-cops-others-2021-10-29/>

Supreme Court declines to block Maine vaccine mandate

The Supreme Court has rejected an emergency appeal from health care workers in Maine to block a vaccine mandate that went into effect Friday. Three conservative justices noted their dissents.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/supreme-court-declines-to-block-maine-vaccine-mandate/ar-AAQ6U5M>

As vaccination mandate looms, New York prepares for shortage of firefighters, police

New York City officials on Friday were preparing for shortages of firefighters, police officers and other first responders as a showdown looms between the city and its unvaccinated uniformed workforce, who face a 5 p.m. deadline to be immunized. De Blasio, who announced the mandate nine days ago, said officials would manage any staffing gaps with overtime and schedule changes and by enlisting private ambulance companies to cover for the city's paramedics.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/vaccination-mandate-looms-new-york-city-prepares-shortage-cops-others-2021-10-29/>

U.S. spy agencies say origins of COVID-19 may never be known

U.S. intelligence agencies said on Friday they may never be able to identify the origins of COVID-19, as they released a new, more detailed version of their review of whether the coronavirus came from animal-to-human transmission or leaked from a lab. The Office of the U.S. Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said in a declassified report that a natural origin and a lab leak are both plausible hypotheses for how SARS-COV-2 first infected humans. But it said analysts disagree on which is more likely or whether any definitive assessment can be made at all.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us-intelligence-releases-report-covid-19-origins-2021-10-29/>

Brazil senators back criminal charges against Bolsonaro

Brazilian Senate commission approved a damning report on Tuesday that recommends criminal charges be brought against President Jair Bolsonaro, including crimes against humanity, for his Covid policies. Seven of the panel's 11 senators voted to endorse the text - presented last week after a six-month investigation into Brazil's pandemic response - which also calls for the indictment of 77 other people, including several ministers and three of Bolsonaro's children. The nearly 1,200-page report also urges Brazil's Supreme Court to suspend the far-right leader's access to his accounts on social media platforms YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for falsely alleging that Covid-19 vaccines were linked to AIDS.

<https://batimes.com.ar/news/latin-america/brazil-senators-back-criminal-charges-against-bolsonaro.phtml>

U.S. Spies Say Covid-19's Origins Will Remain Unclear Without China's Help

Covid-19 was probably not a biological weapon and most U.S. analysts believe it wasn't genetically engineered at all, but a final conclusion on the virus's origins is impossible without cooperation from China, a declassified U.S. report says. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence released its long-awaited public findings on the virus's origins on Friday, a declassified version of the secret report submitted to President Joe Biden this summer. The intelligence community remains divided on where the outbreak began, but believes two causes are plausible -- that it spread through animals to humans, or that it sprang from an incident at a lab in the city of Wuhan.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-29/u-s-spies-say-covid-19-origins-unclear-without-china-s-help>

Canada says decision on allowing Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children still weeks away

A Canadian decision on whether to approve Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine for those aged 5 to 11 will not come before mid- to end-November, a senior official said on Friday. "I think we're still at least a few weeks away from a final decision ... we've received some additional information just this past week that we're looking through," Supriya Sharma, the federal health ministry's chief medical adviser, told a briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-canada-pzifer/canada-says-decision-on-allowing-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-for-children-still-weeks-away-idUSL1N2RP1ZY>

China's Real Covid Crisis Is Yet to Come

Chinese leaders can claim enviable success in tamping down the pandemic using massive lockdowns but they're going to struggle to return the country to normalcy.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-10-28/china-s-real-covid-19-crisis-is-yet-to-come>

U.S. Supreme Court rejects religious challenge to Maine vaccine mandate

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday turned away healthcare workers seeking a religious exemption to Maine's COVID-19 vaccine mandate in the latest battle over vaccination to reach the justices. The court, which has a 6-3 conservative majority, rejected a request made by nine unnamed plaintiffs who identified themselves as healthcare workers who object to receiving the shots on religious grounds. The court previously rejected challenges to vaccine mandates in New York and Indiana, though those cases did not involve religious objections. The justices were divided, with three conservative members saying they would have granted the request.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-supreme-court-rejects-religious-challenge-maine-vaccine-mandate-2021-10-29/>

Sweden acted too slowly as pandemic swept country, commission finds

Sweden's response to the spread of coronavirus was too slow and preparations to handle a pandemic were insufficient, a commission investigating the country's response to COVID-19 said on Friday. Sweden's strategy, shunning lockdowns and measures such as widespread use of face masks and only gradually tightening curbs, made the country an outlier in the first year of the pandemic when many countries across Europe chose to implement far tougher restrictions. The country kept most schools, businesses, bars and restaurants open in startling contrast with a locked-down Europe, relying on voluntary recommendations even as its death toll rapidly eclipsed those of its Nordic neighbours.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/sweden-acted-too-slowly-pandemic-hit-commission-finds-2021-10-29/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Moderna Told FDA Needs More Time to Assess Vaccine for Teenagers

Moderna Inc. said it was notified that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will require additional time to complete its assessment of the company's Emergency Use Authorization request for its Covid vaccine kids aged 12 to 17 years old.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-31/moderna-told-fda-needs-more-time-to-assess-vaccine-for-teenagers>

Takeda eyeing early 2022 rollout of Novavax's COVID-19 shot in Japan - CEO

Takeda Pharmaceutical Co, the Japanese partner for Novavax Inc's COVID-19 vaccine, is preparing to seek regulatory approval for a roll out in Japan early next year, its top executive said on Friday. Novavax delayed filing for U.S. approval to the end of this year, and Politico reported this month that the Maryland-based company has faced production and quality problems. The drugmaker filed for conditional authorisation to British regulators on Wednesday and with Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/takeda-eyeing-early-2022-rollout-novavaxs-covid-19-shot-japan-ceo-2021-10-29/>

Seniors 70 and older, front-line health workers, people who got 2 AZ doses can be offered boosters, NACI says

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is recommending COVID-19 booster shots for all adults 80 years of age and older, and is also opening the door for certain other groups who may be at increased risk of lowered protection over time since their initial vaccinations.

"Populations at highest risk of waning protection following their primary series and at highest risk of severe COVID-19 illness should be offered a booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after completing their primary series," NACI's new guidance released Friday said, noting that seniors 80 years and older "should" be offered a booster shot.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/naci-october-29-boosters-covid-19-1.6229985>

Booster shot now advised for Canadians who received two shots of AstraZeneca vaccine

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization has expanded eligibility guidelines for booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines. Canada's expert panel on COVID-19 vaccines is recommending boosters for people who received two doses of AstraZeneca or one dose of the Janssen vaccine, regardless of age, and frontline health workers who were vaccinated with mRNA shots that were spaced less than 28 days apart.

<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/naci-names-several-more-groups-who-should-qualify-for-covid-19-booster-shots>

Covaxin approvals delay: Be transparent

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's contribution to the fight against coronavirus disease (Covid-19) during his intervention at the first G20 session on Saturday, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said. The top diplomat told a press briefing that PM Modi mentioned India's medical supplies to over 150 countries as he spoke about the country's vision of 'One Earth, One Health' for a collaborative approach in combating the pandemic. Speaking at the Group of 20 Leaders' Summit in Rome, the prime minister conveyed that India is ready to produce 5 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses by 2022 end which will be available for the world. PM Modi invited G20 countries to make India their partner in economic recovery and supply chain diversification. "He also brought out the fact that despite challenges of the pandemic, India continued to be a trusted partner in the context of reliable supply chains," Shringla told the special briefing in Rome.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/g20-summit-pm-modi-says-india-ready-to-produce-5-billion-covid-vaccine-doses-by-2022-end-101635610199473.html>

Needle-free vaccine patches coming soon, say researchers and makers

Effective vaccines, without a needle: Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, researchers have doubled down on efforts to create patches that deliver life-saving drugs painlessly to the skin, a development that could revolutionise medicine. The technique could help save children's tears at doctors' offices, and help people who have a phobia of syringes. Beyond that, skin patches could assist with distribution efforts, because they don't have cold-chain requirements - and might even heighten vaccine efficacy. A new mouse study in the area, published in the journal Science Advances, showed promising results. The Australian-US team used patches measuring one square centimetre that were dotted with more than 5,000 microscopic spikes, "so tiny you can't actually see them," David Muller, a virologist at the University of Queensland and co-author of the paper, told AFP.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/needle-free-vaccine-patches-coming-soon-say-researchers-and-makers>

COVID-19: US intelligence agencies admit the true origins of coronavirus may never be known

US spy agencies have admitted that the true origins of COVID-19 may never be known. The Office of the US Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said on Friday that theories involving transmission from animals or a leak from a lab were plausible. However, the office added that analysts could not agree which was more likely or if any firm conclusion could be made at all. They did, however, dismiss suggestions that the virus originated as a bioweapon, saying backers of this theory "do not have direct access to the Wuhan Institute of Virology".

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-us-intelligence-agencies-admit-the-true-origins-of-coronavirus-may-never-be-known-12454715>

Study of Hospitalized Covid-19 Patients Shows Vaccination Is Better Guard Than Prior Infection

Covid-19 was over five times more common among hospitalized people who were unvaccinated and had a previous infection, compared with those who were fully vaccinated and hadn't had Covid-19 before, a study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found. The report, released Friday and written by scientists from the federal agency as well as hospitals across the U.S., adds to the body of research suggesting that vaccines provide stronger protection against the coronavirus than prior-infection immunity. Research into immunity to Covid-19 has been limited in part by the short window of time in which the virus has been circulating and vaccines have been in use. Few clinical studies of patients who have recovered from Covid-19 have been conducted, compared with the more robust body of clinical research into the vaccines, making it hard to reach definitive conclusions about the nature of immunity provided by prior infection.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/study-of-hospitalized-covid-19-patients-shows-vaccination-is-better-guard-than-prior-infection-11635543610>

Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 Vaccine Authorized for Young Children by FDA

The Covid-19 vaccine from Pfizer Inc. PFE 1.30% and BioNTech SE BNTX -1.85% was authorized for use in children as young as 5 years old, the first shot that federal health regulators have permitted for them in the U.S. The decision by the Food and Drug Administration on Friday for children age 5 to 11 paves the way for one of the last remaining groups in the U.S. to get vaccinated against Covid-19, probably starting within days. The shot works safely, the FDA said. Once the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gives its signoff, expected within days, the young children can begin getting their first dose. The children will be given two shots three weeks apart, the same schedule as adults and adolescents, although each shot will contain one-third of the dosage.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-authorized-for-young-children-by-fda-11635535040>

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A Canadian decision on whether to approve Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine for those aged 5 to 11 will not come before mid- to end-November, a senior official said on Friday. "I think we're still at least a few weeks away from a final decision ... we've received some additional information just this past week that we're looking through," Supriya Sharma, the federal health ministry's chief medical adviser, told a briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-canada-pzifer/canada-says-decision-on-allowing-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-for-children-still-weeks-away-idUSL1N2RP1ZY>

Moderna to supply 56.5 mln more doses of its COVID-19 shot to vaccine alliance GAVI

Moderna Inc announced a pact with the GAVI vaccine alliance to supply a further 56.5 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in the second quarter of next year to low- and middle-income countries. The vaccine maker said the doses will be in addition to an earlier commitment to supply 60 million doses in the second quarter of 2022 to GAVI, which co-leads the COVAX facility for equitable distribution of COVID-19 shots around the world. The COVAX facility, backed by the World Health Organization and GAVI, has delivered some 400 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to more than 140 low- and middle-income countries, but several countries run the risk of failing to meet WHO's target of 40% vaccination coverage by year-end

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-supply-565-million-more-doses-global-vaccine-alliance-gavi-2021-10-29/>

Malaysia to buy Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11

Malaysia said on Friday (Oct 29) it would proceed with the procurement of the Pfizer and BioNTech

Covid-19 vaccine for children, following a United States expert panel's recommendation for the shot to be authorised for those aged five to 11. A panel of advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration voted on Tuesday to recommend the authorisation, saying the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks. The agency's decision is still pending. Malaysia's Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said on Twitter that other options, such as the vaccine made by China's Sinovac BioTech, would also be considered to ensure schools can reopen safely. About 62 per cent of teenagers aged between 12 and 17 in the South-east Asian country are fully vaccinated, government statistics showed on Friday.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-to-buy-pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-for-children-aged-5-to-11>

Egypt receives 3rd batch of J&J COVID-19 vaccine on Monday

The Cairo International Airport will receive a third batch of Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine on Monday, said the Egyptian Ministry of Health on Saturday. The third batch of 1,058,000 doses is part of the ministry's plan to offer varieties of anti-Coronavirus vaccines, especially for travelers, the ministry added. The shipment will be distributed to vaccination centers allocated for travelers. The shipment arrived in Egypt as part of the initiative reached between the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) and UNICEF for the African Union countries. On September 4, 2021, Egypt received the second batch of 525,600 J&J doses, while the first patch of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine against coronavirus was given to Egypt on August 9, 2021. The first batch included 21,600 doses.

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/109129/Egypt-receives-3rd-batch-of-J-J-COVID-19-vaccine>

Coronavirus Resurgence

UK reports 41278 new COVID cases, 166 deaths

Britain reported 41,278 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday and 166 more deaths within 28 days of a positive test, official data showed. The figures compared to 43,467 new infections and 186 deaths reported on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-reports-41278-new-covid-cases-166-deaths-2021-10-30/>

One person in 50 had Covid in England last week, ONS data shows

Coronavirus infections in England have increased to the same levels seen at the height of the second wave in January, data has revealed, with one in 50 people in the community having the virus last week. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, based on swabs collected from randomly selected households, an estimated 2% of people had Covid in the week ending 22 October – about 1,102,800 people. Such levels were last seen in the weeks around late December and early January, when the second wave of Covid swept across the country. The figures mark a rise on the week before, when about one in 55 people in the community in England were thought to have Covid. Such levels were last seen in the weeks around late December and early January, when the second wave of Covid swept across the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/29/one-person-in-50-had-covid-in-england-last-week-ons-data-shows>

World could go 'back to square one' with new COVID-19 strains without more vaccine aid

Australia has been urged to ramp up its COVID-19 vaccine aid to developing countries and encourage other nations to do the same at this weekend's summit of global leaders to reduce the risk of dangerous new strains emerging. Research commissioned by UNICEF Australia ahead of the G20 meeting of the world's major economies shows Australia's per capita vaccine supply is nine times higher than doses delivered per capita to Sub-Saharan Africa.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/world-could-go-back-to-square-one-with-new-covid-19-strains-without-more-vaccine-aid-20211029-p594a3.html>

With coronavirus untamed, Russia suffers deadliest September since World War II

Russia suffered its deadliest September since World War II, according to figures published on Friday,

even before the peak of its current wave of the Covid-19 pandemic forced authorities to order non-working days for the first week of November. There were 44,265 deaths associated with the virus last month, bringing the pandemic's total to nearly half a million, according to Federal Statistics Service data published late on Friday. That contributed to the highest number of September fatalities since the war, said Alexei Raksha, a demographer who left the agency last year after a dispute over its coronavirus numbers.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/russia-central-asia/article/3154256/covid-19-untamed-russia-suffers-deadliest-september>

China's COVID-19 outbreak developing rapidly, health official says

China's latest COVID-19 outbreak is developing rapidly, a health official said, as the authorities demanded high vigilance at ports of entry amid growing infections in a northeastern border city caused by the virus arriving from abroad. Some 377 domestically transmitted cases with confirmed symptoms were reported from Oct. 17-29, National Health Commission (NHC) data showed. China has tackled a series of outbreaks this year since it largely contained a national spread in early 2020.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/mainland-china-reports-78-new-covid-19-cases-oct-29-vs-64-day-earlier-2021-10-30/>

Poland's tally of COVID-19 infections crosses 3 mln

Poland's total number of COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic passed 3 million on Friday, health ministry data showed, with daily cases hitting their highest in the fourth wave as a spike in infections gathers pace. Amid wide disregard for rules on wearing masks, infections in Poland are surging ahead of All Saints' Day, when crowds of people visit cemeteries to pay their respects to the dead in a tradition that could contribute to the spread of the virus.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/polands-total-number-covid-19-cases-passes-3-mln-2021-10-29/>

Russia says at least 44265 people died from COVID-19 in Sept

At least 44,265 people died in Russia in September due to the coronavirus and related causes, taking the toll to around 462,000 since the pandemic began, state statistics service Rosstat said on Friday. The figure was down from a peak of 51,044 in July, although infections and fatalities began to surge again in the second half of September and have repeatedly touched record levels this month, leading authorities to reintroduce stricter health restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-says-least-44265-people-died-covid-19-sept-2021-10-29/>

New Lockdown

'We have to survive': some businesses flout Moscow COVID-19 lockdown

Some businesses flouted the Russian capital's new lockdown measures on Friday saying they needed to make ends meet amid a lack of state support, as nationwide deaths from COVID-19 hit a new record daily high blamed on slow vaccination take-up. The restrictions allow only essential shops like pharmacies and supermarkets to remain open, while schools and state kindergartens are shut. Bars, cafes and restaurants are only allowed to operate takeaway and delivery services. Some entrepreneurs said they were trying to keep their businesses going as they had not been promised state aid.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/we-have-survive-some-businesses-flout-moscow-covid-19-lockdown-2021-10-29/>

Chinese city on Myanmar border vows COVID curbs despite disruption

A Chinese jade trading hub on the border with Myanmar vowed strict control over domestic outbound travel to halt the spread of COVID-19, sustaining some of the toughest zero-tolerance policies in China despite economic costs. After suffering intermittent waves of outbreaks, Ruili has imposed some of the most stringent domestic travel restrictions in China, including self-funded quarantine of at least seven days at centralised facilities for those wishing to leave the city for non-

urgent matters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinese-city-myanmar-border-vows-covid-curbs-despite-disruption-2021-10-29/>