

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 3rd Sep 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **Fresh surges in Europe**

Multiple European countries are witnessing surges in cases of Covid-19 as the pandemic continues. [France, Greece, and Spain have all reported a spike in cases, being among the hardest-hit countries by the outbreak.](#) Spain has seen an uptick in cases in several regions and Madrid, now accounts for thirty percent of all hospitalisations and 42% of deaths due to the disease in the last fortnight. France too is witnessing a spike in cases but, despite this, it is continuing with the reopening of schools. Greece, on the other hand, has responded to a surge in cases by delaying the reopening of school by one week.

#### **Libya at 'turning point' says UN**

The United Nations has warned that Libya is at 'a decisive turning point,' in the words of the African nation's acting UN representative Stephanie Williams. [The UN indicates that the pandemic in Libya is 'spiralling out of control' as cases surge.](#) Ms Williams said that pre-existing issues, such as internal unrest, as well as an influx of weapons and the presence of mercenaries from abroad, are compounding the 'debilitating effect of the Covid-19 pandemic.' The case count has more than doubled in the last fortnight and the true scale in Libya is likely to be much higher.

#### **America's housing crisis in CDC crosshairs**

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has weighed in on the United States housing crisis which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. [With millions of Americans facing evictions, the CDC has said that those people who have sought government assistance for rental payments and are unable to pay rent due to Covid-19,](#) and are liable to be evicted - should not be evicted. Mass evictions leading to increased homelessness is likely to increase the transmission of Covid-19, the CDC warns.

#### **WHO analysis suggests corticosteroids effective in reducing mortality among those critically ill with Covid-19**

A World Health Organization analysis has found that corticosteroids reduce the risk of death by up to one third among Covid-19 patients in a critical condition. [This development is promising given that corticosteroids are inexpensive and widely available.](#) The WHO considered seven separate clinical trials before arriving at its conclusion, and has issued fresh guidelines for treatment. [One small caveat is that it has cautioned against the use of them to treat those who are not in a 'severe or critical' condition.](#)

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **117 children have tested positive for Covid-19 since return to school**

A total of 117 children have tested positive for coronavirus since Scotland's schools reopened last month, the Education Secretary has revealed. John Swinney announced the number of positive tests for the virus as teachers' unions spoke out about their ongoing fears over safety inside schools. Since pupils returned to school in August, a total of 77 youngsters aged between 12 and 17 have been found to have Covid-19, along with 40 children aged between five and 11. The Education

Secretary told MSPs at Holyrood the evidence he had seen suggested most cases were “coming within households”, describing this as the “predominant explanation” for how youngsters had contracted the disease. But he added that overseas travel was also “resulting in quite a number of the cases”.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/117-children-tested-positive-covid-18863808>

### **Coronavirus: How it feels to be back at school**

As millions of pupils in England return to school after lockdown, the BBC went to two primary schools in Luton, Whitefield Primary Academy and Southfield Primary School, to find out how parents and children felt.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-53996461>

### **Spain, France and Greece report fresh surges in Covid-19 cases as schools reopen in Europe**

The Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, said he was particularly worried about the surge in coronavirus cases in Madrid. One of the countries in Europe hit hardest by Covid-19, Spain has reported a surge in infections in the capital and other regions since lockdown was lifted in June. “We are worried about the state of public health and evolution of the virus in Madrid,” Mr Sánchez said.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/world/coronavirus-latest-europe-spain-france-greece-surge-covid-19-cases-616706>

### **India's coronavirus case tally nears 3.8 million as country reopens**

India said on Wednesday it would allow metro services to reopen nationwide, despite the number of novel coronavirus infections there reaching almost 3.8 million. The country reported 78,357 new cases in the last 24 hours, federal health data showed, taking total infections to 3,769,523. Some 66,333 people have died. India’s total cases lag only the United States and Brazil, which it will overtake in days based on current trends. A dozen metro services including in the capital New Delhi would be allowed to reopen from Sept. 7, India’s urban affairs minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Wednesday

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india-cases/indias-coronavirus-case-tally-nears-3-8-million-as-country-reopens-idUKKBN25T0XG>

### **Months after lockdown, children in Wuhan return to school**

Children returned to school Tuesday in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the original epicentre of the coronavirus epidemic that underwent months of lockdown but which has not seen new cases of local transmission for weeks. State media reported 1.4 million children in the city reported to 2,842 kindergartens, primary and secondary schools as part of a nationwide return to classes. Life has largely returned to normal in Wuhan, where the novel coronavirus was first detected late last year. After what critics called an attempt to ignore the outbreak, the city underwent a 76-day lockdown during which residents were confined to their homes and field hospitals opened to assist an overwhelmed medical system.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2020/sep/01/months-after-lockdown-children-in-wuhan-return-to-school-2191156.html>

### **Exit Strategies**

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#### **'It gets into your bones': the unique loneliness of coronavirus lockdown when you live alone**

Melbourne’s second-wave lockdown rules are some of the strictest in the western world – and many single people have faced weeks of isolation

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/03/it-gets-into-your-bones-the-unique-loneliness-of-coronaviruses-lockdown-when-you-live-alone>

### **Covid-19: Ireland now in ‘most challenging phase’, says Government**

The current surge of Covid-19 can be successfully suppressed through people slightly reducing their daily contacts, public health officials have said. Getting the R number below 1 is “absolutely realistic”, through a “marginal reduction” in the number of contacts people have each day, according to Prof Philip Nolan of the National Public Health Emergency Team. The R figure represents the number of people that one infected person will pass the virus on to, on average. “It is a modest amount of extra effort that we have to do,” he said on Wednesday evening. The reproduction number stands at 1 to 1.2, according to Prof Nolan, who is chairman of the Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/covid-19-ireland-now-in-most-challenging-phase-says-government-1.4344766>

### **Coronavirus: Jeremy Hunt calls for weekly COVID-19 testing for secondary school teachers**

Secondary school teachers should be tested weekly for coronavirus, a former health secretary has said. Jeremy Hunt, who now chairs the health and social care committee, told Sky News that regular COVID-19 tests would help reassure parents.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-jeremy-hunt-calls-for-weekly-covid-19-testing-for-secondary-school-teachers-12061513>

### **UN: Libya at ‘turning point,’ COVID heading ‘out of control’**

The top U.N. official for Libya warned Wednesday that the conflict-torn North African country is at “a decisive turning point,” with foreign backers of its rival governments pouring in weapons and the misery of its people compounded by the coronavirus pandemic that appears to be “spiraling out of control.” Acting special representative Stephanie Williams told the U.N. Security Council that its actions “will help determine whether the country descends into new depths of fragmentation and chaos, or progresses towards a more prosperous future.”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/un-libya-at-turning-point-covid-heading-out-of-control/2020/09/02/dd6aca1e-ed5e-11ea-bd08-1b10132b458f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/un-libya-at-turning-point-covid-heading-out-of-control/2020/09/02/dd6aca1e-ed5e-11ea-bd08-1b10132b458f_story.html)

### **Coronavirus: UK considers putting Portugal back on quarantine list**

Ministers are considering reimposing quarantine measures for those arriving in the UK from Portugal as coronavirus cases rise, sources have told the BBC. The country has recorded more than 20 cases per 100,000 people in the past week. Normally when a country surpasses that mark the UK government imposes 14 days of self-isolation on returning travellers. Ministers are expected to reach a decision on the measures by Thursday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53980191>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Piers Corbyn claims coronavirus lockdown is 'psychological operation to close down the economy'**

The brother of former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has claimed the coronavirus lockdown is a “psychological operation to close down the economy”. Piers Corbyn was arrested and slapped with a £10,000 fine for his part in anti-lockdown protests on Saturday which saw thousands descend on Trafalgar Square. The 73-year-old, a climate change denier who set up controversial weather forecasting business Weather Action, said on Twitter he had been handed the fixed penalty fine as “organiser”.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/piers-corbyn-arrested-protest-coronavirus-lockdown-a4537061.html>

### **Coronavirus: Lockdown protesters ‘spit on’ and shout homophobic slurs at German health minister**

Germany’s health minister has been subjected to homophobic abuse and allegedly spat on while

attempting to engage with a crowd of anti-lockdown protesters, as opponents of the country's pandemic restrictions appear increasingly emboldened. Jens Spahn faced down the two dozen or so demonstrators gathered outside a community centre in which he was campaigning on Sunday ahead of local elections in Bergisch-Gladbach. Now viral footage showed the Christian Democrats (CDU) politician appealing for calm from the crowd as some in the crowd yelled "disgrace" and "gay pig". North Rhine-Westphalia Police said in a statement on Monday that they had no evidence that the minister was spat on, but that a criminal complaint had been filed against a 39-year-old man who "insulted" Mr Spahn.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/coronavirus-germany-anti-lockdown-protesters-health-minister-homophobic-a9699536.html>

### **German minister spat at and verbally abused at Covid protest**

Germany's health minister was jeered, spat at and targeted by homophobic abuse as the countrywide protests of a vocal minority of people against coronavirus restrictions has taken on an increasingly aggressive tone. The Conservative politician Jens Spahn, a key figure in Germany's handling of the pandemic, on Saturday tried to confront a crowd of protesters outside an event ahead of local elections in North-Rhine Westphalia. A video of the encounter in Bergisch Gladbach shows Spahn, who is gay, taking off his mask to speak to demonstrators only to be drowned out by audible shouts of "shame", "go away", and "gay pig". A campaign event in Münster scheduled for Monday night was moved to an indoor venue at short notice.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/01/german-health-minister-jens-spahn-targeted-by-homophobic-abuse-from-protesters>

### **German SPD leader can call anti-lockdown protesters 'Covidiot', prosecutors say**

Anti-lockdown protesters and face-mask refusers can be called "Covidiot", German prosecutors said on Wednesday, dismissing legal complaints against Social Democrat co-leader Saskia Esken who used the term on Twitter. Prosecutors in Berlin, who had received hundreds of complaints accusing Esken of slander, said she was exercising her constitutional right to express her opinion. Esken's SPD party is the junior partner in Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative-led ruling coalition. In an Aug. 1 tweet, Esken said protesters at a Berlin march threatened the health of others by violating social distancing rules and ignoring requirements to wear face masks. "The pointed term 'Covidiot' is, as an expression of opinion in the political discourse in the coronavirus pandemic, not liable for prosecution and is covered by the constitutionally protected freedom of speech," prosecutors said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-covidots/german-spd-leader-can-call-anti-lockdown-protesters-covidots-prosecutors-say-idUKKBN25T1WS>

### **COVID-19 Pandemic Conspiracy Theories Are Taking Over German Democracy**

The Berlin government tried, but failed, to ban the protests on public safety grounds. But the demonstrations may have a positive, if unintended, effect: they are already jolting Germany and Europe awake to a new wave of political disinformation aimed right at the heart of European democracy. Berlin's coronavirus pandemic management has been the source of global admiration and pride at home, and it has driven government approval to new heights. German Chancellor Angela Merkel enjoys a 71 percent approval rating. Her health minister, Jens Spahn, has 60 percent support. And her Social Democratic Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, the architect of Germany's coronavirus rescue package, is at 57 percent approval.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/02/germany-is-losing-the-fight-against-qanon/>

### **Coronavirus Australia: Tony Abbott calls for lockdown lift**

Tony Abbott wants Australia to lift all travel bans immediately amid COVID-19. He argues the economic devastation isn't proportionate to health risks of virus. Mr Abbott criticised Dan Andrews' strict lockdown in Victoria in particular. He said lockdown was most restrictive globally aside from

epicentre Wuhan. New modelling suggests cases in Victoria could fall below ten within a week. University of South Australia's Adrian Esterman said infections dwindling fast

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8685877/Tony-Abbott-slams-Daniel-Andrews-calls-Australia-lift-covid-19-lockdowns-travel-bans.html>

### **Three men arrested ahead of planned anti-lockdown protest in Victoria**

Police in Victoria have arrested a pregnant 28-year-old woman in front of her partner and two children for planning an anti-lockdown protest in regional Victoria this weekend. Police arrested the woman, Zoe Buhler, at her home in Miners Rest near Ballarat on Wednesday after she created a "freedom day" event on Facebook calling for people to protest against the Victorian government's lockdown measures.

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/other/three-men-arrested-ahead-of-planned-anti-lockdown-protest-in-victoria/ar-BB18CFPs>

### **Tony Abbott accuses Daniel Andrews of running 'health dictatorship', slams Australia's virus response**

Former prime minister Tony Abbott has defended travelling to the UK where he took a swipe at Australia's coronavirus response, slamming Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews for running a "health dictatorship". Speaking in London to the UK think-tank Policy Exchange, Mr Abbott said some of the lockdown measures taken in Australia had gone too far. "My plea is for us to be very careful about further lockdowns because the consequences of lockdowns are enormous," Mr Abbott said.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/tony-abbott-victoria-coronavirus-response-health-dictatorship-uk-visit/3e4e5498-1906-44f1-b81c-94db2847eec1>

### **Pregnant woman arrested in Ballarat for creating anti-lockdown protest event on Facebook**

Police in Victoria have arrested a pregnant 28-year-old woman in front of her partner and two children for planning an anti-lockdown protest in regional Victoria this weekend. Police arrested the woman, Zoe Buhler, at her home in Miners Rest near Ballarat on Wednesday after she created a "freedom day" event on Facebook calling for people to protest against the Victorian government's lockdown measures. "As some of you may have seen the government has gone to extreme measures and are using scare tactics through the media to prevent the Melbourne protest," the now-deleted event description read. "Here in Ballarat we can be a voice for those in stage four lockdowns. We can be seen and heard and hopefully make a difference!"

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/02/three-men-arrested-ahead-of-planned-anti-lockdown-protest-in-victoria>

### **Hungary exempts some visitors from border lockdown, riles EU**

Hungary has decided to exempt tourists visiting from three neighbouring states from a lockdown of its borders that took effect on Tuesday, provided they test negative for COVID-19 beforehand, prompting a rebuke from the European Commission. The EU executive said Hungary's move to admit visitors from the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia but not from other EU member states amounted to discrimination and was illegal. Hungary said last week it would close its borders to foreigners from Tuesday to curb a rise in coronavirus cases. Returning Hungarian citizens can leave a 14-day quarantine only if they provide two negative COVID tests.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-hungary-borders/hungary-exempts-some-visitors-from-border-lockdown-riles-eu-idUKKBN25S3U7?il=0>

### **Continued Lockdown**

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### **CDC Directs Halt to Renter Evictions to Prevent Virus Spread**

The Trump administration has issued a directive halting the eviction of certain renters though the

end of 2020 to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Federal, state and local governments have approved eviction moratoriums during the course of the pandemic for many renters, but those protections are expiring rapidly. A recent report from one think tank, the Aspen Institute, stated that more than 20 million renters live in households that have suffered COVID-19-related job loss and concluded that millions more are at risk of eviction in the next several months. The administration's action stems from an executive order that President Donald Trump issued in early August. It instructed federal health officials to consider measures to temporarily halt evictions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention followed up Tuesday by declaring that any landlord shall not evict any "covered person" from any residential property for failure to pay rent.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/cdc-directs-halt-renter-evictions-prevent-virus-spread>

### **Despite stringent lockdown, India's COVID-19 cases, deaths record fastest rise even as GDP plummets**

The country's GDP contraction was the worst among many major economies. Despite enforcing the most stringent lockdown to control the spread of COVID-19, the average daily cases and deaths in India are growing at the fastest pace in the world. Due to the severe restrictions between April and June, the economy took an unprecedented hit with the GDP contracting for the first time in decades in the April to June quarter.

<https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-despite-stringent-lockdown-indias-covid-19-cases-deaths-record-fastest-rise-even-as-gdp-plummets/article32502582.ece>

### **Coronavirus lockdown hurt Indian industries 'dramatically'**

The Indian economy had been moderating even before the pandemic but the lockdown to curtail the spread of the virus dealt a further blow to industrial production and consumer spending, IHS Markit chief economist Rajiv Biswas told DW. But there are already some signs of a recovery.

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-lockdown-hurt-indian-industries-dramatically/av-54782126>

### **Covid-19 ends Australia's 28-year run without a recession**

Australia has entered its first recession in almost three decades after Covid-19 battered the economy, which shrank a record 7 per cent in the June quarter. The decline in gross domestic product follows a fall of 0.3 per cent in the March quarter, marking two consecutive quarters of contraction — the technical definition of recession — according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. "The global pandemic and associated containment policies led to a 7 per cent fall in GDP for the June quarter. This is, by a wide margin, the largest fall in quarterly GDP since records began in 1959," said Michael Smedes, ABS head of national accounts. The economic contraction was worse than expected, with economists forecasting a 6 per cent fall in the second quarter and a decline of just over 5 per cent on an annual basis. The ABS figures revealed that GDP fell 6.3 per cent in the 12 months to the end of June.

<https://www.ft.com/content/7057b5b2-01cf-4881-b40e-aa09035f1017>

### **As Victoria endures prolonged coronavirus lockdown, mental health workers see devastating impacts of COVID-19**

Many exhausted Victorian healthcare workers have been among the callers. They're experiencing burn-out and fatigue, and they're stressed about not being able to take time off work, Joy says. They have also raised concerns about the possibility of unknowingly contracting and passing on the virus.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-02/mental-health-crisis-coronavirus-victoria-lifeline-calls-rise/12588500>

### **Coronavirus despair forces girls across Asia into child marriage**

Tens of thousands of girls across Asia are being forced into child marriage by desperate families plunged into poverty because of the coronavirus pandemic, as campaigners warn that years of progress tackling the practice is being undone. Child marriage has long been practised as part of tradition in communities from the Indonesian archipelago to India, Pakistan and Vietnam, but

numbers had been decreasing as numerous initiatives worked to spread awareness of its dangers and encouraged access to education and women's health services.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/09/coronavirus-despair-forces-girls-asia-child-marriage-200902071153195.htm>  
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## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Inexpensive steroids reduce deaths of hospitalized Covid-19 patients, WHO analysis confirms**

Use of inexpensive, readily available steroid drugs to treat people hospitalized with Covid-19 reduced the risk of death by one-third, according to an analysis encompassing seven different clinical trials conducted by the World Health Organization and published Wednesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The positive steroid findings — the result of a pooled look at data known as a meta-analysis — confirm a similar survival benefit reported in June from a single, large study. Corticosteroids are the first, and so far only, therapy shown to improve the odds of survival for critically ill patients with Covid-19.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/09/02/covid19-steroids-reduce-deaths-of-hospitalized-patients-who-analysis-confirms/>

### **WHO recommends cheap everyday steroids as Covid-19 treatment**

The World Health Organization has said anti-inflammatory steroids should be used to treat severely ill coronavirus patients as a landmark study provided a “clear signal” of their effectiveness in reducing mortality. Issuing its first guidance on treating Covid-19, the WHO strongly endorsed the use of two cheap steroids, informed by a report published on Wednesday which confirmed that the drugs significantly reduced the rate of death in patients requiring oxygen support. “We’ve received a clear signal that using steroids with severely ill patients improves their outcomes,” said Anthony Gordon, professor of anaesthesia and critical care at Imperial College London.

<https://www.ft.com/content/b77f87cc-8224-4061-ae2d-7702b16d8cbe>

### **EU watchdog assessing Dexamethasone Taw as possible COVID-19 drug**

The European health regulator said on Wednesday it was evaluating Taw Pharma’s branded steroidal drug dexamethasone as a potential COVID-19 treatment for hospitalised adult patients after it received an application from the drug developer. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said in a statement its human medicines committee (CHMP) would weigh-in on the application for Dexamethasone Taw within the shortest timeline possible. Europe is already evaluating the decades old dexamethasone for COVID-19 after it garnered international attention when a study, dubbed RECOVERY, showed in June the drug reduced death rates by about a third in severely ill, hospitalised COVID-19 patients. The EMA said results from RECOVERY would be considered in the assessment of Dexamethasone Taw.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-europe-dexamethaso/eu-watchdog-assessing-dexamethasone-taw-as-possible-covid-19-drug-idUKKBN25T21Q>

### **U.S. FDA to bring outside experts to review COVID-19 vaccines**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration will organize meetings with an independent group of experts to review data of coronavirus vaccine candidates and advise the agency, FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn said on Wednesday. “The meetings will reinforce the transparency of the process as FDA reviews data from trials now underway,” Hahn said in a post on Twitter. The statement comes after U.S. President Donald Trump last month accused members, without evidence, of a so-called “deep state” working within the FDA of complicating efforts to test COVID-19 vaccines in order to delay results until after the Nov. 3 presidential election. The FDA said last week it will hold a meeting of its advisory committee to address the general development of COVID-19 vaccines on Oct. 22, and have additional meetings as applications for coronavirus vaccines are submitted.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccine-fda/u-s-fda-to-bring-outside-experts-to-review-covid-19-vaccines-idUKKBN25T23H>

### **Pregnant Women With COVID-19 'More Likely to Need Intensive Care'**

Pregnant women with COVID-19 are less likely to have major symptoms, but more likely to need intensive care treatment, and experience preterm birth.

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/936738>

### **NHS to start using the steroid hydrocortisone on Covid-19 patients as it boost survival by up to 93%**

Patients given the drug for seven days were compared to those who were not. They had a 93 per cent better recovery odds - measured by either a greater chance of survival or less need for organ support such as ventilation. The findings come from the REMAP-CAP trial involving hospitals globally. NHS chief executive Sir Simon Stevens said the NHS will 'now take immediate action to ensure that patients who could benefit from hydrocortisone do so.' Another study published today found three steroids reduce risk of death by 20%

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8689999/NHS-start-using-steroid-hydrocortisone-Covid-19-patients-boost-survival-93.html>

### **Oxford Biomedica Covid-19 vaccine gets cash injection to boost production**

Oxford Biomedica's role as lead manufacturer of a potential Covid-19 vaccine being developed by Astrazeneca has been expanded with an agreement to increase production. The gene and cell therapy group has signed an 18-month supply agreement to produce Astrazeneca's AZD1222 vaccine on a commercial scale. Under the agreement, which can be extended for a further 18 months into 2022 and 2023, Astrazeneca will pay Oxford Biomedica an initial £15 million as a capacity reservation fee. Oxford Biomedica said that, subject to the stepping up of manufacturing capacity and the continuation of the vaccine programme, it expected to receive further revenue of more than £35 million, plus "certain materials costs", for the manufacture of multiple large-scale batches of AZD1222 until the end of 2021.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/oxford-biomedica-covid-19-vaccine-gets-cash-injection-to-boost-production-xjdwbw8vv>

### **Covid-19 triggers epidemic of eczema**

Covid-19 has triggered an eczema epidemic among NHS workers - from washing their hands so much, reveals new research. Six-out-of-10 seen for skin problems are suffering irritant contact dermatitis - a form of the itchy, painful condition caused by friction, according to the study. It highlights the impact of PPE (personal protective equipment) and frequent hand hygiene on medical workers. Co-lead author Dr Isha Narang, of University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation, said: "Wearing PPE for long periods can cause pressure and irritant effects on the skin and frequent handwashing with soap is drying; sometimes the effects can be bad enough to require time off work. "As PPE and handwashing are essential methods of reducing the spread of Covid-19, it's important to provide healthcare workers with advice and support in managing their skin."

<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/covid-19-triggers-epidemic-eczema-18866414>

### **Two types of steroid found to save lives of some Covid-19 patients**

Studies around the world have confirmed that steroids can save lives in the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to new recommendations from the World Health Organization that doctors should give them to severely ill patients. In June, the Recovery trial run in most NHS hospitals and led by Oxford University found that the lives of one in eight people sick enough from Covid-19 to need a ventilator could be saved by a steroid called dexamethasone. Now, combined results from that trial and six others have confirmed those findings and established that at least one other equally cheap and widely available steroid, hydrocortisone, also saves lives.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/sep/02/two-types-of-steroid-found-to-save-lives-of-some-covid-19-patients>

### **More than half of people struggled to manage their weight during COVID-19 lockdown, suggests UK survey**

More than half of adults have found it difficult to manage their weight during the COVID-19 lockdown, according to the results of an online survey involving over 800 UK adults, being presented at The European and International Congress on Obesity (ECOICO), held online this year (1-4 September).

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-09-people-struggled-weight-covid-lockdown.html>

### **'Russian Roulette': Inside Putin's Race to Develop a Covid-19 Vaccine Before the West**

In April, as Covid-19 cases surged across Russia, President Vladimir Putin called a meeting of the country's top scientists and health officials over video link to deliver an urgent directive: Do whatever you need to create a national vaccine as soon as possible. Four weeks later, Alexander Gintsburg, director of the state-run Gamaleya Institute for Epidemiology and Microbiology, told state television that his researchers had developed one. They were so sure it was safe, he said, the researchers had tested it on themselves. Last month, Mr. Putin, with great fanfare, said Russia had approved Gamaleya's vaccine, making it the first country to sign off on one amid a global race to curb the spread of Covid-19.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/russian-roulette-inside-putins-race-to-develop-a-covid-19-vaccine-before-the-west-11599039001>

### **Covid-19 news: Steroid drugs save lives in severe coronavirus patients**

"The evidence for benefit is strongest for dexamethasone," Stephen Evans at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine said in a statement. These new results, published today in the Journal of the American Medical Association, add weight to earlier findings from the RECOVERY trial, which found that dexamethasone reduced deaths in critically ill covid-19 patients by a third for patients on ventilators and by a fifth for those receiving oxygen – the first drug shown to do so. "This analysis increases confidence that [dexamethasone] has a really worthwhile role in critically ill patients with covid-19," Evans said. As a result of the study, the WHO is expected to update its guidance on treatment. In the UK, the drug has been in use for treating severely ill covid-19 patients since June.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-millions-of-pupils-return-to-schools-after-lockdown/>

### **CDC tells health officials to expect a coronavirus vaccine by November**

Health officials across the US have reportedly been notified that they should expect a coronavirus vaccine available to health workers and high-risk groups by November, amid concerns the accelerated vaccine development process has become politicized. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) informed health officials that "limited Covid-19 vaccine doses may be available by early November 2020", the New York Times reported. Meanwhile, in a letter to governors dated 27 August, Robert Redfield, the director of the CDC, said states "in the near future" will receive permit applications from McKesson, a company which has contracted with CDC to distribute vaccines to places including state and local health departments and hospitals.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/02/cdc-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-november-trump>

### **Coronavirus US: Vaccine trials could stop early if safe, says Fauci**

Dr Anthony Fauci told Kaiser Health News that researchers would have a 'moral obligation' to stop trials early if the data was good enough. The FDA has said a shot should cut rate of symptomatic COVID-19 by at least 50% to get its approval. Three coronavirus vaccines are currently in their final-stage trials in the US. Some experts and Americans are concerned that political pressure, not data, is driving the push to approve vaccines. Currently, the three trials are expected to conclude this winter

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-8690209/Dr-Fauci-says-coronavirus-vaccine-trials-stopped-weeks-early.htm>  
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### **AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine could be on the market by end of 2020 - Italy minister**

The first shots of British drug maker AstraZeneca's potential COVID-19 vaccine could be on the market by the end of 2020, Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said on Wednesday. "We are talking about a potential vaccine so we need to be extremely prudent, but... if the vaccine is confirmed as safe and able to meet its objective it will be already available by the end of 2020," Speranza told parliament. Drugmakers are racing to combat the pandemic, which has killed more than 850,000 people and infected over 25 million.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy-vaccine/astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-could-be-on-the-market-by-end-of-2020-italy-minister-idUSKBN25T2D7>

### **US refuses to join international effort to develop Covid-19 vaccine**

The US government has said that it will not participate in a global initiative to develop, manufacture and equitably distribute a vaccine for Covid-19 because the effort is co-led by the World Health Organization. The Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (Covax) is a plan developed by the WHO, along with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and is meant to accelerate the development and testing of a vaccine and work toward distributing it equally. The WHO announced last month that more than 170 countries were in talks to participate in Covax.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/01/us-covid-19-vaccine-refuses-international-effort-coronavirus>

### **Pregnant women in hospital with Covid-19 may not show symptoms, study finds**

Pregnant women in hospital with coronavirus are less likely to show symptoms and may have a greater risk of being admitted to an intensive care unit than non-pregnant women of similar age, a study has found. The analysis, which encompassed 77 studies conducted globally and was published in the British Medical Journal, looked at 11,432 pregnant women admitted to hospital and diagnosed as having suspected or confirmed Covid-19. It showed that pregnant women may be at increased risk of needing admission to an intensive care unit (ICU) than non-pregnant women of similar age, as is the case with other respiratory viruses such as the flu. This could be partially attributed to the understanding that a mother's immune system is often compromised to protect the baby, and that the lungs and the cardiovascular system - the coronavirus's attacking ground - are already under strain during pregnancy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/sep/01/pregnant-women-in-hospital-with-covid-19-may-not-show-symptoms-study-finds>

### **If everyone wears a mask, we can achieve 90% effect of lockdown: Dr D Nageshwar Reddy**

Handwashing isn't as effective as wearing a mask, when it comes to curbing the spread of COVID. Fact. Flying in an aeroplane is a surefire way to contract COVID because it is a closed air-conditioned space. Myth. Six months of on-again, off-again lockdowns later, the average Indian still has a whole load of basic questions about the COVID-19 virus — and all he/she has to contend with is a glut of news stories that often offer contradictory viewpoints about what is safe, and what isn't. To best understand the hard (and constantly evolving) scientific knowledge that we have about this virus, The New Indian Express Editor G S Vasu spoke to renowned gastroenterologist and Padma Bhushan awardee Dr D Nageshwar Reddy.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2020/sep/01/if-everyone-wears-a-mask-we-can-achieve-90-effect-of-lockdown-dr-d-nageshwar-reddy-2191168.html>

### **Health agency: COVID-19 hitting health workers hard in Americas**

The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Americas is unprecedented, an official with the Pan

American Health Organization (PAHO) said today in a press conference. And nowhere has its impact been bigger than in the healthcare workforce. PAHO Director Carissa Etienne, MBBS, MSc, said that nearly 570,000 healthcare workers in the Americas have fallen ill with COVID-19, and more than 2,500 have died. Overall, there have been almost 13.5 million cases in the Americas and more than 469,000 deaths.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/09/health-agency-covid-19-hitting-health-workers-hard-americas>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Greater Manchester lockdown easing U-turn after cases rise**

Parts of Greater Manchester will not have lockdown restrictions eased as planned following a government U-turn. Measures in Bolton and Trafford were due to be eased overnight after a fall in cases earlier in August. But they will "now remain under existing restrictions" following "a significant change in the level of infection rates over the last few days", the government announced. The region's mayor Andy Burnham said the U-turn had been "complete chaos". The boroughs had been due to allow people from different households to meet indoors and businesses to offer close contact services such as facials, but that has now been halted

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-53995677>

### **Coronavirus: Visiting restrictions reintroduced in Glasgow area**

Restrictions on visiting other households have been reintroduced in Glasgow and two neighbouring areas after a rise in coronavirus cases. The new rules affect more than 800,000 people in Glasgow city, West Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire. They are being told not to host people from other households in their own homes or visit another person's home. The restrictions came into effect from midnight. They will last for two weeks, but will be reviewed after a week. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said on Tuesday that 135 of the 314 new cases in Scotland over the past two days had been in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area. She said Covid-19 continued to be a dangerous and potentially deadly virus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-53989021>

### **Covid-19 outbreaks dampen Spanish tourist sector's hopes for the summer season**

According to Social Security Minister José Luis Escrivá, 132,000 new jobs were created in the first three weeks of the month. But the upward trend was reversed by fresh coronavirus outbreaks and travel advisories introduced by many countries that recommended not going to Spain. The slowdown began in late July, when the United Kingdom introduced a quarantine for travelers arriving from the country. This has impacted the tourism industry, which is usually a leading source of Spanish job creation at this time of the year and contributes more than 12% of Spain's gross domestic product (GDP). And hotels have already announced plans to close in late August due to a lack of demand, in a move that could have an adverse effect on September, traditionally still a strong month for tourism.

[https://english.elpais.com/spanish\\_news/2020-09-02/covid-19-outbreaks-dampen-spanish-tourisms-hopes-for-the-summer-season.html](https://english.elpais.com/spanish_news/2020-09-02/covid-19-outbreaks-dampen-spanish-tourisms-hopes-for-the-summer-season.html)

### **Spain's unemployment rises amid new COVID outbreaks, tourist restrictions**

The number of registered unemployed people in Spain rose in August as new outbreaks of the coronavirus and travel restrictions imposed by other countries began taking a toll after months of timid recovery from an initial lockdown. The number of jobless people rose by 0.79% in August, pushing up the national total to 3.80 million and ending a positive trend that began in May when Spain began emerging from one of Europe's strictest coronavirus lockdowns. The heavily tourism-dependent Balearic Islands were the hardest hit region, registering a 3% rise in unemployment. The pace of job creation in Spain stagnated in August, with only 6,822 more people with a formal working contract and contributing to social security in that month, compared to an increase of

161,000 in July, the social security minister said on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-economy-unemployed/spains-unemployment-rises-amid-new-covid-outbreaks-tourist-restrictions-idUSKBN25T1CX>

### **Russia reports nearly 5,000 new coronavirus cases**

Russia reported 4,952 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, pushing its national tally to 1,005,000, the fourth largest in the world. Authorities said 115 people had died in the last 24 hours, bringing the official death toll to 17,414.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-russia-cases/russia-reports-nearly-5000-new-coronavirus-cases-idUSKBN25T10T>

### **57 countries see surge in new coronavirus cases**

More than 50 countries around the world are experiencing a rise in new coronavirus cases, figures show. Europe, north Africa and south Asia have the highest concentration of countries that are experiencing an upswing in coronavirus cases, as the worldwide total passed 25 million. The UK is among the worst hit. Infections have spiked in two northern areas of England due to be released from lockdown against the advice of local officials.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-news-live-uk-cases-deaths-update-schools-reopen-portugal-latest-today-a9697956.html>

### **South Korea sees rise in critical Covid-19 cases**

More than 40% of new coronavirus cases in South Korea are being found in people over the age of 60, contributing in part to a surge in the number of Covid-19 patients who are severely or critically ill, health authorities said. South Korea is battling a second wave of infection, centred in the capital Seoul and surrounding areas which are home to 25 million people. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 267 new cases as of midnight last night, a slight increase over the day before. Overall, South Korea has reported 20,449 cases and 326 deaths. The number of severely or critically ill patients stood at 124, Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip told a briefing, from just nine reported on 18 August.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2020/0902/1162678-coronavirus-global/>

### **German minister rules out new nationwide coronavirus lockdown**

Germany will not need another national lockdown over the winter to keep the coronavirus under control despite rising infections, Health Minister Jens Spahn said on Wednesday. After initially keeping infections and deaths relatively low compared to its European neighbours, the number of new cases has accelerated in recent weeks, raising fears of a second wave.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-germany-minister/german-minister-rules-out-new-nationwide-coronavirus-lockdown-idUSL8N2FZ2C8>

### **Turkey seeing second peak of COVID-19 outbreak, health minister says**

Turkey is seeing the second peak of the coronavirus outbreak due to “carelessness” at weddings and other social gatherings, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said on Wednesday, amid a rapid rise in the number of daily cases and deaths. Speaking after a meeting of his coronavirus science team, Koca said the capital Ankara had seen the most rapid rise in the number of cases lately. He added that 29,865 healthcare workers had contracted the virus so far, with 52 of them dying. “The outbreak is increasingly continuing. The virus is spreading to more people each day. Our test numbers are rising every day, our new patient numbers are not falling.,” Koca said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-turkey/turkey-seeing-second-peak-of-covid-19-outbreak-health-minister-says-idUKA4N29K01W>

### **German health institute designates Canary Islands as coronavirus-risk region**

Germany’s national institute for infectious diseases on Wednesday added the Canary Islands to its

list of risk regions, citing a high rate of new coronavirus infections in the Spanish autonomous region. The Robert Koch Institute said the whole of Spain, mainland and islands, was a risk region. The institute's update is usually followed by a travel warning to the designated regions by the Foreign Ministry.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-spain/german-health-institute-designates-canary-island-s-as-coronavirus-risk-region-idUKKBN25T2ZU>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Government reapplies northern lockdown after 24 hours in latest U-turn**

The UK faces a permanent £33bn annual hit to the economy as it emerges from the coronavirus pandemic, Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey told MPs on Wednesday. Structural changes in the economy as people change their behaviours in response to the pandemic could cause long-term "scarring" to growth and employment, Mr Bailey warned. The Bank predicts that behavioural shifts, such as more working from home and people being more cautious about going out, will reduce gross domestic product (GDP) by 1.5 per cent every year below where it had been expected to be.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-news-live-uk-cases-deaths-update-test-quarantine-greece-scotland-latest-a9700216.html>

### **Cuba puts Havana into lockdown to stamp out spread of coronavirus**

Cuban authorities have ordered a strict 15-day lockdown of Havana in an effort to stamp out the low-level but persistent spread of the coronavirus in the capital. Aggressive anti-virus measures, including closing down air travel, have virtually eliminated COVID-19 in Cuba with the exception of Havana, where cases have surged from a handful a day to dozens daily over the last month. A daily curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. was instituted Tuesday. Most stores are barred from selling to shoppers from outside the immediate neighborhood in order to discourage people from moving around the city. Some Havana residents complained that the measures were complicating the already difficult task of buying food in a city hit by constant shortages and endless lines for a limited supply of basic goods.

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-09-02/cuba-closes-off-havana-coronavirus>

### **Coronavirus: The countries bolstering restrictions or re-entering lockdown**

Auckland re-emerged from lockdown this week, but the new cluster in the city was a reminder that globally, the coronavirus pandemic is far from over. Many countries who were apparently progressing well have been hit by second waves of Covid-19. In parts of Europe, surging infections numbers are placing pressure on governments, with some opting for localised lockdowns, mandated masks and even border closures to try and get on top of the virus.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/122637177/coronavirus-the-countries-bolstering-restrictions-or-re-entering-lockdown>