

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 4th Dec 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **U.S political leaders pledge to publicly take Covid vaccine to boost confidence**

Several leading American politicians have said they are willing to publicly receive a vaccination against the novel coronavirus to boost public confidence. [Misinformation has led to significant vaccine hesitancy. President-elect Joe Biden and former presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton are among those to have made the pledge to be vaccinated publicly if experts say a vaccine is safe.](#)

#### **Global Covid-19 deaths surpass 1.5 million**

The death toll due to the pandemic now exceeds 1.5 million, a grim milestone in the outbreak of the coronavirus which has infected more than 65 million people. [The mortality rate of the virus equates to one death every nine seconds on average.](#) During the last week, an average of 10,000 people died each day from the virus.

#### **Facebook finally starts to take a stand on fake news**

Social media giant Facebook has said it will be vigilant against the spread of misinformation on the platform related to a Covid-19 vaccine. [The spread of fake news on the site, in what experts describe as an 'infodemic,' has alarmed many.](#) Facebook has said it will remove posts spreading stories which could lead to 'imminent physical harm.'

#### **China's approach to the pandemic under scrutiny**

China's response to Covid-19 is under scrutiny. The country where the pandemic originated has faced scrutiny over its handling of the outbreak. Nature reveals a 'complex picture of science mixed with international politics' based on conversations with scientists and policymakers. [The country has pushed its research programme into a Covid-19 vaccine along quickly, in a bid to repair its tarnished image.](#) It has done so as a way to respond to criticism over its missteps during the earlier stages of the outbreak.

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Pfizer supply chain challenges led to slashing COVID-19 vaccine production target: WSJ**

Challenges in Pfizer Inc's supply chain for the raw materials used in its COVID-19 vaccine played a role in its decision to slash its 2020 production target, a Pfizer spokeswoman told Reuters. Pfizer has said in recent weeks that it anticipates producing 50 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine this year. That is down from an earlier target of 100 million doses. Pfizer's vaccine relies on a two dose regimen, meaning 50 million doses is enough to inoculate 25 million people.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7500692/pfizer-vaccine-delivery-2020-supply-chain/>

#### **Coronavirus: WHO considers e-vaccination certificates to ease travel**

The WHO recommended that countries do not begin issuing immunity passports. A number of governments have suggested they are a route back to normality. British experts warned issuing immunity passports would lead to inequality. WHO: Rich nations will lose hundreds of billions if

vaccine isn't issued equally

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9013955/WHO-looks-possible-e-vaccination-certificates-travel.html>

### **Spain's government is studying a four-day work week**

Spain's government is analysing shortening working hours as well as cutting the working-week to four days. According to Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias, leader of the left-wing Unidas Podemos, the government is considering proposing shorter working hours to boost employment. The idea of a shorter working week has been around for years across the world, but the pandemic this year, and its impact on work, wellbeing and inequality, has led to a new push to think about economies and social structures.

<https://luxtimes.lu/business-finance/42448-spain-s-government-is-studying-a-four-day-work-week>

### **Biden says he will join former presidents in publicly getting COVID vaccine**

President-elect Joe Biden said he would publicly take a vaccine when it's available to encourage the public to get vaccinated, joining three former presidents who recently pledged to do the same. Biden said he'd "be happy" to join former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton in getting the vaccine in public to prove it is safe. "When Dr. Fauci says we have a vaccine that is safe, that's the moment in which I will stand before the public," Biden said during an interview on CNN Thursday night. "People have lost faith in the ability of the vaccine to work," Biden told CNN, pointing to the high number of cases. "It matters what a president and vice president do. I think my three predecessors have set the model on what should be done."

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/12/03/biden-says-hed-be-happy-join-former-presidents-taking-covid-vaccine-publicly/3819923001/>

### **Biden asks Fauci to join COVID-19 team, stresses need for masks**

Biden told CNN that he plans to ask the public to wear masks for 100 days to help drive down the spread of the novel coronavirus. "I'm going to ask the public for 100 days to mask," Biden said. "Not forever, 100 days." His office would issue a standing order for people to wear masks in federal buildings and on interstate transportation, including aeroplanes and buses, he added. Biden also said he would get the COVID-19 vaccine when Fauci says it is safe and would be happy to take it publicly. "It's important to communicate to the American people it's safe, safe to do this," he said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/4/biden-fauci-covid-team-stresses-need-masks>

### **Bali struggles with 'COVID-poor' as Indonesian cases hit record**

Chronic malnutrition that has long afflicted isolated communities in the remote eastern cape of Bali has ballooned as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with a new wave of "COVID-poor" emerging in urban areas, NGOs have said thousands of people on the island are going hungry. With about 60 percent of Bali's gross domestic product attributed to tourism before the coronavirus struck, the island's economy has been the hardest hit in Indonesia by the pandemic - the central bank reported negative growth of just less than 11 percent for the province in September.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/4/covid-poor-emerge-in-bali-as-indonesian-cases-hit-new-records>

### **Coronavirus claims 1.5 million lives globally with 10,000 dying each day**

Over 1.5 million people have lost their lives due to COVID-19 with one death reported every nine seconds on a weekly average, as vaccinations are set to begin in December in a handful of developed nations. Half a million deaths occurred in just the last two months, indicating that the severity of the pandemic is far from over. Nearly 65 million people globally have been infected by the disease and the worst affected country, United States, is currently battling a third wave of coronavirus infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-global-casualties-idAFKBN28D37M>

### **Pizza bar worker linked to SA coronavirus lockdown 'in hiding', but Premier stands by**

## comments

The lawyer for a pizza bar worker who was accused of causing South Australia's coronavirus lockdown by allegedly lying to contact tracers says his client is "worried about stepping outside" for fear of backlash. SA Police on Wednesday revealed they would not press charges against the man due to a lack of evidence, saying SA Health had not provided key information which was deemed "confidential and privileged".

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-03/lawyer-speaks-for-pizza-worker-linked-to-sa-coronavirus-lockdown/12945954>

## Key test: South Koreans sit university exam amid COVID-19 surge

Nearly 500,000 high school students are sitting the test with stringent measures imposed to curb the virus. South Korea fell quiet on Thursday as hundreds of thousands of students sat for the country's high-stakes national university entrance exam amid a surge in coronavirus cases that has prompted new measures to curb its spread, including for candidates sitting the test. Teenagers spend years preparing for the exam, which can mean a place in one of the elite colleges that are seen as key to future careers, incomes and even marriage prospects.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/3/key-test-south-koreans-sit-university-exam-amid-covid-19-surge>

## First batch of Pfizer's Covid vaccine will arrive in UK in 'HOURS' as military carry out dry run for Britain's biggest-ever vaccination programme - but care homes will have ...

Initial batches of the Pfizer/BioNTech jab are already heading to Britain after it was approved by UK regulators. Vaccine will be distributed at hospitals first, and then GPs and city hubs in stadiums and conference centres. The UK has ordered 40million doses in total, with several millions due by end of 2020 and the rest next year

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9013511/First-batch-Pfizers-Covid-vaccine-arrive-UK-HOURS.html>

## Exit Strategies

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### France's PM says COVID-19 vaccines will be free for all

French Prime Minister Jean Castex said on Thursday it was "a matter of weeks" before the country will start rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations and that they will be free for all. Castex also told a news conference that the vaccinations would be deployed in three phases

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-vaccination-idUSP6N2HA01Y>

### U.K.'s Covid-19 Vaccine Program to Test Its National Health Service

Britain's authorization of a Covid-19 vaccine, the first in the West, sets in motion an ambitious plan that will test the capabilities of its state-run National Health Service: Inoculate everybody in the country over 50 within months. The U.K. has been laying the groundwork for some time. The scale and urgency of the task is such that the NHS, already under enormous pressure because of the pandemic, has appealed for retired doctors and nurses to rejoin the service and for thousands of volunteers to train as vaccinators and support staff. The project will be "the biggest vaccination campaign in our history," NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens said Wednesday.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-k-s-covid-19-vaccine-program-to-test-its-state-run-medical-system-11607000400>

### Covid-19 Vaccines Are 'Liquid Gold' to Organized Crime, Interpol Says

Criminal gangs will likely attempt to get their hands on the new Covid-19 vaccines, international police organization Interpol warned, potentially disrupting supplies of the crucial shots as they become available. The agency issued a global orange notice—which it describes as a serious and imminent threat to public safety—to its 194 members, calling the vaccines "liquid gold." It warned that counterfeit vaccines or fake coronavirus tests could become a growing problem as international travel gradually resumes in the months to come. "As governments are preparing to roll out vaccines, criminal organizations are planning to infiltrate or disrupt supply chains," Interpol Secretary-General

Jürgen Stock said

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/virus-vaccines-are-liquid-gold-to-organized-crime-interpol-warns-11607000854>

### **Scientist who created Covid-19 vaccine 'disappointed' he's not allowed to get it**

TV presenters Ben Shephard and Susanna Reid spoke to Professor Ugur Sahin, Chief Executive of BioNTech, the company which created the newly-approved coronavirus vaccine. The professor revealed he is actually unable to take his own vaccine at present, because it has only been approved in the UK and because he is not allowed to take it first, as a drug developer. Professor Ugur lives in Germany where the vaccine has not yet been approved, and he admitted this was "disappointing".

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/scientist-who-created-covid-19-23107653>

### **Covid-19 NI: Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor on vaccine announcement**

Northern Ireland Chief Medical Officer Dr Michael McBride and Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Ian Young write about the approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine: "An unprecedented vaccination programme can now begin, involving a massive logistical exercise that will span many months. Each person receiving the vaccination will require two doses. Strict conditions on vaccine deployment will be set by the MHRA, while the JCVI (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) will guide on which population groups should receive the vaccine first. The roll-out will take up a large part of 2021."

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/health/covid-19-ni-chief-medical-19388935>

### **Coronavirus: UK may still need circuit breaker lockdown in 2021**

Britain may still face a circuit breaker lockdown in January or February despite the mass roll-out of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine, a top scientist has warned. Professor Liam Smeeth, an epidemiology and public health expert at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, issued his caution as Britain made one of 2020's biggest breakthroughs and announced vaccination will start next week. Casting a shadow over re-ignited hopes of a return to normality, he added that the virus would be with us 'for the foreseeable future - and maybe forever'. 'A further circuit breaker in January or possibly February is likely to be needed but it is realistic to hope that by March or April the vast majority of older people, care home residents, and those with severe conditions will have been immunised.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9010469/Britain-need-circuit-breaker-lockdown-January-February.html>

### **Covid: Travel allowed between Wales and parts of the UK**

People will be able to travel from Wales to tier one and two areas in England and Scotland from Friday. The new regulations prohibit travel into tier three zones in England, tiers three and four in Scotland and the whole of Northern Ireland. Previously people could only travel out of Wales if it was "essential". But the Welsh Government said it still strongly advised people against travelling to other parts of the UK to help control the spread of the virus.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55170248>

### **Why isn't Australia rolling out a vaccine as quickly as Britain? Why is it taking longer?**

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson says COVID vaccinations will start rolling out to the British public next week. So why do Australians have to wait? Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Health Minister Greg Hunt and John Skerritt, the head of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, spent more than an hour on Thursday explaining why, and what happens next. The Government is looking at four different vaccines, including the Pfizer vaccine just approved for emergency use in the UK. Mr Morrison said all four vaccines the Government was pursuing still had "stages to pass in the months ahead".

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-03/covid-vaccine-australia-uk-when-get-it/12946148>

### **Staggered return planned for university students in England after Christmas**

Students in England will be asked to stay at home after Christmas and continue their studies online

at the start of the new year as part of a staggered return to university to minimise the risk of Covid transmission. The government wants students to stagger their journeys back to campus over a five-week period beginning on 4 January 2021, with everyone expected to be back at university by 7 February, and coronavirus tests available to all returning students. Many students have expressed frustration with their experience at university this term, with the bulk of studies online, social activities curtailed because of Covid restrictions, long periods of self-isolation and harsh penalties for breaches.

[https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/dec/02/staggered-return-planned-for-university-students-in-england-after-christmas?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/dec/02/staggered-return-planned-for-university-students-in-england-after-christmas?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

### **Hospitals poised for rollout of Covid vaccine next week as first deliveries set to arrive**

NHS trusts are poised for the roll out the coronavirus vaccine after it emerged the first of 40 million doses are to be administered from next week. It comes as the military reportedly carried out dry-run drills for what will be the country's biggest ever mass vaccination, with the first deliveries of the vaccine arriving as soon as today. Boris Johnson has warned of the "immense logistical challenges" in distributing the newly approved jab as it emerged that most care home residents will need to wait to receive it.

[https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/hospitals-poised-for-roll-out-of-covid-vaccine-as-first-deliveries-set-to-arrive-b147150.html?utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Twitter#Echobox=1606980567](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/hospitals-poised-for-roll-out-of-covid-vaccine-as-first-deliveries-set-to-arrive-b147150.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1606980567)

### **UK care home residents to miss out on first round of Covid vaccinations**

In England, hundreds of thousands of care home residents will miss out on the first wave of Covid vaccinations when the rollout begins next week, the government has admitted. The fragility of the newly licensed Pfizer vaccine means it will first be delivered only to hospitals. The news came hours after the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI), which advises ministers, said care home residents and staff should be prioritised. Boris Johnson described the distribution of the vaccine as "an immense logistical challenge" and said it would take months before all of the most vulnerable were protected.

[https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/02/uk-care-home-residents-to-miss-out-on-first-wave-of-covid-vaccinations?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/02/uk-care-home-residents-to-miss-out-on-first-wave-of-covid-vaccinations?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Facebook to remove COVID-19 vaccine-related misinformation**

Facebook said Thursday it will start removing false claims about COVID-19 vaccines, in its latest move to counter a tide of coronavirus-related online misinformation. In the coming weeks, the social network will begin taking down any Facebook or Instagram posts with false information about the vaccines that have been debunked by public health experts. The U.S. tech giant is taking action as the first COVID-19 vaccines are set to be rolled out. Britain this week became the first country to give emergency authorization for a vaccine developed by American drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech, and inoculations could start within days. Regulators in the U.S., the European Union and Canada are also vetting vaccines.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/facebook-to-remove-covid19-vaccinerelated-misinformation-facebook-covid-vaccines-misinformation-misinformation-b1765786.html>

### **Facebook vows to remove false claims about Covid-19 vaccines**

Facebook on Thursday said it would start removing false claims about Covid-19 vaccines, in a tightening of its policies on health-related misinformation. The new restrictions come a day after UK prime minister Boris Johnson vowed to fight the spread of misleading content from "anti-vaxxers", as the UK prepares to roll out Covid-19 vaccinations from next week. Facebook said in a blog post that it would remove falsities debunked by public health experts, citing as an example claims that Covid-19 jabs contain microchips, a theory often spuriously linked to Bill Gates. Earlier this year,

Facebook began removing Covid-19-related misinformation, but only if it could “contribute to imminent physical harm”, while material considered false by fact-checkers was covered with a warning label.

<https://www.ft.com/content/2fc9e693-790a-40ab-8ac2-0aafd59ef515>

### **Covid-19 contracts: government refuses to say who benefited from political connections**

The government has been accused of “completely unnecessary secrecy” after refusing to say which companies have been awarded multimillion-pound Covid-19 contracts after being processed in a high-priority channel for firms with political connections. A report by the National Audit Office last month stated that a government unit, set up to procure PPE, established the high-priority lane to deal with leads that came “from government officials, ministers’ offices, MPs and members of the House of Lords, senior NHS staff and other health professionals”. The 493 companies given high priority due to these connections secured contracts to supply PPE with 10 times the success rate of nearly 15,000 companies that were not given enhanced attention.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/03/government-secrecy-over-huge-covid-contracts-completely-unnecessary-say-critics>

### **Staten Island bar shut down after declaring itself an 'autonomous zone' and defying Covid-19 rules, sheriff's office says**

A Staten Island bar was shut down after calling itself an "autonomous zone" and defying Covid-19 restrictions, the New York City Sheriff's Office said. The bar, Mac's Public House, was also not following face covering rules and social distancing guidelines while continuing to allow indoor dining despite being in a designated "orange zone," the sheriff's office said in a statement. An executive order by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo allows only outdoor dining of up to four people per table at businesses in areas designated as orange zones. The bar has refused to shut down because the restrictions have impacted business, said Louis Gelormino, a lawyer representing the bar. "They opened two months before Covid and spent \$150,000 to open the place," Gelormino said. "About a week ago, they refused to close down the place and abide by those state restrictions."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/staten-island-bar-shut-down-after-declaring-itself-an-autonomous-zone-and-defying-covid-19-rules-sheriffs-office-says/ar-BB1bBG4g>

### **More than 2,000 people protest outside Staten Island bar after owner was dragged away in handcuffs when he declared it an 'autonomous zone' from lockdown rules and invited**

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Sheriff's deputies shut down a Staten Island bar and arrested the owner on Tuesday night. Danny Presti was led out in handcuffs after repeated warnings to stop serving customers indoors. The bar has been fined thousands of dollars as it continued to serve patrons inside and to operate past the 10pm curfew for restaurant service that Cuomo imposed citywide. Demonstrators gathered on both Tuesday and Wednesday evening to protest. The bar is located in a coronavirus hot spot, and with hospitalizations surging, Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered that indoor dining be suspended

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9012567/2-000-people-gather-outside-Staten-Island-bar-declared-autonomous-zone.html>

### **Covid-19: Boris Johnson vows to combat vaccine 'disinformation'**

Boris Johnson has promised action to tackle online "disinformation" about vaccines that could prevent take-up. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer called for emergency legislation to fine social media firms who failed to clamp down on incorrect information. Mr Johnson agreed online "anti-vaxxers" were a problem and promised a plan to deal with them "very shortly". It came as the UK approved the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, paving the way for mass vaccinations.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55160246>

### **Covid-19: Facebook to take down false vaccine claims**

Facebook says it will start removing false claims about Covid-19 vaccines to prevent "imminent physical harm". The company says it is accelerating its plans to ban misleading and false information on its Facebook and Instagram platforms following the announcement of the first vaccine being approved for use in the United Kingdom. Among already-debunked claims that won't be allowed are falsehoods about vaccine ingredients, safety, effectiveness and side-effects. Also banned will be the long-running false conspiracy theory that coronavirus vaccines will contain a microchip to control or monitor patients.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-55175222>

### **Chefs vs scientists: France's pandemic fight to keep eating out**

Chez Françoise is a discreetly located venue near the French parliament whose visitors' book boasts signatures from former leaders including Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. Options include a Menu Parlementaire — three courses including wild boar pate with chestnuts, veal and crepes suzette. In late September, as a second wave of COVID-19 infection loomed, government scientific advisers wanted new restrictions on bars, restaurants and cafes. Fearing his business would suffer, Pascal Mousset, who owns Chez Françoise and four other restaurants in the French capital, decided to seek help from an old contact. "For pity's sake, don't close Paris," Mousset texted to Alain Griset, a junior minister at the finance and economy ministry.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/12/03/world/france-coronavirus-dining-out/>

### **Reluctant partners: French companies resisted home-working as virus surged**

On the October evening President Emmanuel Macron ordered France back into lockdown, the chief executive of Thales told staff in a memo that anti-COVID measures already in place at the company conformed with the new requirements. At the time, staff were required to wear a face mask at work, stagger arrival and departure times and were permitted to work up to two days per week at home. But in his address, Macron urged everyone to work from home full-time if they could - although the order was not legally binding and the final decision was left to employers. Sensing a reticence at Thales, several unions complained to the labour inspectorate, according to the hard-left CGT union.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france-homeworking-idUKKBN28D0RB>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Germany Extends Partial Lockdown Until Jan. 10 to Curb Virus**

Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany will extend its partial lockdown by three more weeks into next year as the country struggles to regain control of the coronavirus spread. Bars, gyms and cinemas will remain closed until Jan. 10 and the government will reconvene with regional leaders on Jan. 4 to reassess the restrictions, Merkel said late Wednesday after talks with the premiers of Germany's 16 states.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-02/germany-extends-partial-lockdown-until-jan-10-to-fight-virus>

### **Germany's second lockdown pushed services sector deeper into recession: PMI**

Germany's second lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the services sector deeper into recession in November, bringing overall private sector activity in Europe's largest economy to a near halt, a survey showed on Thursday. Restaurants, bars, hotels, gyms and entertainment venues have been closed since Nov. 2 to contain an aggressive second wave of coronavirus infections. Factories and shops remain open with social distancing conditions in place.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-economy-pmi/germanys-second-lockdown-pushed-services-sector-deeper-into-recession-pmi-idUSKBN28D110>

### **Germany Extends Lockdown Again as Infections Remain High**

Germany lengthened its coronavirus restrictions for the third time in the current wave of the pandemic, saying late Wednesday that the constraints would remain in place until at least Jan. 10,

after a mild lockdown first introduced in November has failed to push infections lower.

<https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/covid-2020-12-03/card/5ibhOqSHWA4zvrhTH1Pc>

### **Astronauts' lessons on how to cope — in lockdown and beyond**

If lockdown and social distancing are not enough of a challenge, how would you like to be confined to a research lab with your colleagues for three weeks — 19 metres under the sea? Or perhaps you would prefer to be left in a cave system, isolated from the outside world with no natural light, minimal privacy and limited equipment for hygiene and comfort? Welcome to the world of astronaut training. Both Nasa and the European Space Agency run field studies in locations with similarities to working in space: a “dangerous and unfriendly” place, according to Nasa’s website. Hazards include isolation and confinement, while behavioural issues are “inevitable”

<https://www.ft.com/content/0d41f06c-3bab-4599-a184-f1fb52ced4d4>

### **Meals on wheels: Camper van dining beats lockdown rules in Belgium**

A Belgian restaurant has found a way to keep orders rolling in during lockdown - by serving its seafood to customers in camper vans. People can rent a vehicle or bring their own, park up outside the “Matthias and Sea” restaurant and wait for masked staff to bring the food over from the kitchens. COVID-19 restrictions have banned indoor dining. But restaurants can still do takeaways and serve food outside. Owner Mattia Collu said he got the idea while delivering orders to people’s houses in and around his base in the southern village of Tarcienne.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-belgium-restaurant-idINKBN28D25P>

### **From Australia to the Philippines, coronavirus lockdowns drive spike in online child sex abuse**

Out-of-school kids and adult predators spending more time at home and on the internet during the coronavirus pandemic is the “perfect storm” driving a spike in online child sex abuse around the world, activists and police say. From slums in the Philippines to Australia’s suburbs, the cross-border crime has mushroomed as offenders take advantage of school closures and lockdowns to reach children — either in person or via social media, gaming sites and the dark web. In Australia, federal police received more than 21,000 reports of child sex abuse in the 12 months to June 30, an increase of over 7,000 cases on the previous year. Their investigators also recorded a 136% increase in online child sex exploitation material.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/12/03/world/coronavirus-lockdown-child-abuse/>

### **Greece extends nationwide lockdown by a week, to Dec. 14**

Greece has extended to Dec. 14 a nationwide lockdown imposed last month to contain a surge in new coronavirus cases, government spokesman Stelios Petsas said on Thursday. The lockdown, the country’s second since the pandemic began, was extended by a week. “There is a stabilisation or rather a decline in the (number of) cases but at a slower pace than expected,” Petsas told a televised briefing. Greece has registered a total of 109,655 COVID-19 cases and 2,186 deaths, with northern Greece hardest hit and hospitals operating at almost full capacity. The restrictions were initially expected to end on Nov. 30 but the government had already extended them to Dec. 7. Petsas said seasonal stores, selling Christmas items, would re-open next week.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-greece-lockdown/greece-extends-nationwide-lockdown-by-a-week-to-dec-14-idUSKBN28D1F9?il=0>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Turkey announces vaccination plan for Chinese CoronaVac**

Turkey’s health minister has announced a plan to start using an experimental Chinese COVID-19 vaccine later this month amid a surge in infections and deaths. Fahrettin Koca had previously announced an agreement with China’s Sinovac Biotech for 50 million doses of CoronaVac, which is

currently in late-stage trials. Koca said in a statement late on Wednesday the first shipment of the vaccine will arrive in Turkey after December 11. The minister said early use authorisation would be granted after Turkish labs confirm the shots are safe and after assessment of initial results from the latest trials. "If developments continue positively as we expect, Turkey would be among the first countries in the world to begin vaccinations in the early phase," Koca said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/3/turkey-announces-vaccination-plan-for-chinese-coronavac>

### **How UK approved BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine ahead of EU**

Since October, when the first data from the BioNTech/Pfizer trial became available, scientists and clinicians at the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, or MHRA, had "worked round the clock" to review more than 1,000 pages of information, according to June Raine, the agency's chief executive. Normally each stage of a clinical trial must be completed before the next stage begins, but the BioNTech/Pfizer trial had been adapted by the companies to allow the different trial stages to "overlap", Ms Raine said. The MHRA then undertook a rolling review of the data, she said, to allow for the assessment of the vaccine "in the shortest time possible".

<https://www.ft.com/content/021720c2-157e-40b4-b2f9-33515032fb19>

### **Public trust vital for Covid-19 vaccine programmes, says WHO**

The WHO has urged European countries to prepare for vaccinations against Covid-19, stressing that community acceptance will be crucial to the success of the health programmes. More than 200 Covid vaccines are under development, some of which have already completed phase 3 clinical trials with an efficacy rate of more than 90%. This week the UK became the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19. The UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is also reviewing vaccines from the US company Moderna and the Oxford University/AstraZeneca team.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/03/public-trust-vital-for-covid-19-vaccine-programmes-who-eu>

### **Repurposed Antiviral Drugs for Covid-19 — Interim WHO Solidarity Trial Results**

At 405 hospitals in 30 countries, 11,330 adults underwent randomization; 2750 were assigned to receive remdesivir, 954 to hydroxychloroquine, 1411 to lopinavir (without interferon), 2063 to interferon (including 651 to interferon plus lopinavir), and 4088 to no trial drug. Adherence was 94 to 96% midway through treatment, with 2 to 6% crossover. In total, 1253 deaths were reported (median day of death, day 8; interquartile range, 4 to 14). The Kaplan-Meier 28-day mortality was 11.8% (39.0% if the patient was already receiving ventilation at randomization and 9.5% otherwise). Death occurred in 301 of 2743 patients receiving remdesivir and in 303 of 2708 receiving its control (rate ratio, 0.95; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.81 to 1.11; P=0.50), in 104 of 947 patients receiving hydroxychloroquine and in 84 of 906 receiving its control (rate ratio, 1.19; 95% CI, 0.89 to 1.59; P=0.23), in 148 of 1399 patients receiving lopinavir and in 146 of 1372 receiving its control (rate ratio, 1.00; 95% CI, 0.79 to 1.25; P=0.97), and in 243 of 2050 patients receiving interferon and in 216 of 2050 receiving its control (rate ratio, 1.16; 95% CI, 0.96 to 1.39; P=0.11). No drug definitely reduced mortality, overall or in any subgroup, or reduced initiation of ventilation or hospitalization duration.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2023184>

### **Covid-19 vaccine: First jabs 'could cut 99% of deaths' - Jonathan Van-Tam**

Up to 99% of Covid-19 hospitalisations and deaths could be avoided with the first wave of vaccinations, England's deputy chief medical officer Prof Jonathan Van-Tam has said. Speaking to BBC News, he said that would be possible if everyone on the first priority list took the vaccine and it was highly effective. He said it was key to go "as fast" and at the "highest volume" as possible. But he acknowledged there would need to be some flexibility in the list. On Wednesday the UK became the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for use. The BBC understands

that some of the first delivery of the Pfizer vaccine is travelling via the Eurotunnel to the UK on Thursday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55169799>

### **Italy curbs Christmas travel to avoid virus 'third wave'**

Italy on Thursday announced national travel restrictions for the Christmas holidays designed to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the European country first hit by the pandemic. The new rules, together with an existing curfew and other regulations already in place, seek to curb circulation throughout the country during the festive period by limiting the number of gatherings. Earlier this year, a punishing lockdown of all Italy's 60 million residents helped bring the outbreak under control, but the government is trying to avoid missteps made over the summer after the lockdown lifted, when the return of vacationers fuelled a new rise in cases.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-italy-curbs-christmas-virus.html>

### **Inside China's response to COVID**

Since SARS-CoV-2 was first reported in China almost a year ago, policymakers have swung the weight of the state's resources towards developing a vaccine. Their approach, alongside similar efforts in other countries, has thrown a spotlight on immunology, epidemiology and virology, bringing increased funding, prestige and public interest. Conversations with Chinese immunologists, policymakers and funders — including some who asked not to be named so they could speak more freely — reveal a complex picture of science mixed with international politics. Scientists, drug developers and research institutions are racing to tackle the virus. But some are concerned about the cost of rapid progress, and the incentives that have been created for companies and researchers to rush their work.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03361-7>

### **How is China beating covid-19 and are the reported numbers reliable?**

As the second wave of the covid-19 pandemic worsens across the northern hemisphere, life has largely returned to normal in the country where the virus first made its mark. Restaurants and markets in Chinese cities are bustling, as are tourist sites and cinemas. In Wuhan, where a lockdown in late January first shocked and then became a precedent for the rest of the world, recent months have seen packed concerts, food festivals and pool parties.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24833112-900-how-is-china-beating-covid-19-and-are-the-reported-numbers-reliable/>

### **'Corners weren't cut': WHO doctor says that Covid-19 vaccines were not rushed**

World Health Organisation (WHO) spokesperson Dr Margaret Harris has said that Covid-19 vaccines have not been rushed. The science that was needed to develop them was already there from the time of Sars and Murs. "Corners haven't been cut," she told RTÉ radio's Morning Ireland. The regulatory authorities were kept up to date during the development process so they were able to move swiftly on seeing the final data.

[https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40139276.html?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40139276.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

### **Incomplete data stalls Swiss authorisation of Covid-19 vaccines**

Switzerland's medical regulator Swissmedic says it lacks the necessary information to sign off on three different coronavirus vaccines ordered by the government. The regulator said important data on safety, efficacy and quality are still missing. It has reached out to the manufacturers, who provided data from their studies. "We lack data on the effectiveness of the clinical trials and on the important subgroups that participated in these large studies," said Claus Bolte, head of the authorisation division at Swissmedic, at a press briefing on Tuesday organised by the Federal Office of Public Health. For example, Swissmedic wants to know about the pre-existing illnesses of the people who took part in these studies. According to the regulator, acceptance of such rapidly

developed vaccines requires a high degree of trust in manufacturers and approving authorities. It is therefore important to examine very closely the effects on different groups of people.

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/incomplete-data-stalls-swiss-authorisation-of-covid-19-vaccines/46196598#.X8dtof2Uab8.twitter>

### **Bill Gates warns the next five months will be 'pretty grim' for US - as he vows to immediately take a COVID-19 vaccine and officials say Americans will be given vaccination cards to show they've had the shots**

Bill Gates said the next five months look 'pretty grim' for the United States unless COVID-19 stops surging across the country. The billionaire philanthropist said things could likely return to normal by the spring if Americans doubled down on public health measures now. He also vowed to immediately take a COVID-19 vaccine once it's available to him. It comes as health officials revealed yesterday that Americans will likely be armed with a COVID-19 vaccine card to keep track of the shots.

[https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9014825/Bill-Gates-warns-five-months-pretty-grim-COVID.html?ito=social-twitter\\_dailymailus](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9014825/Bill-Gates-warns-five-months-pretty-grim-COVID.html?ito=social-twitter_dailymailus)

### **Pfizer Slashed Its Original Covid-19 Vaccine Rollout Target After Supply-Chain Obstacles**

When Pfizer Inc. said last month it expects to ship half the Covid-19 vaccines it had originally planned for this year, the decision highlighted the challenges drug makers face in rapidly building supply chains to meet the high demand. "Scaling up the raw material supply chain took longer than expected," a company spokeswoman said. "And it's important to highlight that the outcome of the clinical trial was somewhat later than the initial projection."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-slashed-its-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-target-after-facing-supply-chain-obstacles-11607027787>

### **Moderna plans to test COVID-19 vaccine on children**

Moderna is planning to test the effects of its COVID-19 vaccine on children. Its study will include administering two doses of the vaccine within 28 days to 3,000 children aged 12 to 17. Earlier this week, the United Kingdom became the first country to grant emergency use to the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, raising hopes that an end to the global pandemic, which has seen almost 65 million people infected and nearly 1.5 million deaths, might be in sight. Moderna, an American firm, said this week it would apply to United States and European regulators to grant emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine after further evidence confirmed the efficacy of its jab stood at more than 94 percent. Neither vaccines can be injected in children and pregnant women.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/3/moderna-plans-to-test-its-coronavirus-vaccine-on-children>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Fall in UK Covid cases brings relief to hospitals**

Coronavirus cases have halved in the past two weeks among people in their twenties and seventies, with falls continuing in all age groups. Test and Trace figures also show a drop of more than a quarter

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/steep-fall-in-coronavirus-cases-across-britain-brings-relief-to-hospitals-d2xh9s53m>

### **Sweden's COVID-19 death toll rises above 7,000**

Sweden, whose unorthodox pandemic strategy placed it in the global spotlight, registered 35 new COVID-19 related deaths, Health Agency statistics showed on Thursday, taking the total to 7,007. Sweden registered 6,485 new coronavirus cases on Thursday. The increase compared with a previous high of 7,240 daily cases recorded two weeks ago. Sweden's death rate per capita is several times higher than that of its Nordic neighbours but lower than several European countries that opted for lockdowns.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-sweden-cases-idUSL8N2IJ3G8>

### **COVID-19: UK deaths pass 60,000 as another 414 are recorded - and 14,879 more cases**

There have been a further 14,879 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 414 deaths recorded in the UK in the last 24 hours, government figures show. The update brings the total number of coronavirus cases in the UK to 1,674,134 - and takes the number of deaths within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test to 60,113. On Wednesday, 16,170 cases and 648 deaths were recorded.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-deaths-pass-60000-as-another-414-are-recorded-and-14879-more-cases-12150076>

### **Positive coronavirus tests fall 28 per cent as England's lockdown makes its mark**

Positive Covid cases dropped more than a quarter in England last week, according to the latest Test and Trace figures, as the country begins to feel the effects of the nationwide lockdown. Figures from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) found that just over 110,000 people in England tested positive for coronavirus in England in the week to 25 November, marking a 28 per cent slump on the previous week.

<https://www.cityam.com/positive-coronavirus-tests-fall-28-per-cent-as-englands-lockdown-makes-its-mark/>

### **South Africa fears virus return after cluster outbreaks**

Localised coronavirus outbreaks in parts of South Africa have raised fears that the country could see a resurgence in cases compounded by gatherings during the upcoming festive season. Officials in Africa's hardest virus-hit country are scrambling to contain infections after a flare-up was reported in the impoverished Eastern Cape province and adjacent Western Cape province last month. The national number of new daily cases crept over 3,000 last week, up 50% from an average of 2,000 earlier in November.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2020/1203/1182055-world-covid/>

### **Europe struggles with 2nd virus wave as winter arrives**

France, having the highest number of COVID-19 cases with more than 2.27 million, announced a gradual exit strategy from lockdown last month. On Nov. 28, lockdowns started to loosen with the opening of shops that had been considered non-essential, but only until 9:00 p.m. local time (2000GMT). Religious services resumed, albeit with a 30-person limit. However, lockdown will be lifted on Dec. 15, but a curfew will be imposed from 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. excluding Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Museums, theaters, movie houses, conservatories, and music schools will reopen. On Jan. 20, restaurants, cafes, bars, gyms, and sports halls will finally reopen.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/europe-struggles-with-2nd-virus-wave-as-winter-arrives/2064268>

### **Swedes' support for anti-lockdown stance slips amid rising Covid deaths**

Support for Sweden's government and public confidence in authorities' ability to handle the coronavirus crisis are sliding as the country's anti-lockdown approach continues to be tested by mounting numbers of deaths and new cases. As the national health agency announced 6,485 new infections and 33 more deaths on Thursday, the prime minister, Stefan Löfven, said the country's high schools would switch to distance learning from 7 December for the rest of the term. "This is being done so as to have a slowing effect on the spread of the disease, Löfven said, adding that the measure was "not an extended break". What the country does now "will determine how we can celebrate Christmas", he said.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/swedes-support-for-anti-lockdown-stance-slips-amid-rising-covid-deaths/ar-B1bBdsK>

### **Lebanese minister says COVID cases rising, beds won't suffice**

Lebanon will not have enough hospital beds to cope with increasing COVID-19 cases, the health minister in the caretaker government warned on Thursday, saying compliance with a two-week lockdown that ended this week had been patchy. In a Tweet, Hamad Hassan said cases were on the rise and although more hospital beds had been added, these would not be enough. Intensive care

units were at critical capacity when Lebanon ordered the lockdown and caretaker Prime Minister Hassan Diab had warned the shutdown may be extended if people did not comply.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-lebanon/lebanese-minister-says-covid-cases-rising-beds-wont-suffice-idINKBN28D14A>

### **Hungary reports record 182 daily COVID deaths**

Hungary reported 182 new COVID-19 deaths on Thursday, by far the highest daily toll since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, government data showed. Thursday's tally brought the total number of deaths to 5,324, while infections rose by 6,635 to 231,844. As of Wednesday, Hungary ran the European Union's fifth-highest death rate per 100,000 people over a two-week period based on data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government imposed a partial lockdown three weeks ago to slow the spread of the virus, including a 1900 GMT curfew and closing secondary schools.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-hungary-casualties/hungary-reports-record-182-daily-covid-deaths-idUKKBN28DOZP?il=0>

### **Italy bans Xmas midnight mass, movement between regions amid high COVID toll**

Italians will not be able to attend midnight mass or move between regions over the Christmas period, a top health ministry official said on Wednesday, as the country battles high coronavirus infection rates and deaths. Italy has been reporting more daily COVID-19 fatalities than any other European nation in recent weeks and, while the increase in new cases and hospital admissions is slowing, the government is worried about gatherings over Christmas. Junior Health Minister Sandra Zampa said Christmas Eve mass must end by around 8:30 p.m. so that worshippers can return home before a 10 p.m. curfew, and people should not invite non-family members home for Christmas lunch or other celebrations.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy/italy-bans-xmas-midnight-mass-movement-between-regions-amid-high-covid-toll-idUKKBN28C14F>

### **Coronavirus surging in England's three worst hotspots - even before lockdown ended**

Latest Public Health England data shows Swale in Kent, Boston in Lincolnshire and Medway, also in Kent, are among a small number of towns and cities to see a seven day rise in cases

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/coronavirus-surging-englands-three-worst-23105727>

### **The covid-19 symptoms to watch out for**

Symptoms of covid-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus, can range from mild to severe. The most common include fever, a dry cough or shortness of breath, but there are other indications you could need to be tested or have a conversation with your doctor. Not everyone experiences the same symptoms, and the order in which they appear can vary. Some people don't show any symptoms — what health experts call "asymptomatic" cases — but still could spread the virus to others.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/12/02/covid-symptoms/>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Tier 3 lockdown rules in England: latest Covid restrictions explained**

England's new three-tier system came into effect on 2 December after the national lockdown was lifted. Non-essential shops in all areas can reopen, as can gyms, hairdressers and other personal care businesses, with the formal instruction to stay at home coming to an end. The "rule of six" will again apply for outdoor gatherings in all areas. Places of worship will be able to open and weddings will be allowed within local restrictions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/02/tier-3-lockdown-rules-in-england-latest-covid-restrictions-explained>

### **LA residents are ordered to stay in their homes: Mayor Garcetti tells 4million citizens to**

### **remain indoors, restricts travel, closes non-essential businesses and says it's 'time to cancel everything' as hospitalizations and cases surge**

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti ordered the city's 4 million residents to stay at home Wednesday night. The mayor told the public to 'cancel everything' and banned all travel, including walking and bicycling. Non-essential businesses were ordered to close and officials threatened to arrest those breaking the rules. There are, however, a long list of exemptions included in the Mayor's order. People can leave their homes if they need to engage in a number of the exempt activities such as visiting certain businesses and exercise, including at beaches and on trails. Businesses that are exempt from the order include healthcare operations, supermarkets and convenience stores, liquor stores, gas stations, banks, hardware stores, handymen services and laundromats. Retail stores that follow the county's in-person shopping health protocols are allowed to remain open. Indoor capacity, however, must be limited to 20 percent and be closed between 10pm to 5am. Personal care establishments such as hair and nail salons, tattoo parlors and tanning salons must limit indoor capacity to 20 percent. Garcetti's order mirrors a directive put in place by Los Angeles County health officials last week. During a press conference, Garcetti said Los Angeles County saw increase of 5,987 new cases on Wednesday. 40 new deaths were reported, bringing county's toll to 7,740, which could hit 11,130 by end of the year. According to Garcetti, 2,572 Angelenos were hospitalized as of Wednesday; there are only 479 beds left across county and at current rate, health officials are predicting county will run out of beds in next 2-4 weeks.

[https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9012939/LA-told-stay-homes-effective-immediately.html?ito=social-twitter\\_dailymailus](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9012939/LA-told-stay-homes-effective-immediately.html?ito=social-twitter_dailymailus)

### **Business owners in Serbia demand government aid ahead of coronavirus lockdown**

Owners of small businesses in Serbia on Wednesday demanded government aid as the country prepared for its first weekend coronavirus lockdown since May. Several dozen people, including restaurant owners and travel agents, protested in front of the Finance Ministry. A crisis committee, made up of doctors and members of the government, has proposed a weekend lockdown for all except food stores and green markets. The government is expected to formally adopt the measure - which will see cafes, restaurants, hair salons, shopping malls, gyms, swimming pools and other businesses close at the weekend - on Thursday. Vladanka Rakic, owner of a small travel agency in the western town of Uzice, said: "We (travel agencies) are on ventilators, we have not been working since March.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201202144931-1y9o2/>