

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 10th Dec 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **Allegations of 'vaccine hoarding' by high-income countries**

Some organizations are alleging that high-income countries are hoarding supplies of the Covid-19 vaccine. [Enough vaccines have been acquired by high-income countries to vaccinate their citizens almost three times over by the end of 2021.](#) 'Nearly seventy poor countries will only be able to vaccinate one-in-ten people against Covid-19 next year unless urgent action is taken,' said Amnesty International.

#### **Hunger hits the Philippines amidst Covid-19 restrictions**

The Philippines is witnessing widespread hunger amidst the economic damage caused by the pandemic. When surveyed, in September, 7.6 million households - [almost one-third of all families - lacked enough food to eat at least once during the last three months.](#) This included an unprecedented number of families experiencing severe hunger - 2.2 million. NGOs are struggling to fill the gap.

#### **Even with vaccines, virus spread in the U.S. may continue into late spring**

The White House Covid-19 taskforce told state governors that the spread of Covid-19 may not be driven downwards until late spring, even with vaccinations. [Fully vaccinating 100 million Americans with comorbidities will need to occur if hospitalisation rates,](#) deaths and the spread of the virus are to be reduced, virus experts said.

#### **The European Medical Agency hacked**

The European Medical Agency has said it was subjected to a cyberattack. It released a statement which offered few details due to an ongoing investigation. [However, BioNTech - whose vaccine is being reviewed by the EMA -](#) did say that some documents related to its vaccine candidate approval application had been unlawfully accessed.

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Nine out of 10 in poor nations to miss out on inoculation as west buys up Covid vaccines**

Nine out of 10 people in 70 low-income countries are unlikely to be vaccinated against Covid-19 next year because the majority of the most promising vaccines coming on-stream have been bought up by the west, campaigners have said. As the first people get vaccinated in the UK, the People's Vaccine Alliance is warning that the deals done by rich countries' governments will leave the poor at the mercy of the rampaging virus. Rich countries with 14% of the world's population have secured 53% of the most promising vaccines. Canada has bought more doses per head of population than any other - enough to vaccinate each Canadian five times, said the alliance, which includes Amnesty International, Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now and Oxfam.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/09/nine-out-of-10-in-poor-nations-to-miss-out-on-inoculation-as-west-buys-up-covid-vaccines>

#### **Amnesty: rich countries have bought too many COVID-19 vaccines**

Rich countries have secured enough coronavirus vaccines to protect their populations nearly three

times over by the end of 2021, Amnesty International and other groups said on Wednesday, possibly depriving billions of people in poorer areas. Amnesty and other organisations including Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now and Oxfam, urged governments and the pharmaceutical industry to take action to ensure intellectual property of vaccines is shared widely. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also called on governments repeatedly this year to make a vaccine protecting against COVID-19 a “public good”.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-vaccines/amnesty-rich-countries-have-bought-too-many-covid-19-vaccines-idUSL1N2IP0PI>

### **British grandmother says she feels great after Pfizer vaccine**

Margaret Keenan, the 90-year-old British grandmother who became the first person in the world to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine outside of a trial, said she feels great after being discharged from hospital on Wednesday. Pictures of Keenan went around the world on Tuesday as she received the shot during a short stay in her local hospital for heart checks. Video footage showed the former jewellery shop assistant wearing a light blue mask, a grey cardigan and a blue T-shirt with a penguin in snow and the message “Merry Christmas”

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-keenan/british-grandmother-says-she-feels-great-after-pfizer-vaccine-idUKKBN28J2PQ>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Morocco to use Chinese vaccine to kick off mass vaccinations**

Morocco is gearing up for an ambitious COVID-19 vaccination program, aiming to vaccinate 80% of its adults in an operation starting this month that’s relying initially on a Chinese vaccine that has not yet completed advanced trials to prove it is safe and effective. King Mohammed VI instructed the government to make the vaccine free, according to a Royal Palace statement. The first injections could come within days, a Health Ministry official told The Associated Press.

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-rabat-coronavirus-pandemic-morocco-china-8841aae31ae7501bf1a51029134b6222>

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### **Covid-19: Whitty says UK lockdowns until March even with vaccines**

Britain will remain in some form of lockdown until at least March despite the roll out of coronavirus vaccines, Professor Chris Whitty has warned. The chief medical officer said not enough Brits will have been inoculated against Covid-19 over the next three months to keep the most vulnerable out of hospitals. He urged people not to let their guard down now a jab had been approved, saying it would be 'really premature' and 'absolutely the wrong thing to do'. However, the CMO said the UK should have 'three or four' vaccines against Covid-19 by mid-2021, raising hopes of returning to pre-pandemic normality by summer.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9034303/UK-three-four-Covid-19-vaccines-year-Chris-Whitty.html>

### **U.S. House approves stopgap funding bill as haggling continues over coronavirus aid**

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a one-week extension of federal government funding, giving lawmakers more time to haggle over a broader spending package with coronavirus relief. The move gives Congress seven more days to enact a broader, \$1.4 trillion “omnibus” spending measure, to which congressional leaders hope to attach the long-awaited COVID-19 relief package.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/ousivMolt/idUSKBN28J1CA>

### **Iran says US sanctions hinder access to COVID-19 vaccines**

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said Wednesday that U.S. sanctions are making it difficult for Iran to purchase medicine and health supplies from abroad, including COVID-19 vaccines needed to contain the worst outbreak in the Middle East. Last week, Iran said it is working on its own vaccine, with

testing on human patients expected to begin next month. It plans to buy 20 million vaccine doses from abroad, for a population of more than 80 million people.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/iran-says-us-sanctions-hinder-access-to-covid19-vaccines-iran-hassan-rouhani-vaccines-sanctions-sanctions-b1768515.html>

### **White House task force: Vaccine may not reduce virus spread until late spring**

The White House coronavirus task force this week warned governors that coronavirus vaccinations will not drive down the spread of COVID-19 until late spring, calling for states to emphasize the need for other mitigation measures. "The current vaccine implementation will not substantially reduce viral spread, hospitalizations, or fatalities until the 100 million Americans with comorbidities can be fully immunized, which will take until the late spring," the task force wrote in its weekly report to states, issued Tuesday and obtained by The Hill. "Behavioral change and aggressive mitigation policies are the only widespread prevention tools that we have to address this winter surge," the report adds.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/529528-white-house-task-force-vaccine-may-not-reduce-virus-spread-until-late>

### **Covid: Self-isolation and quarantine period to shorten in Wales**

All people who need to self-isolate or quarantine will only need to do so for 10 days from Thursday, the Welsh Government has announced. The current period for those without the virus is 14 days, which has been changed after medical endorsement. It will now apply to people who have tested positive for the virus or are at risk of having it, including those returning from non-exempt countries. It means Wales will have a shorter isolation period than England.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55236684?at\\_custom4=FB42FED8-39FF-11EB-B567-A16596E8478F&at\\_custom1=%5Bpost+type%5D&at\\_custom3=%40WalesPolitics&at\\_medium=custom7&at\\_campaign=64&at\\_custom2=twitter](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55236684?at_custom4=FB42FED8-39FF-11EB-B567-A16596E8478F&at_custom1=%5Bpost+type%5D&at_custom3=%40WalesPolitics&at_medium=custom7&at_campaign=64&at_custom2=twitter)

### **Mexico to launch COVID-19 vaccinations this month**

Mexico plans to begin vaccinating its people against COVID-19 at the end of the third week of December, starting with health workers, the government announced. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said the vaccines will be "universal and free" — and also voluntary — and he hopes the full population will be vaccinated by the end of 2021. Officials said that starting in February, those over 60 will receive vaccinations, followed by those over 50 in April and over 40 in May. They urged people with risk factors to get vaccinated first.

<https://news.yahoo.com/mexico-launch-covid-19-vaccinations-173447208.html>

### **Mexico says could order 22 mln more vaccine doses from J&J**

Mexico could order an additional 22 million doses of coronavirus vaccine from Johnson & Johnson's Janssen unit under a memorandum of understanding signed this week, Deputy Health Minister Hugo Lopez-Gatell said. Janssen has begun its coronavirus clinical trials in Mexico, and Lopez-Gatell said the memorandum his government signed on Monday gave it the option of ordering additional doses. "So there we could end up getting up to 22 million more vaccines from Janssen," Lopez-Gatell, the government's coronavirus czar, told a regular evening news conference

<https://au.finance.yahoo.com/news/mexico-says-could-order-22-031448186.html>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **US megachurches rebrand as 'strip clubs' to dodge lockdown**

Two California megachurches have continued to defy the state's coronavirus ban on indoor worship services, rebranding themselves as "strip clubs". News outlet DSIRN reported that Awaken Church in San Diego and Godspeak Calvary Chapel had both declared themselves strip clubs after their pastors took off a tie before their congregation. Strip clubs are currently allowed indoor patrons under California law.

<https://www.9news.com.au/world/coronavirus-california-churches-rebrand-as-strip-clubs-to-skirt-lockdown/8dea7811-5ab4-433b-9496-4f19c0bf7388>

### **German intelligence places coronavirus protesters under observation - media**

German intelligence agents have placed under observation a group of protesters against coronavirus restrictions, citing the influence of radicals including far-right Nazi admirers. The domestic intelligence service in the southwestern Baden-Wuerttemberg region put the "Querdenken 711" group on a watch-list due to its increasing radicalisation, the state's interior ministry said on Wednesday. "Querdenken 711" was founded early in the pandemic by IT entrepreneur Michael Ballweg in the affluent city of Stuttgart and helped begin a nationwide movement.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/germany-security-coronavirus-idUSKBN28J108>

### **North Korea berates South Korea's top diplomat for doubt over 'zero COVID-19 cases'**

North Korea lashed out at South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha for casting doubt over its claim that there were no coronavirus outbreaks there, warning of consequences for her "impudent" comment,

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/north-korea-berates-south-korea-s-top-diplomat-for-doubt-over-zero-covid-19-cases/ar-BB1bKJDu?MSCC=1604478389>

### **North Korea says South will 'pay dearly' for questioning its Covid success story**

North Korea lashed out at the "reckless" comments of a South Korean minister on Wednesday, after Seoul openly questioned Pyongyang's claims to have not had a single Covid-19 case. Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, said South Korea's Kang Kyung-wha risked further damaging the already strained relations between the neighbours for saying it is "hard to believe" the North Korean coronavirus success story.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/north-korea-says-south-will-e2-80-98pay-dearly-e2-80-99-for-questioning-its-covid-success-story/ar-BB1bLHoj>

### **South Korea questions Pyongyang's claims to be virus-free**

The sister of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has lambasted South Korea's foreign minister for casting doubt over Pyongyang's claim that the country has no coronavirus cases. North Korea closed its borders in January to avoid a spread of the virus and has insisted that it has had no cases. Experts have suggested that this is unlikely since the virus first emerged in China and North Korea relies on its neighbour for trade. Kang Kyung-wha, South Korea's foreign minister, said that it was "hard to believe" that the North had had no cases.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/south-korea-questions-pyongyangs-claims-to-be-virus-free-sspmpf2n2>

### **He Broke Out of Quarantine for 8 Seconds, and Got a \$3,550 Fine**

One man left the house after an argument with his wife and walked 280 miles to cool off, breaching Italy's national curfew. Another man wandered outside his quarantine room in Taiwan for eight seconds and caught the attention of the authorities. Still another drove 19 miles for a butter chicken curry during a strict lockdown and was apprehended by the Australian police. All those actions ended up costing them thousands of dollars in penalties.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/09/world/coronavirus-covid-19-quarantine-fine.html>

### **Covid data which forced Boris into second lockdown quietly downgraded**

Concerns have been raised about Covid-19 figures used by the Government to trigger a second national lockdown after they were dramatically lowered retrospectively. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has dropped its estimate of the infection rate of coronavirus in England at the end of October by almost half. In its report, which was used to provide key data to back the national restrictions, the ONS estimated that 9.52 people per 10,000 were catching the virus by October 17 - a considerable spike from 4.3 people on October 3.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/12/09/covid-data-which-forced-boris-into-second-lockdown-quietly-downgraded-13724636/>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **France warns it could delay end of Covid lockdown if epidemic spread does not slow**

France's government said Wednesday it would not necessarily end the country's second coronavirus confinement as planned on 15 December if epidemic indicators did not reach targets. The comments came ahead of a meeting of the health defence council that decides on restrictions. France had planned to lift travel and movement restrictions and reopen cinemas, theatres and museums on 15 December in the second of a three-part easing of lockdown if it met certain conditions were met. But with health officials warning the country was far off from a target of 5,000 new infections per day, President Emmanuel Macron was to meet with the senior ministers and officials comprising a special health defence council to discuss whether to change those plans.

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20201209-france-warns-it-could-delay-end-of-covid-lockdown-if-epidemic-does-not-improve>

### **More afraid of hunger: COVID-19 rules causing many in Philippines to starve**

Daniel Auminto lost his job and then his home when the coronavirus pandemic sent the Philippines into lockdown. Now he and his family live on the street, relying on food handouts to survive. Charities are struggling to meet the ever-growing demand for food as millions of families go hungry across the country. COVID-19 restrictions have crippled the economy and thrown many out of work. "I've never seen hunger at this level before," said Jomar Fleras, executive director of Rise Against Hunger in the Philippines, which works with more than 40 partners to feed the poor.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/12/09/asia-pacific/philippines-covid19-hunger/>

### **Domestic violence surges in Lancashire during lockdown**

Police in Lancashire made more than 2,000 arrests for offences linked to domestic abuse in that time, with charities warning the problem "is not going away". And figures reveal such cases make up a growing proportion of the work officers have to deal with. While comparable arrest figures for previous years were not available, nationally the number of domestic abuse cases has risen steadily in recent years.

<https://www.lep.co.uk/news/crime/domestic-violence-surges-lancashire-during-lockdown-3062267>

### **France says will delay easing of lockdown if necessary**

France will delay relaxing some COVID-19 lockdown restrictions if necessary to stave off a third wave of infections, government spokesman Gabriel Attal said on Wednesday. France is due to reopen cinemas, theatres and museums and allow citizens to move between regions on Dec. 15, but there are signs it may not meet preconditions to enter into the second phase of rolling back the curbs. "If we consider that ... we must modify this second phase (of lifting lockdown measures), then of course we will do it," Attal told CNews television. President Emmanuel Macron will discuss the matter with senior ministers on Wednesday. He had originally set a target of 5,000 new infections per day and fewer than 3,000 COVID patients in intensive care before the lockdown could be eased.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-france-measures/france-says-will-delay-easing-of-lockdown-if-necessary-idUKKBN28J0S4>

### **UK firms avoid hiring permanent staff in November lockdown**

British employers recruited fewer permanent staff during an England-wide lockdown last month, and relied instead on temporary workers to plug the gap, a monthly survey of recruiters showed on Wednesday. The number of permanent staff recruited fell for a second month in a row in November and dropped by its most since July, when Britain had just emerged from its first coronavirus lockdown, the Recruitment and Employment Confederation said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-jobs/uk-firms-avoid-hiring-permanent-staff-in-november-lockdown-idUKKBN28>

## Scientific Viewpoint

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### India says it may approve vaccine in weeks, outlines plan

India's Health Ministry has announced that some COVID-19 vaccines are likely to receive licenses in the next few weeks and outlined an initial plan to immunize 300 million people. Health officials said Tuesday that three vaccine companies have applied for early approval for emergency use in India: Serum Institute of India, which has been licensed to manufacture the AstraZeneca vaccine, Pfizer Inc., and Indian manufacturer Bharat Biotech. "Some of them may get licensed in the next few weeks," federal Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/india-says-it-may-approve-vaccine-in-weeks-outlines-plan/2020/12/08/dae62994-39b4-11eb-aad9-8959227280c4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/india-says-it-may-approve-vaccine-in-weeks-outlines-plan/2020/12/08/dae62994-39b4-11eb-aad9-8959227280c4_story.html)

### UK medicine regulator says people with anaphylaxis risk should not take Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine

The UK's medicine regulator said anyone with a history of anaphylaxis to a medicine or food should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, giving fuller guidance on an earlier allergy warning about the shot. "Any person with a history of anaphylaxis to a vaccine, medicine or food should not receive the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. A second dose should not be given to anyone who has experienced anaphylaxis following administration of the first dose of this vaccine," said June Raine, chief executive of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Earlier it had warned that people with a "significant allergic reaction" to those things should not take the shot, without specifying anaphylaxis.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN28K01B>

### UK investigates possible allergic reactions to COVID-19 shot

U.K. regulators say people who have a "significant history" of allergic reactions shouldn't receive the new Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine while they investigate two adverse reactions that occurred on the first day of the country's mass vaccination program

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk-investigates-possible-allergic-reactions-to-covid19-shot-reactions-reactions-pfizer-people-coronavirus-vaccine-b1768574.html>

### Chinese Covid-19 vaccine has 86% efficacy, UAE says

The United Arab Emirates said a Chinese coronavirus vaccine tested in the federation of sheikhdoms has 86% efficacy, in a statement that provided few details but marked the first public release of information on the performance of the shot. The announcement brought yet another contender into the worldwide race for a vaccine to end the pandemic, a scientific effort in which China and Russia are competing with western firms to develop an effective inoculation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/09/chinese-covid-19-vaccine-has-86-efficacy-uae-says>

### 'Very inconsistent': Allergic reaction by 2 in UK to COVID-19 vaccine puzzles researchers

Two British people with severe allergies apparently had allergic reactions to Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine, raising questions about whether it is safe for people with preexisting allergies. In response, British regulators advised those with severe allergies to avoid the vaccine. It was not immediately clear what triggered the allergic reactions. Unlike some vaccines, in the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine there are no preservatives or egg products, which have been known to trigger reactions with other types of vaccines.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/12/09/covid-pfizer-vaccine-allergic-reaction-uk/6505867002/>

### Canada Authorizes Covid-19 Vaccine From Pfizer and BioNTech

Canada became the third country to authorize use of the Covid-19 vaccine produced by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, racing ahead of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Europe's main

regulator to approve shots for its most vulnerable citizens. Canada will now begin its immunization rollout as early as next week—a daunting challenge for a sparsely populated country with the world's second-largest territory. The country is on schedule to begin inoculations next week, with a portfolio of vaccine candidates that it argues is among the most diverse among large economies.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/canada-authorizes-covid-19-vaccine-from-pfizer-and-biontech-11607531030>

### **Canada health regulator approves Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine.**

Canada's health regulator approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine Wednesday, days ahead of possible approval in the United States, and said it hopes to start giving the shots next week. The vaccine made by U.S. drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech vaccine already has been authorized for use by the United Kingdom and Bahrain, and officials have said they expect the U.S. authorization within days. "This a momentous occasion," said Dr. Supriya Sharma, chief medical adviser at Health Canada. "The geek in me is amazed. No one would have thought, even when we looked back at the first discovery of the virus, that less than a year later we would be authorizing and distributing a vaccine."

<https://apnews.com/article/canada-archive-coronavirus-pandemic-9cde42df20e80c50752768b6696d45d5>

### **Sinovac: What do we know about China's Covid-19 vaccine?**

As the global race to produce a Covid-19 vaccine continues, China appears to have made huge strides, with one of its vaccine front-runners, Sinovac, already making its way abroad. Shipments of Beijing-based biopharmaceutical company Sinovac's Covid-19 vaccine CoronaVac have arrived in Indonesia in preparation for a mass vaccination campaign, with another 1.8m doses due to arrive by January. But the vaccine is yet to finish its late-stage trials, which begs the question: what exactly do we know about this Chinese vaccine?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-55212787>

### **Covid-19 vaccine: Allergy warning over new jab**

People with a history of significant allergic reactions should not have the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid jab, regulators say. It came after two NHS workers had allergic reactions on Tuesday. The advice applies to those who have had reactions to medicines, food or vaccines, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said. The two people had a reaction shortly after having the new jab, had treatment and are both fine now. They are understood to have had an anaphylactoid reaction, which tends to involve a skin rash, breathlessness and sometimes a drop in blood pressure. This is not the same as anaphylaxis which can be fatal. Both NHS workers have a history of serious allergies and carry adrenaline pens around with them.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55244122>

### **UK healthcare workers seven times more likely to develop severe coronavirus during first lockdown, study finds**

Those working on the front lines against coronavirus during the UK's first lockdown were up to seven times more likely to become severely infected, new research suggests. A University of Glasgow-led study of more than 120,000 employees aged 49 to 64 indicated that those in healthcare roles were seven times more likely to be hospitalised or killed with the virus. And those with jobs in the social care and transport sectors were found to be twice as likely to suffer such outcomes, which the researchers said emphasises the need to ensure that key workers are adequately protected against infection.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/coronavirus-uk-health-care-workers-risk-b1768121.html>

### **Significant increase in depression seen among children during first UK lockdown**

The first lockdown led to a significant increase in symptoms of depression among children, highlighting the unintended consequences of school closures, according to a new study from the

University of Cambridge. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK Government implemented a national "lockdown" involving school closures and social distancing. There has been widespread concern that these measures would negatively impact child and adolescent mental health. To date, however, there is relatively little direct evidence of this. The most direct way of measuring the association between the onset of lockdown and children's mental health is to follow the same individuals over a length of time and look for changes - so-called 'longitudinal' changes.

[https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2020-12/uoc-sii120820.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/uoc-sii120820.php)

### **China's government-made coronavirus vaccine 'is 86% effective' and has been approved for use by the UAE after clinical trials - but scientists behind it have yet to publicly ...**

Vaccine from state-owned company Sinophar is one of four made by China UAE officials today claim the phase three trials show it is 86% effective No data on the vaccine has yet been publicly released despite its approval Vaccine is a weakened form of virus and UAE has been running trials since July Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum received an unnamed jab and reports claim so too has North Korea leader Kim Jong Un

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9033685/UAE-registers-Chinas-Sinopharm-vaccine-says-86-effective.html>

### **To defeat Covid-19, we must acknowledge the fear it engenders**

My career as a hospital epidemiologist has been based on science and evidence, which I believed to be the touchstones of my work. But Covid-19 has taught me that fear — gut-wrenching, all-consuming fear, like the fear of dying from a horrific respiratory virus — can be much more powerful than science. We can't conquer this fear unless we acknowledge and respect it. I'm no stranger to my work keeping me awake at night. In pre-pandemic times, I sometimes lost sleep over issues like a spike in staph infections in a particular intensive care unit

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/09/to-defeat-covid-19-we-must-acknowledge-the-fear-it-engenders/>

### **Pharma Pfizer's COVID vaccine data raise some flags, analysts say, but not enough to scuttle an FDA nod**

When the FDA released a 53-page briefing document on Pfizer's COVID-19 mRNA vaccine candidate yesterday, most readers zeroed in on the shot's high efficacy in a wide range of demographic groups. Wall Street analysts dug a bit deeper. Their conclusion? A few red flags in the FDA documents will likely generate some discussion at Thursday's advisory panel meeting, but not enough alarm to scuttle an emergency authorization.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-s-covid-vaccine-data-raise-some-questions-but-shouldn-t-scuttle-fda-nod-analysts>

### **UK warns people with serious allergies to avoid Pfizer vaccine after two adverse reactions**

Britain's medicine regulator warned people with significant allergies not to get Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine after two people suffered adverse reactions, but was set to give more detailed guidance on Wednesday based on reviews of those cases.

[https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-vaccine-idUSKBN28J1D1?taid=5fd0ec555b1bc70001e4054c&utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=twitter](https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain-vaccine-idUSKBN28J1D1?taid=5fd0ec555b1bc70001e4054c&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter)

### **EU agency in charge of COVID-19 vaccine approval says it was hacked**

The European Medicines Agency (EMA), the EU regulatory body in charge of approving COVID-19 vaccines, said today it was the victim of a cyber-attack. In a short two-paragraph statement posted on its website today, the agency discloses the security breach but said it couldn't disclose any details about the intrusion due to an ongoing investigation. EMA is currently in the process of reviewing applications for two COVID-19 vaccines, one from US pharma giant Moderna, and a second developed in a collaboration between BioNTech and Pfizer.

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/eu-agency-in-charge-of-covid-19-vaccine-approval-says-it-was-hacked/>

### **Warning after two NHS workers have allergic reaction to Pfizer/BioNTech Covid vaccine**

People with a history of "significant" allergic reactions have been told not to take the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine after two NHS workers who received the jab had "adverse" reactions. NHS England confirmed that two staff members who were administered doses on Tuesday - on the first day of the mass vaccination programme - suffered an allergic reaction. Both staff members have a significant history of allergic reactions, to the extent where they need to carry an adrenaline auto-injector with them, it is understood.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/warning-patients-pfizer-biontech-covid-allergic-reactions-b229762.html>

### **Hackers steal Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine data in Europe, companies say**

U.S. drugmaker Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said on Wednesday that documents related to development of their COVID-19 vaccine had been "unlawfully accessed" in a cyberattack on Europe's medicines regulator. The European Medicines Agency (EMA), which assesses medicines and vaccines for the European Union, said hours earlier it had been targeted in a cyberattack. It gave no further details. Pfizer and BioNTech said they did not believe any personal data of trial participants had been compromised and EMA "has assured us that the cyber attack will have no impact on the timeline for its review."

[https://mobile.reuters.com/article/amp/idUSKBN28J2Q7?\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://mobile.reuters.com/article/amp/idUSKBN28J2Q7?_twitter_impression=true)

### **Pfizer's first shipment of its coronavirus vaccine will include 2.9 million doses upon FDA approval**

Pfizer Inc's first shipment of its vaccine to the US will include 2.9 million doses and another shipment 21 days later with the same amount. The jabs will be going to 636 locations, mostly large health-care systems with enough storage capacity. Gen Gustave Perna said he has set aside a reserve of 500,000 doses from the total supply of 6.4 million available to the US. At an Operation Warp Speed briefing on Wednesday, HHS Secretary Alex Azar said he'd be willing to get vaccinated publicly. The team said they have not considered who would receive the very first vaccine or where. The FDA will meet Thursday and Friday - and are expected to approve the vaccine by the end of the week.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9036185/Pfizers-shipment-coronavirus-vaccine-include-2-9-million-doses-FDA-approval.html>

### **Don't mix Sputnik vaccine with alcohol, says Russian official. Some recoil**

A health official's warning that anyone getting vaccinated against COVID-19 with Russia's Sputnik V vaccine should give up alcohol for almost two months has caused a backlash among some Russians who call the request unreasonable. Anna Popova, head of the consumer health watchdog, told the Komsomolskaya Pravda radio station on Tuesday that people should stop drinking alcohol at least two weeks before getting the first of two injections. They should continue to abstain for a further 42 days, she advised.

[https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-russia-vaccine-alcohol-idUSKBN28J239?taid=5fd11fddf0e12b00013d9b95&utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=twitter](https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-russia-vaccine-alcohol-idUSKBN28J239?taid=5fd11fddf0e12b00013d9b95&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter)

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Brazil registers highest COVID-19 daily death toll in almost a month**

Brazil reported 51,088 additional confirmed coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours and 842 fatalities from COVID-19, its Health Ministry said on Tuesday, marking the highest death toll since Nov. 14. The South American country has now registered 6,674,999 cases since the pandemic began, while its official death toll has risen to 178,159, according to ministry data. Brazil has the world's third highest case count, after the United States and India, and second highest death toll. Easing quarantines in Brazilian cities have led to crowded bars and restaurants, giving some the impression

that life has returned to normal. With the approaching holiday season, experts worry that COVID-19 will spread even faster.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/brazil-registers-highest-covid-19-daily-death-toll-almost-month-n1250548>

### **California's hospitals are close to 'breaking point' as COVID-19 surges**

Governor Gavin Newsom is now bringing in hundreds of hospital staff from outside the state and preparing to re-start emergency hospitals that were created but barely used when the coronavirus surged last spring to cope with the new surge. The seven-day rolling average for new cases in the county's most populous state has doubled over the past two weeks to 23,000 a day. During the summer surge, average infections in California peaked at 10,000 per day.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/californias-hospitals-close-to-breaking-point-as-covid-19-surges/ar-BB1bMDHp>

### **Christmas spike in Covid-19 cases 'inevitable'**

A spike in Covid-19 cases is "inevitable" as people mix over the Christmas holidays, the Tanaiste has said. Leo Varadkar said if further restrictions are introduced in January it "won't be done lightly". Referring to a rise in coronavirus cases following gatherings in the US and Canada for Thanksgiving, Mr Varadkar said it gives an indication on how the virus will spread over the festive holidays.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/christmas-spike-in-covid-19-cases-inevitable-39845282.html>

### **COVID-19: Another 533 deaths reported and 16,578 new cases**

The UK has reported another 533 deaths with COVID-19 and 16,578 new cases of the virus in the last 24 hours. That compares to 12,282 cases and 616 deaths on Tuesday, according to government data. It means the total number of people who have died within 28 days of testing positive for the virus is now 62,566.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-another-533-deaths-reported-and-16-578-new-cases-12156229>

### **UK records 16,578 more cases of coronavirus and 533 deaths as fatalities continue to decline in the wake of England's second lockdown**

Department of Health figures show the number of cases rose by 2.5 per cent compared to last Wednesday. Deaths, however, fell by 17 per cent compared to last week after 533 were recorded by health chiefs. Covid-19 cases in Briton have been plateauing since England's national lockdown was lifted on December 2

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9035449/UK-records-16-578-cases-coronavirus-533-deaths.html>

### **Covid cases: Hospital admissions rise in most of England's NHS regions despite lockdown, figures show**

Admissions to hospital of patients with Covid-19 are rising in four out of seven NHS regions of England despite the month-long lockdown in November, official figures have shown. The increases are in London, east of England, south east and the Midlands, suggesting a third wave of the epidemic could be threatening the NHS just before the Christmas relaxation period.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/covid-cases-hospital-admissions-figures-england-nhs-regions-despite-lockdown-788328>

### **London 'facing Tier 3 before Christmas' as figures shows rates up in 21 boroughs**

Londoners might be facing Tier 3 lockdown restrictions just a week before Christmas as data shows infections are up in two thirds of the capital's boroughs. The latest Public Health England data shows infection rates are rising in the capital, with cases per person up by half in certain areas of the city. Some officials are reportedly now voicing concern about London. Rates in some areas were rising even before lockdown was lifted on December 2 - and before Londoners enjoyed the first weekend of slightly eased measures.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/london-facing-tier-3-before-christmas-b209285.html>

### **Germany coronavirus: Merkel backs tougher restrictions as Covid deaths hit record**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel advocated tougher restrictions on public life and pleaded with her compatriots to cut down on socializing as the country reported its highest single-day death toll of the coronavirus pandemic on Wednesday. Germany is gradually moving toward a tighter lockdown, at least for a limited period after Christmas, as new virus cases remain stubbornly high — and are even beginning to creep higher — despite a partial shutdown that started on Nov. 2.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-lockdown-covid-merkel-update-b1768550.html>

### **With record deaths, Germany may tighten lockdown**

Chancellor Angela Merkel is throwing her weight behind calls for a fuller lockdown in Germany that would include closing shops after Christmas, telling legislators that vaccines alone would not majorly alter the pandemic's course. Olivia Chan reports.

<https://www.reuters.com/video/watch/with-record-deaths-germany-may-tighten-l-id722876011>

### **Covid cases revealed for each London borough as millions urged to help keep capital out of Tier 3**

Every single Londoner was today urged to join the battle to keep the city out of Tier 3 as official figures showed Covid-19 cases rising in more than two thirds of boroughs. MPs and Mayor Sadiq Khan called on millions of people across the capital to stick to social distancing, self-isolation, mask wearing and good hygiene rules and guidance to reverse the latest coronavirus surge. The number of confirmed cases is increasing across east London, apart from Redbridge which saw a very small decrease in the week to December 3, compared to the previous seven days.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-tier-3-warning-coronavirus-cases-rising-b228912.html>

### **Asia Today: S. Korea sees 686 new cases, 2nd-biggest spike**

South Korea has reported 686 new cases of the coronavirus, tying its second-highest daily jump since the emergence of the pandemic, as a resurgence driven by the greater capital area threatens to erase hard-won gains against the virus. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said Wednesday that 536 of the new cases were reported in the Seoul metropolitan area, where new clusters of infections have been popping up from seemingly everywhere, including restaurants, markets, saunas, hospitals, long-term care facilities and army units.

<https://apnews.com/article/03e6283b415c195631490ce91b83085d>

### **International update: Global Covid cases pass 68.3 million - more than 15.1 million in US**

Global coronavirus infections pass 68.3 million. Meanwhile, the global coronavirus death toll has passed 1,559,000 according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University. US: Covid-19 infections have passed 15 million. Record cases in at least three states – Arizona, Alabama and Ohio – pushed the cumulative case load to over 15 million, according to a Reuters tally of state and county data. Meanwhile, the US coronavirus death toll is 286,338 according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/special-focus/covid-19/international-update-global-covid-cases-pass-68-3-million-more-than-15-1-million-in-us/>

### **Germany records highest Covid death toll**

The number of people who have died in Germany after catching the coronavirus has surged to 590, marking the highest daily death toll for the country in the pandemic yet. The figure, reported by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the national agency for disease control, beat the last record of 487 by more than 100. The RKI added 20,815 new coronavirus cases to the country's tally of confirmed infections, which amounts to 1,218,524 so far. The daily rise in new cases last Wednesday was lower at 17,270, providing further proof that a partial lockdown put in place in early November has failed to break Germany's second wave of infections

<https://thewest.com.au/news/health/germany-records-highest-covid-death-toll-ng-s-2041395>

### **U.S. Breaks Record for Most Deaths in a Week**

The United States has recorded its most coronavirus-related deaths over a weeklong period, as a brutal surge gathers speed across the country. With a seven-day average of 2,249 deaths, the country broke the previous mark of 2,232 set on April 17 in the early weeks of the pandemic. Seven-day averages can provide a more accurate picture of the virus's progression than daily death counts, which can fluctuate and disguise the broader trend line. The United States is approaching 300,000 total deaths, with nearly 283,000 recorded, according to a New York Times database. The nation is averaging nearly 200,000 cases per day, an increase of 15 percent from the average two weeks earlier, and has recorded over than 15 million total cases.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/12/07/world/covid-19-coronavirus>

### **Swedish govt to ask parliament for tougher powers to fight pandemic**

Sweden's government on Wednesday proposed new temporary legislation to expand its powers to fight the coronavirus pandemic, giving it greater leeway to implement and enforce lockdown measures such as closing shopping malls and gyms. The legislation, which will be submitted for review to relevant stakeholders before a vote in parliament, would come into force on March 15 next year and be valid for just over a year, the coalition said in a statement. Since summer and early autumn's lull in the pandemic, a second wave of the virus has swept the Nordic country with infections hitting daily records, while hospitalisations and deaths have also shot up over the past two months.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-sweden-legislation/swedish-govt-to-ask-parliament-for-tougher-powers-to-fight-pandemic-idINL8N2IP219>

### **French new coronavirus cases jump to 13,717**

New confirmed coronavirus infections over the past 24 hours in France jumped to 13,713 on Tuesday, from 3,411 on Monday and 8,083 last Tuesday, health ministry data showed. On the 11th day after the government eased a nationwide lockdown, the number of people in intensive care however fell by 110 to 3,088, bringing it closer to a 2,500-3,000 government threshold that is one of the conditions for further lockdown easing.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-france-casualties/french-new-coronavirus-cases-jump-to-13717-idUKKBN28I2TD>

### **New powers allow Hong Kong government to lock down Covid-19 hotspots**

Chief Executive Carrie Lam adopts powerful new tool to combat an escalating fourth wave of the virus and urges residents to stay home as much as possible. Authorities tighten social-distancing restrictions, with restaurants to end dine-in service at 6pm and gyms to close, as 100 new cases confirmed

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3112968/coronavirus-hong-kong-tighten-social-distancing>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Ukraine will introduce tight lockdown restrictions in January**

Ukraine will introduce tight lockdown restrictions in January, hoping to stop the rapid spread of coronavirus infection, Prime Minister Denys Shmygal said on Wednesday. The measures, which include the closure of schools, cafes, restaurants, gyms and entertainment centres and a ban on mass gatherings, will be in force from January 8-24, Shmygal told the televised government meeting.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/ukraine-will-introduce-tight-lockdown-restrictions-in-january/articleshow/79646283.cms>

### **David Staples: Alberta's new measures can wipe out COVID but how far should we go?**

The Alberta government is imposing the kind of severe lockdown measures that have worked to stop

COVID-19 spread in places like Canada's Maritime provinces, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan, jurisdictions which in the past two weeks have had zero COVID-19 deaths. Compare that to Alberta and B.C., each with 35 deaths per million in the past two weeks, Quebec with 51 per million and Manitoba with 124 deaths per million, with all of those death rates trending up quickly.

<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/david-staples-albertas-new-measures-can-wipe-out-covid-but-how-far-should-we-go>

### **Merkel pushes for tougher German lockdown**

Chancellor Angela Merkel threw her weight behind calls for a fuller lockdown in Germany that would include closing shops after Christmas, telling legislators that vaccines alone would not majorly alter the pandemic's course in the first quarter. Europe's largest economy has been in partial lockdown for six weeks, with bars and restaurants closed but shops and schools open. That has stopped the coronavirus's exponential growth but infection levels remain at a high level. Speaking in parliament on Wednesday, Merkel said regional leaders should follow scientific guidance, which has called for people to further reduce their contact with others.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-pandemic/merkel-pushes-for-tougher-german-lockdown-idUSKBN28JOY8>