

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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News Highlights

India to export Covid-19 vaccines in the coming weeks

Exports of Covid-19 vaccines in India will begin in the coming weeks according to an official in its foreign ministry. ['Within a fortnight of the rollout of the vaccines we will allow exports to some of our South Asian neighbours,' they told BBC News.](#) India manufactures sixty percent of the world's vaccine supply. There has been some confusion about whether its largest manufacturer has permission to export Covid-19 vaccines at present. [The Indian government pushed back and denied this report.](#)

'Moral catastrophe' - Africa CDC chief on delay Covid-19 vaccine access

John Nkengasong, head of the Africa Center for Disease and Control prevention, has warned that the world faces a 'moral catastrophe' if access to vaccines against Covid-19 is delayed in the region. ['The second wave of the coronavirus pandemic is already here with a vengeance,' he said. Cases rose by nineteen percent in the last week. 'We cannot delay, we need those vaccines and we need them now,'](#) he added. 'We don't have to get into a moral crisis, where these things are stocked and stored in the developed world leaving us in the African region struggling.'

WHO expresses disappointment over lack of authorisation for experts to enter China

The Director-General of the WHO Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that he is ['very disappointed that the Chinese government has not yet authorised a ten-member team to enter the country to investigate the pandemic's origin.](#) 'I have once again made it clear the mission is a priority for the WHO,' he said. Emergencies chief Dr Mike Ryan added 'we trust and hope that this is just a logistic and bureaucratic issue that can be resolved very quickly.'

Continued uncertainty over timing between vaccine doses

The uncertainty about delaying the second dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is ongoing. Some countries are spacing out the doses longer than three to four weeks so that the vaccine vial supply stretches further. [This is despite there being no available scientific evidence that the protection offered by the first shot is sustained beyond a 21-28 day period, according to Pfizer and BioNTech.](#) The World Health Organization has weighed in. [It says both doses should be received with 21-28 days.](#) However, countries can have latitude to space out shots for up to six weeks so that the more vulnerable can be inoculated.

Lockdown Exit

World risks 'moral catastrophe' if Covid vaccine delayed in Africa, its CDC chief says

The world risks a "moral catastrophe" if Covid-19 vaccinations are delayed in Africa while wealthier regions inoculate their entire populations, the head of the continent's disease control body said on Thursday. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hopes significant vaccination campaigns on the continent will begin in April, its head, John Nkengasong, told reporters. "That's a long way to go given that this virus transmits very quickly," he said, adding that in Africa, "the second wave is here with a vengeance". Cases of the new coronavirus increased by nearly 19%

since last week and deaths increased by 26%, according to Africa CDC data. Africa has recorded 2.7 million coronavirus infections and 64,000 deaths as of Thursday, it says.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/africa-covid-vaccine-cdc-b1782452.html>

Indonesia to start mass COVID vaccination drive on January 13

Indonesia will begin its nationwide COVID-19 vaccination programme on January 13, with President Joko Widodo set to be given the first jab, made by China's Sinovac Biotech. The mass inoculation programme will begin in the capital, Jakarta, Indonesia's Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin announced on Tuesday, while vaccinations in other regions will follow on January 14 and 15.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/5/indonesia-to-start-mass-covid-vaccination-drive-next-week>

China's latest potential culprit in its search for foreign coronavirus sources? Auto parts packaging

More than a year since the coronavirus pandemic began, while a surprising -- and frustrating -- number of points remain unclear, one thing is certain: the first major outbreak was in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. While scientists are still examining the exact origins of the virus, whether or not it came from bats or another animal, how it mutated to become so infectious and so deadly, and how long it was around before the initial outbreak, that Wuhan was the initial epicenter is undeniable. Equally undeniable, is how effectively the city has rebounded, just last week hosting a New Year's party as much of the world remains in effective lockdown -- a success that has become a major point of pride in China.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/05/china/china-car-parts-foreign-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html>

New UK coronavirus strain found in Perth hotel quarantine system as three arrivals test positive

Three people in Western Australia's hotel quarantine system tested positive for the new COVID-19 variant from the UK, Premier Mark McGowan has revealed. The cases all arrived from London between the 16th and 20th of December 2020, and have recovered and since left hotel quarantine. It comes after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a new national lockdown for England to combat the fast-spreading mutant strain of coronavirus. "We've done testing of the most recent cases. Unfortunately, what we've found in our hotel quarantine system is three people have the new UK variant ... a more rapidly spreading variant of the virus," he said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-05/new-uk-coronavirus-strain-found-in-perth-hotel-quarantine-system/13032066>

WHO's Tedros 'very disappointed' China hasn't granted entry to coronavirus experts

The head of the World Health Organization said on Tuesday he was "very disappointed" that China has still not authorised the entry of a team of international experts to examine the origins of the coronavirus.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-who-china/whos-tedros-very-disappointed-china-hasnt-granted-entry-to-coronavirus-experts-idUKKBN29A2BG>

Watching New Zealand's Covid success from bungling Britain has been torture

Like most Britons this past year, I've spent more time than I care to admit doomscrolling social media. But in between the muted festive lockdown celebrations, I also saw photos of crowded house parties, family barbecues and road trips to baches and beaches. My social feeds have split into alternate realities. Because although I'm a British citizen living in Oxford, I'm also a resident of New Zealand, where things really couldn't be more different. As a resident of two countries, with friends and family in each, I'm used to witnessing events and political developments in both places at once. Usually this experience is a rewarding one where new ideas and cultural differences cross-pollinate in my brain and expand the way I see the world. But in 2020 it's been an exercise in frustration. The torture of watching how one country has handed the Covid pandemic so well, while living in another

that has bungled it so badly, has been one of the defining characteristics of my past year.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2021/jan/05/watching-new-zealands-covid-success-from-britain-has-shown-me-nations-make-their-own-luck>

Major concern at failure to tell over-65s in mental health facilities when they will get Covid-19 vaccine

Major concern has emerged that residents aged over 65 in mental health facilities have not yet been told when they will get the Covid-19 vaccine. The HSE has promised that all residents and staff in long-term care over-65 will be among the first to receive the jab. However, today the watchdog Mental Health Commission (MHC) said it has been in contact with individuals in mental health centres over the Christmas and New Year period as part of its ongoing remit to monitor, risk-rate and support units in the management and mitigation of the virus. Many have confirmed that they are still to receive a timeline from the Health Service Executive (HSE) for the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccine in their facility.

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/major-concern-at-failure-to-tell-over-65s-in-mental-health-facilities-when-they-will-get-covid-19-vaccine-39933604.html>

China steps up COVID measures near Beijing as local infections rise

-Chinese authorities shut sections of highways running through Hebei province that surrounds Beijing on Wednesday and closed a key long distance bus terminal in the provincial capital Shijiazhuang in efforts to stave off another coronavirus wave. The province, which entered a "wartime mode" on Tuesday, accounted for 20 of the 23 new locally transmitted COVID-19 cases reported in mainland China on Jan. 5, more than the total of 19 cases in the province in the three previous days. The total number of new mainland cases, including those originating from overseas, fell to 32 from 33 a day earlier. Hebei also accounted for 43 of the 64 new asymptomatic cases - patients who have been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus but not yet showing symptoms of COVID-19.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-china-cases/china-steps-up-covid-measures-near-beijing-as-local-infections-rise-idUKKBN29B05D>

Large US airlines back global COVID-testing requirements: Report

A group representing airlines in the United States has backed a proposal by public health officials to implement a global testing programme requiring negative tests before most international air passengers return to the US, according to a letter seen by the Reuters news agency. Airlines for America, which represents American Airlines, United Airlines, Delta Air Lines and other large carriers, also urged the Trump administration in a letter to Vice President Mike Pence on Monday "to move ahead with recommendations to rescind current entry restrictions on travellers from Europe, the United Kingdom and Brazil as soon as possible ... concurrently with the testing programme."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/1/5/large-us-airlines-back-global-covid-testing-requirements-report>

Exit Strategies

What do we know about the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out in Scotland?

Vaccination of the public and vulnerable people from Covid-19 in Scotland is well underway, but information on when the Scottish Government expects vaccines to reach all of the population remains thin on the ground.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/what-do-we-know-about-covid-19-vaccine-roll-out-scotland-3085714>

Back-of-the-pack Dutch under fire for slow coronavirus vaccine rollout

The Dutch government's vaccine strategy has been flawed, Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Tuesday as he admitted watching on with frustration as other countries' citizens were given a jab against the coronavirus. "Because the government's approach was not ...

<https://www.politico.eu/article/netherlands-coronavirus-vaccination-slow-start-mark-rutte-hugo-de-jonge/>

Almost 14 million people to get a Covid vaccine jab by mid-February, vows minister

Almost 14 million people could receive a Covid vaccine by the middle of February, it has been announced. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said tonight that officials were hoping for all people in the top four priority groups to have received a jab in the coming weeks. And speaking afterwards, vaccine minister Nadhim Zahawi said the NHS "family will come together" to get 13.9 million doses administered by the middle of February. In a tweet tonight, he said: "We can do this. The NHS family will come together and we will do this." Speaking from Downing Street, Mr Johnson outlined the NHS's "realistic expectations" for the vaccination programme in the weeks ahead. He said: "By the middle of February, if things go well and with a fair wind in our sails, we expect to have offered the first vaccine dose to everyone in the four top priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation."

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/vaccine-rollout-uk-coronavirus-covid-19563218>

Exclusive: Teachers Could Get Covid Vaccine From Mid-February, MPs Told

Deputy chief medical officer Jenny Harries suggests frontline key workers could begin getting jabs once 13m most vulnerable are inoculated. In a briefing with MPs on Tuesday, England's deputy chief medical officer Jenny Harries suggested teachers and other frontline key workers could be included in the next stage of vaccinations, which will cover the next five priority groups including over 50s and those with risky underlying health conditions. Any decision to inoculate teachers and key workers that early in the vaccination programme would mark a significant acceleration.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/coronavirus-vaccine-teachers-schools-lockdown_uk_5ff47a2dc5b6fd331111480b

The EU's coronavirus vaccine blame game. Why so slow?

When it comes to getting people vaccinated, the EU is trailing behind the U.K., the U.S. and Israel — and a growing number of critics blames the European Commission. Over the weekend, Markus Söder, leader of Germany's Christian Social Union, and BioNTech CEO Uğur Şahin criticized the Commission for not purchasing enough of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine, the first to be approved by European regulators. The Commission fired back Monday, saying it had secured more than 2 billion doses of vaccines from seven producers with member states' participation throughout the process.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/the-vaccination-blame-game-is-it-all-the-eus-fault/>

Coronavirus vaccine: China slams West's 'elderly first' policy

Hu Xijin of The Global Times praised China for prioritising people aged 18 to 59 He lauded Beijing for having a 'responsible attitude' in tackling the coronavirus The state-run paper warned the West against pinning its hope on the vaccines A commentary urged the West to learn from China and adopt a national system Comes as Beijing steps up its effort in shaping the narrative about the pandemic

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9114071/Coronavirus-vaccine-Chinas-editor-praises-nation-inoculating-working-population-first.html>

Coronavirus: India to export Covid vaccines 'within weeks'

India will begin exporting locally-made coronavirus vaccines within a fortnight of their launch, a foreign ministry official has told the BBC. The official dismissed reports that India would ban exports of vaccines it is producing to meet local demand. India makes about 60% of vaccines globally and many countries are eagerly waiting for it to begin shipping doses. It has formally approved the emergency use of two vaccines as it prepares to begin giving jabs in January.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-55538092>

Baker says 70,000 staff members at Mass. hospitals have received COVID-19 vaccine

Governor Charlie Baker said Tuesday that more than 70,000 “COVID-facing” staff members at Massachusetts hospitals have received the COVID-19 vaccine amid the ongoing distribution program that’s slated to expand to first responders on Jan.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/01/05/nation/watch-live-10-am-governor-baker-giving-update-covid-19-vaccinations/>

India says it hasn't banned the export of COVID-19 vaccines

India's government had not banned the export of any vaccines for COVID-19 the health ministry said Tuesday, days after the head of the world's largest vaccine manufacturer said it got emergency authorization to produce the shots as long as it didn't send them overseas. Adar Poonawalla, chief executive of Serum Institute of India, told The Associated Press in an interview Sunday that the company got the green light for its version of the AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine on the condition that it not export shots to ensure that vulnerable populations in India are protected. AstraZeneca contracted Serum Institute of India to manufacture 1 billion doses for developing nations. That vaccine and another developed by Indian company Bharat Biotech were granted licenses for emergency use by Indian regulators Sunday.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/india-says-it-hasnt-banned-the-export-of-covid19-vaccines-india-vaccines-vaccines-export-export-b1782717.html>

A COVID-19 shot for \$150? Online scams surge as slow vaccine rollout frustrates

As millions of people await their turn to get a COVID-19 vaccine that could be months away, scammers online, in emails and on messaging apps are luring victims with claims they can deliver shots within days for as little as \$150. COVID-19 vaccine scams are on the rise, according to European and U.S. government officials who are warning the public of fraudsters out for money and personal data. A Reuters search online, in dark web forums and on messaging app Telegram found seven different offers for alleged COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-vaccine-scams-idUKKBN29A1AA>

Elderly residents who waited overnight for Covid vaccine are turned away as Florida centre hits capacity

Distribution has stalled in places across the United States due to the limited number of coronavirus doses currently available, and it caused one Florida vaccine centre to close its doors once it reached capacity. On Monday, a vaccination centre at Daytona Stadium, in Daytona Beach, Florida, reached capacity for distributing the Moderna vaccine. It was announced that the centre would be open Monday, 4 July, and Tuesday, 5 July, on a first come, first serve basis to administer the coronavirus vaccine to those who qualified. About 2,000 doses were available.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/florida-covid-vaccine-distribution-capacity-b1782260.html>

New York nurse is first in US to be fully vaccinated after receiving second shot

New York nurse Sandra Lindsay on Monday became the first person in the United States to be fully vaccinated against coronavirus. Ms Lindsay received her second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in Queens, where she is the director of critical care nursing. “My message is still that of hope. You know the initial study was done using two doses of the vaccine. So, I feel like I have completed a kind of a marathon and closed the loop,” she said, after receiving both jabs, administered 21 days apart.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-covid-vaccine-news-sandra-lindsay-b1782376.html>

Covid: Can we really jab our way out of lockdown?

With the country in lockdown and a new faster-spreading variant of coronavirus rampant, it's clear the UK is in a race to vaccinate. Prime Minister Boris Johnson wants all the over-70s, the most clinically vulnerable and front-line health and care workers to be offered a jab by mid-February, to allow the restrictions to be eased. That requires about 13 million people to be given the opportunity

to be vaccinated - but so far only one million have been. And ensuring a quick rollout to the rest is fraught with difficulties. There is enough vaccine in the country, BBC News has learned, but getting it into people's arms could be hampered by: a global shortage of glass vials to package up the vaccines long waits for safety checks the process of ensuring there are enough vaccinators

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55488724>

France cranks up vaccine rollout to deliver shots faster

France is stepping up its COVID-19 vaccine rollout by widening further its first target group to include more health workers and simplifying a cumbersome process to deliver jabs more quickly, Health Minister Olivier Veran said on Tuesday. France's inoculation campaign got off to a slow start, hampered in part by red tape and President Emmanuel Macron's decision to tread warily in one of the most vaccine-sceptical countries in the world. But France has fallen behind neighbours such as Britain and Germany, and the president is now demanding the vaccination programme be expedited.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKKBN29A0MJ>

France's go-slow coronavirus vaccination strategy backfires

France's cautious approach to rolling out a coronavirus vaccination program appears to have backfired, leaving barely 500 people inoculated in the first week and rekindling anger over the government's handling of the pandemic. Amid public outcry, the health minister vowed Monday to step up the pace, and made a belated public plea on behalf of the vaccine, saying it offers a "chance" for France and the world to vanquish a pandemic that has killed more than 1.8 million people. President Emmanuel Macron was holding a special meeting with top government officials Monday to address the vaccine strategy and other virus developments. The slow rollout of the vaccine made by Pfizer and the German firm BioNTech was blamed on mismanagement, staffing shortages during holiday vacations and a complex French consent policy designed to accommodate unusually broad vaccine skepticism among the French public.

<https://apnews.com/article/pandemics-europe-emmanuel-macron-coronavirus-pandemic-france-6436e64415a442b514a5e780e7c9852a>

Messonnier: The slow vaccine rollout should speed up 'pretty massively' in coming weeks

Nancy Messonnier, a top federal health official involved in the distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, predicted on Tuesday that delays in the administration of the shots would improve soon, even as public health experts have piled up complaints about the slow rollout and about the gap between the number of doses distributed versus those actually going into people's arms. "I really expect the pace of administration to go up pretty massively in the next couple weeks," Messonnier, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said in a conversation with STAT infectious disease reporter Helen Branswell.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/01/05/nancy-messonnier-stat-interview/>

Decades of basic research paved the way for today's 'warp speed' Covid-19 vaccines

The emergency use authorizations of mRNA vaccines by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna and the likely gradual rollout of multiple others is our collective best hope for curtailing the Covid-19 pandemic. The speed at which these vaccines has been developed is remarkable, both in absolute terms and compared to the multiyear time frame it normally takes to create and approve new vaccines. Great credit is due to the pharmaceutical industry and the university and government scientists who have worked directly and diligently on Covid-19 vaccine programs in the U.S., Europe, and elsewhere. They deserve accolades for their skillful hard work. But the Covid-19 vaccines did not come from nowhere. Decades of research by tens of thousands of scientists worldwide put in place the essential knowledge and methods that underpinned their rapid development.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/01/05/basic-research-paved-way-for-warp-speed-covid-19-vaccines/>

Partisan Exits

US pharmacist 'tried to ruin Covid vaccine' because of safety fears, court told

Steven Brandenburg was detained following an investigation into spoiled vials of the Moderna jab, which would have inoculated 500 people. A US pharmacist convinced the world was “crashing down” told police he tried to ruin hundreds of doses of coronavirus vaccine because he believed the shots would mutate people’s DNA. Court documents from Wisconsin showed pharmacist Steven Brandenburg was detained following an investigation into the 57 spoiled vials of the Moderna vaccine, which officials say contained enough doses to inoculate more than 500 people.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/world-news/pharmacist-tried-ruin-covid-vaccine-19563468>

Covid-19: England lockdown looms as hospital ejects 'Covid deniers'

A group of Covid-19 "deniers" were removed from a hospital by security guards after going there to take pictures of empty corridors to post on social media to back up their claims that there is no crisis, according to its chief executive. Describing the incident at Colchester Hospital, where the intensive care unit is running at maximum capacity because of the virus, Nick Hulme said it "beggars belief" some people were calling the pandemic a hoax. "Of course there are empty corridors at the weekend in outpatients, because that's the right thing to do," he added.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55536189>

I won't make the same mistakes again: Milan mayor on his green Covid recovery plan

Milan’s mayor, Beppe Sala, admits he made mistakes. In late February 2020, a week after the first locally transmitted coronavirus case was confirmed in Italy, he shared a promotional video on his Facebook page with the slogan “Milan does not stop”. The clip contained images of people hugging, eating in restaurants, walking in parks and waiting at train stations. It was not Sala’s finest hour.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/05/milan-mayor-covid-strategy-beppe-sala-pandemic-green-solutions-crisis>

Italy's 5Star Movement learns to love coronavirus vaccines

Italy, the first European country to see its hospitals overflow with coronavirus cases, is rolling out vaccines that many hope will mark the beginning of the end of the crushing pandemic. But the country faces an uphill battle to immunize its population — one of the most vaccine-skeptical in Europe — especially given that one of its ruling parties has long expressed such doubts itself. The populist 5Star Movement, which governs with the center-left Democratic Party, voiced vaccine skepticism as far back as 1998, when Beppe Grillo, the movement's founder and its former leader, questioned the use of vaccines in a televised skit in front of a live audience.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-5-star-movement-vaccine-coronavirus-beppe-grillo-anti-vax/>

Continued Lockdown

Germany set to extend hard lockdown as daily deaths mount

Germany’s disease control center on Tuesday reported 944 more COVID-19 deaths, fueling expectations that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the country’s 16 state governors will extend the country’s lockdown until the end of the month. Germany’s latest lockdown took effect Dec. 16 after a partial shutdown starting in early November failed to reduce the number of daily new coronavirus infections. It was initially set to expire Jan. 10. Merkel's meeting with the governors on Tuesday will decide how long the lockdown should go on and to what extent schools will reopen. Another topic high on the agenda will be addressing criticism of the country's vaccination program amid frustrations over its gradual start. Vaccinations in Germany and the rest of the 27-nation European Union started over a week ago. In Germany, a nation of 83 million, nearly 265,000 vaccinations had been reported by Monday, the Robert Koch Institute said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/germany-set-to-extend-hard-lockdown-as-daily-deaths-mount-germany-angela-merkel-lockdown-country-country-b1782421.html>

Germany set to extend lockdowns as COVID-19 deaths rise

Germany's disease control center on Tuesday reported 944 more COVID-19 deaths, fueling expectations that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the country's 16 state governors will extend the country's lockdown until the end of the month. Germany's latest lockdown took effect Dec. 16 after a partial shutdown starting in early November failed to reduce the number of daily new coronavirus infections. It was initially set to expire Jan. 10.

<https://www.masslive.com/coronavirus/2021/01/germany-set-to-extend-lockdowns-as-covid-19-deaths-rise.html>

Europe starts 2021 by extending lockdowns as coronavirus cases spiral

A number of European nations have kicked off 2021 in familiar fashion, locking down residents and struggling to curb Covid-19 cases. The tightened restrictions come as a new variant of the virus causes alarm among governments across the continent. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a strict new national lockdown in England on Monday. The restrictions will last for at least six weeks. "It's clear that we need to do more together to bring this new variant under control while our vaccines are rolled out," Johnson said in an address to the nation on Monday evening.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/05/europe/european-coronavirus-lockdowns-2021-intl/index.html>

Germany heading towards extension of hard lockdown

The German government and the country's 16 federal states have agreed to extend a strict lockdown until Jan. 31 in an effort to bring coronavirus infections under control, Bild newspaper reported on Monday, without providing a source. Chancellor Angela Merkel and the state premiers are scheduled on Tuesday to discuss a possible extension of the lockdown beyond Jan. 10. Some, including Bavaria's premier Markus Soeder, have already spoken in favour of an extension. Speaking after the Bild report, a government source told Reuters: "All but two federal states support (a lockdown extension until) Jan. 31. However, the formal decision will be made on Tuesday."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany/germany-heading-towards-extension-of-hard-lockdown-idUKKBN2991OR>

Scientific Viewpoint

COVID-19 vaccine: FDA pushes back against delaying second dose as US officials, health experts weigh in on debate

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration weighed in on a debate over when the first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine should be administered. The FDA said in a statement there is no adequate scientific evidence that supports changing the authorized COVID-19 vaccine schedule or dosing. "Without appropriate data supporting such changes in vaccine administration, we run a significant risk of placing public health at risk, undermining the historic vaccination efforts to protect the population from COVID-19," the FDA said

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2021/01/05/covid-vaccine-fda-us-officials-health-experts-argue-dosing-schedule/4138358001/>

Italy to enter capital of ReiThera to support COVID vaccine development

Italy will invest in local biotech company ReiThera to support the development of its COVID-19 vaccine, a senior official said on Tuesday after the government called results of a Phase 1 trial encouraging. ReiThera is developing the vaccine with Germany's Leukocare and Belgium's Univercells and started talks with the European Union in September about supplying the bloc with doses. An initial trial involved 45 volunteers aged between 18 and 55. None of them showed serious side effects in the 28 days after the vaccination, said Giuseppe Ippolito, scientific director of Rome's Lazzaro Spallanzani institute which conducted the tests.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy-reithera/italy-to-enter-capital-of-reithera-to-support-covid-vaccine-development-idUKKBN29A17V>

FDA says changing coronavirus vaccine dosing could put 'public health at risk'

The Food and Drug Administration won't recommend altering the dose regimens of the two coronavirus vaccines currently authorized for emergency use in the U.S. without new clinical data, the agency said late Monday. In an unusual statement, commissioner Stephen Hahn and top agency official Peter Marks warned that changing the way the vaccines are used could put "public health at risk" because those immunized may falsely think they're protected from COVID-19. The vaccines from Moderna as well as partners Pfizer and BioNTech were proven to be 95% protective against symptomatic COVID-19 after two shots given a few weeks apart. Hahn and Marks' opposition comes after the leader of the White House's Operation Warp Speed effort, Moncef Slaoui, suggested using half-doses of Moderna's vaccine, citing study results indicating the immune response generated appeared equally strong in adults 18 to 55 years of age given doses half as strong as the one authorized.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/fda-coronavirus-vaccine-dosing-schedule/592811/>

No sign S.Africa's COVID-19 variant more contagious than UK version -WHO

There is no indication that the coronavirus variant identified in South Africa is more transmissible than the one spreading fast in Britain, the World Health Organization's technical chief on COVID-19,

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-who-variant-idUSZ8N2HS00C>

WHO recommends two doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine within 21-28 days

People should get two doses of the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine within 21-28 days, the World Health Organization said on Tuesday, as many countries struggled to administer the jabs that can ward off the COVID-19 virus. Many are experiencing intensifying pressure on their health services due to surging coronavirus cases and the emergence of new variants that appear to spread more easily. Governments are introducing new lockdown measures to halt the spread while facing massive demand for vaccines which are seen as the best way out of the global health crisis. But with jabs in limited supply as production ramps up, the WHO has been examining how they can be used most effectively.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-who-idUSKBN29A25G>

Relief for cancer patients as study shows those with solid tumours have the same level of immune response to Covid-19 as healthy people

Charity Cancer research UK studied blood samples of 76 cancer patients Forty-one of these patients tested positive for Covid-19 and 35 were uninfected Reveals people with solid tumours respond in same way as non-cancer patients But also found people with blood cancer have a milder immune response

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9115019/Cancer-patients-tumours-immune-response-Covid-19-people-without-cancer.html>

Covid-19 in South Africa: Scientists seek to understand new variant

Scientists in South Africa say there is a "reasonable concern" that the new variant of Covid-19 sweeping across the country might prove to be more resistant to current vaccines being rolled out in the UK and elsewhere, and warn that it makes the need for a global roll-out of vaccines "even more critical". "It's a theoretical concern. A reasonable concern... that the South African variant might be more resistant," Prof Shabir Madhi, who has led trials for the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine in South Africa, told the BBC. Prof Madhi was responding to comments by the UK government and scientists. He said a definitive answer would probably come in a matter of weeks, with extensive testing already under way in South Africa.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-55531838>

No data to support delay of second Covid vaccine dose, say Pfizer and BioNTech

BioNTech and Pfizer have warned against delaying the provision of a second dose of their vaccine,

after the UK government adopted the strategy in an attempt to make the country's supplies go further. Amid an escalation in Covid-19 cases across the four nations – driven in part by the new coronavirus variant – government health officials heeded calls to roll out initial supplies of the vaccines to as many people as possible, rather than holding back jabs to give second doses to those who have received the first.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/covid-vaccine-pfizer-second-dose-b1782467.html>

The Nigerian scientist sequencing new COVID strain as cases rise

A Nigerian scientist has spent the holiday season in his laboratory doing genetic sequencing to learn more about the country's COVID-19 variant, as cases increase in the country. Virologist Sunday Omilabu says the information he gathers about the variant will help battle the spread of the disease in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with 196 million people. Nigeria has confirmed 89,163 COVID-19 cases, including 1,302 deaths, according to the figures released on Sunday by the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "The variants discovered in the UK and South Africa, they are distantly different from the variants discovered in Nigeria," said Omilabu, who said it is not unusual for viruses to mutate and cause variants. Nigeria is seeing more infections of COVID-19 but it is not yet certain if that is from the variant, said Omilabu, the director of the Centre for Human and Zoonotic Virology at the Lagos University College of Medicine and Teaching Hospital.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/4/sunday-omilabu-the-doctor-sequencing-nigerias-covid-variant>

Study: US COVID cases, deaths far higher than reported

An estimated 14.3% of the US population had antibodies against COVID-19 by mid-November 2020, suggesting that the virus has infected vastly more people than reported—but still not enough to come close to the proportion needed for herd immunity, according to a study published today in JAMA Network Open. In the cross-sectional study, researchers from study sponsors Pfizer and Merck analyzed data from random community seroprevalence surveys and five such regional and national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveys to estimate infection underreporting multipliers. Seroprevalence surveys reveal the proportion of a population that has antibodies against a certain disease, such as COVID-19.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/01/study-us-covid-cases-deaths-far-higher-reported>

WHO experts weigh in on COVID-19 vaccine dose interval

The World Health Organization (WHO) vaccine advisory group today weighed in with recommendations for delivering the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, urging the vaccine doses be given 21 to 28 days apart in most circumstances, but in certain situations allowing for an interval of up to 6 weeks. The new guidance comes as countries rush to get their vaccination drives up and running as they face the prospect of wider circulation of more transmissible SARS-CoV-2 variants. It also comes just days after the WHO announced its first emergency use listing for a COVID-19 vaccine, the one from Pfizer-BioNTech.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/01/who-experts-weigh-covid-19-vaccine-dose-interval>

Not so fast: FDA warns of 'premature' changes to COVID-19 vaccine dosing in clash with Slaoui

Amid concerns over limited COVID-19 vaccine supplies, some have proposed tweaking the shots' dosing to immunize more people. One suggestion came from none other than U.S. vaccine czar Moncef Slaoui, Ph.D. But the FDA's stepping forward to dismiss the idea—at least for now. Any changes to currently authorized vaccine dosing regimens pose a "significant risk of placing public health at risk" and undermine "the historic vaccination efforts to protect the population from COVID-19," FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn, M.D., and Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., head of the agency's biologics department, said in a statement Monday. The comment came on the heels of Operation Warp Speed chief Slaoui saying the vaccine task force is working with the FDA and

Moderna to potentially reduce the company's mRNA-1273 dose in half to stretch the supply.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/not-so-fast-fda-warns-premature-changes-to-covid-19-vaccine-dosing-clash-slaoui>

Moderna dials up low-end COVID-19 vaccine supply estimate, setting sights on 1B doses in 2021

Moderna Therapeutics is angling to surpass the hundreds of millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses it's already pledged to governments worldwide. And, on Monday, the drugmaker signaled that it's inching toward that goal, dialing up its low-end manufacturing predictions for the year. Moderna has raised its base-case global production estimate from 500 million doses to 600 million doses this year. The supply bump comes as the company continues to invest and staff up, with a view to potentially hit 1 billion doses in 2021, Moderna said. The company will need those extra doses, too: It recently received expanded vaccine orders from the likes of Canada, the U.S. and the EU. The FDA in December cleared the shot for emergency use in Americans 18 years and older, with Health Canada following suit a week later.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/moderna-dials-up-low-end-vaccine-supply-estimate-setting-sights-1-billion-doses-2021>

UK scientists question COVID-19 vaccine dosing delay

Five UK medical scientists have criticised a British government plan to delay giving second doses of COVID-19 vaccines by up to 12 weeks, saying proven dosing schedules should not be altered "without solid scientific support or evidence". In an opinion piece published online in the BMJ British Medical Journal, the scientists said the plan was based on "assumptions" rather than scientific evidence or trial data. They also questioned the rationale behind prolonging the time between first and second doses. The scientists from the universities of Nottingham, Manchester and De Montfort wrote that suggestions by officials on the government's Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunization (JCVI) that the delay strategy was due to shortages of COVID-19 shots in the UK were "disputed by vaccine manufacturers".

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-vaccines-d/uk-scientists-question-covid-19-vaccine-dosing-delay-idUKKBN29A2A1>

Explainer-How safe is it to switch and space COVID-19 vaccine doses?

Britain and other nations are considering ways to stretch scarce supplies of COVID-19 vaccines, including by delaying second doses, reducing dose sizes and switching vaccine types between the first and second shots.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-vaccine-doses/explainer-how-safe-is-it-to-switch-and-space-covid-19-vaccine-doses-idUKKBN29A1QX>

Brazil scrambles to secure COVID vaccine from India

Brazil made a diplomatic push on Monday to guarantee an Indian-made shipment of British drugmaker AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine, hoping to avoid export restrictions that could delay immunisations during the world's second-deadliest outbreak. In parallel, Brazil's private clinics struck a preliminary deal for an alternative injection made by India's Bharat Biotech despite a lack of public results from late-stage trials.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/4/brazil-scrambles-to-secure-covid-vaccine-from-india>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19: UK daily coronavirus cases top 60,000 for first time

The number of new daily confirmed cases of coronavirus in the UK has topped 60,000 for the first time since the pandemic started. According to government figures on Tuesday, the number of people who tested positive was 60,916. One in 50 people in private households in England had Covid

last week - and one in 30 in London, according to estimates based on the latest data. A further 830 people have also died within 28 days of a positive test. It comes as England and Scotland announced new strict lockdowns, with people told to stay at home.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-55550906>

COVID-19: More than a million have coronavirus in England, says PM - as variant is 'taking off' around UK

More than a million people in England are currently infected with coronavirus, the prime minister has said. Boris Johnson was speaking at a Downing Street news conference on the first full day of the nation's third lockdown, as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said one in 50 people in England have COVID-19. Chief medical officer Professor Chris Whitty said it was "really quite a large number indeed" and warned the new variant is "taking off" in areas outside London and the South East.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-more-than-a-million-have-coronavirus-in-england-says-pm-as-variant-is-taking-off-around-uk-12180059>

New York reports first case of new coronavirus variant as U.K. orders third national lockdown

New York on Monday reported its first case of a U.K. variant of the coronavirus that appears to be more contagious and has been reported in more than 30 countries. The news came as Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered a third national lockdown for England amid a surging outbreak driven by the variant.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/01/04/coronavirus-covid-live-updates-us/>

New coronavirus infections increase by 25% in a week in Spain

Compared with the data seen on December 28, the ministry's latest report is showing a very similar situation - both of these reports were released after a four-day period of celebrations, the former Christmas, the latter New Year. The number of new cases notified has risen 25% in the last report from a week ago, from 24,462 to 30,579, bringing the overall total of official cases in Spain to 1,958,844 since the health crisis began. In terms of the 14-day cumulative number of coronavirus cases per 100,000 inhabitants, the figure has risen from 246.19 to 272.22 over this seven-day period, a figure that is far from the 188.72 on December 10, as Minister Darias pointed out while speaking after a meeting of the country's regional health chiefs and the central Health Ministry

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2021-01-05/new-coronavirus-infections-increase-by-25-in-a-week-in-spain.html>

South Korea's COVID-19 death toll passes 1000, gyms protest distancing rules

The number of deaths linked to the coronavirus in South Korea passed 1,000 on Tuesday (Jan 5), while an increasing number of gym owners said they would reopen in protest against strict social distancing rules. After using aggressive testing and tracing to blunt several earlier waves of the coronavirus without widespread lockdowns, South Korea has imposed increasingly strident social distancing rules as it struggles to stop its largest wave yet. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) reported 28 new deaths and 715 new cases, for a total of 1,007 deaths and 64,979 cases overall.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/south-korea-covid-19-death-toll-passes-1000-gyms-protest-13896530>

Japan weighs state of emergency in Tokyo area as COVID cases surge

Public health experts advising Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga called on Tuesday for the swift imposition of a state of emergency in the Tokyo area as daily COVID-19 cases hit a record and some citizens accused the government of dragging its feet. The government's top spokesman, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato, said a decision would likely come on Thursday on whether to impose the second state of emergency since the start of the pandemic. Japanese media said it would take effect by Friday and last about a month. The government is anxious about the economic impact of another state of emergency as it prepares to host the Olympics in the summer.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-japan/update-4-japan-weighs-state-of-emergency-in-tokyo-area-as-covid-cases-surge-idUKL1N2JG040>

Level 5 restrictions: 10 other lockdown measures that could be considered as Covid cases skyrocket

Ireland is in Level 5 lockdown as countries across Europe implement tough measures in an attempt to slow the rapid spread of Covid-19. As the number of Covid cases in this country hit record levels, we take a look at further restrictions which could be brought in to contain the virus.

<https://www.independent.ie/news/level-5-restrictions-10-other-lockdown-measures-that-could-be-considered-as-covid-cases-skyrocket-39933647.html>

New Lockdown

England Covid lockdown likely to be in place until March, Gove warns

The third national lockdown imposed in England to try to deal with the huge increase in Covid-19 cases is likely to remain in place into March at least, with some measures lasting even longer, the government has indicated. The Cabinet Office minister, Michael Gove, said he hoped the gradual lifting of restrictions could begin in mid-February, but that the time it took for the vaccines to take effect meant it was likely to be at least another couple of weeks before measures could start to be eased. "We can't predict with certainty that we'll be able to lift restrictions the week commencing the 15 to 22 [February], what we will be doing is everything we can to make sure that as many people as possible are vaccinated so that we can begin progressively to lift restrictions," Gove told Sky News on Tuesday.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/05/covid-lockdown-in-england-likely-in-place-until-march-gove-warns>

UK PM Johnson cancels India visit, citing need to oversee virus response

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday cancelled a planned trip to India later this month, citing the need to oversee the pandemic response at home. "The prime minister spoke to (Indian) Prime Minister Modi this morning, to express his regret that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned," a Downing Street spokeswoman said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/UKNews1/idUKKBN29A19M>

Covid-19 fight in China's Hebei enters 'wartime mode' as province sees first local cases in six months

The fight to contain the coronavirus in northern China's Hebei has entered "wartime mode", official media reported on Tuesday (Jan 5), after the province surrounding capital Beijing saw its first locally transmitted Covid-19 cases in more than six months. Hebei reported 19 local infections and 40 asymptomatic cases between last Saturday and Monday, according to data from the Chinese health authorities. The last time the province recorded locally transmitted infections was in June last year. Nationally, mainland China reported 33 new Covid-19 cases on Monday, the National Health Commission said on Tuesday, with 14 of the 17 local cases recorded in Hebei and 16 cases imported from overseas.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/covid-19-fight-in-chinas-hebei-enters-wartime-mode-as-province-sees-first-infections>

China places village under lockdown after coronavirus outbreak

China has placed a village under lockdown following a coronavirus outbreak likely tied to recent weddings, according to multiple reports. Entry and exit were barred from Xiaoguo Zhuang, located in Hebei province, and it is now the only "high risk" area of China, The Washington Post reported. Authorities reported 44 new cases in Hebei, of which 30 were asymptomatic.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-places-village-under-lockdown-after-coronavirus-outbreak/ar-BB1cuBrF>

The Times view on the new lockdown: End Game

The means to defeat the coronavirus are now available. Yet the rate of infection of Covid-19 in Britain is intensifying and risks overwhelming the National Health Service. That is the paradox driving public health policy. Unfortunately, the government has been continually reactive in adopting measures to halt transmissions. It has had to learn painfully that there is no route out of the crisis by half-measures. Policy needs to be tougher and speedier if the nation's hardships are to be eased and then dispelled by a vast vaccination campaign. Failing to do this has already cost lives. The government needs to give a clearer message on the urgency of the crisis and the stages by which, with public support, it can be lifted.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-the-new-lockdown-end-game-2z7zndq9p>

Covid-19 coronavirus: New UK lockdown 'frustrating, utterly disappointing' say Kiwis

Kiwis living in the United Kingdom say the Government's announcement of a new lockdown is frustrating and utterly disappointing. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced a new national lockdown for England with people being instructed to stay at home just as they did in March. In his TV address on Tuesday morning NZ time, Johnson said a new coronavirus variant had caused the number of Covid-19 cases to rise rapidly in every part of the country. Leeanne Coles, 31, a beauty therapist from Auckland, has been in the UK for the last 18 months and contracted Covid-19 when she went out for lunch with five friends on December 4

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-new-uk-lockdown-frustrating-utterly-disappointing-say-kiwis/DKVUQR3T3Z6T32FWJ5Y5XJXP3E/>

Covid-19: Third UK lockdown 'pretty depressing' for Kiwi expats but not a surprise

The United Kingdom is preparing to endure a third Covid-19 lockdown as new strains of the virus ravage the country. Tuesday's announcement, however, came as no shock to some Kiwi expatriates enduring the pandemic in the UK. Sam Tylee, a 28-year-old originally from Wairarapa who has lived in the UK for over four years, described the announcement from British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as anti-climatic. "I wasn't actually shocked, to be honest ... I think that it was inevitable because they can't vaccinate people quick enough."

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/europe/123871904/covid19-third-uk-lockdown-pretty-depressing-for-kiwi-expats-but-not-a-surprise>

Rishi Sunak announces £9,000 grant to support UK businesses closed during national Covid lockdown

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced a new package of support for businesses forced to close during the lockdown. One-off grants worth up to £9,000 per property will be made available to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses to support them during the Covid-19 lockdown. The measures will apply to 600,000 business properties and are expected to cost the Treasury around £4 billion.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/rishi-sunak-grant-support-uk-business-closed-national-lockdown-covid-restrictions-817450>

Lebanon orders three-week lockdown to fight virus spread

Lebanon announced a full lockdown for three weeks, including a night curfew, to stem a rise in COVID-19 infections that threatens to overwhelm hospitals in a country already facing financial meltdown. Caretaker Health Minister Hamad Hasan said the lockdown would start on Thursday and run until Feb. 1, with further details on Tuesday on which sectors would be exempt. The lockdown will include a curfew from 6 pm to 5 am. "It has become clear that the pandemic challenge has reached a stage that is seriously threatening Lebanese lives as hospitals are not capable of providing beds," Hasan told reporters after a meeting of the ministerial committee on COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-lebanon/lebanon-orders-three-week-lockdown-to-fight-virus-spread-idUSKBN29923T>

UK offers lockdown-hit firms extra \$6.2 billion of help

Britain offered a 4.6 billion pound (\$6.2 billion) support package for businesses on Tuesday to soften an expected recession caused by a surge in COVID-19 cases that has triggered a third national lockdown. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the lockdown on Monday, saying a highly contagious coronavirus variant risked overwhelming the health service within 21 days. Most people must work from home and schools have closed for almost all pupils. Hospitality venues must stay shut, as well as non-essential shops. Britain's economy looks likely to tip back into recession - shrinking in the final quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 - following a record 25% fall in output in the first two months of lockdown in 2020.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-sunak/uk-offers-lockdown-hit-firms-extra-62-billion-of-help-idUKKBN29A0V3>

Britons ordered to stay at home as third national lockdown begins

Britain began its third COVID-19 lockdown on Tuesday with citizens under orders to stay at home and the government calling for one last major national effort to contain the virus before mass vaccinations turn the tide. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the lockdown late on Monday saying the highly contagious new coronavirus variant first identified in Britain was spreading so fast it risked overwhelming the National Health Service (NHS) within 21 days. In England alone, some 27,000 people are in hospital with COVID, a number 40 percent higher than during the first peak of infections in April. "The weeks ahead will be the hardest yet but I really do believe that we are entering the last phase of the struggle, because with every jab that goes into our arms, we are tilting the odds against COVID and in favour of the British people," said Johnson.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain/britons-ordered-to-stay-at-home-as-third-national-lockdown-begins-idUSKBN29A0QU>

UK lockdowns force British Airways, easyJet to review flying plans

UK-based airlines British Airways and easyJet said they were reviewing their plans in response to new national COVID lockdowns, with reductions to already low levels of flying almost certain. Restrictions on travel due to the pandemic, and particularly a halt by some countries to passenger traffic from Britain due to an outbreak of a new variant of the coronavirus, means that there are only a fraction of flights currently operating. But the new lockdown in England stops most people from travelling abroad, making more cuts likely, and putting airline finances under renewed pressure as carriers had hoped for a recovery in travel by the spring. Goodbody analysts said the lockdown would wipe out income from the school half-term holiday in February, usually a strong travel period, and risked impacting bookings for Easter and summer.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-iag/uk-lockdowns-force-british-airways-easyjet-to-review-flying-plans-idUKKBN29A10Y?il=0>

UK unveils \$6.2 billion in extra lockdown support

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the lockdown late on Monday saying the highly contagious new coronavirus variant first identified in Britain was spreading so fast it risked overwhelming the health service. Britain announced on Tuesday 4.6 billion pounds (\$6.2 billion) in new lockdown grants to support businesses and protect jobs.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-support/uk-unveils-6-2-billion-in-extra-lockdown-support-idUKKBN29A0VR>

Elite sport to continue in England despite national lockdown

Elite sport will be allowed to continue in England despite Prime Minister Boris Johnson announcing a new national COVID-19 lockdown on Monday due to surging infections in the country caused by a more contagious variant of the novel coronavirus.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-lockdown-s/elite-sport-to-continue-in-england-despite-national-lockdown-idUKKBN2992DW>

Scotland to enter another effective national lockdown

Scotland will on Monday enter another effective national lockdown, likely to last until spring, The Times newspaper reported. Scottish government leader Nicola Sturgeon said earlier her cabinet would meet on Monday to discuss possible further steps to limit the spread of the virus, and ordered Scotland's parliament to be recalled. It is expected the reopening of schools will be pushed back beyond Jan. 18, the newspaper reported

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-lockdown-s-idUKKBN29903R>