

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

12th Jan 2021

News Highlights

Even with vaccines, herd immunity won't be reached in 2021 says WHO chief scientist

The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that despite the vaccine rollout in multiple countries, we still won't see global population or herd immunity this year. Dr Soumy Swaminathan, the WHO's chief scientist, said '[even if it happens in a couple of pockets in a few countries, it's not going to protect people across the world.](#)' As such, measures such as physical distancing and mask-wearing are likely to need to continue.

A year's worth of immunity, Moderna claims

Drugmaker Moderna has said that mRNA-1273, its Covid-19 vaccine candidate, should offer immunity for a year and is '[well-suited to deploy another vaccine based on the new variant of the coronavirus which has emerged in a handful of countries.](#)' The company expects to roll out 600 million to one billion doses of the vaccine this year, having inked purchase agreements with several government that it projects will lead to U.S.\$11.7 billion worth of sales.

BioNTech scales up distribution targets

Targets for distributing doses of the vaccine candidate developed by Pfizer and BioNTech in 2021 have been increased by the latter, from 1.3 billion to two billion. [This comes as new production lines are opened and the use special low dead space syringes that can extract more doses from a single vial.](#) BioNTech said, consequently, one billion people can be inoculated with the recommended two dose regimen this year.

Mutation will probably force drugmakers and regulators into a game of 'cat and mouse' with vaccines

The emergence of mutations in the novel coronavirus have resulted in regulators and vaccine manufacturers having to think about planning for changes to the efficacy of the vaccines developed. [Researchers are retesting vaccine candidates and preparing to make alterations to their formulae, if the vaccines prove less effective](#) in tackling the mutated variants, while regulators are investigating how to expedite the process.

Lockdown Exit

The Lancet editor: UK 'steadfastly refused to follow the science'

Richard Horton: The primary reason why the UK has struggled is because it has not learned the lessons of the first wave of the pandemic in 2020 and it has steadfastly refused to follow the science, despite claims that it is doing so. The lessons from the science have been that when there is a rise in infections, you need to clamp down immediately to suppress transmission to reduce the prevalence of infection in the community. But at every stage, the government has delayed and delayed locking down, with the result that the virus has got out of control. The result of that is increased hospitalisations and deaths. This has been entirely preventable if the government

had acted with more decisiveness, and sooner.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/11/uk-covid-crisis-ga-with-the-lancets-richard-horton>

WHO: Won't achieve 'herd immunity in 2021' despite vaccines

WHO stresses need for measures like physical distancing, hand washing and mask wearing to rein in the pandemic. Herd immunity will not be achieved this year despite COVID-19 vaccines being rolled out in a number of countries, the World Health Organization has warned. Last month, the United Kingdom became the first country in the world to start administering its citizens with a fully trialed and tested COVID-19 vaccine. "We are not going to achieve any levels of population immunity or herd immunity in 2021," WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan told a briefing in Geneva on Monday. "Even if it happens in a couple of pockets in a few countries, it's not going to protect people across the world."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/11/despite-vaccines-covid-herd-immunity-wont-happen-in-2021-who>

Australia closes hospital emergency unit over virus case as city lockdown lifts

A hospital emergency department in Sydney was closed after a patient tested positive for COVID-19, Australian authorities said on Monday, as the city of Brisbane made face masks compulsory at public venues. A man in his 40s tested positive for the virus on Sunday after coming to Sydney's Mount Druitt Hospital, prompting it to close its emergency unit for cleaning, with media reports saying ambulances were diverted to other hospitals. Although the unit reopened on Monday, health officials said they would investigate the man's movements to determine where he contracted the illness and whether it was linked to a highly-contagious strain that was first detected in Britain.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/healthcare-coronavirus-australia/australia-closes-hospital-emergency-unit-over-virus-case-as-city-lockdown-lifts-idUSL1N2JM02G>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Spike in border cases, Brisbane lockdown shows need for 'extra vigilance' - expert

New Zealand might need to close its border to the United Kingdom if cases of the new Covid-19 variant there continue to skyrocket, says a leading public health expert. The comments come in response to news on Sunday of 31 new Covid-19 cases in managed isolation over the past 72 hours, with 11 of the new highly-infectious UK variant. One case is linked to the South African strain. "I am very concerned, and this is possibly the most dangerous phase we have been in since the August Auckland outbreak," epidemiologist Dr Michael Baker told the Herald.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-spike-in-border-cases-brisbane-lockdown-shows-need-for-extra-vigilance-expert/M6YZ4POAQKIR2XFCZSCPRUUM2M/>

Partner of Queensland cleaner with UK Covid variant tests positive as Brisbane comes out of 72-hour lockdown

The partner of a Queensland cleaner who tested positive to the UK variant of Covid-19 has also tested positive, hours before a lockdown of greater Brisbane was lifted. The Queensland chief health officer, Dr Jeannette Young, said the partner had been in quarantine since 7 January. She said it was likely that genome sequencing would confirm it was the second case of the UK variant detected in the Australian community. Young said the result was unsurprising given the variant was more contagious. "However, it highlights the importance of why the greater Brisbane lockdown was so important to ensure any potential spread of the virus is contained," she said on Monday evening.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/11/nsw-reports-four-new-covid-cases-as-brisbane-to-come-out-of-72-hour-lockdown>

The West should envy Japan's COVID-19 response

On Jan. 1, the world total of coronavirus cases was 83,748,593 and deaths 1,824,140. Japan's corresponding figures were 230,304 and 3,414. Unusually, in Japan the disease killed more people in autumn-winter than spring. Still, for balance and perspective it's worth noting that more Japanese

died from 25 other causes in 2020. Japan attracted world notice for neither imposing a lockdown nor obsessively testing asymptomatic people. As Tomoya Saito put it in these pages, “Encouraging people with mild or no symptoms to take PCR tests would have revealed nothing but resulted in isolating false-positive cases.”

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2021/01/10/commentary/japan-commentary/west-japan-coronavirus-response/>

COVID-19 pandemic puts Barcelona urban greening plan in the fast lane

One of Barcelona’s largest parks, named after Spanish painter Joan Miro, is just a stone’s throw from the busy crossroads between Consell de Cent and Rocafort streets, but here you could be mistaken for thinking nature is a million miles away. That could be about to change under an ambitious new 10-year plan, unveiled by Barcelona City Hall in November, aimed at drastically cutting traffic and expanding green spaces in the central district of Eixample. The 38 million-euro (\$46.5-million) plan aims to turn one in three streets in the densely populated residential and commercial area into green zones. It responds to longstanding problems of air pollution and cramped living conditions in the Spanish region of Catalonia’s main city, brought to the fore by COVID-19, said Janet Sanz, Barcelona’s deputy mayor for ecology, urban planning and mobility. Lockdowns imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19 made urban residents realise how important nature is to them personally and to their wider communities, said Josep M. Pages, secretary general of the Belgium-based European Nurserystock Association

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-coronavirus-city-environment-fe/covid-19-pandemic-puts-barcelona-urban-greening-plan-in-the-fast-lane-idUSKBN29G0I2>

Malaysia's king declares state of emergency to curb spread of COVID-19

Malaysia’s King Al-Sultan Abdullah declared a state of emergency across the country on Tuesday to curb the spread of COVID-19, after consenting to a request from Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, who is facing a leadership challenge. An emergency would give the prime minister and his cabinet extraordinary powers, including allowing the government to introduce laws without the approval of parliament. It was not immediately clear how the emergency would impact day to day activities, but the constitution allows for parliament to be suspended during that period - which could for now put an end to political uncertainties faced by Muhyiddin.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-malaysia/malaysias-king-declares-state-of-emergency-to-curb-spread-of-covid-19-idUSKBN29H06G?il=0>

Exit Strategies

Covid vaccine: Medics are being drafted in to counter public complacency as vaccine programme is rolled out

It was no accident that Downing Street drafted in England’s chief medical officer for the round of broadcast interviews usually faced by ministers. Chris Whitty used his appearances to hammer home a bleak warning that Britain has reached the worst moment in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic with one in 50 of the population believed to be infected. And he delivered a fresh plea for the public to stick to the latest lockdown restrictions and social distancing rules to prevent the super-infectious strain of the disease advancing further. Prof Whitty has become a familiar face alongside ministers at Downing Street press conferences, but is being promoted to the forefront of efforts to jolt the public out of any sense of complacency.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/chris-whitty-scientists-lockdown-public-complacency-vaccine-824788>

Most Australians will get the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine, but priority groups will receive the Pfizer drug. What's the difference?

As Australians navigate lockdowns, border closures, hotel quarantine and COVID-19 testing queues, the wait for the vaccines that will protect the population is slowly shortening. But before the largest vaccination program in the country's history can kick off next month, many of the details have to be

decided, implemented and communicated to the public. Last week, the Federal Government outlined its plan to administer the Pfizer vaccine to "first-priority groups" because Australia will get that drug first, but only in a limited supply. Over the weekend, Chief Health Officer Paul Kelly said most Australians would receive the AstraZeneca drug as part of the Government's strategy because "we are making it here".

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/australia/most-australians-will-get-the-astrazeneca-coronavirus-vaccine-but-priority-groups-will-receive-the-pfizer-drug-whats-the-difference/ar-BB1cEUju>

Covid in Scotland: All over-80s to be vaccinated by February

Everyone aged 80 or over in Scotland will be given the Covid vaccine by February, the health secretary has said. Jeane Freeman also said care home staff and residents, as well as front-line health and social care staff would be vaccinated in the next few weeks. As of Sunday, 163,377 Scots had been given a first dose of vaccine. Ms Freeman told BBC Scotland that just under 560,000 people will have been vaccinated by the end of the month. The Oxford vaccine will be available at more than 1,100 locations from Monday. Scotland has been given an initial allocation of more than 500,000 doses to use in January.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-55612735>

Covid vaccine: Wales has delivered 70,000 of 275,000 doses

Wales has received 275,000 doses of the two Covid-19 vaccines to deal with the pandemic. About 70,000 people received a first dose after the first month of the vaccine rollout. The Welsh Government confirmed it has had more than 250,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 25,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab. The health minister promised a "really significant step-up" in the roll-out after opponents criticised its speed. The Pfizer jabs were first administered in early December at seven sites across Wales as part of the UK-wide immunisation programme.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55605111>

France rejects criticism of EU coronavirus vaccine procurement

Delegating coronavirus vaccine procurement to the European Commission was the right approach, even if there are kinks to work out, according to French Europe Minister Clément Beaune. In an interview with POLITICO setting out France's EU priorities for the year ahead, Beaune said the vaccination effort would dominate the first six months of 2021. The Commission and its president Ursula von der Leyen have been accused by critics in recent days of not buying enough doses, not buying enough of the right vaccine and not getting the doses fast enough. The criticism has included unusually blunt attacks on the EU from some German politicians and media outlets as the controversy has become caught up in the contest to succeed Angela Merkel as German chancellor.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/clement-beaune-interview-coronavirus-vaccines-defends-eu/>

Hundreds of over-80s queue as Covid-19 mass vaccination centres open

They travelled many miles for their chance at immunity against a virus which isolated from friends and family for months. Hundreds of over-80s, some with the aid of their children and carers, flocked

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hundreds-of-over-80s-queue-as-covid-19-mass-vaccination-centres-open-fb89nptt6>

Two million receive Covid-19 vaccination as Boris Johnson urges 'maximum vigilance'

Almost two million people have been vaccinated against the coronavirus but the epidemic has never been so dangerous, according to England's chief medical officer. Professor Chris Whitty warned people that there was a "very high chance" that someone with whom they have had unnecessary contact had Covid-19, adding: "This is the most dangerous time." Boris Johnson has begged people to follow rules, particularly in supermarkets and at takeaway venues as part of a drive to counter faltering compliance and lockdown fatigue.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/two-million-receive-covid-19-vaccination-as-boris-johnson-urges-maximum-vigilance>

[e-wpcffzv6w](#)

Travel body rejects compulsory COVID-19 shots, experts say herd immunity distant

The head of a global travel organisation on Monday opposed making COVID-19 vaccinations a requirement for travellers in the fight against the pandemic, despite scepticism about reaching herd immunity this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-global-vaccines/reuters-next-travel-body-rejects-compulsory-covid-19-shots-as-experts-say-herd-immunity-not-close-idUSL1N2JM0N8>

COVID-19: 2.6 million jabs given to 2.3 million people - but UK warned vaccine 'not a free pass' to ignore rules

Some 2.6 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine have been given to 2.3 million people, the health secretary has said, as an NHS boss warned the jab is "not a free pass" to ignore national guidance.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-26-million-jabs-given-to-23-million-people-but-uk-warned-vaccine-not-a-free-pass-to-ignore-rules-12185221>

COVID-19: Army to help ensure vaccines reach health authorities in Spain after worst snowfall in decades

Convoys containing food and the coronavirus vaccine are being sent by the Spanish government to reach areas cut off by record snowfall. Army emergency brigades have focused on clearing access to Madrid's main fresh food distribution centre and to hospitals as COVID-19 infections rise across Spain. Interior minister Fernando Grande-Markaska said the government will take extra steps to ensure that the country's weekly shipment of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, arriving on Monday, can be distributed to regional health authorities via police-escorted convoys.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-convoys-deployed-to-dispense-coronavirus-vaccine-and-food-in-spain-after-record-snowfall-12184061>

Covid-19: Birmingham mass vaccination centre opens

Health workers have been among the first to receive a Covid-19 jab at a mass vaccination centre. The site at Birmingham's Millennium Point is one of seven across England and will offer about 2,500 vaccinations a day when it is fully operational. It comes as England's chief medical officer Prof Chris Whitty warns the coming weeks will be "the most dangerous time" of the pandemic. One of the first patients said she had been "so excited" to get the vaccine. Olga Leach-Walters is an endoscopy nurse at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-55620244>

COVID-19: Boris Johnson says 40% of 80-year-olds vaccinated as 2.4 million coronavirus jabs given out in UK

Some 2.4 million coronavirus jabs have been administered across the UK, the prime minister has said. Speaking from a vaccination centre in Bristol, Boris Johnson said: "Today, I think I can confirm that we've done roughly 40% of the 80-year-olds in this country already. "We've done about 23% of the elderly residents of care homes." Seven new mass vaccination sites in England have been opened today, joining hundreds more GP sites and a small number of new pharmacy-led centres opening this week. Officials are racing to vaccinate as many people as possible while COVID-19 cases continue to rise and hospitals come under extreme pressure.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-2-4-million-coronavirus-jabs-given-out-in-uk-says-boris-johnson-12185070>

COVID-19: Israel urges world to follow its rapid vaccine rollout, but Palestinians are left waiting

Israel's health minister has urged countries simply to "get out there" if they want to replicate his country's vaccination success. Speaking to Sky News, Yuli Edelstein said that expert logistics, early procurement, close co-operation with the manufacturer and Israeli innovation had all been combined

to make the country a clear leader in the global vaccination race. "The faster we get the vaccine into their arms, the less cases we'll see in our hospitals and, God forbid, deaths," Mr Edelstein said.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-israel-urges-world-to-follow-its-rapid-vaccine-rollout-but-palestinians-are-left-waiting-12184489>

Third of over 80s vaccinated as government to unveil COVID-19 vaccine deployment plan

Health and social care secretary Matt Hancock told the BBC on Sunday that around 2m doses of vaccine had now been delivered and that around a third of over 80s had received at least one dose. His comments came as the government prepared to set out its full COVID-19 vaccine deployment plan on 11 January, which Mr Hancock said would be the 'keystone of our exit out of the pandemic'. The government has already said it hopes to deliver 13.9m doses of COVID-19 vaccine UK-wide by mid February, covering the first four priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

<https://www.gponline.com/third-80s-vaccinated-government-unveil-covid-19-vaccine-deployment-plan/article/1704120>

Here's when the new lockdown measures in England could end, and how they'll be reviewed

England has entered a third period of national lockdown restrictions to replace the four-tier system as Covid cases continue to rise at an alarming rate. The rules were announced by Boris Johnson on Monday 6 January, and were enshrined in law two days later ahead of a retrospective Commons vote. Under the measures people are only allowed to leave their homes for certain specific reasons, with schools closed to the majority of pupils and all non-essential businesses closed in an attempt to ease pressure on the embattled NHS. While the legislation on the new restrictions lasts until 31 March, the speed that the measures can be eased depends on how quickly the UK can continue its roll-out of Covid-19 vaccination.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/lockdown-when-end-date-how-long-covid-restrictions-england-last-first-review-rules-819127>

Chicago Is Reopening Schools Against Fierce Resistance From Teachers

Across the country, many big cities like New York have struggled to resume even limited in-person instruction, while a number, including Los Angeles, have simply given up on the idea, choosing to stick with all-remote education into the spring. Few places have seen as much acrimony over the issue as Chicago, whose public school system is the nation's third-largest. Now, with 6,000 prekindergarten and special education students preparing to return to the city's public school buildings on Monday for the first time since March, a question looms: How many of their teachers will be there to greet them?

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/10/world/covid19-coronavirus>

UK on course for COVID-19 vaccination target as shots reach 200000 a day - Hancock

Britain is on course to have immunised its most vulnerable people against COVID-19 by mid-February and offering a shot to every adult by autumn, with some 2 million people having already received a first dose, its health secretary said on Sunday. "Over the last week we've vaccinated more people than in the entirety of December, so we're accelerating the roll-out," Matt Hancock told BBC TV. Britain is battling surging infections but is pinning its hopes on rapid immunisation to enable life to start returning to some degree of normality by the spring. Hancock said around 2 million people had already received a first shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-hancock/uk-on-course-for-covid-19-vaccination-target-as-shots-reach-200000-a-day-hancock-idUSKBN29F09N>

COVID-19: Teachers to be considered for next vaccination wave

Teachers could be next in line for the second wave of COVID-19 jabs, a member of the group

advising on the vaccine rollout has suggested. Professor Adam Finn told Sky News' Sophy Ridge On Sunday programme that while no decisions had been taken on future prioritisation of the coronavirus injections, the "critical role" played by the profession would "figure in the discussions" of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The professor of paediatrics at the University of Bristol said committee members had been instructed to come up with a plan by the middle of February to determine the priority order of who should be vaccinated against COVID-19 next.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-teachers-to-be-considered-for-next-vaccination-wave-12184134>

Partisan Exits

Police warn protesters to stay away from illegal anti-lockdown demo in Edinburgh

They said the protest, planned for Holyrood later today, was unlawful under current level 4 restrictions. And they warned that where their officers encounter 'wilful breaches' they will act 'decisively' to enforce the law. Superintendent David Robertson said: "The Scottish Government's message is clear- 'stay at home'. "We understand people want to make their voices heard but they must do so lawfully and safely. "Under the current level 4 restrictions, such gatherings are not permitted.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/police-warn-protesters-to-stay-away-from-illegal-anti-lockdown-demo-in-edinburgh/ar-BB1cDU3v>

Canadians seethe over lockdown-defying politicians

In his Christmas Eve video message, Rod Phillips, finance minister of Canada's largest province, sat next to a crackling fireplace and commiserated with the people of Ontario that they could not "be in person with as many family and friends as we'd like to". In reality Mr Phillips was on vacation at a luxury resort on the Caribbean island of St Barts. Despite rushing back after his trip was exposed, he resigned on New Year's Eve. The daily tally of politicians and government officials who have flouted stay-at-home recommendations to travel abroad over the holidays has sparked outrage in a country that places a premium on following rules and has a low tolerance for hypocrisy in public life.

<https://www.ft.com/content/306410b2-60b7-482f-bd08-972e43156997>

Germany: Anti-lockdown leader faces questions about cash flow

The leader of Germany's largest anti-lockdown movement, "Querdenken-711," has asked supporters to stop protesting until the spring. Michael Ballweg's announcement comes after the German media reported he shared the profits from Querdenken merchandise and directed donations to the movement into his personal bank account. Ballweg never registered the group as an association, a company, or a foundation and is exempt from issuing invoices for donations. Querdenken 711 gained international media attention after organizing some of Europe's largest anti-lockdown protests, which some experts believe were infiltrated by far-right extremists. Ballweg's slogan for the group is: "Where we go one, we go all," lifted directly from the QAnon conspiracy theory.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/leader-of-german-anti-lockdown-group-accused-making-unfair-profit-2021-1>

Police use force to disperse churchgoers violating lockdown regulations

Police used rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse a group of about 250 people who had gathered for a church service in Sebokeng Zone 7 in the Vaal area on Sunday. Two church leaders aged 47 and 69 were arrested for contravening level 3 lockdown regulations which do not allow for church services to be held. A 62-year-old woman was arrested for a similar contravention and for an additional charge of public violence.

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-01-11-police-use-force-to-disperse-churchgoers-violating-lockdown-regulations/>

Covid-19 Hit Hardest Where Financial Crisis Led to Health-Care Cuts

Claudio Zanon has seen firsthand how less spending on health care in recent years left Italy exposed when the coronavirus began sweeping through his country early last year. Dr. Zanon, who until the end of December was the medical director at a hospital in Como in Italy's hard-hit Lombardy region, says when the pandemic arrived he didn't have enough doctors and nurses. Intensive-care unit beds were scarce and there wasn't a large network of local clinics to help take the strain. With money tight, technology used in the hospital had also fallen behind. "Italy was unprepared when the first coronavirus wave hit because the health-care system hasn't received adequate funding in recent years," said Dr. Zanon, who practiced as a surgeon for three decades. "If investments don't keep up, you will inevitably see the negative results at a certain point."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-hit-hardest-where-financial-crisis-led-to-health-care-cuts-11610372026>

Lockdown protests erupt in Europe cities

The coronavirus is wreaking havoc across Europe but in some cities some people are fighting the stay-at-home message. Thousands turned out in central Prague on Sunday to protest against recently extended restrictions designed to contain the coronavirus. Footage of the demonstration in Prague showed many protesters not wearing masks and standing close to one other. A day earlier in Denmark, protesters became violent and lit fireworks as police arrested nine people in the capital Copenhagen and northern city Aarhus. The demonstrators, who call themselves 'Men in Black', gathered at the town hall square in Copenhagen and clashed with police in the wintry conditions. Denmark and Czech Republic are among the nations to extend lockdown measures in the fight against soaring COVID-19 infections and a new, more infectious variant.

<https://thewest.com.au/news/health/lockdown-protests-erupt-in-europe-cities-ng-s-2044864>

Czechs challenge coronavirus lockdown measures with beer glass protest

Protesters in the Czech Republic have taken an unconventional approach to challenge the nation's COVID-19 lockdown measures which have seen the closing of hotels, bars and restaurants around the country. Hundreds of demonstrators recently descended on the nation's capital of Prague, waving empty beer glasses to protest the nation's strict measures. Protesters then placed lit candles in the empty glasses and positioned them in a kilometre-long chain from the government building to the city's historic Old Town Square. The glasses were placed roughly two-metres apart.

https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_6221658382001

French resorts ask: will COVID write off whole ski season?

Business owners at France's Chamonix ski resort, their earnings slashed because of the COVID-19 lockdown, are worried they might not be able to welcome back skiers at all before the snows melt and the season ends. French ski resorts were prevented from opening their cable cars and ski lifts at the start of the season, driving away the large portion of their visitors who come for downhill skiing. The French government had discussed the possibility of re-opening the ski lifts of Jan. 7, but last week it said that with virus cases still high, that would be premature. A decision is now due on Jan. 20, leaving little time before the season ends. "If we have to close to the end of season, that's going to cost us several billion euros," said Mathieu Dechavanne, Chairman and CEO of Compagnie du Mont-Blanc, which operates cable cars in the region. "The economic impact will be catastrophic."

<https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/business/french-resorts-ask-will-covid-write-off-whole-ski-season-539432/>

Continued Lockdown

UK facing even tougher lockdown with masks in more places and limits on exercise

The Prime Minister is believed to have spoken with senior ministers on Sunday about whether or not the current lockdown rules are 'working' to reduce the spread of the virus. A further 54,940 cases were confirmed on Sunday,

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/01/11/covid-lockdown-more-face-masks-and-exercise-limits-being-considered-13881283/>

Largest UK student accommodation provider gives 50% off rent for lockdown

The UK's largest student accommodation provider has offered a 50 per cent rent discount in light of the new lockdown. It comes after students were told to remain where they were - while many were still at family homes for the Christmas break - until at least mid-February,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/lockdown-unite-students-rent-discount-b1785383.html>

In the first lockdown, England proved it could end homelessness. Why not now?

Halfway through a walk early last summer, I noticed a change around Peckham Rye train station in south-east London. Before the pandemic, there had been a semi-permanent cluster of men and women who would sleep by the entrance. Their makeshift shelters had become increasingly elaborate over the years. Mattresses, duvets and the occasional tent were common enough sights, a damning indictment of the UK's spiralling homelessness crisis. But I couldn't see any trace of them that afternoon. A few months had passed since the implementation in March of Everyone In, the scheme to temporarily house rough sleepers in self-contained accommodation during the first wave of the pandemic, including in newly deserted hotels and hostels. The homelessness charity Crisis called it extraordinary, while others lined up to congratulate the government on its unusually bold course of action to shelter thousands of society's most vulnerable people. An article in the Lancet estimated that the measures prevented more than 21,000 infections and 266 deaths. Simply put, Everyone In saved lives.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jan/10/first-lockdown-england-homelessness-everyone-in-streets>

Covid lockdown: what can be done to tighten the rules in England?

With hospitalisations and deaths rising sharply and the NHS struggling to cope, scientists have called for a tightening of lockdown measures in England. "We're in a crisis - that crisis is not only killing people, it's compromising the ability and the effectiveness of the NHS, including its ability to roll out the vaccinations," said Stephen Reicher, a professor of social psychology at the University of St Andrews and a member of a committee advising the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies (Sage). "We need to act early, and act hard - half-measures really don't work. They give you all the pain, but they don't give you the gain."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/11/covid-lockdown-what-can-be-done-tighten-rules-england>

Covid: Are lockdown rules changing? Public Health England answers your questions

As coronavirus cases continue to rise and strong restrictions continue across the UK, people are wondering how it will all end. Vaccinations centres have opened across the UK, but who will get the jabs, and when? Restrictions are being reviewed, but what if people don't follow them? We're watching very carefully, it is early days. We won't really know until next week, or maybe the week after whether these restrictions have had the effect that we very much hope for. Every single day these things are reviewed. It's a balance between the need for what human beings want to do with what they we need to do to keep people protected. It will be kept under review. Radio 1 Newsbeat put your questions to Professor Yvonne Doyle, who is Public Health England's medical director and director for health protect

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-55615950>

Chris Whitty urges people to 'double down' on lockdown rules as he warns of 'worst weeks' ahead for NHS

England's chief medical officer has urged people to stay at home and stop "unnecessary contact" as he warned of the "worst weeks of the pandemic" for the NHS. Chris Whitty said that the UK was in an "appalling situation", with the Covid-19 variant causing the virus to spread in a way that the "old variant was not able to do". He added that this winter "is in a completely different league" for the NHS. "We got to be very clear that we are now at the worst point of this epidemic for the UK," he

told BBC Radio 4's Today programme, adding that people should "really think about" unnecessary contact.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/chris-whitty-warning-lockdown-rules-worst-weeks-bbc-b823282.html>

Supermarkets told to limit customers over fears lockdown rules being broken

Shoppers could once again be faced with long queues outside supermarkets as part of a wider Government crackdown on compliance with the latest lockdown measures. Ministers are said to have agreed to toughen enforcement of the rules amid fears poor compliance could mean the nationwide restrictions fail to bring the soaring coronavirus infection rates under control. The crackdown will focus on the retail sector and the rules allowing people to leave their homes for daily exercise, according to The Times. A Government source told the newspaper: 'We need to make sure supermarkets in particular are following the rules given this is one of the few places where you still see people from different households in the same indoor space.'

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/01/11/supermarkets-told-to-limit-customers-over-fears-lockdown-being-broken-13881434/?i-co=related-posts>

Greeks escape lockdown for the beach as winter temperatures soar

Greeks headed to beaches and public parks on Sunday as a rare January heat wave offered a respite from the coronavirus lockdown that has thrown life across Europe into disarray. With temperatures in Athens set to reach 23 Celsius (73.4 Fahrenheit), people lounged on the sand, swam in the sea, and strolled on the promenade on the Athens coast, while police patrolled to control the crowds. In the last 50 years, such high temperatures for January have been seen only twice: in 1987 and 2010, the National Observatory of Athens said. "It is not normal. This time last year it was cold," said 65-year old Kyriakos Pitoulis. "On the other hand, it helps because people are cooped up at home and they want to go somewhere to let off steam. They cannot stay home all the time."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-weather/greeks-escape-lockdown-for-the-beach-as-winter-temperatures-soar-idUSKBN29F0IE>

Scientific Viewpoint

Moderna says COVID-19 vaccine immunity to stay at least a year

Immunity from Moderna Inc's COVID-19 vaccine should last at least a year, the company said on Monday at the J.P. Morgan Healthcare conference. The drugmaker said it was confident that the messenger RNA (mRNA) technology it used was well suited to deploy a vaccine based on the new variant of the coronavirus which has emerged in a handful of countries. The company's vaccine, mRNA-1273, uses synthetic mRNA to mimic the surface of the coronavirus and teach the immune system to recognize and neutralize it. Moderna said in December it would run tests to confirm the vaccine's activity against any strain.

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/lifestyle/wellbeing/moderna-says-covid-19-vaccine-immunity-to-stay-at-least-a-year/ar-BB1cFbs8>

Vaccine makers prepare for game of Covid cat and mouse

Vaccine makers and medicine regulators are sketching out plans in case the mutating coronavirus turns vaccine development into a game of cat and mouse. Just weeks after leading manufacturers secured the first regulatory approvals, mutations in the virus have forced scientists to re-test their Covid-19 vaccines and prepare to tweak their formula should the shots prove less effective. At the same time, regulators are considering how they could fast-track new approvals and whether they could use the seasonal flu jab as a model to authorise revised versions without requiring long trials.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a67d1c2e-9963-4fd0-9ba6-dc677f68a216>

MEPs to view CureVac coronavirus vaccine contract on Tuesday

MEPs will be able to see the CureVac vaccine contract starting Tuesday, Health Commissioner Stella

Kyriakides tweeted Monday. "Transparency & accountability are core EU values," she wrote, adding that she has been working with companies to make more information public: "More companies should follow this example." For months, the European Parliament has called for more transparency with the Commission's classified vaccine deals, while the Commission has countered it's up to the companies to release confidential information.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/meps-to-view-curevac-coronavirus-vaccine-contract-on-tuesday/>

BioNTech aims for 2 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses in 2021

Pfizer Inc's partner BioNTech SE has boosted the 2021 delivery target for their COVID-19 vaccine to 2 billion doses, up from 1.3 billion previously, as they add new production lines and as more doses can be extracted per vial. Special syringes known as low dead space syringes allow for extraction of six vaccine doses from a standard vial, instead of the usual five, avoiding wasting unused liquid left in a syringe. That would result in 1 billion people getting the designated two-dose regimen, BioNTech said on Monday in a presentation for the annual JP Morgan healthcare conference being held virtually this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/BigStory12/idUSKBN29G1DM>

Urgent call for 'lifesaving' blood donations from Scots recovered from Covid-19 to treat other patients

The plasma in the blood of those recently recovered from the virus contains antibodies which could save the life of another person. Those giving the donation must have been free of symptoms for four weeks, and feel completely fit and well. They are also asked to get in touch within four months of recovery, as antibody levels reduce after that. The "convalescent plasma", as it is known, will be used to treat patients in a major Covid-19 treatment trial called "RECOVERY". If successful the treatment will be rolled out to hospitals across Scotland.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/health/medical/urgent-call-for-lifesaving-blood-donations-from-scots-recovered-from-covid-19-to-treat-other-patients/ar-BB1cEGhV>

Which US demographics are more likely to refuse a COVID-19 vaccine?

A new survey indicates that over 31% of individuals queried had no intention of getting vaccinated against infection with SARS-CoV-2. According to the same source, the groups most likely to reject a COVID-19 vaccine are Black people, women, and those with conservative political leanings. The researchers who led the survey emphasize that policymakers must find better ways of communicating with and reassuring the public about the effectiveness and safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/which-us-demographics-are-more-likely-to-refuse-a-covid-19-vaccine>

India's quick nod to homegrown COVID-19 vaccine seeds doubt

As the director of a large hospital in the Indian state that has seen the country's most coronavirus cases, Dr. S.P. Kalantri had been waiting for the day a vaccine would be approved and bring protection not only to his community but also himself. But now he has his doubts about getting the shots after India took a regulatory shortcut to approve a vaccine by Indian drugmaker Bharat Biotech before late clinical trials showed it was effective in preventing illness from coronavirus infections. "I'd rather wait and watch," said Kalantri, who runs a hospital in Maharashtra state's Wardha district.

<https://apnews.com/article/asia-pacific-clinical-trials-india-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-16a4c1cfb1b6b5def70812e638e5fc54>

Can you spread Covid-19 if you get the vaccine?

We know that the vaccines now available across the world will protect their recipients from getting sick with Covid-19. But while each vaccine authorized for public use can prevent well over 50% of cases (in Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's case, more than 90%), what we don't know is whether

they'll also curb transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. That question is answerable, though—and understanding vaccines' effect on transmission will help determine when things can go back to whatever our new normal looks like.

<https://qz.com/1954762/can-you-spread-covid-19-if-you-get-the-vaccine/>

China's Efforts to Hide Covid Missteps in Wuhan

At a museum in Wuhan, China, a sprawling exhibition paints a stirring tale of how the city's sacrifices in a brutal 76-day lockdown led to triumph over the coronavirus and, ultimately, rebirth. No costs appear to have been spared for the show, which features a hologram of medical staff members moving around a hospital room, heart-rending letters from frontline health workers and a replica of a mass quarantine site, complete with beds, miniature Chinese flags and toothbrush cups. But the exhibition is also striking for what is not included. There is no mention of the whistle-blowing role of Ai Fen, one of the first doctors to sound the alarm in Wuhan, where the virus is believed to have originated, or the decision by Zhang Yongzhen, a Shanghai doctor, to share its genome with the world against official orders.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/10/world/asia/wuhan-china-coronavirus.html>

COVID-19 tracker: BioNTech aims for 2B shot doses in 2021; It's time for the U.S. to 'reset' its vaccine rollout, Gottlieb says

Novavax tapped Baxter BioPharma Solutions to crank out its late-stage vaccine for European and British markets as Moderna started delivering its vaccine to the continent. Meanwhile, Merck KGaA bought out German mRNA manufacturer AmpTec as it looks to expand in the fast-growing field. Twenty-two Publix pharmacies will start offering pandemic shots in Florida.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/covid-19-tracker-johnson-johnson-aims-to-test-shot-kids-president-trump-talks-firing-fauci>

JPM: BioNTech hikes COVID-19 vaccine output to 2B doses in 2021—and plans a bigger label, too

With its Pfizer-partnered COVID-19 vaccine authorized in the U.S., Europe, the U.K. and a slate of other countries, German mRNA specialist BioNTech is wasting no time scaling up its 2021 pandemic ambitions—namely, 2 billion shots by year-end, plus a slate of new approvals and a temperature-stable formulation, too. BioNTech set its sights on producing 2 billion doses of its pandemic vaccine, now dubbed Comirnaty, this year, up from a previous estimate of 1.3 billion, CEO Uğur Şahin said at the virtual J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference. That production boost will rely on six global manufacturing sites tapped in Pfizer and BioNTech's alliance, including a facility in Marburg, Germany, that's expected to go live by the end of February, the company said. Besides tapping that site, which will have a 75 million-dose capacity, the company plans to call on new suppliers and CMOs, Sahin said.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/jpm-biontech-raises-covid-19-vaccine-output-to-2b-eyeing-label-extensions-and-higher>

People with type 1 diabetes have a higher risk of dying from Covid-19. Why are they lower on CDC's vaccine priority list?

Laura Woerner has diligently managed her type 1 diabetes since she was diagnosed at age 11. She's remained vigilant about anything that might throw her blood sugar levels out of balance, and now, at 36, she has had two healthy pregnancies and avoided such severe complications of diabetes as limb neuropathy or eye disease. Woerner knows what she needs to do to maintain her health. What she doesn't know is why the nation's leading public health authority places people like her farther down the priority list for receiving Covid-19 vaccination than people with type 2 diabetes. As written now, the guidelines put her in with the rest of the U.S. population under age 65, despite research showing that people with type 1 diabetes are at just as high a risk of dying from Covid-19 as those

with type 2, if not higher.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/01/11/for-people-with-type-1-diabetes-cdc-guidelines-for-covid-19-vaccine-priority-are-puzzling/>

States and hospitals: overhaul your vaccine plans with data before it's too late

The first phase of the vaccine rollout, which is supposed to deliver shots to roughly 24 million health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities, has been stymied by poorly conceived distribution plans based on judgement calls. Without better use of sound science and data, vaccine plans for the next two phases of the rollout, which aim to inoculate nearly 180 million Americans, could descend into complete chaos. Most of the missteps so far stem from the same problem: prioritization decisions that ignore the science of risk assessment and leave too much to chance. From Stanford Medical Center's reliance on a simplistic and arbitrary distribution plan that kicked front-line health care workers to the back of the line, to Massachusetts General Hospital's use of an app that relied on workers to self-report their level of risk, to an Arizona county's misplaced trust in a survey issued to health care workers, we've seen that the people who need the vaccine the most tend to get left behind when allocation decisions are made by faulty risk models or are up to the discretion of a handful of individuals, despite their best intentions.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/01/11/overhaul-vaccine-plans-with-data-before-its-too-late/>

Covid research: Convalescent plasma trial paused as results poor

Scientists running REMAP-CAP trial have stopped enrolling Covid ICU patients Found 'no evidence' convalescent plasma therapy boosted their survival chance Will continue to test the antibody-rich plasma on people with moderate illness

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9134277/Convalescent-plasma-does-NOT-work-Doctors-pause-trial-drug-no-proof-works.html>

Coronavirus Resurgence

China reports biggest daily COVID-19 case jump in over five months

Mainland China saw its biggest daily increase in COVID-19 cases in over five months, the country's health authority said on Monday, as new infections in Hebei province surrounding Beijing continued to rise. A county in northeastern Heilongjiang province on Monday moved into lockdown after reporting new coronavirus infections, state television also reported separately. Hebei accounted for 82 of the 85 new local infections reported on Jan. 10, the National Health Commission (NHC) said in a statement, with Liaoning province also reporting two new cases and Beijing reporting one new case. The country also saw 18 new imported infections from overseas. The total number of new COVID-19 cases stood at 103, the highest since 127 cases were reported on July 30.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china/china-reports-biggest-daily-covid-19-case-jump-in-over-5-months-idUSKBN29G01P>

Coronavirus: UK to face 'worst weeks of pandemic', Whitty warns as cases surge

England's chief medical officer has warned the coming weeks are going "to be the worst weeks" of the coronavirus pandemic for the NHS, as he urged the public to minimise unnecessary contacts in order to reduce transmissions. Highlighting the pressure on the health service, professor Chris Whitty said that while 18,000 people were in hospital with Covid-19 during the April peak last year, on Sunday there were over 30,000 beds occupied by patients with the disease. "This is going to be a significant crisis for the NHS unless we take evasive action," he warned on BBC Breakfast several days after the government imposed the third nationwide lockdown in England to curb the spread of the virus.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coronavirus-uk-cases-nhs-chris-whitty-b1785274.html>

Over half a million under lockdown as Beijing outbreak spreads

More than half a million people were placed under lockdown in Beijing on Monday as the government imposed strict measures to stamp out a handful of Covid-19 cases. China has largely brought the virus under control, but is tackling a number of local infections with lockdowns and mass testing. Authorities are keen to stem any outbreak in the capital -- home to over 20 million people -- particularly ahead of a week-long national holiday next month.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210111-over-half-a-million-under-lockdown-as-beijing-outbreak-spreads>

Japan finds new mutant Covid strain as infectious as variant in UK

Japan has detected a third mutant strain of coronavirus that is similar to the highly infectious variants spreading across the UK and South Africa. The strain was found in four passengers arriving from Brazil who were quarantined at Haneda Airport in Tokyo when they tested positive, Nikkei Asia reports. Three of the group developed symptoms including struggling to breathe, a fever and a sore throat, while one man in his 40s arrived on January 2 without any symptoms. But he was later rushed to hospital with difficulties breathing, Bloomberg reports.

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/01/11/japan-finds-new-mutant-covid-strain-as-infectious-as-variant-in-uk-13881581/>

Global COVID-19 cases surpass 90 million as battle against new variant continues

Worldwide coronavirus cases surpassed 90 million on Monday, according to Reuters tally, as nations around the globe scramble to procure vaccines and continue to extend or reinstate lockdowns to fight new coronavirus variants. The new COVID-19 variants discovered initially in the United Kingdom and South Africa are rapidly spreading globally. The novel coronavirus has picked up pace in the past few months with about one-third of total cases registered in the last 48 days, according to a Reuters tally.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/global-covid-19-cases-surpass-90-million-as-battle-against-new-variant-continues-1.5261424>

China reports biggest daily COVID-19 case jump in over 5 months

Mainland China saw its biggest daily increase in COVID-19 cases in over five months, the country's health authority said on Monday, as new infections in Hebei province surrounding Beijing continued to rise. A county in northeastern Heilongjiang province on Monday moved into lockdown after reporting new coronavirus infections, state television also reported separately. Hebei accounted for 82 of the 85 new local infections reported on Jan. 10, the National Health Commission (NHC) said in a statement, with Liaoning province also reporting two new cases and Beijing reporting one new case. The country also saw 18 new imported infections from overseas. The total number of new COVID-19 cases stood at 103, the highest since 127 cases were reported on July 30.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china/china-reports-most-covid-19-cases-since-july-30-amid-hebei-outbreak-idUSKBN29G01P>

Sweden passes lockdown law to allow closures amid high death toll

Sweden has introduced a law that would allow the government to close restaurants, shops, and public transport to combat the spread of COVID-19. The new legislation signals a major shift away from the country's initial no-lockdown approach to the pandemic. A severe second wave of COVID-19 infections has prompted Sweden gradually to abandon the unique approach it first adopted towards the pandemic, when it relied on voluntary social distancing measures. Anders Tegnell, the architect of Sweden's initial no-lockdown response, said last week that the COVID-19 situation showed no signs of improvement in Sweden.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/sweden-passes-law-to-allow-closures-amid-high-death-toll-2021-1>

Over half a million under lockdown as Beijing outbreak spreads

More than half a million people were placed under lockdown in Beijing on Monday as the government imposed strict measures to stamp out a handful of COVID-19 cases. China has largely brought the virus under control, but is tackling a number of local infections with lockdowns and mass

testing. Authorities are keen to stem any outbreak in the capital -- home to over 20 million people -- particularly ahead of a week-long national holiday next month.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/over-half-a-million-under-lockdown-as-beijing-outbreak-spreads-1.5261591>

UK steps vaccinations as COVID surges, worst weeks still to come

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday Britain was in "a race against time" to roll out COVID-19 vaccines as deaths hit record highs and hospitals ran out of oxygen, and his top medical adviser said the pandemic's worst weeks were imminent. A new, more transmissible variant of the disease is now surging through the population, with one in 20 people in parts of London now infected, threatening to overwhelm the National Health Service (NHS) as hospitals fill up with patients. The death toll in the United Kingdom has been soaring and now stands in excess of 81,000 - the world's fifth-highest official toll - while more than three million people have tested positive.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-britain/update-2-uk-ramps-up-covid-vaccinations-as-it-faces-worst-weeks-of-pandemic-idUSL8N2JM1BA>

Global coronavirus cases surpass 90 million in battle on new variant

Worldwide coronavirus cases surpassed 90 million on Monday, according to Reuters tally, as nations around the globe scramble to procure vaccines and continue to extend or reinstate lockdowns to fight new coronavirus variants. The new COVID-19 variants discovered initially in the United Kingdom and South Africa are rapidly spreading globally. The novel coronavirus has picked up pace in the past few months with about one-third of total cases registered in the last 48 days, according to a Reuters tally. Europe, which became the first region to report 25 million cases last week, remains the worst-affected area in the world, followed by Latin America with 22.4 million and 16.3 million cases respectively.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-global-cases/global-coronavirus-cases-surpass-90-million-in-battle-on-new-variant-idUSKBN29G0GB>

New Lockdown

Coronavirus: Germany's stricter lockdown starts nationwide

Harder coronavirus lockdown restrictions came into force across all of Germany's 16 federal states on Monday. Ten states, including the most populous, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Baden Württemberg, introduced the new rules as of Monday. A number of restrictions were introduced on December 16 in a bid to curb a second COVID-19 infection wave. These were originally slated to remain in place until at least January 10 but have had only a moderate impact on caseloads. Some of the measures that were already in place have been extended, while other restrictions have been tightened. Health Minister Jens Spahn appealed to the public to stay the course. "I know that these are once again particular difficulties, hardships for many," Spahn said on ZDF television. "Also social hardships, but at the moment that is the arena in which the virus is spreading above all others."

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-germanys-stricter-lockdown-starts-nationwide/a-56190080>

This lockdown is necessary but must not lead to a permanent loss of liberty

When the second lockdown was announced in October sceptics were down but not out. The Great Barrington Declaration, the formation of the Covid Recovery Group and the widely held view that shutdown 3.0 could trigger the implosion of Boris Johnson's premiership handed them firepower in the fightback against coronavirus authoritarianism. Laws passed in late March marked the greatest restrictions on liberty in modern British history. Worse, they could not stop Covid: that ship sailed in February with New Zealand and east Asian nations on board. Claims by ministers and scientists that this blunt tool could eliminate the virus were wrong-headed, corroded public trust and torpedoed compliance.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/this-lockdown-is-necessary-but-must-not-lead-to-a-permanent-loss-of-liberty-zgqc>

[m0hhj](#)

Malaysia to reimpose 2-week limited lockdown to stem virus spread

Malaysia's Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Monday announced a fresh lockdown in the capital Kuala Lumpur and five states, as the Southeast Asian nation's cumulative cases grew to over 135,000 as of Sunday. Muhyiddin said interstate travel will also be barred during the two-week lockdown, but assured that five essential sectors will be allowed to continue operating under strict regulations.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-malaysia/malaysia-to-reimpose-2-week-limited-lockdown-to-stem-virus-spread-idUSK7N29P01N>

Japan emergency state to expand beyond Tokyo as COVID-19 cases climb: media

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told a meeting of ruling party executives on Tuesday he would declare a state of emergency for the three western prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo to stem the spread of COVID-19, Kyodo news reported. Responding to pressure from Tokyo and three neighbouring prefectures in eastern Japan, Suga last week declared a one-month state of emergency for that region until Feb. 7. But the number of coronavirus cases has also climbed in the west, prompting the three prefectures to seek a state of emergency too. The government is finalising plans to declare an emergency there on Wednesday, and could also consider adding the central prefectures of Aichi - home to Toyota Motor Corp - and Gifu, Kyodo reported, citing government sources.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan/japan-emergency-state-to-expand-beyond-tokyo-as-covid-19-cases-climb-media-idUSKBN29H070>