

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Overnight NewsRoundup

'A biological Fukushima'; Brazil COVID-19 deaths on track to pass worst of U.S. wave

Brazil's brutal surge in COVID-19 deaths will soon surpass the worst of a record January wave in the United States, scientists forecasts, with fatalities climbing for the first time above 4,000 in a day on Tuesday, as the outbreak overwhelms hospitals.

[Brazil has set daily death records every week since late February, as a more contagious local variant and meager social distancing efforts fuel an uncontrolled outbreak.](#) With mass vaccinations curtailing the U.S. outbreak, Brazil has become the epicenter of the pandemic, contributing about one in four deaths per day globally, according to a Reuters analysis.

President Jair Bolsonaro has pushed back against mask-wearing and lockdowns that public health experts consider the best way to lessen virus transmission. While the president has shifted his tone on immunizations, touting vaccines he had recently disdained, the far-right former army captain continues to battle in the courts against state and municipal restrictions on economic activity.

Brazilian researchers at the Fiocruz Institute are separately forecasting that Brazil could surpass the United States in both overall deaths and the record for average deaths per day. As soon as next week, Brazil may break the record U.S. seven-day average for COVID-19 deaths, according to a model by the influential Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington. The U.S. average for daily deaths peaked at 3,285 in January.

The IHME forecast does not currently stretch beyond July 1, when it projects Brazil could reach 563,000 deaths, compared with 609,000 total U.S. fatalities expected by then.

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Brazil's brutal surge in COVID-19 deaths will soon surpass the worst of a record January wave in the United States, scientists forecast, with fatalities climbing for the first time above 4,000 in a day on Tuesday as the outbreak overwhelms hospitals. Brazil's overall death toll trails only the U.S. outbreak, with nearly 337,000 killed, according to Health Ministry data, compared with more than 555,000 dead in the United States. But with Brazil's healthcare system at the breaking point, the country could exceed total U.S. deaths, despite having a population two-thirds that of the United States, two experts told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-brazil/a-biological-fukushima-brazil-covid-19-deaths-on-track-to-pass-worst-of-us-wave-idUSKBN2BT30P>

Brazil's COVID-19 death surge set to pass the worst of record U.S. wave

Brazil's brutal surge in COVID-19 deaths will soon surpass the worst of a record January wave in the United States, climbing well beyond an average 3,000 fatalities per day, scientists predict, as contagious new variants overwhelm hospitals. Brazil's overall death toll trails only the U.S. outbreak, with nearly 333,000 killed, according to Health Ministry data, compared with more than 555,000

dead in the United States. But with Brazil's healthcare system at the breaking point, the country could also exceed total U.S. deaths, despite having two-thirds the population, two experts told Reuters.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/brazils-covid-19-death-surge-set-to-pass-the-worst-of-record-us-wave/ar-BB1fm86m>

Chile shows quick COVID vaccine rollout does not mean lockdowns end: UK official

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The experience of Chile shows that a quick COVID-19 vaccine rollout is not necessarily enough to avoid lockdowns, England's Chief Medical Officer said on Monday, saying a steady and cautious approach to easing restrictions was important. Britain has given a first vaccine dose to over 31.5 million people, leading some in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's party to urge him to end England's lockdown more quickly. But Chile, which also has one of the world's quickest vaccination rates, has closed its borders and tightened an already strict lockdown. Chris Whitty said that Chile's experience had contrasted with that of Israel, and it was unclear whether it was due to the timings of rollout, the vaccines used, interactions with coronavirus variants or other factors.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-chile/chile-shows-quick-covid-vaccine-rollout-does-not-mean-lockdowns-end-uk-official-idUSKBN2BS1KX>

Lockdown warning after Covid cases rise in Chile despite vaccine rollout

Rising cases of Covid-19 in Chile, despite the country having one of the world's fastest vaccination programmes, has led British experts to warn that a rapid rollout may not be enough to avert more lockdowns. In the past week Chile has recorded 49,542 new cases, the highest weekly level since the the pandemic began, according to analysis by Johns Hopkins University in the United States.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/lockdown-warning-after-cases-rise-in-chile-despite-coronavirus-vaccine-rollout-bf20dpbw0>

To stem the pandemic, the U.S. needs a national Covid-19 genomic sequencing effort

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More than a year into the pandemic, the United States is at yet another critical inflection point. The number of Covid-19 cases remains high and is on the rise in more than half of states. And though vaccination rates are climbing here, topping 4 million shots on April 3 alone, we are in a race between vaccinations and the proliferation of viral variants, which continue to spread and may be even more dangerous than the coronavirus that triggered the pandemic. The country must drastically improve genomic surveillance of Covid-19 cases, which is not happening often enough. Viruses mutate as they multiply and spread. Genomic sequencing is an advanced test that determines the precise genetic information a virus carries. It can highlight variant strains that may spread faster, evade vaccines, or make people sicker by being less responsive to existing treatments.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/04/06/stem-the-pandemic-national-covid-19-genomic-sequencing-effort/>

Japan fears COVID-19 variants are behind possible fourth wave

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Japanese health authorities are concerned that variants of the coronavirus are driving a nascent fourth wave in the pandemic with just 109 days remaining until the Tokyo Olympics. The variants appear to be more infectious and may be resistant to vaccines, which are still not widely available in Japan. The situation is worst in Osaka, where infections hit fresh records last week, prompting the regional government to start targeted lockdown measures for one month from Monday. A mutant COVID-19 variant first discovered in Britain has taken hold in the Osaka region, spreading faster and filling up hospital beds with more serious cases than the original virus, according to Koji Wada, a

government adviser on the pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-japan-strain/japan-fears-covid-19-variants-are-behind-possible-fourth-wave-idUSL4N2LY0L6>

COVID-19: Later stages of PM's roadmap may cause hospital admissions to surge, scientists warn

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The later stages of Boris Johnson's roadmap for ending lockdown restrictions in England could cause coronavirus infection rates to surge, the government's scientific advisers have warned. At a Downing Street briefing yesterday, the prime minister said he plans to stick "like glue" to his plans for easing current measures. He confirmed that step two - where shops, hairdressers and beer gardens can reopen - will go ahead on 12 April as planned.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-later-stages-of-pms-roadmap-may-cause-hospital-admissions-to-surge-scientists-warn-12267195>

Global rollout of vaccines is no longer a guarantee of victory over Covid-19

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At the end of 2020, there was a strong hope that high levels of vaccination would see humanity finally gain the upper hand over Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. In an ideal scenario, the virus would then be contained at very low levels without further societal disruption or significant numbers of deaths. But since then, new "variants of concern" have emerged and spread worldwide, putting current pandemic control efforts, including vaccination, at risk of being derailed. Put simply, the game has changed, and a successful global rollout of current vaccines by itself is no longer a guarantee of victory.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/06/global-rollout-of-vaccines-is-no-longer-a-guarantee-of-victory-over-covid-19>

Brain disorders affect 1 in 3 Covid survivors, large UK study shows

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One in three people who have suffered from Covid-19 was diagnosed with a neurological or psychiatric condition within six months of infection, according to scientists who have carried out the largest study of the mental health effects of coronavirus. They found that Covid-19 was 44 per cent more likely to cause neurological and mental problems than a case of influenza of comparable severity. "Although the individual risks for most disorders are small, the effect across the whole population may be substantial for health and social care systems due to the scale of the pandemic and the fact that many of these conditions are chronic," said Paul Harrison, professor of psychiatry at Oxford university and project leader.

<https://www.ft.com/content/beb407c0-03a3-4aae-ba4b-7f66390d7409>

Covid Mutants Multiply as Scientists Race to Decode Variations

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When Bette Korber, a biologist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, spotted the first significant mutation in the Covid-19 virus last spring, some scientists were skeptical. They didn't believe it would make the virus more contagious and said its rapid rise might just be coincidence. Now, 11 months later, the D614G mutation she helped discover is ubiquitous worldwide, featured in the genomes of fast-spreading variants from the U.K., South Africa and Brazil. Meanwhile, new mutations are popping up in increasingly complicated patterns, spurring a drive by top biologists to devise new ways to track a fire hose of incoming genomic data. The goal: Quickly detect variants that can lessen the effectiveness of vaccines for a pathogen that's unlikely to be eradicated any

time soon. The SARS-CoV-2 virus could settle down and become a mere nuisance like the common cold. Or much like influenza, it could retain its ability to cause severe disease in some segments of the population, a scenario that could require regular booster shots.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-05/covid-mutants-multiply-as-scientists-race-to-decode-variations>

AP Interview: India could resume vaccine exports by June

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The world's largest vaccine maker, based in India, will be able to restart exports of AstraZeneca doses by June if new coronavirus infections subside in the country, its chief executive said Tuesday. But a continued surge could result in more delays because the Serum Institute of India would have to meet domestic needs, Adar Poonawalla warned in an interview with The Associated Press. The company is a key supplier for the U.N.-backed COVAX program that aims to distribute vaccines equitably in the world. On March 25, COVAX announced a major setback in its vaccine rollout because a surge in infections in India caused the Serum Institute of India to cater to domestic demand, resulting in a delay in global shipments of up to 90 million doses.

<https://apnews.com/article/world-news-india-global-trade-coronavirus-pandemic-dd58b5c596f261f8a5655e8d8b5d6984>

Regulators walk fine line assessing AstraZeneca vaccine

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The issues never stop with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. After all the fights over contracts and deliveries, the latest challenge is one facing European regulators: Whether to recommend that national governments don't give the vaccine to younger people, citing a rare but sometimes fatal form of blood clotting. Several countries have already taken that step and on Tuesday, the head of the European Medicines Agency's vaccine strategy spoke out on the situation.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/regulators-walk-fine-line-when-assessing-oxford-astrazeneca-vaccine/>

COVID-19: Oxford-AstraZeneca jab benefits outweigh 'rare incidents of risk', says vaccines minister - as regulator reviews clot cases

The benefits of taking the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab "far outweigh" any "rare incidents of risk", the vaccines minister has said, as the UK's drugs regulator investigates reports of blood clots. Speaking to Sky News, Nadhim Zahawi reinforced the government's message for people to get a COVID jab as experts at the UK's independent drugs regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), continue to investigate reports of a very rare and specific blood clot in the brain after taking the Oxford jab. They are also considering other very rare blood clotting cases alongside low platelet levels.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-oxford-astrazeneca-jab-benefits-outweigh-rare-incidents-of-risk-says-vaccines-minister-as-regulator-reviews-clot-cases-12267398>

EU drug agency denies already finding causal link between AstraZeneca vaccine and blood clots

Europe's drug regulator has denied it has already established a causal connection between the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and a rare blood clotting syndrome, after a senior official from the agency said there was a link. In a statement to Agence France-Presse, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said on Tuesday it had "not yet reached a conclusion and the review is currently ongoing", adding that it expected to announce its findings on Wednesday or Thursday. Marco Cavaleri, the EMA's head of vaccines, had earlier told Italy's Il Messaggero newspaper that in his opinion "we can say it now, it is clear there is a link with the vaccine ... But we still do not know what causes this reaction."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/06/ema-denies-already-finding-causal-link-astrazeneca-vaccine-blood-clots>

Europe's vaccine divide: As scientists scramble for answers to AstraZeneca blood clot puzzle, some nations opt for caution

For 18 hours a day, Andreas Greinacher and his team at Germany's Greifswald University Hospital have pored over blood samples from across Germany and Austria. Their mission: Trying to figure out how and why potentially deadly blood clots have appeared in a handful of patients who received AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine. No link has been established with the vaccine, widely used in Europe and other countries, including Canada and India, and under review for possible approval in the United States.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/astrazeneca-blood-clot-dilemma-europe/2021/04/05/a8091e4e-914f-11eb-aadc-af78701a30ca_story.html

COVID-19: UK trial of Oxford vaccine on children paused as regulator probes rare blood clots in adults

A trial of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID vaccine on children in the UK has been paused while the medicines regulator investigates a possible link between the jab and rare blood clots in adults. A University of Oxford spokesperson stressed that there were "no safety concerns" with this specific study, but that further information was being awaited from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). "Whilst there are no safety concerns in the paediatric clinical trial, we await additional information from the MHRA on its review of rare cases of thrombosis/thrombocytopenia that have been reported in adults, before giving any further vaccinations in the trial," the statement said.

<https://news.sky.com/story/uk-trial-of-oxford-covid-jab-on-children-paused-as-regulator-probes-blood-clots-in-adults-12267780>

UK medicines watchdog 'considers limiting use of Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine in young'

The medicines watchdog is considering restricting use of the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine in younger people, it was reported last night. Channel 4 News said sources had told it that the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) was considering limiting the use of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine on a by-age basis

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/uk-medicines-watchdog-considers-limiting-use-of-oxford-astrazeneca-coronavirus-vaccine-in-young-brlsc6606>

AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine linked to rare blood clots, EMA official says, but benefits still outweigh risks

A European Medicines Agency official drew a link Tuesday between AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine and the rare reports of blood clots in vaccine recipients. But the shot's benefits still outweigh its risks, the official said as the agency itself wraps up its review of the clotting incidents. As the number of blood-clot reports rises, EMA vaccine chief Marco Cavaleri told the Italian newspaper *il Messaggero* it's "clear that there is an association with the vaccine," as translated by Reuters. The benefits of the shot still outweigh the risks, he said. The news comes ahead of an updated safety review from EMA—expected Wednesday or Thursday—and after the agency's March 18 decision to continue the shot rollout despite the small number of patients reporting serious, unexpected blood clots. Several countries had stopped using the vaccine ahead of that decision to wait for the EMA's initial findings.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-linked-to-rare-blood-clots-ema-official-says-but-benefits-still>

COVID-19: European Medicines Agency's vaccines chief says it is 'increasingly difficult' to say no link between Oxford jab and rare blood clots

The European Medicines Agency's (EMA) head of vaccine strategy has said it is "increasingly

difficult" to say there is "no cause and effect relationship" between the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab and "rare cases of unusual blood clots". However, Marco Cavaleri did tell an Italian newspaper that full evaluation work was still "far from being completed" and that the risk-benefit ratio was still in favour of the vaccine.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-european-medicines-agencys-vaccines-chief-says-it-is-increasingly-difficult-to-say-no-link-between-oxford-jab-and-rare-blood-clots-12267461>

AstraZeneca Covid-19 Vaccine Has 'Clear' Link To Rare Blood Clots, European Public Health Official Says

There is a "clear" link between AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine and rare blood clots in the brain, a senior official from European Medicines Agency (EMA) said in an interview published Tuesday, stressing that the benefits of the shot still outweigh any possible risks, a line the EMA, World Health Organization and a number of other regulators have held while many European countries suspended or restricted the use of the vaccine.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/roberthart/2021/04/06/astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-has-clear-link-to-rare-blood-clots-european-public-health-official-says/>

Moderna vaccine begins UK rollout in Wales

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The Moderna vaccine will be rolled out for the first time in the UK to residents in west Wales from Wednesday, Matt Hancock, the health secretary, has announced. The UK government has ordered 17m doses of the Moderna vaccine, which will be the third to be administered in the UK, since the rollout began in December last year. The vaccine was first approved by the medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, in January. The announcement follows growing concern surrounding the possible link between the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and rare blood clots. "I'm delighted we can start the UK rollout of the Moderna vaccine in west Wales today," Hancock said. "The UK government has secured vaccines on behalf of the entire nation and the vaccination programme has shown our country working together at its best."

<https://www.ft.com/content/f1ff80af-d204-4c33-b9a9-c3bf72a50cf2>

COVID-19: Vaccine rollout to be 'considerably slower' until end of July, government advisers say

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England's vaccine rollout will be "considerably slower" until the end of July and could drop to 2.5 million doses a week, the government's scientific advisers have said. Previous modelling for SAGE said the number of COVID-19 vaccine doses was predicted to reach up to 3.9 million doses a week. But in the latest paper, published on Monday, scientists expect to deliver 2.7 million doses per week in England until the end of July and 2 million after that date.

<https://news.sky.com/story/vaccine-rollout-to-be-considerably-slower-until-end-of-july-government-advisers-say-12267668>

White House rules out federal Covid-19 vaccine passports

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The White House has insisted it will not introduce mandatory federal Covid-19 vaccine passports, as Republican resistance builds to any sort of vaccine certification system. "The government is not now, nor will we be supporting a system that requires Americans to carry a credential," Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, said on Tuesday. "There will be no federal vaccinations database, no federal mandate requiring everyone to obtain a single vaccination credential." However, officials are willing to work with private companies to help set standards for how such certificates could be used fairly, she added.

<https://www.ft.com/content/db56b3ac-2528-4e52-bfbe-fe392dcb32c3>

Coronavirus in Ireland: Covid-19 tracker app has limited benefits, report claims

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A research paper has questioned the benefits of the Covid-19 tracker app in stopping the spread of coronavirus. The app has four main functions: alert the user if he or she has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19; alert close contacts of the user if the user has tested positive; give the user advice if they report symptoms; and provide an overview of Irish national and regional Covid-related data, such as confirmed cases, hospital and ICU admissions, and the number of completed tests.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-in-ireland-covid-19-tracker-app-has-limited-benefits-report-claims-xkmf7nn27>

UK minister defends possible domestic use of ‘vaccine passports’

Boris Johnson was on Tuesday forced on to the back foot over so-called Covid passports, as businesses responded coolly to the idea and a senior Tory MP warned they could create “the miserable dystopia of Checkpoint Britain”. The prime minister is facing a major Tory rebellion after the government said on Monday that it wanted to provide some form of certification to help people prove their Covid-19 status, both for overseas travel and for domestic use. But many businesses, including nightclubs, have expressed reservations about their use, while more than 40 Tory MPs have threatened to vote against domestic Covid certificates.

<https://www.ft.com/content/7992c618-9a74-4dd5-9860-4ded6d9c3d78>

Why is Germany struggling to stop a third-wave COVID crisis?

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Gerald Lehmann prides himself as a hands-on, common sense type of mayor. When he heard there were only 70 takers for the 100 vaccine doses that had been sent to Luckau’s hospital to inoculate doctors and medical staff, he called to see if the leftovers could be given to nursery school teachers. His proposal was sent to Brandenburg’s health ministry. The answer was no. There was a priority list and it had to be adhered to. “I’m upset, he told Al Jazeera. “This bureaucracy, there is simply no pragmatism.” It was not the first time Germany’s inflexible vaccine regulations have caused problems in the historic town, about an hour south of Berlin.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/6/why-is-germany-struggling-to-stop-a-third-wave-covid-crisis>

Colombia's capital Bogota to enter three-day quarantine from Saturday

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Colombia’s capital Bogota will introduce new restrictions this week, including a three-day lockdown starting on Saturday, Mayor Claudia Lopez said, in a bid to curb a third wave of coronavirus infections. The decision to place additional restrictions in Bogota this week follows high growth in coronavirus positive test rates and increasing demand for intensive care units (ICUs), the mayor said late on Monday. “We’re all going to stay at home Saturday, Sunday, and Monday,” Lopez said in a video message, adding that essential workers would still be allowed out. The percentage of coronavirus tests coming back positive has doubled to around 20%, Lopez said, while total occupancy of ICUs has hit 70%, according to local health authorities.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-colombia/colombias-capital-bogota-to-enter-three-day-quarantine-from-saturday-idUSL1N2LZOPF>

Conflict and COVID-19 drive hunger to record levels in Congo

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A record 27.3 million people in Democratic Republic of Congo, or about one-third of its population, are suffering from acute hunger, largely because of conflict and the economic impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations said on Tuesday. The figure makes Congo home to the most people needing urgent food assistance in the world, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in a joint statement. Besides conflict and the pandemic, the number also rose because the latest analysis covered more people than previous ones.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-congo-hunger/conflict-and-covid-19-drive-hunger-to-record-levels-in-congo-idUSKBN2BT1MH?il=0>

Opening party for one rural Illinois bar led to 46 COVID-19 cases

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A bar in rural Illinois held an opening party indoors, where attendees often didn't wear masks or practice social distancing. Within two weeks, 26 people who attended the event and three staff members tested positive for COVID-19. Of 71 close contacts, 17 also tested positive within 14 days of contacts for a total of 46 cases linked to the party. Two of the close contact cases were student athletes, which forced a school to suspend in-person classes for two weeks. Three of the close contact cases were among nursing home staff and residents, including one who was hospitalized after testing positive.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9438451/Opening-party-one-rural-Illinois-bar-led-46-COVID-19-cases.html>

Iran receives first AstraZeneca doses through COVAX

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Some 700,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine have been delivered to Iran as part of its purchase of millions of doses through the World Health Organization's COVAX initiative. As confirmed by an Iranian official and the United Nations' UNICEF, which handled delivery, the first shipment landed in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport Monday night and included 700,800 doses of the vaccine.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/6/iran-receives-first-astrazeneca-doses-through-covax>