

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

30th Aug 2022

Lockdown Exit

Moderna Says It's Suing Pfizer, BioNTech Over Covid Shots

Moderna Inc. sued Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, claiming the technology in their Covid-19 shot infringes on its patents, a move that sets the stage for a massive legal clash between the vaccine titans. Moderna accused Pfizer and BioNTech of violating intellectual property rights on key elements of its messenger RNA technology in developing the Comirnaty vaccine. Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Moderna said it had patents from 2010 to 2016 on the mRNA technology that made its Spikevax shot possible but that the other two companies copied the technology without permission.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-26/moderna-says-it-s-suing-pfizer-biontech-over-covid-vaccines>

Chinese province neighbouring Beijing expands COVID lockdown

Another city near Beijing imposed a partial lockdown as COVID-19 infections climbed, taking extra precautions even as cases nationwide continued to ease. Shijiazhuang, the provincial capital of China's Hebei province that borders Beijing, said mass testing will be done on residents in four major downtown districts and they are required to stay at home for three days from 2pm on Sunday. It reported 25 local COVID cases for Saturday.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/chinese-province-neighbouring-beijing-expands-covid-lockdown-20220829-p5bdgk.html>

Moderna suing Pfizer over Covid vaccine technology

Moderna said it is suing Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech for patent infringement linked to the development of the first Covid-19 vaccines. The US biotech company is alleging that mRNA technology it developed before the pandemic was copied. The lawsuit, which is seeking unspecified financial damages, was filed in the US and Germany. Pfizer said it was "surprised" by the action and would "vigorously defend" itself against the allegations. In a statement, Moderna said Pfizer/BioNTech copied two key elements of its intellectual property.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-62691102?pinned_post_locator=urn:bbc:cps:curie:asset:c66bc618-575c-471b-80f4-a8dd01d0b38a&pinned_post_asset_id=62691102&pinned_post_type=share

Clash of the titans: Moderna sues Pfizer, BioNTech for mRNA patent infringement

Moderna has filed patent infringement lawsuits in the U.S. and Germany accusing Pfizer and its partner BioNTech of stepping on patents that Moderna says it filed between 2010 and 2016. Pfizer and BioNTech have reeled in tens of billions of dollars with their world-leading COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty, so a win for Moderna in either case could be quite lucrative. Moderna is seeking to "protect the innovative mRNA technology that we pioneered, invested billions of dollars into creating, and patented during the decade preceding the COVID-19 pandemic," CEO Stéphane Bancel said in a statement. Moderna began working on the "foundational" mRNA platform way back in 2010, he added, which enabled it to develop its coronavirus vaccine Spikevax in "record time."

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/clash-titans-moderna-sues-pfizer-and-biontech-patent-infringement>

Factbox: Moderna sues Pfizer as patent owners fight over mRNA vaccine technology

Pfizer /BioNTech and Moderna have been hit with patent lawsuits by other companies related to their COVID-19 vaccines. In the latest turn of events, the two mRNA vaccine makers are locking horns, with Moderna suing Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech for patent infringement in their race to

develop the shot approved in the United States. Moderna on Friday alleged that they copied a technology that it had developed years before the pandemic

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/moderna-sues-pfizer-patent-owners-fight-over-mrna-vaccine-technology-2022-08-26/>

Cambodia to build factory to produce 104 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines from 2024 to 2026

A pharmaceutical company in Cambodia signed a memorandum with Chinese company Sinovac Biotech to build a factory for filling and packaging vaccines in that country. The factory is expected to produce around 104 million COVID-19 doses from 2024 to 2026 and explore the possibility of making other vaccines. China has become a reliable, stable and indispensable provider of COVID-19 vaccine supplies to the developing world, experts and officials from several countries said.

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501139625/cambodia-to-build-factory-to-produce-104-million-doses-of-covid-19-vaccines-from-2024-to-2026/>

Taiwan reports 25901 new COVID-19 cases, 40 deaths

Taiwan on Saturday reported 25,901 new cases of COVID-19 and 40 deaths from the disease, according to the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC). The deceased ranged in age from less than 5 years old to their 90s. All except two suffered from chronic illnesses or other severe diseases, while 18 had not been vaccinated against COVID-19, the CECC said. Also on Saturday, the CECC reported 41 COVID-19 cases newly classified as severe and 138 newly classified as moderate.

<https://focustaiwan.tw/society/202208270008>

China customs drops some COVID reporting for international arrivals; quarantine remains

China still requires international passengers to take pre-departure COVID-19 tests and quarantine upon arrival, the customs office said on Friday, a day after dropping some reporting requirements for travellers clearing customs. China, which has shortened the quarantine period and removed some testing and self-isolation requirements for inbound international travellers, still has some of the world's most stringent COVID-19 policies.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-customs-drops-some-covid-reporting-international-arrivals-quarantine-2022-08-26/>

Exit Strategies

Latest Covid Boosters Are Set to Roll Out Before Human Testing Is Completed

The Food and Drug Administration is expected to authorize new Covid-19 booster shots this week without a staple of its normal decision-making process: data from a study showing whether the shots were safe and worked in humans. The shots, modified to target the latest versions of the Omicron variant, won't have finished testing in humans when the FDA makes its decisions. Instead, the agency plans to assess the shots using data from other sources such as research in mice, the profiles of the original vaccines and the performance of earlier iterations of boosters targeting older forms of Omicron. "Real world evidence from the current mRNA Covid-19 vaccines, which have been administered to millions of individuals, show us that the vaccines are safe," FDA Commissioner Robert Califf said in a recent tweet. The FDA pointed to Dr. Califf's tweets when asked for comment.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/latest-covid-boosters-are-set-to-roll-out-before-human-testing-is-completed-11661679003>

At Jackson Hole, World's Central Bankers Gauge Economic Risks in Covid's Wake

The world's central bankers returned to Grand Teton National Park after a three-year, pandemic-induced hiatus with angst over inflation that has been at the highest levels since the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City began hosting its annual summer symposium there in 1982. Policy makers and economists signaled growing unease with the trade-offs they could soon confront, particularly if the forces that helped central banks bring down inflation and keep it low over the past

three decades are unraveling. “For the first time in four decades, central banks need to prove how determined they are to protect price stability,” said Isabel Schnabel, who sits on the European Central Bank’s six-member executive board, during a panel that concluded the conference Saturday afternoon.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/at-jackson-hole-worlds-central-bankers-gauge-economic-risks-in-covids-wake-11661656392>

Italian Man Diagnosed With COVID, Monkeypox, HIV at Same Time

A 36-year-old man in Italy appears to be the world’s first documented case of being diagnosed with COVID-19, monkeypox, and HIV at the same time this summer, according to a recent case report published in the Journal of Infection. His COVID-19 and monkeypox infections have cleared up without any issues, and he has been placed on HIV treatment. “Monkeypox virus and SARS-CoV-2 infections can occur simultaneously,” the study authors wrote. “Flu-like symptoms and SARS-CoV-2 positivity should not exclude monkeypox in high-risk individuals.”

<https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20220826/italian-man-covid-monkeypox-hiv-same-time>

Partisan Exits

Top Thai Hospital Bets on Tourists to Counter Covid Revenue Dip

Bangkok Dusit Medical Services Pcl, Thailand’s biggest private hospital operator, expects a rebound in international patient arrivals to make up for an expected decline in revenue from Covid-19 treatment and services. Foreign patients seeking treatment at Bangkok Dusit’s 53 hospitals in the Thai capital and other tourist hotspots have reached about 90% of the pre-pandemic level, Chief Executive Officer Poramaporn Prasarttong-Osoth said. The recovery in fly-in patients are led by those from the Middle East, Australia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. But a slower-than-expected return of European tourists may still weigh on earnings in the second half, especially of hospitals in places such as Phuket, Koh Samui and Pattaya as they serve visitors from the region, she said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-28/top-thai-hospital-bets-on-tourists-to-counter-covid-revenue-dip>

China’s Industrial Profit Falls on Covid-19 Measures, Bad Weather

China’s industrial profit dropped in the first seven months of the year, reversing a year-on-year increase in the first half of the year, as sporadic Covid-19 outbreaks and bad weather weighed on the world’s second-largest economy. Industrial profit dropped 1.1% from a year earlier in the January-to-July period, offsetting a 1% increase reported in the first half of the year, the National Bureau of Statistics said Saturday. A record heat wave and drought cut into China’s industrial production, and Beijing recently unveiled tens of billions in economic support for power generation and agriculture.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-industrial-profit-falls-on-covid-19-measures-bad-weather-11661607719>

Biden Team Aims for Omicron-Targeted Shots in Arms by Labor Day

The Biden administration plans to begin offering next-generation Covid-19 booster shots as soon as the Labor Day weekend, according to people familiar with the matter, aiming to stave off a fall surge in cases of the disease. Food and Drug Administration regulators are expected to clear the use of Covid-19 vaccines reformulated for omicron variants next week, the people said. They asked not to be identified ahead of an official announcement.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-26/biden-team-aims-for-omicron-targeted-shots-in-arms-by-labor-day>

The Long Tail of Covid-19 Disinformation

“Two shots, three shots, four shots, five — how many shots will you survive?” Every Saturday afternoon, protesters collect outside Parliament House in Melbourne, then stream down through the

city center toward the waterfront. In November, when I moved to the city, those protesters were a tsunami of frustration and anger. They closed off streets and disrupted public transportation, the chants of thousands echoing off the glass-and-stone skyscrapers. These days, the protests are more of a trickle — a few hundred people most weeks, railing against scientific consensus, Covid-19 vaccines and restrictions, the media and the government, among other institutions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/world/australia/covid-disinformation-australia-new-zealand.html>

Three-quarters don't believe COVID cases will rise

More than three-quarters of Australians expect COVID-19 cases to drop or stay stable, suggesting that the country is getting less spooked by the pandemic. Only 7 per cent of Australians expect COVID numbers to increase in the coming months, down from 20 per cent in the same survey in March.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/three-quarters-don-t-believe-covid-cases-will-rise-20220825-p5bcoe.html>

SEC fines top medical group chief over 2 million baht for 'false' vaccine claims

Dr Boon Vanasin, chairman of Thonburi Healthcare Group (THG), was slapped with a 2.34 million baht fine for allegedly releasing a false statement that could affect THG's share price or investment decisions. SEC fines top medical group chief over 2 million baht for 'false' vaccine claims. Apart from hitting him with a fine, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has also banned Boon from sitting on boards of listed companies for three and half years. SEC said that from July 12 to August 4, 2021, Boon had released statements through several media outlets saying that THG had purchased the mRNA Covid-19 vaccine from Pfizer and that the first lot of 5 million doses were to be delivered within July 2021.

<https://www.nationthailand.com/in-focus/national/40019420>

Conservative party hustings: Covid lockdown went too far say Truss and Sunak - video

Liz Truss joined Rishi Sunak, her rival in the Tory leadership contest, in saying the Covid lockdown was too strict when both candidates said school closures during the peak of the pandemic were wrong. At the eleventh of 12 hustings in Norwich, Sunak and Truss talked out policies they would implement on policing and the NHS if they became prime minister

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2022/aug/25/conservative-party-hustings-covid-lockdown-went-too-far-say-truss-and-sunak-video>

Continued Lockdown

Australia's COVID-19 numbers are dropping but experts warn the pandemic will not end this year

Winter's nearly over and, with COVID-19 daily case numbers declining, you could be forgiven for hoping the coronavirus pandemic is coming to an end too. But experts say that could still be a long way off. Let's unpack why — after a quick look at the latest COVID figures.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-29/how-will-we-know-when-covid-is-over-pandemic-declaration/101334534>

Scientific Viewpoint

Hong Kong to Expand Covid Testing Across City as Virus Cases Surge

Hong Kong imposed a select set of measures to try to protect its most vulnerable from a surging Covid-19 outbreak that is putting the city's health care system under pressure, and forcing the government to take action. The Asian financial hub will expand testing across the city, while holding off on the full-scale closures and tighter mitigation measures it's used in the past, and which are still frequently deployed in mainland China now. The aim is to balance the health of its people with the city's economic needs, officials said. Those who test positive for Covid will be sent to isolation facilities with their families if any of them are at high risk and their living conditions don't provide adequate space, Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau said at the daily virus briefing

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-26/hong-kong-to-renew-social-curbs-as-covid-outbreak-gains-momentum>

COVID-19 mortality surveillance in Lebanon

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Epidemiological surveillance program of the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health has launched a rapid surveillance system for collecting COVID-19-related mortality data. In this study, we document the Lebanese experience of COVID-19 mortality surveillance and provide an analysis of the epidemiological characteristics of confirmed deaths. The implementation of the rapid COVID-19 mortality surveillance system, data sources, and data collection were described. A retrospective descriptive analysis of the epidemiological characteristics of confirmed cases occurring in Lebanon between February 20, 2020, and September 15, 2021, was performed.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-18715-6>

Beneficial non-specific effects of live vaccines against COVID-19 and other unrelated infections

Live attenuated vaccines could have beneficial, non-specific effects of protecting against vaccine-unrelated infections, such as BCG protecting against respiratory infection. During the COVID-19 pandemic, testing of these effects against COVID-19 was of interest to the pandemic control programme. Non-specific effects occur due to the broad effects of specific live attenuated vaccines on the host immune system, relying on heterologous lymphocyte responses and induction of trained immunity. Knowledge of non-specific effects has been developed in randomised controlled trials and observational studies with children, but examining of whether the same principles apply to adults and older adults was of interest to researchers during the pandemic.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(22\)00498-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(22)00498-4/fulltext)

MOH to offer COVID-19 booster shot for children aged 5 to 11

Children aged 5 to 11 are now recommended to receive one booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty vaccine, from five months after the second dose of their primary vaccination series. Preparations are under way to start inoculating the group in the fourth quarter of the year, "likely when examinations in primary schools are towards the tail end or over", the Ministry of Health (MOH) said in a news release on Wednesday (Aug 24) The move comes on the recommendation of the Expert Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination. MOH said that the booster dose will sustain protection against severe illness and strengthen Singapore's preparation for the next infection wave.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/covid-19-vaccination-booster-children-aged-5-11-recommended-moh-2896726>

Hong Kong gears up for Covid fight as health chief warns tighter curbs possible

Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau says changes to quarantine rules for elderly are justified because of a resurgence of coronavirus infections. Health authorities confirm 7,835 new coronavirus infections, including 170 imported ones, as well as seven more related deaths

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3190258/coronavirus-hong-kongs-daily-tally-could-cross>

Moderna sues Pfizer/BioNTech for patent infringement over COVID vaccine

Moderna sued Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech on Friday for patent infringement in the development of the first COVID-19 vaccine approved in the United States, alleging they copied technology that Moderna developed years before the pandemic. The lawsuit, which seeks undetermined monetary damages, was filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts. The suit also would be filed also in the Regional Court of Duesseldorf in Germany, Moderna said in a news release.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/moderna-sues-pfizerbiontech-patent-infringement-over-covid-vaccine-2022-08-26/>

Britain approves Novavax COVID shot for 12-17 year-olds

Britain's medicines regulator on Friday approved Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine for children aged between 12 and 17 years. The mRNA vaccines made by Moderna as well as the partnership between Pfizer-BioNTech are also cleared for use by this age group, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said. Britain in February cleared Novavax's two-dose vaccine, Nuvaxovid, for use in adults.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-approves-novavax-covid-shot-12-17-year-olds-2022-08-26/>

Booster Shots Protect Against Severe Covid for at Least Six Months, Study Finds

A Covid-19 vaccine booster shot protects people from becoming severely ill or dying and its efficacy lasts for six months, according a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, underscoring the importance of additional jabs as the world moves to coexist with the virus. The mRNA booster vaccines -- made by drugmakers Pfizer Inc. and BionTech SE, or Moderna Inc. -- were most effective in cutting the rate of people with severe Covid, scoring an estimated 87%, and there was no evidence of their effect waning within six months, the study found. Inactivated booster vaccines by Sinovac Biotech Ltd. and Sinopharm Group Co. also cut the chance of severe illness by about 70%. Severe Covid was defined in the research as requiring oxygen supplementation, intensive care or death.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-26/boosters-protect-against-severe-covid-for-six-months-study-says>

Do I need a Covid Booster Shot? AstraZeneca (AZ) Boss Wonders If Good Idea

The boss of pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca has said he is unsure whether annual Covid-19 boosters for otherwise healthy people are a good use of resources or money. A new booster jab will be offered to everyone in the UK aged 50 and over from next month, as well as those with underlying health conditions, to increase protection ahead of future waves. Chief executive officer Pascal Soriot said he believes most of the vaccinated population has a "foundation immunity against severe disease" at this point. In an interview with the Telegraph, he said: "People who are otherwise healthy - especially if they are young, have been vaccinated, have had a boost already - boosting them again, I'm just not sure it's really a good use of resources."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-27/astrazeneca-boss-unsure-if-annual-covid-19-boosters-are-good-use-of-resources>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Hong Kong daily Covid numbers set to hit 10,000 mark 'in coming days'

Government advisers say latest developments are expected, further tightening of social-distancing rules not required. Health officials report 9,708 new infections, including 213 imported cases, on Sunday while 10 more deaths are recorded

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3190449/coronavirus-hong-kongs-new-rules-requiring-rapid>

Pandemic's impact on U.S. productivity may be a wash, research shows

The coronavirus pandemic touched off a scramble among U.S. firms and households to adapt their work lives and business models, with work-from-home arrangements and teleconferencing tools boosting what some employees could do, and new technology helping even the smallest cafes do more with less. But the crisis also brought a wave of inefficiency in the form of snarled supply chains, time and money spent on cleaning and health management, and hiring difficulties that still keep some businesses below capacity.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/us/pandemics-impact-us-productivity-may-be-wash-research-shows-2022-08-26/>

Egypt sees 55% decline in coronavirus cases, 37% drop in fatalities: Health minister -

Health - Egypt

Egypt has seen a drop of 55 percent in coronavirus infections and a decline of 37 percent in pandemic-linked deaths, Health Minister Khaled Abdel-Ghaffar said in a cabinet meeting on Thursday.

<https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1236/473843/Egypt/Health/Egypt-sees--decline-in-coronavirus-cases,--dr-op-in.aspx>

Chinese city's residents made to queue for Covid tests in heat above 40C

Residents of the south-western Chinese city of Chongqing have been queueing on the streets to be tested for Covid, despite extreme temperatures that have soared past 40C (104F) this week. Photos posted on Chinese social media also showed health workers testing residents while wearing full hazmat suits in the heatwave. Other images showed that the tests were being carried out while bushfires raged in the background, prompting descriptions of the situation as "apocalyptic". The city of more than 31 million people reported eight new confirmed Covid cases on Friday. Authorities said that as of midnight on Thursday, Chongqing had had 105 cases.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/china-city-chongqing-covid-tests-heatwave>

Hainan's Covid chaos exposes the bad, ugly - and scary - of China's virus control measures

My family's 23-day holiday nightmare is finally over. But it serves as more than just a cautionary tale for travellers in zero-Covid China. It's a story of local officials ignoring direct orders from Beijing, and an arbitrary, abusable health code system being used for social control.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3190293/hainans-covid-chaos-exposes-bad-ugly-and-scary-chinas-virus>