

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

14th Dec 2020

News Highlights

U.S. regulator approves Pfizer vaccine, mass rollout begins

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration gave emergency use authorisation to the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine. [A first round of 2.9 million doses will prioritise health workers and the elderly.](#) Cargo planes and trucks were rolling across the country to deliver doses to distribution centres nationwide, [beginning a campaign which is aiming to vaccinate 100 million by the end of March.](#)

Covid-19 vaccination in Africa is a concern

Concerns abound as to whether [African nations will receive enough doses of a Covid-19 vaccine for an effective vaccination campaign](#), as well as whether they will have the capacity to handle its mass rollout. The COVAX initiative to ensure availability in LMICs seems to be the regions lifeline. Last week, [the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director, John Nkengasong](#), called for an extraordinary UN session to address the issue.

South Korea continues to see record case numbers

The third wave of cases battering South Korea could mean the highest level of restrictions being imposed, said President Moon Jae-in. [The country has seen record case numbers in recent days.](#) 'Our back is against the wall,' Moon said, as the spectre of level-three restrictions - effectively moving the country into lockdown - looms large.

Germany to tighten restrictions over the Christmas period

Rising cases in Germany have led to Chancellor Angela Merkel and state leaders agreeing to impose a lockdown over the Christmas period. [Until January 10th, non-essential shops will be closed; outdoor alcohol consumption will be banned.](#) schools will be largely closed, private gatherings will be restricted and fireworks will be banned, [ahead of New Year's Eve, among other restrictions.](#)

Lockdown Exit

When will COVID-19 vaccinations start in African countries?

With the United Kingdom rolling out the world's first approved coronavirus vaccine this week and other clinical trials showing promising results, the focus has swiftly turned towards the distribution of the doses worldwide and which countries will get them first - and which will be pushed to the back of the queue. On Thursday, Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director John Nkengasong warned "it will be extremely terrible to see" wealthy nations obtaining vaccines and African countries missing out, as he called on for an extraordinary United Nations session to discuss this "moral issue" and avoid a "North-South distrust in respect to vaccines, which is a common good".

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/when-will-covid19-vaccinations-start-african-countries>

Historic U.S. COVID vaccine campaign launches with convoy of trucks

Tractor trailers loaded with suitcase-sized containers of COVID-19 vaccine will leave Pfizer Inc's

manufacturing facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on Sunday morning - launching the largest and most complex vaccine distribution project in the United States, where the virus is raging. U.S. regulators late on Friday authorized the vaccine from Pfizer and partner BioNTech for use, and U.S. marshals will accompany the tightly secured shipments from factory to final destination. "We have spent months strategizing with Operation Warp Speed officials and our healthcare customers on efficient vaccine logistics, and the time has arrived to put the plan into action," Wes Wheeler, president of UPS Healthcare, said on Saturday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-vaccines-distribut/historic-us-covid-vaccine-campaign-launches-with-convoy-of-trucks-idUKKBN28N043>

Covid vaccine: Four Pfizer trial participants developed facial paralysis, FDA says

New documents have revealed that four participants in the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine trial developed Bell's palsy - a condition that causes a temporary weakness or paralysis of the muscles in the face. The patients were taking part in the US vaccine trial, which included 38,000 participants. The Bell's palsy is believed to be unrelated to the vaccine, with cases in the trial occurring at the same rate as in the general population. A document by the FDA said: "Among non-serious unsolicited adverse events, there was a numerical imbalance of four cases of Bell's palsy in the vaccine group compared with no cases in the placebo group, though the four cases in the vaccine group do not represent a frequency above that expected in the general population."

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/science/covid-vaccine-four-pfizer-trial-23151047>

Covid-19 vaccine-distribution timeline will keep slipping, experts say

When Bruce Y. Lee was helping the U.S. government model delivery plans for H1N1 influenza vaccines, he came to expect one constant: The schedule would always change. "We'd constantly have to update the models as new production numbers came out," said Lee, a professor at CUNY Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy, who developed computational models to guide the national response to the H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009. "That just became accepted."

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/11/covid19-vaccine-timeline-keeps-slipping-experts-say-it-will-change-again/>

Africa's hurdles toward a COVID vaccine

Coronavirus vaccines are now being administered in Europe, while Africa hopes to start by mid-2021. Until then, the continent of 54 countries will need to put the necessary logistics, such as refrigeration, in place. On December 8, 2020, the United Kingdom became the first country to begin vaccinating its citizens with the new BioNTech-Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Canada and Bahrain have also greenlighted it. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) will meet on December 29 and is expected to approve the vaccine. But European Union countries are already putting modalities in place to receive and distribute the vaccine. Africa's hopes of receiving the vaccine are pinned on the global COVAX initiative, which aims to buy and deliver vaccines for the world's poorest people.

<https://www.dw.com/en/africas-hurdles-toward-a-covid-vaccine/a-55904651>

UN chief warns 'vaccine nationalism' is moving at full speed

Director General Antonio Guterres warned Wednesday that "vaccine nationalism" is moving "at full speed," leaving poor people around the globe watching preparations for inoculations against the coronavirus in some rich nations and wondering if and when they will be vaccinated.

<https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1879715/Network/World/UN-chief-warns-vaccine-nationalism-is-moving-at-full-speed>

Grief in the Covid era will weigh on the American psyche for years to come

The rituals of grief and mourning are as old as time: the swift Jewish burial and seven days of sitting shiva to honor the dead; the Muslim washing and three-sheeted shrouding of a body; the solemn Mass of Christian Burial with Holy Communion and the promise of an afterlife. All these — and other rites of faith and community across the globe — have been brutally curtailed by the Covid-19

pandemic, with effects on the mental and physical health of those left behind that have yet to be grasped.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/09/drive-by-burials-and-facetime-farewells-grief-in-the-covid-era-will-weigh-on-the-american-psyche-for-years-to-come/>

Walgreens to hire 25,000 as part of plan to give COVID-19 vaccine to nursing home residents and staff

Walgreens expects to receive its first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine Dec. 21 and plans to inoculate nursing home residents and workers at more than 30,000 long-term care facilities nationwide. The company plans to hire about 25,000 people across the U.S., including up to 9,000 pharmacists and other health care workers, to administer the vaccine to long-term care facilities through a partnership with pharmacy service provider PharMerica, the companies said during a panel discussion Friday on the vaccine rollout.

<https://bangordailynews.com/2020/12/12/national-business/walgreens-to-hire-25000-as-part-of-plan-to-give-covid-19-vaccine-to-nursing-home-residents-and-staff/>

South Korea begins anti-coronavirus period ahead of college entrance exam

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in warned on Sunday that COVID-19 restrictions may be raised to the highest level after a second day of record increases in cases as the country battles a harsh third wave of infection. Presiding over an emergency meeting at the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters for the first time since February, Moon urged vigilance and called for an all-out efforts to contain the virus. "Unless the outbreak can be contained now, it has come to the critical point of considering escalating social-distancing measures to the third level," he said, referring to the tightest curbs under the country's five-tier system.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-southkorea/south-korea-begins-anti-coronavirus-period-ahead-of-college-entrance-exam-idUSKBN27Z0BS>

Exit Strategies

U.S. expects to have immunized 100 million against COVID-19 by the end of first-quarter 2021 - Slaoui

The United States expects to have immunized 100 million people with the coronavirus vaccine by the end of the first quarter of 2021, the chief U.S. adviser for efforts on COVID-19 vaccines said on Sunday. "We would have immunized 100 million people by the first quarter of 2021," U.S. Operation Warp Speed chief adviser Dr. Moncef Slaoui said in an interview with Fox News Sunday. He said the United States hopes to have about 40 million doses of vaccine distributed by the end of December, and another 50 million to 80 million distributed in January, and the same number in February. The vaccine requires two shots per person

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa-immunizations-idUSKBN28N0HH>

Historic journey: Pfizer prepares to deliver 6.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines

Three semi-trucks loaded with the U.S.'s first doses of a COVID-19 vaccine rolled out of the parking lot of the Pfizer manufacturing plant early Sunday morning, met with cheering crowds of local residents who said they were proud of their hometown's contribution to science, and helping to bring the end to the coronavirus pandemic. The caravan of FedEx, UPS and Boyle Transportation trucks — led and tailed by unmarked police cars — pulled out of the parking lot about 8:25 a.m., headed to airports and distribution centers on a historic journey. Millions of doses of the company's coronavirus vaccine were inside those trucks, and could be injected into the arms of the American people as early as Monday morning.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/12/13/pfizer-covid-19-vaccines-kalamazoo-michigan/6529215002/>

'There are many roadblocks': Fears grow over US Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Eleven hospitals in Kentucky will receive doses of a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer, perhaps as soon as Monday. Dr Nichelle Jadhav's hospital is not one of them and she is confused. And she is not alone. Jadhav's experience is one likely being replicated across the country, as states begin distributing a vaccine with plans that vary widely, lack federal funding, are often opaque and will not reach everyone even in early, limited populations. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Friday evening authorized a vaccine for emergency use, with the manufacturing partnership of pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and BioNTech expected to begin an initial shipment of 2.9m doses hours later.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/13/us-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-hospitals>

Covid-19 in Wales: Mass testing a 'waste of resources'

Continuing mass testing in Wales could be a "massive-scale of waste of resources", a leading public health expert has said. Figures show less than 1.5% of people were testing positive as part of pilots in Merthyr Tydfil and the lower Cynon Valley. Dr Angela Raffle said there was little evidence to suggest it helped cut transmission. First Minister Mark Drakeford said mass testing "has a part to play". Dr Raffle, a senior lecturer in population sciences at Bristol University, said mass testing was "incredibly resource intensive". "We simply don't know whether you'll find enough cases who would have transmitted a lot, and who don't [transmit Covid-19] simply because you found them," she said. "And we don't know whether telling lots of people they're negative could actually undermine any potential benefit."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55283183>

UPS and FedEx to Ship the First Vaccines on Sunday Morning

UPS and FedEx usually compete fiercely for business. Now, the rivals are working side by side to ship the coronavirus vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, the first of the vaccines to win U.S. government approval. The two shipping companies said they had put plans they had been working on for months into action after the Food and Drug Administration gave the vaccine emergency authorization late Friday. At a news conference on Saturday, Gen. Gustave F. Perna, the chief operating officer of Operation Warp Speed, the federal effort to bring a vaccine to market, said that boxes were being packed at Pfizer's plant in Kalamazoo, Mich., and would be shipped to UPS and FedEx distribution hubs, where they would be dispersed to 636 locations across the country. Pfizer said shipping would start early Sunday morning.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/12/business/ups-and-fedex-say-plans-to-ship-the-vaccine-are-underway.html>

Now that there's a coronavirus vaccine, how do you persuade people to take it?

In Philadelphia, public health officials think block captains may be more effective than football stars in persuading people to get coronavirus vaccines. Researchers in the Navajo Nation anticipate that directives about the shots will have to be reworded to resonate with Native people. And in Atlanta, where a federally funded project has been working with community leaders to increase minority participation in clinical trials, physicians have a lesson to learn in how to talk to patients about vaccines. Memo to docs? More empathy. Less authority.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/covid-vaccine-communication-campaign/2020/12/10/c825ad18-34e9-11eb-a997-1f4c53d2a747_story.html

Swedish Covid Workers Are Quitting, Leaving ICUs Short-Staffed

Sweden faces a shortage of health-care workers as the number of resignations ticks up after a relentless year of caring for Covid patients. Sineva Ribeiro, the chairwoman of the Swedish Association of Health Professionals, says the situation is "terrible." Even before the first wave of the pandemic back in March, there was "a shortage of specialist nurses, including at ICUs," she said in a phone interview.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-12/swedish-covid-workers-are-quitting-leaving-ic-us-short-staffed>

Dozens of GPs opt out of Pfizer vaccine rollout next week forcing 100,000 patients to get their jabs elsewhere due to 'concerns over heavy workloads'

Doctors told to prioritise those from ethnic minorities if they run short of vaccine Several GPs in Manchester, Yorkshire, Sussex and Lincolnshire have opted out Some 280 of Primary Care Networks set to administer the vaccine next week Follows initial Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine roll-out in 70 hospital hubs last Tuesday

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9045867/Dozens-GPs-opt-Pfizer-vaccine-rollout-week.html>

Scientists warn against Christmas gatherings in UK despite relaxed rules

“If people [aren't] cautious, then we will pay for our Christmas parties with January and February lockdowns,” said Prof Devi Sridhar, the chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh. “With a vaccine just weeks away, why risk infecting vulnerable and elderly people we love?” Prof Susan Michie, a member of the government’s Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behaviours (Spi-B) and the Independent Sage group of experts, agreed. “One has got to respond to the situation as it is, not the situation as we’d like it to be,” she said, reiterating that people should think carefully about whether to meet up with others, and if they do, only meet outside. “If we really want to keep our loved ones safe, the best thing is not to see them.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/11/scientists-warn-against-christmas-gatherings-uk-despite-relaxed-rules-covid>

Covid drives record drop in global carbon emissions, research shows

The coronavirus pandemic has driven a record drop in global carbon emissions, researchers have found. They warned, however, that greener measures are needed as economies recover, to start delivering the annual emissions cuts required to curb climate change. Britain saw one of the biggest drops in emissions at 13 per cent, the analysis showed. The country saw major reductions in transport - the largest source of climate pollution for the country - and was hit by two waves of restrictions.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid-drives-record-emissions-drop-2020-b253925.html>

The mind-boggling logistics of transporting one of the most important vaccines in history

Two coronavirus vaccines are in line to be authorized for emergency use in the United States, and a massive transportation network is standing at the ready once they receive government clearance. The delicate, mind-boggling logistics of distributing the vaccines will be crucial. The challenges of moving millions of doses — over thousands of miles and under strict temperature specifications — are enormous. Here's what we know about how vaccines will be physically transported from drug manufacturers to medical facilities around the world.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/11/business/vaccine-distribution-coronavirus/index.html>

Partisan Exits

Fears of new Covid restrictions as councils struggle to fund self-isolation

More than 17 million people are living in areas under tier 2 restrictions that have seen infection rates rise over the last three weeks, new research has revealed amid growing concerns that councils are struggling to help people with the costs of self-isolation. With the government due to review the Covid-19 measures across England this week, an assessment of official data found that more than half of councils in which tier 2 restrictions are in place - or “high alert” areas - have seen infection rates rise since the last week of November. The areas cover some 17.5 million people. The research, carried out by Labour, found that 100 local authorities have seen an increase in cases since 24 November, compared with 87 that have seen a decrease. It has raised concerns that more areas could face the most restrictive tier 3 measures from this week. London is in danger of entering tier 3, with some boroughs suffering from the highest rates of the disease in England.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/13/fears-of-new-covid-restrictions-as-councils-struggle-to-fund-self-isolation>

[ation](#)

Up to 40 million Americans could lose their homes if Congress doesn't act: "It's life or death for me"

Ten months into the pandemic, renters owe an estimated \$70 billion in back rent — and if the hold is not extended, 30 to 40 million Americans could lose their homes, CBS News' Nancy Cordes reports. The CDC had put a temporary hold on all evictions, to protect public health and prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, more coronavirus relief spending is again bogged down in Congress, and many Americans are already getting warnings that they will be tossed out if lawmakers don't act. In Houston, Texas, more than 17,000 evictions have been initiated since the pandemic began, and 300,000 or more could be coming if the federal moratorium is allowed to expire.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-40-million-americans-lose-homes-congress-evictions/>

Bolsonaro branded 'homicidally negligent' over Brazil's vaccine planning

Jair Bolsonaro is facing a furious backlash over what critics are calling his “homicidally negligent” failure to prepare a coherent coronavirus vaccination programme as Brazil’s death toll again soars. More than 181,000 Brazilians have died from the disease the president calls “a little flu”, with Latin America’s biggest economy now careering into a painful second wave. But Bolsonaro’s far-right administration has been sluggish to explain plans to vaccinate Brazil’s 212 million citizens, betting nearly all of its chips on the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/13/brazil-bolsonaro-branded-homicidally-negligent-over-vaccine-planning>

FDA chief seeks to reassure Americans about COVID-19 vaccine: "I will absolutely" take it

Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn sought to reassure the public on Saturday about the thoroughness of the agency's review of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, and that the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any risks, after the agency authorized it for emergency use on Friday evening. "Efficiency does not mean any cutting of corners," Hahn said at a press conference. "I will absolutely take this COVID-19 vaccine, pending availability and distribution, because I have complete trust and confidence in the FDA's career staff's evaluation," he said.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fda-chief-hahn-seeks-to-reassure-americans-covid-19-vaccine-i-will-absolutely-take-it/>

India's drug regulator has failed the pandemic stress test

The Covid-19 pandemic has served as a stress test for drug regulators across the world. India’s has failed. Amid the desperate scrambles for therapeutics and vaccines to stem the havoc caused by the pandemic, drug regulators have had to resist tremendous political pressure to approve unproven therapies. Rick Bright, the former head of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), the federal agency that helps secure the U.S. from chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and emerging infectious disease threats, left his position, alleging in his whistleblower complaint that he faced political pressure to allow the distribution of hydroxychloroquine, an unproven drug for treating Covid-19 that had been championed by President Trump.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/11/drug-regulator-india-failed-pandemic-stress/>

More Brazilians sceptical of COVID-19 vaccine: Poll

Scepticism towards a COVID-19 vaccine has increased in Brazil during the past months, a new poll showed on Saturday, as the country continues to grapple with high infection and death rates linked to the virus. The Datafolha polling institute’s survey found that 22 percent of Brazilians said they would be unwilling to take any COVID-19 vaccine, up from 9 percent in August.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/12/more-brazilians-sceptical-of-covid-19-vaccine-poll>

Anthony Fauci Reveals His Biggest COVID Vaccine Fear

As the Food and Drug Administration authorized Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use on Friday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, was out for a walk in the dark. "Sorry if I'm out of breath," he said. "I'm walking. I promise I'm not having a heart attack." He's walking these days, he says, because his schedule has been so tightly packed in recent weeks that by the time he gets home it's too ill-lit to run. And this day in particular has been extra draining, he says, primarily because of the anticipation that the vaccine would soon be on its way to states across the country.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/anthony-fauci-reveals-his-biggest-covid-vaccine-fear-skepticism>

UK: Why do some ethnic minorities fear the coronavirus vaccine?

When 29-year-old Shabrez Ali from Bradford was a child, his mother was cautious about vaccines. "For the longest time, my mum didn't want me to take jabs during primary and secondary school," Ali, who has South Asian origins, told Al Jazeera by phone. He was not sure why, but guessed, "it may have been due to some potential conspiracies she might have heard in the past". Since the UK went into its first coronavirus lockdown in March, Ali, who suffers from an autoimmune condition, has barely left the house. He had received a letter from the government urging him to "shield" because the immunosuppressant drugs he takes made him vulnerable.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/8/why-some-minorities-in-the-uk-fear-a-covid-19-vaccine>

Continued Lockdown

When could London go into tier 3? The date of first Covid tiers review, and when lockdown rules would change

London is in danger of being moved into tier three, after significant rises in Covid-19 cases in several of the city's boroughs. Public Health England (PHE) data shows 22 of the capital's 32 boroughs have infection rates higher than the national seven-day average of 150 per 100,000 people. Government officials will meet to review the tier system on 16 December, and decide which areas should move up or down. These changes will then come into force from Saturday 19 December. They will only be in place for four days before restrictions are relaxed nationwide over Christmas, but will return on 28 December.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/london-tier-3-when-go-into-date-covid-tiers-review-lockdown-rules-restrictions-change-791321>

COVID-19 vaccine to be provided free of cost in Kerala, says CM Pinarayi Vijayan

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan today said that the COVID-19 vaccine will be provided free of cost in the state once it is available. Kerala on Saturday recorded 5,949 new COVID-19 cases and 32 deaths. The number of total cases in the state has jumped to 6.64 lakh and the death toll to 2,594, the Chief Minister said. "No one will be charged for the vaccine. This is the stand of the government," the Kerala Chief Minister told reporters at Kannur.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/health/covid-19-vaccine-to-be-provided-free-of-cost-in-kerala-says-cm-pinarayi-vijayan/2148738/>

France to introduce night-time curfew in bid to slow spread of Covid-19

France is set to introduce a night-time curfew and delay the opening of cultural venues as the nation struggles to curb the spread of Covid-19. Jean Castex, the French Prime Minister, said on Thursday that infection rates were not falling as fast as was hoped following the country's lockdown which began in late October. Its current lockdown will be lifted as planned on 15 December, which is when the daily 8pm to 6am curfew will begin.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/france-nighttime-curfew-covid19-b249790.html>

Scientific Viewpoint

Pfizer's Covid-19 Vaccine: Distribution, Side Effects and Everything You Need to Know

Pfizer Inc. and partner BioNTech SE received authorization from the Food and Drug Administration on Friday to begin distributing their Covid-19 vaccine. As the shot goes into use across the U.S., here's what we know and don't know. Who is authorized to receive the vaccine? The FDA authorized the vaccine to be administered to people 16 and older to prevent Covid-19.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-fda-review-11605715625>

Bahrain approves Chinese COVID-19 vaccine for use

Bahrain said Sunday it approved the use of a Chinese coronavirus vaccine, following its earlier approval of a vaccine made by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech. Separately, Kuwait has granted emergency use for the Pfizer vaccine. Bahrain's state-run news agency said the Sinopharm vaccine would be available in the island kingdom off the coast of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf. It offered few details though on study results of the vaccine, in line with the United Arab Emirates, which last week announced the vaccine was 86% effective.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/bahrain-approves-chinese-covid-19-vaccine-74699175>

Covid vaccine: Four Pfizer trial participants developed facial paralysis, FDA says

New documents have revealed that four participants in the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine trial developed Bell's palsy - a condition that causes a temporary weakness or paralysis of the muscles in the face. The patients were taking part in the US vaccine trial, which included 38,000 participants. The Bell's palsy is believed to be unrelated to the vaccine, with cases in the trial occurring at the same rate as in the general population. A document by the FDA said: "Among non-serious unsolicited adverse events, there was a numerical imbalance of four cases of Bell's palsy in the vaccine group compared with no cases in the placebo group, though the four cases in the vaccine group do not represent a frequency above that expected in the general population."

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/health/medical/covid-vaccine-four-pfizer-trial-participants-developed-facial-paralysis-fda-says/ar-BB1bQoKp>

Fears over safety of Chinese coronavirus vaccines

China has already vaccinated more than a million people, even though its experimental vaccines have yet to be proven to work — or be safe. It has done this by offering vaccines that are still in their testing stage for emergency use. Initially, they were given to employees of state-owned enterprises who were being sent abroad, and frontline healthcare workers. In October, clinics in one province began allowing people to register and receive an unapproved vaccine at a cost of £46 for a double dose. People were reported to have travelled hundreds of miles for a shot at immunity. China has been doing all this without official regulatory approval. Instead, it has given people experimental vaccines under an emergency programme launched in July. This approach runs counter to that of many western countries, where experts have said that complete testing is necessary. Furthermore, Chinese companies have not released any data on their vaccines' safety or efficacy.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fears-over-safety-of-chinese-coronavirus-vaccines-6lddb5vc?shareToken=5d7f0d21f760ed9738739b612c81c2e2>

Mexico approves emergency use of Pfizer coronavirus vaccine

The Mexican government's medical safety commission approved the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine Friday, making Mexico the fourth country to do so. Assistant Health Secretary Hugo López-Gatell said Mexico's approval came after Britain, Canada and Bahrain. Mexico is set to receive 250,000 doses of the vaccine, enough for 125,000 people, because each person requires two shots. López-Gatell has said that front-line health workers will get the shots first.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/mexico-approves-emergency-use-of-pfizer-coronavirus-vaccine-vaccine-mexico-coronavirus-vaccine-coronavirus-government-b1770548.html>

Coronavirus: Where to get the COVID-19 Sinopharm vaccine in the UAE

The United Arab Emirates released a list on Friday of all the locations where residents and nationals can receive the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine. Residents across the UAE will now be able to volunteer to be vaccinated, after Abu Dhabi's voluntary vaccination campaign was extended to include Dubai and the UAE's five other emirates this week. The vaccine, which was developed by China's state-owned Sinopharm, was approved after it showed 86 percent efficacy in trials, according to regulators.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/coronavirus/2020/12/12/Coronavirus-Coronavirus-Where-to-get-the-COVID-19-Sinopharm-vaccine-in-the-UAE>

U.S. FDA authorizes Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it authorized the use of Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine on Friday, with the first inoculations expected within days, marking a turning point in the United States where the pandemic has killed more than 292,

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-vaccines-pfizer/us-fda-authorizes-pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-for-emergency-use-idUKKBN28M03H>

Coronavirus vaccine: Minority groups and the very ill given priority

GPs who run short of vaccine for patients aged over 80 have been told to prioritise elderly people from ethnic minorities and those who have severe underlying health conditions. The first vaccines are set to be given by GPs on Tuesday from about 280 sites. They have been told to start contacting patients, who can expect to hear about appointments today and tomorrow. However, there is concern that dozens of practices have opted out of the programme, citing a lack of resources and fears that other patient care might be affected by the focus on Covid-19. In NHS guidance, those not taking part have been told to co-operate with local health chiefs to ensure their patients still have access to the vaccine.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-vaccine-minority-groups-and-the-very-ill-given-priority-c2nxj8862>

GSK/Sanofi Covid vaccine delayed until end of next year

A coronavirus vaccine being developed by GlaxoSmithKline and its French partner, Sanofi, will be delayed until the end of next year after trials revealed it failed to produce a strong immune response in older people. The drug companies hoped to have regulatory approval for the candidate vaccine in the first half of 2021, but interim results from a phase 1/2 trial showed an "insufficient" response in the over-50s, the age group most vulnerable to severe Covid-19. The results released on Friday are a stark reminder that despite a flurry of positive results from vaccines produced by Pfizer/BioNTech, NIH/Moderna and Oxford University/AstraZeneca, developing effective vaccines at speed is no simple task.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/11/gsk-sanofi-covid-vaccine-delayed-end-next-year>

J&J cuts size of Covid-19 vaccine study due to prevalence of disease

Johnson & Johnson is cutting the size of its pivotal U.S. Covid-19 vaccine trial — the only major study testing a single dose of a Covid vaccine — from 60,000 volunteers to 40,000 volunteers. The change is being made possible by the fact that Covid-19 is so pervasive across the country, according to a person familiar with the matter. The more virus there is in the U.S., the more likely it is that participants will be exposed to it, meaning researchers will be able to reach conclusions based on a smaller trial. Changing the size of the study does not indicate that results will come on a different timetable, or anything about whether they will be positive or negative

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/09/johnson-johnson-cuts-size-of-covid-19-vaccine-study-due-to-prevalence-of-disease-in-u-s/>

Engineers develop mini Covid vaccine factory that can create 30,000 doses a day

British engineers have invented a miniature Covid-19 vaccine factory that can make 30,000 doses a day. Experts at King's College London designed it to manufacture vaccines such as the

Pfizer/BioNTech inoculation. It could end the logistical problems of delivering the frozen vaccine from factories on the continent to UK communities. Plans are on track to submit the game-changing "factory in a box" technology for regulatory approval by as early as March. It is estimated that 60 of the devices could make enough doses to immunise the nation in a matter of weeks. The innovative machine was designed by Professor Makatsoris Harris.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/engineers-develop-mini-covid-vaccine-23158236>

Oxford Covid vaccine could leave people unprotected despite being vaccinated, expert warns

With coronavirus cases around the world now at over 68 million, scientists have been working around the clock to develop a vaccine. A vaccine developed at the University of Oxford was initially tipped as the front runner in the fight against Covid-19. Yesterday, the results of the Oxford vaccine's Phase III trial were announced, showing an overall vaccine efficacy of 70.4%. However, the efficacy was found to increase to 90% when participants were given a low first dose, followed by a larger second dose of the vaccine. While this suggests that giving a low first dose could be the best way to roll out the vaccine, one expert has warned that this tactic runs the risk of leaving people unprotected between doses.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/science/oxford-covid-vaccine-could-leave-23138911>

Boston Biogen conference of 175 people led to 300,000 infections across the world

A strategy meeting of 175 senior managers at Biogen Inc was held at the Boston Marriott Long Wharf Hotel in late February. In a recent study of 772 patients, researchers found one distinct strain in more than one-third of patients linked back to the conference. The strain was found in at least 29 states, including Florida, North Carolina and Indiana, and countries such as Australia, Slovakia, Sweden. At least 99 people at the meeting tested positive for COVID-19 and researchers now believe the conference is responsible for up to 330,000 global infections.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9043429/Boston-Biogen-conference-175-people-led-300-000-infections-world.html>

Five key genes linked to severe COVID-19 found, suggesting drug targets

Five key genes are linked with the most severe form of COVID-19, scientists said on Friday, in research that also pointed to several existing drugs that could be repurposed to treat people who risk getting critically ill with the pandemic disease. Researchers who studied the DNA of 2,700 COVID-19 patients in 208 intensive care units across Britain found that five genes involving in two molecular processes - antiviral immunity and lung inflammation - were central to many severe cases. "Our results immediately highlight which drugs should be at the top of the list for clinical testing," said Kenneth Baillie, an academic consultant in critical care medicine at Edinburgh University who co-led the research.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-genetics/update-1-five-key-genes-linked-to-severe-covid-19-found-suggesting-drug-targets-idUKL1N2IR1QR>

Nigeria warned of possible new COVID-19 wave, authorities eye vaccine in early 2021

Nigeria may be on the verge of a second wave of COVID-19 infections, the health minister warned on Thursday, as another official said the country expects to roll out a vaccine by April next year. Osagie Ehanire, speaking at a news conference in the capital Abuja, said 1,843 cases were recorded last week compared with 1,235 two weeks before that. "We may just be on the verge of a second wave of this pandemic," he said. His comments came a day after South Africa said it had officially entered a second wave.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-nigeria/nigeria-warned-of-possible-new-covid-19-wave-authorities-eye-vaccine-in-early-2021-idUKKBN28K2US>

Covid: Trials to test combination of Oxford and Sputnik vaccines

UK and Russian scientists are teaming up to trial a combination of the Oxford-AstraZeneca and Sputnik V vaccines to see if protection against Covid-19 can be improved. Mixing two similar vaccines could lead to a better immune response in people. The trials, to be held in Russia, will involve over-18s, although it's not clear how many people will be involved. Oxford recently published results showing their jab was safe and effective in trials on people. The researchers are still collecting data on the effectiveness of the vaccine in older age groups while waiting for approval from the UK regulator, the MHRA. AstraZeneca said it was exploring combinations of different adenovirus vaccines to find out whether mixing them leads to a better immune response and, therefore, greater protection.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55273907>

Sanofi suffers major setback in development of a Covid-19 vaccine

One of the world's leading vaccine manufacturers has suffered a major setback in its work to produce a Covid-19 vaccine. The problem will push the timeline for deployment of Sanofi Pasteur's vaccine — if it is approved — from the first half of 2021 into the second half of the year, the company said Friday. The news is not just disappointing for Sanofi and its development partner, GlaxoSmithKline, which is providing an adjuvant used in the vaccine. The companies have contracts with multiple countries, including the United States and Britain, as well as the European Union. Sanofi had hoped to start a Phase 3 trial of the vaccine this month and had projected it could produce 100 million doses of vaccine in 2020, and 1 billion doses in 2021.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/11/sanofi-suffers-major-setback-in-development-of-a-covid-19-vaccine/>

World Trade council fails to act on proposal to waive IP rights to Covid-19 drugs and vaccines

In a widely anticipated meeting, a World Trade Organization council failed to act on a controversial proposal to temporarily waive some provisions in a trade agreement governing intellectual property rights, which would make Covid-19 medical products more easily accessible, especially by low-income countries. During the closed-door session, which took place on Thursday, several wealthy nations reiterated arguments that patent rights do not create barriers to wider access and affordability. The U.S., for instance, suggested a more targeted approach in which a license could be granted to a generic manufacturer to make a specific product for distribution in certain countries.

<https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2020/12/11/wto-patents-covax-who-south-africa-india/>

US offers to help increase production of Pfizer/BioNTech Covid vaccine

The US government is offering to help increase production of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine, as it tries to secure another 100m doses of the jab that regulators are reviewing. Operation Warp Speed, the government programme to accelerate the development of a vaccine, is trying to double its pre-order of doses, after soaring demand has led to a shortage, according to people familiar with the matter. Operation Warp Speed is trying to help Pfizer obtain more raw materials and equipment under the Defense Production Act to ensure it can produce the extra doses by June 2021, according to one of the people.

<https://www.ft.com/content/3c21ae81-3504-4d11-8784-c1b67458a0ca>

Australia Scraps Covid-19 Vaccine That Produced H.I.V. False Positives

Australia on Friday canceled a roughly \$750 million plan for a large order of a locally developed coronavirus vaccine after the inoculation produced false positive test results for H.I.V. in some volunteers participating in a trial study. Of the dozens of coronavirus vaccines being tested worldwide, the Australian one was the first to be abandoned. While its developers said the experimental vaccine had appeared to be safe and effective, the false positives risked undermining trust in the effort to vaccinate the public. Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Friday said that his government would compensate for the loss of 51 million doses it had planned to buy from the

Australian consortium in part by increasing orders of vaccines made by AstraZeneca and Novavax. The government has said it plans to begin inoculating citizens by March

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/11/world/australia/uq-coronavirus-vaccine-false-positive.html>

Peru suspends Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine trial after 'adverse event'

Peru suspended trials for China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine due to a "serious adverse event" that occurred with one of the volunteers for the study, the Peruvian government said in a statement on Saturday. The health ministry said the event is "under investigation to determine if it is related to the vaccine or if there is another explanation."

<https://canoe.com/news/world/peru-suspends-sinopharm-covid-19-vaccine-trial-after-adverse-event>

Covid vaccine: GlaxoSmithKline's jab found to be ineffective in huge blow for British firm

An experimental Covid-19 vaccine developed by Britain's GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi has been found to show an 'insufficient immune response' in clinical trial results, in a blow to efforts to fight the pandemic. The two companies said they planned to launch another study next year, hoping to come up with a more effective vaccine by the end of 2021. The results showed an immune response comparable to patients who recovered from COVID-19 in adults aged 18 to 49 years, but a low immune response in older adults. Thomas Triomphe, Executive Vice President and Head of Sanofi Pasteur, said: "We care greatly about public health which is why we are disappointed by the delay announced today, but all our decisions are and will always be driven by science and data.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/science/covid-vaccine-glaxosmithklines-jab-found-23150314>

No cases of allergic reactions recorded during Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine trial - company executive

There were no cases of severe allergic reactions to Pfizer Inc and partner BioNTech SE's COVID-19 vaccine candidate during clinical trials, a Pfizer executive said at a regulatory conference on Friday. A late-stage trial testing the potential vaccine excluded participants who had a prior history of severe allergic reactions to any vaccine or to the constituents of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, said Dr. William Gruber, Pfizer's senior vice president of vaccine clinical research and development. "We've not had any anaphylactic episodes related to the vaccine," Gruber said during a panel meeting of independent advisers to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccines-cdc/no-cases-of-allergic-reactions-recorded-during-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-trial-company-executive-idUSKBN28L2Q8>

F.D.A. Clears Pfizer Vaccine, and Millions of Doses Will Be Shipped Right Away

The Food and Drug Administration authorized Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use on Friday, clearing the way for millions of highly vulnerable people to begin receiving the vaccine within days. The authorization is a historic turning point in a pandemic that has taken more than 290,000 lives in the United States. With the decision, the United States becomes the sixth country — in addition to Britain, Bahrain, Canada, Saudi Arabia and Mexico — to clear the vaccine. Other authorizations, including by the European Union, are expected within weeks.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/11/health/pfizer-vaccine-authorized.html>

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<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/health/medical/covid-vaccine-glaxosmithkline-s-jab-found-to-be-ineffective-in-huge-blow-for-british-firm/ar-BB1bQ5BK?ocid=msedgdhp>

AstraZeneca to trial combination with Russian COVID-19 vaccine

Pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca's Russian branch has said it would use part of Russia's homemade Sputnik V vaccine in further clinical trials, a major sign of recognition for a jab that has been viewed with scepticism by the West. Russia was one of the first countries to announce the development of a coronavirus vaccine, which it named Sputnik V after the Soviet-era satellite. While the jab is yet to complete its third and final phase of testing involving some 40,000 volunteers, its developers have said interim trial results showed 95 percent efficacy. "Today we announce a clinical trial programme to assess the safety and immunogenicity of a combination of AZD1222, developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University, and Sputnik V, developed by Russian Gamaleya Research institute," AstraZeneca said in a statement published on its website in English and Russian on Friday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/astrazeneca-to-trial-combination-with-russian-covid-19-vaccine>

Growing concerns over COVID-19 vaccine distribution

There are growing concerns that African countries won't receive enough doses and that there is not enough capacity for a roll-out. This is despite the WHO's COVAX initiative to ensure access of lower income countries like Malawi to COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://www.dw.com/en/growing-concerns-over-covid-19-vaccine-distribution/av-55899539>

Oxford COVID-vaccine paper highlights lingering unknowns about results

The first formally published results from a large clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine — which scientists hope could be among the cheapest and easiest to distribute around the world — suggest that the vaccine is safe and effective. But the data also highlight a number of lingering unknowns, including questions about the most effective dosing regimen and how well it works in older adults. The vaccine, developed by the University of Oxford, UK, and the pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca in Cambridge, UK, has been closely watched, in part because it is likely to be simpler to distribute than the two RNA-based vaccines from companies Pfizer and Moderna, which need to be stored at low temperatures. The Oxford team is also now the first of these three leading COVID-vaccine developers to publish results from its phase III trials in a peer-reviewed journal — so far, the findings have been disseminated only through press releases.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03504-w>

Ultra-cold freezing presents next challenge in Covid vaccine race

Demand for ultra-cold storage freezers has spiked as governments and manufacturers prepare to ship Covid-19 vaccines around the world and along the so-called last mile to those most vulnerable to the disease. Unique characteristics of the two leading Covid-19 vaccines mean they both have to be transported frozen. The shot developed by US biotech Moderna, currently under regulatory review in the US and the EU, can survive for six months at minus 20C, the temperature of a standard domestic freezer. The vaccine developed by Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech, approved for use in the UK this month, must, in contrast, be transported at minus 70C.

<https://www.ft.com/content/21db2043-26e0-4b6f-a0e9-09e779a86a34>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Navajo Nation reports 203 new COVID-19 cases, 7 more deaths

Navajo Nation health officials have reported 203 new COVID-19 cases and seven more deaths as they implement a weekend-long lockdown for reservation residents. As of Saturday night, the tribe has now reported 19,420 cases and 718 known deaths since the pandemic began. Navajo Department of Health officials said more than 181,000 people on the vast reservation that includes

parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah have been tested for COVID-19 and over 10,000 have recovered.

<https://apnews.com/dc4b1bfdcb9b791008dbe51ef34cb892>

South Korea's Moon warns of toughest COVID-19 curbs after two days of record cases

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in warned on Sunday that COVID-19 restrictions may be raised to the highest level after a second day of record increases in cases as the country battles a harsh third wave of infection. Presiding over an emergency meeting at the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters for the first time since February, Moon urged vigilance and called for an all-out efforts to contain the virus. "Unless the outbreak can be contained now, it has come to the critical point of considering escalating social-distancing measures to the third level," he said, referring to the tightest curbs under the country's five-tier system.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-southkorea-idUSKBN28N01F>

New COVID-19 cases in Netherlands jump by almost 10,000 - data

The number of new coronavirus infections in the Netherlands has jumped by almost 10,000 in the past 24 hours, data released by national health authorities showed on Sunday, marking their biggest jump since the end of October. The increase continues a rising trend seen over the previous week, as the effects of a partial lockdown which has been in effect since Oct. 13 seem to have waned. The Dutch government has convened an emergency meeting for Sunday to discuss extra measures to limit the spread of the disease.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-netherlands/new-covid-19-cases-in-netherlands-jump-by-almost-10000-data-idUKKBN28N0F6>

China reports 24 new COVID-19 cases vs 13 a day earlier

China reported 24 new coronavirus cases in the mainland for Dec. 12, up from 13 cases a day earlier, the health commission said on Sunday. There were five local cases and 19 imported infections, according to a statement by the National Health Commission. The number of new asymptomatic cases, which China does not classify as confirmed cases, fell to 14 from 17 a day earlier. As of Saturday, mainland China had 86,725 confirmed coronavirus cases, the health authority said. The COVID-19 death toll remained at 4,634.

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/lifestyle/wellbeing/china-reports-24-new-covid-19-cases-vs-13-a-day-earlier/ar-BB1bSuAf>

Sweden coronavirus: Intensive care beds running low amid soaring cases

Sweden has been hit hard by coronavirus second wave, after shunning lockdown Stockholm intensive care units are at 99 per cent capacity, with seven beds left Top medic says neighbouring nations, which used lockdowns, may need to help Sweden has suffered a total of 312,000 cases of the virus and 7,000 deaths, while Finland has seen just 30,000 cases and 400 deaths

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9043261/Sweden-coronavirus-Intensive-care-beds-running-low-amid-soaring-cases.html>

South Korea reports 1,030 new coronavirus case, record daily rise

South Korea reported 1,030 new coronavirus infections on Sunday, the second daily record in a row as a country that had initial success controlling COVID-19 now battles a harsh third wave. Of the new cases, 1,002 were locally transmitted. It brings the total to 42,766 infections with 580 deaths, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said. Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun on Saturday said further tightening social distancing restriction to the nation's highest level would be inevitable if the spread continues, which would be practically a lockdown for the first time in Asia's fourth-largest economy.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-southkorea-idUKKBN28N01F>

Brazil rolls out COVID-19 vaccination plan

The Brazilian government unveiled its long-awaited national vaccination plan against COVID-19 on Saturday with an initial goal of vaccinating 51 million people, or about one-fourth of the population, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/brazil-rolls-out-covid-19-vaccination-plan/ar-BB1bSutA>

UK records 21,672 COVID-19 cases and 424 deaths

The United Kingdom recorded 21,672 cases of COVID-19 on Friday, up slightly from the day before, and 424 deaths of people who had tested positive for the disease within 28 days, official data showed. The UK had recorded 20,964 cases on Thursday and 516 deaths.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-cases/uk-records-21672-covid-19-cases-and-424-deaths-idUKKBN28L2IZ>

Montreal records largest single-day increase in COVID-19 cases

Montreal's public health director is once again urging people to respect the COVID-19 measures in effect and reduce their contacts as the disease spreads at an increasingly "alarming" rate. Montreal recorded its highest single-day increase in cases Thursday, adding 648 new infections. The new cases mostly come from school-aged children and seniors over 85 living in long-term care centres and residences, but the spread is increasing across all age groups.

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/montreal-records-largest-single-day-increase-in-covid-19-cases/ar-BB1bP8Q4>

Nicola Sturgeon: Care homes with Covid-19 outbreaks must tell families of residents

There is a "big responsibility" on care home providers to ensure good communication with relatives, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said. Speaking at the coronavirus daily update on Friday, Ms Sturgeon said she would investigate the reported case of a woman who first found out about a Covid-19 outbreak at the care home of a relative in the North East through the media. It comes after investigations were launched by the Crown Office into outbreaks at two care homes in the North East.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/nicola-sturgeon-care-homes-covid-19-outbreaks-must-tell-families-residents-3065599>

Care home Covid-19 case numbers much lower than during first wave - Sturgeon

The number of coronavirus cases in Scotland's care homes is much lower than it was during the first wave of the virus, Nicola Sturgeon has said. A recent outbreak at Inchmarlo House care home in Banchory, Aberdeenshire, led to more than 40 cases being detected. It is one of two care homes in the north east where the Crown Office is investigating several deaths.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/scotland/care-home-covid-19-case-numbers-much-lower-than-during-first-wave-sturgeon/>

Second Covid-19 wave could be worse: Professor Karim

THE second Covid-19 wave has been worse than the first for half of the countries that have experienced a resurgence of the virus. This is according to epidemiologist and infectious diseases specialist Professor Salim Abdool Karim, speaking at the 2020 Postgraduate Research and Innovation Symposium in Durban yesterday.

<https://www.iol.co.za/mercury/news/second-covid-19-wave-could-be-worse-professor-karim-a914afd3-87c9-4a59-9207-a1aadfd0244d>

Navajo nation president says second COVID-19 wave hitting the tribe is 'more dire and severe than the first'

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez said Sunday that the most recent wave of COVID-19 cases is 'much more dire and much more severe than the first wave' Confirmed cases reached 18,163 on Monday among the reservation's population of only 173,667. ICU units are reaching capacity as another three-week lockdown began. Nez warned that healthcare workers will soon be forced to

make 'difficult decisions' in treating patients due to a lack of resources. More than 600 residents have now died from COVID-19, bringing the death rate to 347 for every 100,000 people. The reservation had already been among the hardest hit in the nation, registering the highest per capita level of positive test results in May

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9032435/Navajo-nation-president-says-second-COVID-19-wave-severe-first.html>

Expert predicts number of COVID-19 cases in Jordan to exceed two million by end of second wave

Disease Diagnostic Consultant Hussam Abu Farsakh Tuesday said he expects the number of people infected with coronavirus in Jordan will exceed two million by the end of the second wave. Abu Farsakh told Roya that studies say the real number of COVID-19 cases may be ten times the number of recorded cases, which is the case across the rest of the world. In regard to the coronavirus vaccine, Abu Farsakh called on health authorities to conduct an antibody test prior to administering the vaccine to ensure antibodies are not already present in the body.

<https://en.royanews.tv/news/24005/Expert-predicts-number-of-COVID-19-cases-in-Jordan-to-exceed-two-million-by-end-of-second-wave>

More than 100 coronavirus cases recorded in care home outbreak

A spokesperson for the IMT said: "There is now 102 detected cases of Covid-19 associated with the outbreak at Inchmarlo House Care Home. "We continue to support the home with staffing to ensure the care of residents." A spokesperson for Inchmarlo House said: "As reported yesterday, we acknowledge that the matter of the Covid-19 outbreak is in the hands of the Procurator Fiscal and we will, of course, co-operate fully with the process." "The care, safety and wellbeing of our residents is always our primary focus and we will continue to work closely with the relevant authorities who are supporting us."

<https://news.stv.tv/north/more-than-100-coronavirus-cases-recorded-in-care-home-outbreak?top>

New Lockdown

Germans deprived of mulled wine in Christmas lockdown

Germany's tightened lockdown measures have eliminated one remnant of seasonal frivolity: "Gluehwein" or mulled wine, a staple of Christmas markets usually served in steaming mugs on cold days in town squares round the nation. A blanket outdoor alcohol ban, starting mid-week, was announced on Sunday among measures to curb the coronavirus second wave. Offenders will be fined.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany-wine/germans-deprived-of-mulled-wine-in-christmas-lockdown-idUKKBN28N0GD>

Germany to close shops and schools in tightened Covid lockdown

Germany will close most shops from Wednesday until 10 January and ban the sale of fireworks for New Year's Eve, after Angela Merkel and state leaders agreed to impose a national lockdown in order to regain control of rising coronavirus infection rates before a "very difficult Christmas". Non-essential shops, excluding food retailers, pharmacies and banks but including hairdressing salons and beauty parlours, will have to close their doors from 16 December. Schools and nurseries will also be required to offer only emergency care for essential workers for the last three days before the start of the scheduled Christmas holidays, with parents asked to look after their children at home "whenever possible".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/13/germany-to-close-shops-and-schools-in-tightened-covid-lockdown>

Germany to impose stricter lockdown to battle COVID-19

Germany will close most stores from Wednesday until at least Jan. 10, cutting short the busy

Christmas shopping season, as it tightens coronavirus restrictions and tries to rein in the spread of the disease, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Sunday. "I would have wished for lighter measures. But due to Christmas shopping the number of social contacts has risen considerably," Merkel told journalists following a meeting with leaders of the country's 16 federal states. "There is an urgent need to take action," she said. Only essential shops such as supermarkets and pharmacies, as well as banks, are to remain open from Dec. 16. Hair salons, beauty salons and tattoo parlours will also have to shut.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany/germany-to-impose-stricter-lockdown-to-battle-covid-19-idUKKBN28N066>