

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

24th Feb 2021

News Highlights

AstraZeneca vaccine supply targets to EU to be missed by up to 50%

A European Union official told Reuters that AstraZeneca is set to supply less than half of the amount of COVID-19 vaccine to the bloc that it was contracted to do, during the the second quarter of 2021. [The manufacturer has faced criticism over a shortfall in vaccine doses supplied to the EU thus far](#), having already markedly slashed the number of doses it expected to provide in the first quarter. AstraZeneca said it is ramping up productivity in order to deliver on its pledge of delivering 180 million doses.

Pfizer, J&J and Moderna pledge to ramp up vaccine supplies to the U.S.

In testimony to the U.S. Congress, executives from Moderna and Pfizer have said they will scale up distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to the U.S. during the coming weeks. [Pfizer will increase its delivery capacity to more than thirteen million weekly by mid-March, compared to four to five million at present](#). Moderna is planning to scale up its delivery capacity to forty million a month by April. Johnson & Johnson also said it plans to deliver 100 million single-shot vaccine doses during the first half of 2021.

Vaccine passports now under consideration in the UK

In order to help businesses safely reopen and ignite foreign travel, so-called 'vaccine passports' are being considered in the UK, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson starts planning the UK's exit strategy out of lockdown. [Johnson has promised the UK government will review the idea, but acknowledged there are 'deep and complex issues that need to be explored](#), ethical issues about what the role is for government in mandating everyone to do something, or indeed, banning them from doing it.'

Herd immunity for the UK and U.S. is achievable during 2021, according to a new report

The U.S. and UK could reach herd immunity in 2021 according to a new Statista report. However, several major EU nations are unlikely to do so. [The pace of vaccinations in the UK and U.S. gives hope that these countries could reach herd immunity by the end of 2021](#), but the EU would need to almost triple the current daily vaccine rate to be able to match this target.

Lockdown Exit

World Bank threatens to halt funding for Lebanon's COVID jobs

The World Bank has threatened to suspend financing for coronavirus vaccines in Lebanon over what it said were violations by legislators who were vaccinated inside Parliament. The comments by the international lender on Tuesday came as frustration grew among some residents and doctors that the national plan that requires people to get vaccinated at predetermined centres could be riddled with violations and favouritism.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/23/world-bank-threatens-to-suspend-lebanons-vaccination-programme>

Even the World's Most-Vaccinated Economy Faces a Tough Reopening

But even as that brings hope for businesses shuttered for months, and for economies across the

globe that have spent trillions of dollars to support people during lockdowns, the Israel experience shows that an emerging new normal that may not look much like the pre-pandemic world for some time to come.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-23/even-the-world-s-most-vaccinated-economy-faces-a-tough-reopening>

'Closer to normality': New York City arenas open doors to elated fans

On Tuesday, standing outside Madison Square Garden in the chilly February air, Cumello was grateful her long-awaited game had finally arrived. "I'm really excited that we finally got to go because I was really upset when it got canceled," said Cumello, who plays point guard in her youth league in Fairfield, Connecticut. "I'm excited that we just get to be here and get to watch." Cumello and her mother were among the 2,000 fans ready to watch the New York Knicks take on the Warriors, as New York City welcomed ticketholders at live sports events for the first time since the pandemic brought sports to a halt nearly a year ago.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-new-york-arenas/closer-to-normality-new-york-city-arenas-open-doors-to-elated-fans-idUSKBN2A00A7>

COVID-19: Is work from home here to stay? What UK businesses are planning post-lockdown

Businesses have started preparing plans to get their employees back to the office, although some suggest office culture may look different post-pandemic. The government's work-from-home (WFH) guidance has been in place now for almost a year, and under Boris Johnson's roadmap out of lockdown it could remain until summer.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-is-work-from-home-here-to-stay-what-uk-businesses-are-planning-post-lockdown-12226622>

South Korea coronavirus: PM aims for 'herd immunity by autumn'

Health officials will start inoculating medical staff in hospitals and care homes later this week. The aim is to give some 800,000 people the jab over the next month using vaccines produced by AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech. In an interview one year since he became the country's coronavirus figurehead, Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun defended the later rollout and said it allowed South Korean officials to see how the vaccine had fared elsewhere. "You know that Koreans are the master of speed," said Mr Chung.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-56156234>

Holiday bookings surge in UK after lockdown exit plans revealed

Airlines and travel companies have reported a surge in holiday bookings after the Boris Johnson announced his roadmap out of lockdown. EasyJet, Ryanair, Tui and Thomas Cook reported a jump in bookings to destinations including Spain and Greece after the prime minister said international trips could potentially resume from 17 May, subject to review and assuming there was no resurgence in coronavirus and vaccination programmes went well. The increase bolstered shares in airlines and travel companies on Tuesday. EasyJet and Tui were among the top risers on the FTSE 250, up 7% and 3% respectively. On the FTSE 100, British Airways' owner International Airlines Group, was up 3.5%.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/23/holiday-bookings-uk-lockdown-exit-plans-easyjet-tui>

New Zealand coronavirus cluster grows with three new cases

New Zealand reported three new locally transmitted cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, as the cluster in its biggest city of Auckland expanded just days after authorities were forced to impose fresh curbs. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern lifted a brief COVID-19 lockdown in Auckland last week, saying the measures had helped limit the spread of the infection to a family of three. However, a student from Papatoetoe High School in Auckland was reported to have tested positive for COVID-19 earlier

in the day. Health authorities later said that two siblings of the student were also infected with the virus, and have asked everyone linked to the school to get re-tested.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-newzealand/new-zealand-coronavirus-cluster-grows-with-three-new-cases-idUSL1N2KT0C2>

Britons rush to book holidays amid plans to end lockdown

Stir-crazy Britons rushed to book overseas vacations after Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveiled plans to slowly ease a national lockdown, boosting optimism that travel restrictions will be removed in time for the summer holiday season. TUI, the U.K.'s largest tour operator said bookings increased six-fold on Monday, the company's busiest day in more than a month. Discount airline easyJet said demand for flights more than tripled, and package holiday company Thomas Cook said traffic on its website increased 75%. International travel has nearly ground to a halt globally, so the increases are a sign of hope for the beleaguered industry.

<https://apnews.com/article/england-unemployment-coronavirus-pandemic-london-boris-johnson-587179b6af3ebf5b5c804f31e1a21140>

Executives with Pfizer, Moderna say they're ramping up vaccine supplies

Executives with Pfizer and Moderna said the companies are ramping up their supply of coronavirus vaccines, with shipments expected to double and possibly triple in the coming weeks, in congressional testimony Tuesday. In a prepared statement before a House subcommittee Tuesday, John Young, Pfizer's chief business officer, is expected to say the company plans to increase its delivery capacity of 4 million to 5 million doses a week to more than 13 million by mid-March. Richard Nettles, the vice president of medical affairs at Johnson & Johnson, said the company plans to have enough of their single-dose Covid-19 vaccine for 20 million Americans by the end of March.

<https://news.yahoo.com/executives-pfizer-moderna-theyre-ramping-044325072.html>

States rush to catch up on delayed vaccines, expand access

A giant vaccination center is opening in Houston to administer 126,000 coronavirus doses in the next three weeks. Nevada health officials are working overtime to distribute delayed shots. And Rhode Island is rescheduling appointments after a vaccine shipment failed to arrive as scheduled earlier in the week. From coast to coast, states were scrambling Tuesday to catch up on vaccinations a week after winter storms battered a large swath of the U.S. and led to clinic closures, canceled appointments and shipment backlogs nationwide. But limited supply of the two approved COVID-19 vaccines hampered the pace of vaccinations even before extreme weather delayed the delivery of about 6 million doses.

<https://apnews.com/article/white-house-coronavirus-vaccine-help-962c913e3186543f10954306a578fb3e>

Exclusive: AstraZeneca to miss second-quarter EU vaccine supply target by half - EU official

AstraZeneca Plc has told the European Union it expects to deliver less than half the COVID-19 vaccines it was contracted to supply in the second quarter, an EU official told Reuters on Tuesday. Contacted by Reuters, AstraZeneca did not deny what the official said, but a statement late in the day said the company was striving to increase productivity to deliver the promised 180 million doses. The expected shortfall, which has not previously been reported, follows a big reduction in supplies in the first quarter and could hit the EU's ability to meet its target of vaccinating 70% of adults by summer.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-astrazeneca-exc/exclusive-astrazeneca-to-miss-second-quarter-eu-vaccine-supply-target-by-half-eu-official-idUSKBN2AN1ZY>

Exit Strategies

Over 850,000 coronavirus vaccines delivered to Belgian hospitals

More than 850,000 vaccines have been delivered to Belgium as of 22 February, Belgium's Federal Agency for Medicine and Health Products (FAMHP) announced on Tuesday. Most of those vaccines were delivered by Pfizer and BioNTech. A total of 738,465 Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines were distributed <https://www.brusselstimes.com/news/belgium-all-news/health/156499/over-850000-coronavirus-vaccines-delivered-to-belgian-hospitals-pfizer-biontech-moderna-astrazeneca/>

Breton aims to reset EU's vaccine narrative

After spending months under siege from EU capitals and pharma heads over Europe's sluggish vaccine rollout, Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton is seeking to change the narrative via a high-profile jaunt to the Continent's drug factories. Monday's stop: Puurs, a small Belgian town 30 minutes from Brussels, home to a Pfizer factory that's the top vaccine producer in Europe. Breton, who took the job leading the Commission's Vaccine Task Force less than three weeks ago, has made himself the public face of the EU's fight to secure vaccines by visiting the facilities where they are made. He started on February 10 with Thermo Fisher Scientific, which has been subcontracted to make AstraZeneca's drug substance in Belgium, followed by Lonza, which is doing that work for Moderna in Switzerland, last Friday.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-commission-thierry-breton-aims-to-reset-eu-vaccine-narrative-coronavirus/>

Egypt receives second shipment of Chinese coronavirus vaccine

Egypt received 300,000 doses of a coronavirus vaccine developed by China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) in the early hours of Tuesday, the health ministry said in a statement. The new batch from China was the second shipment of the Sinopharm vaccine to Egypt. The country received its first 50,000-dose shipment in December. The North African country also got 50,000 doses of a vaccine developed by AstraZeneca earlier in February as part of its programme to vaccinate health workers

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-egypt-int/egypt-receives-second-shipment-of-chinese-coronavirus-vaccine-idUSKBN2AN0HM>

Spain among world leaders in administering second Covid-19 dose, but strategy under debate

Spain is one of the countries that has administered the highest percentage of the population with the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine: 2.4% have received the two jabs, meaning they have the full protection offered by the vaccine. According to figures from Our World in Data, which is run by Oxford University in the United Kingdom, Spain is only behind Israel – which is the clear world leader, with nearly a third of the population fully vaccinated – the United States (4.83%), Denmark (2.99%), Romania (2.74%) and Serbia (2.67%). But while this is good news – it means that the vaccines are being administered at a good speed as they are delivered – there is another side to the coin. Studies indicate that just one dose of the vaccine can provide a high level of protection from Covid-19. This means that every second dose administered could be seen as a jab that didn't go toward protecting another person.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2021-02-23/spain-among-world-leaders-in-administering-second-covid-19-dose-but-strategy-under-debate.html>

NHS app could be used to show coronavirus vaccine or test result

The NHS app could be used to display vaccination status or latest coronavirus test results, as ministers consider the ethical issues surrounding the possible introduction of vaccine passports. Boris Johnson said on Tuesday that he has tasked senior minister Michael Gove with leading a review into the “deep and complex issues” surrounding “Covid status certificates”. But it was understood that the “proper review” will also investigate whether businesses such as pubs and theatres could be prohibited from making access conditional on vaccination alone.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/uk/nhs-app-could-be-used-to-show-coronavirus-vaccine-or-test-result/>

Chile powers ahead in Covid-19 vaccination race

More than 2.7m vaccinations have been administered to Chile's population of 19m so far — more than in all of Africa. That has made the country one of the frontrunners in the global scramble for vaccines on a per capita basis, lagging behind just a handful of richer countries including Israel, the UK and the US. Although the centre-right administration of President Sebastián Piñera came under pressure after violent protests against inequality erupted in October 2019, its far-sighted and pragmatic approach in securing vaccines is poised to boost both Chile's economic recovery and the government's political standing ahead of presidential elections in November.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c4c97a9b-2b52-4f97-8c33-7f9103171319>

'No fourth lockdown': Ireland to set out cautious reopening plan

Ireland will set out a broad and gradual plan to reopen its economy on Tuesday to ensure there is no fourth lockdown, a minister said, as the more infectious UK COVID-19 variant slows suppression of its deadliest wave to date. Ireland has been back in lockdown since late December after a brief reopening led to an enormous spike in infections. Some students will return to school next week but no consideration will be given to re-opening the hospitality sector before mid-summer, Prime Minister Micheál Martin said last week

<https://www.metro.us/no-fourth-lockdown-ireland/>

Dutch expected to ease lockdown slightly despite rising infections

The Netherlands on Tuesday slightly eased COVID-19 restrictions, allowing schools and hairdressers to reopen, as the government seeks to relieve months of lockdown even as infection rates rise again. A controversial night-time curfew, which sparked a string of riots when it was introduced on Jan. 23, will remain in place until at least March 15, Prime Minister Mark Rutte said, as health experts warn of a new wave of infections due to the rise of more contagious variants of the virus. New coronavirus cases increased 19% to 29,997 in the week through Tuesday, the Dutch Institute for Public Health RIVM said, as new variants continued to take hold.

<https://www.metro.us/dutch-expected-to-ease/>

UK Covid Lockdown: Ministers Review Vaccine Passport Options to Help Firms Open

U.K. firms may be allowed to demand proof that customers do not have coronavirus under options being considered to help businesses reopen after the pandemic. Ministers are conducting a review of whether so-called vaccine passports and test certificates could enable venues to open without fueling a surge in infections once lockdown rules are lifted. In one potential scenario, someone planning to go to an event could be asked to show staff a medical record on their National Health Service smart-phone app proving they have been vaccinated or tested negative for Covid-19, a person familiar with the matter said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-23/u-k-mulls-vaccine-passport-options-to-help-businesses-reopen>

Covid-19: Everyone 'has to play their part' in lockdown easing, says Hancock

Everybody has to "play their part" to meet the dates for England's lockdown to be eased, Matt Hancock has said. But it is currently "too early" to say how long social distancing will be in place, the health secretary said. The aim is for measures like masks to become a "matter of personal responsibility", rather than law, in the future. Boris Johnson has outlined a strategy that could see restrictions lifted by 21 June - if strict conditions are met.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56164098>

More German state workers to get AstraZeneca jab as doses go begging

The German government is reworking its strategy to vaccinate the nation against COVID-19 as its campaign, which has faltered due to a lack of supply, also faces public resistance to the shot from AstraZeneca Plc. As schools and kindergartens start to reopen from a lockdown imposed in November, federal and state health ministers on Monday reworked vaccination rules so that

teachers will now get priority access to the AstraZeneca vaccine. "Children, the young, and their parents are especially affected by lockdown," they said in a document seen by Reuters. "Since it can be hard to ensure social distancing with young children, teachers must be protected in another way."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany/germanys-merkel-proposes-3-stage-plan-to-lift-virus-curbs-sources-idUSKBN2AM0YA>

COVID-19: How European nations are trying to plot route out of lockdown

The details of England's route out of lockdown were revealed this week. Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he is "very optimistic" he will be able to remove all coronavirus restrictions by 21 June under his four-stage plan. But how are European countries faring in the second year of the pandemic?

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-how-european-nations-are-trying-to-plot-route-out-of-lockdown-12226655>

Long wait over as first COVID-19 vaccines arrive in Ukraine from India

Ukraine received its first batch of 500,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine on Tuesday, allowing it to launch its delayed roll-out, starting with front-line medical workers and soldiers. One of Europe's poorest countries, Ukraine has lagged behind its neighbours in securing vaccines for its 41 million people, asking European Union member states for help while refusing to buy the Sputnik V vaccine from Russia. "We will start vaccination ASAP. We need to fight COVID together," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy tweeted.

<https://cn.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-ukraine-vaccine-idUSKBN2AN11M>

When will Covid mass vaccination drive start, asks Maharashtrians dreading another lockdown

As a worry of complete lockdown looms large over many Maharashtra cities, citizens are asking the government to start vaccination for common people. However, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has said the Central government must take a call on the mass vaccination programme. In his recent address to the State, Thackeray said the government will have to consider imposing a lockdown if the number of Covid-19 cases multiplies in the next 8-10 days.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/when-will-covid-mass-vaccination-drive-start-asks-maharashtrians-dreading-another-lockdown/article33912742.ece>

Easing lockdown will allow Covid to spread. Here's how to mitigate the risks

The government's roadmap for ending Covid restrictions in England commits it to steps that may increase the rate at which the virus spreads. Some of that is unavoidable. But even as we reopen, there is more that we could do to mitigate the risk, and get us to the summer - and normality - without a resurgence. One reason that east Asian countries have done better during the pandemic is that prior experience with Sars has given people the understanding of how respiratory diseases spread, and how to avoid them. Japan's three Cs guidance - avoidance of closed spaces, crowded places, and conversations - helped it avoid a serious epidemic without imposing a national lockdown. But the UK's messaging still prioritises hand washing, surface cleaning and 2-metre distancing, and there has been no public education campaign about ventilation on the scale of last year's hand-washing campaign.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/easing-lockdown-will-allow-covid-to-spread-heres-how-to-mitigate-the-risks/ar-BB1dVQit>

Lockdown easing: How are other countries handling it?

The UK has laid out its road map for lifting all lockdown restrictions by the end of June, but many major economies are taking a different approach. The British Government's strategy is underpinned by the rapid rollout of its vaccine programme, with 17.7 million people having received their dose as of Sunday. But other nations were more cautious in approving vaccines, and are wary of over-promising while the full risk posed by Covid-19 variants are still unknown.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/lockdown-easing-how-are-other-countries-handling-it-40123106.html>

COVID-19: PM promises 'vaccine passports' review as holiday-starved Britons flock to book a break after lockdown exit plans revealed

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has promised a review of so-called vaccine passports as eager Britons book holidays, excited by Monday's roadmap out of lockdown. Mr Johnson said: "There are deep and complex issues that we need to explore, ethical issues about what the role is for government in mandating all people to have something or indeed banning people from doing such a thing." He said senior minister Michael Gove would lead a review into the issue, although he added that some form of vaccine passport is "going to come on the international stage whatever" for foreign travel, as some other countries would insist on it.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-holiday-starved-britons-flock-to-book-a-break-after-lockdown-exit-plans-revealed-12226330>

Pharmacists say 'pooling' Covid vaccines could save thousands of doses

As millions of people across the U.S. line up for their coronavirus vaccination shots, health officials are struggling to meet the surging demand, the result of short supplies. Some pharmacists say a simple solution could get thousands more people vaccinated each week, but the FDA is standing in the way. It's called "pooling" — and it's not a new concept. Pharmacists have been doing it for years with everything from flu vaccines to some chemotherapy medications to antibiotics. It involves taking what's left over in a drug vial and combining it with what's left in another vial to create a full dose.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/pharmacists-say-pooling-covid-vaccines-could-save-thousands-doses-n1258149>

Partisan Exits

U.S. House plans vote on COVID-19 aid bill on Friday

The U.S. House of Representatives will vote on Friday on legislation to provide \$1.9 trillion in new coronavirus relief, Representative Steny Hoyer, the chamber's No. 2 Democrat, said. "The American people strongly support this bill, and we are moving swiftly to see it enacted into law," Hoyer said on Twitter on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-congress-idUSKBN2A007E>

World Bank threatens to halt funding for Lebanon's COVID jobs

The World Bank has threatened to suspend financing for coronavirus vaccines in Lebanon over what it said were violations by legislators who were vaccinated inside Parliament. The comments by the international lender on Tuesday came as frustration grew among some residents and doctors that the national plan that requires people to get vaccinated at predetermined centres could be riddled with violations and favouritism.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/23/world-bank-threatens-to-suspend-lebanons-vaccination-programme>

Covid-19: Frustration over London's maskless passengers

Mask wearing on public transport looks likely to be with us for some time. But the most recent figures from Transport for London (TfL) show there is still a significant minority that do not wear them. Commuters have also complained to me about maskless rail staff who also ignore social distance regulations. TfL said about 90% of its passengers wear masks. Around 137,000 maskless people have so far been stopped from using London's public transport and told to wear a face covering since it was made mandatory on 15 June, latest figures show.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-56124646>

Continued Lockdown

Portugal's COVID-19 nightmare eases but end of lockdown still out of sight

Health experts warned that lifting the lockdown too soon could lead to a rise in cases caused by the variant initially discovered in Britain, currently responsible for almost half of the country's cases. Another surge would be catastrophic for a fragile health system. Germany sent on Tuesday a replacement team of military doctors and nurses to take over from the first deployment sent three weeks ago to prop up Lisbon's underresourced hospitals.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-portugal/portugals-covid-19-nightmare-eases-but-end-of-lockdown-still-out-of-sight-idUSKBN2AN1PC>

Scientific Viewpoint

Drug supply chain issues aren't going away, report says

The first chapter of the ninth edition of ASHP's pharmacy forecast, which was released earlier this month, is called, "The Certainty of Uncertainty for a Global Supply Chain." Written by Erin Fox, PharmD, and Aaron Kesselheim, MD, JD, MPH, the section reflects on responses to an ASHP survey from 272 experts in health-system pharmacy. Allocation guides, a push for domestic supply chains, manufacturing quality scrutiny, and more were all topics the panelists thought would be highly relevant for the next 5 years, and the authors agree. "With a global pandemic and continuing uncertainty regarding the stability and quality of the medication supply chain, health-system pharmacists must be prepared for significant disruptions to 'normal' healthcare delivery, including disruption of medication procurement," they write.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/drug-supply-chain-issues-arent-going-away-report-says>

Sanofi and GSK begin new study of their COVID-19 vaccine

The new Phase II study will involve 720 volunteers aged 18 years and over, and will include equal numbers of adults aged 18 to 59 years and those 60 years and above. The study will test three different antigen doses with a fixed dose of adjuvant in the total study population, at sites in the US, Honduras and Panama. Sanofi/GSK said in a statement that results of the Phase II trial will inform the Phase III protocol, adding that if data from the new trial is positive, a global late-stage trial could begin in the second quarter of 2021. Depending on the outcome of the potential Phase III trial, regulatory submissions for the vaccine could be expected in the second half of 2021, with the vaccine likely to then be available in Q4 2021 if approved.

http://www.pharmatimes.com/news/sanofi_and_gsk_begin_new_study_of_their_covid-19_vaccine_1363891

Sanofi to provide manufacturing support to Johnson & Johnson for their COVID-19 vaccine to help address global supply demands

Sanofi has entered into an agreement with Janssen Pharmaceutical NV and Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., two of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, under which Sanofi will support manufacturing of Janssen's COVID-19 vaccine in order to address the COVID-19 pandemic and supply needs. Janssen has submitted an application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requesting Emergency Use Authorization for its single-dose Janssen COVID-19 vaccine candidate and an application for conditional marketing authorisation to the European Medicines Agency.

<https://www.pharmiweb.com/press-release/2021-02-23/sanofi-to-provide-manufacturing-support-to-johnson-johnson-for-their-covid-19-vaccine-to-help-address-global-supply-demands>

Sanofi and GSK start trial of upgraded coronavirus vaccine after first version disappoints

Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline on Monday announced the start of a Phase 2 study testing a new version of the experimental coronavirus vaccine the two partners have been developing. The 720-volunteer mid-stage study begins roughly two months after the partners disclosed weaker than expected results for their first vaccine candidate. Sanofi and GSK are evaluating a "refined antigen formulation" in the new trial, and could start Phase 3 testing in the second quarter if results are

positive, they said in a statement. If all goes well, Sanofi and GSK hope to bring a vaccine to market by the fourth quarter of 2021. But that outcome would still represent a six-to-nine month delay from previous estimates, a significant setback for a program that was promised up to \$2.1 billion in funding from the U.S. government. Multiple coronavirus vaccines are already available, and others could arrive later this year.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/sanofi-gsk-upgraded-coronavirus-vaccine-trial/595457/>

Covid-19 could become disease of the poor and persist in some areas of UK, expert warns

Dr Mike Tildesley, reader in mathematical modelling of infectious diseases at the University of Warwick and member of the Government advisory group SPI-M, said that he was "concerned" that the virus might persist in particular parts of the country. Asked on BBC Radio 4's Today programme whether Covid-19 could remain a "disease of the deprived", he said: "This is a real concern actually for me and I know a number of other scientists have raised this, that we may end up in a situation where we have the 'vaccine rich' and as it were, who are able to access the vaccine who have taken up the vaccine and are at much lower risk.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/covid-19-could-become-disease-23548370>

Fauci: Vaccinated people shouldn't dine indoors or go to the theater quite yet

Dr. Anthony Fauci cautions against indoor dining and theatergoing even for those fully vaccinated. The number of coronavirus cases in the US remains high. He said it'd be safer to gather outdoors again as more people get vaccinated and COVID-19 cases drop.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/fauci-vaccinated-people-should-not-indoor-dine-go-to-theaters-2021-2>

Covid-19: Vaccine success drives England's lockdown exit

Siren study - The Pfizer and BioNTech covid-19 vaccine is at least 70% effective against symptomatic and asymptomatic infection 21 days after the first dose and at least 85% seven days after the second dose, shows a UK study of healthcare workers. The Siren study previously investigated the effect of prior infection on protection against reinfection but has now been amended to investigate vaccine effectiveness. The first results following this update have looked at the eight weeks after the first Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine dose.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n528>

Italy 'misled WHO on pandemic readiness' weeks before Covid outbreak

Italy allegedly misled the World Health Organization (WHO) on its readiness to face a pandemic less than three weeks before the country's first locally transmitted coronavirus case was confirmed. Each year, countries bound by the International Health Regulations (IHR) - an international treaty to combat the global spread of disease - are required to file a self-assessment report to the WHO on the status of their preparedness for a health emergency.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/22/italy-misled-who-on-pandemic-readiness-weeks-before-covid-outbreak>

Heads of COVID vaccine firms promise dose ramp-up

Today during a House Committee on Energy & Commerce hearing, chief executives from Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, and Novavax addressed US lawmakers for the first time since July 2020 on the production of vaccines and when Americans could expect more doses. According to Richard Nettles, MD, vice president of US medical affairs for Johnson & Johnson's Janssen division, his company will be able to immediately ship vaccine doses upon a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) emergency use authorization (EUA). An FDA advisory board meets on Feb 26 to consider granting an EUA to Johnson & Johnson.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/heads-covid-vaccine-firms-promise-dose-ramp>

Adults with Down syndrome 3 times more likely to die of COVID, study finds

Adults older than 40 with Down syndrome are about three times more likely to die of COVID-19 than the rest of the population, pointing to the need to prioritize coronavirus vaccination to this group, a study published yesterday in the Lancet's EClinicalMedicine has found. A team led by Emory University researchers conducted the international online survey of the clinicians or caregivers of 1,046 patients with Down syndrome diagnosed as having COVID-19 from April to November 2020.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/adults-down-syndrome-3-times-more-likely-die-covid-study-finds>

COVAX vaccine begins shipping from India facility

The World Health Organization's (WHO's) South East Asia office said on Twitter today that the first batches rolled out from India's Serum Institute in Pune. The move comes a week after the WHO listed versions of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine made in India and South Korea for emergency use, which paves the way for the vaccine to be distributed by the COVAX program. The vaccines required two separate reviews and approvals, because they are made in two different facilities.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/covax-vaccine-begins-shipping-india-facility>

Pfizer, Moderna and J&J tout supercharged COVID-19 vaccine output, eyeing nearly 140 million new doses by March

Pfizer, which has been shipping 4 million to 5 million doses per week, plans to increase that to 13 million a week by mid-March, according to executive testimony planned for Tuesday morning's hearing before the House Energy and Commerce Committee's oversight arm. J&J, which reportedly had just 2 million doses in stock last week, should be able to ship 20 million by March 31—provided it wins FDA authorization as expected, Richard Nettles, M.D., vice president of U.S. medical affairs at Janssen's infectious diseases and vaccines unit, said in his testimony. The shot is up for an FDA panel review later this week. And Moderna, which already doubled its monthly deliveries to the feds this year and has so far supplied 45 million doses of its mRNA vaccine, aims to double monthly deliveries again by April, president Stephen Hoge's testimony states.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/pfizer-moderna-and-more-tout-upscaled-covid-19-vaccine-production-us-clearing-way>

Pfizer eyes higher prices for COVID-19 vaccine after the pandemic wanes: exec, analyst

Amid the high-stakes fight against COVID-19, a company at the forefront of the vaccine effort is laying plans to hike prices after the crisis. A top Pfizer exec said the drugmaker aims to charge more after the "pandemic pricing environment," and an influential analyst says the company could be eyeing prices 3 to 4 times higher. On an earnings call earlier this month, CFO Frank D'Amelio said that "obviously," the company is "going to get more on price" after the "pandemic pricing environment." He was speaking in response to Bank of America Merrill Lynch analyst Jason Zemansky, who asked the management team about how profit margins for the program could change over time.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-eyes-higher-covid-19-vaccine-prices-after-pandemic-exec-analyst>

UK, US to achieve herd immunity in 2021, but not EU: Report

The United States and the United Kingdom are on course to achieve herd immunity against COVID-19 by the end of 2021 given the speed of their mass vaccination programmes, but key European Union nations are not, according to a new report. The German database firm Statista studied the number of COVID-19 vaccines that were given on a daily basis, using recent data from local health authorities of each country.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/23/us-uk-vaccine-drives-to-deliver-herd-immunity-in-2021-report>

Not to be sniffed at: Agony of post-COVID-19 loss of smell

The doctor slid a miniature camera into the patient's right nostril, making her whole nose glow red with its bright miniature light. "Tickles a bit, eh?" he asked as he rummaged around her nasal

passages, the discomfort causing tears to well in her eyes and roll down her cheeks. The patient, Gabriella Forgione, wasn't complaining. The 25-year-old pharmacy worker was happy to be prodded and poked at the hospital in Nice, in southern France, to advance her increasingly pressing quest to recover her sense of smell. Along with her sense of taste, it suddenly vanished when she fell ill with COVID-19 in November, and neither has returned.

<https://apnews.com/article/post-covid-loss-of-smell-570a3750912c47aa30b94f0be639fbd1>

UK data: COVID-19 vaccines sharply cut hospitalizations

Two U.K. studies released Monday showed that COVID-19 vaccination programs are contributing to a sharp drop in hospitalizations, boosting hopes that the shots will work as well in the real world as they have in carefully controlled studies. Preliminary results from a study in Scotland found that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine reduced hospital admissions by up to 85% four weeks after the first dose, while the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot cut admissions by up to 94%. In England, preliminary data from a study of health care workers showed that the Pfizer vaccine reduced the risk of catching COVID-19 by 70% after one dose, a figure that rose to 85% after the second.

<https://apnews.com/article/uk-covid-19-vaccine-cut-hospitalizations-fd60feb6dc54e45e96089d92e891ead7>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Ukraine gets first vaccine shipment as hospitals struggle

Ukraine on Tuesday received its first shipment of coronavirus vaccine raising hopes that authorities can start beating back the virus spread in a country where cases have strained the fragile health care system. A consignment of 500,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine was flown to the capital Kyiv from India. Officials said the first tranche of vaccine will be administered to medical workers and military personnel in eastern Ukraine, where conflict with Russian-backed separatists has been ongoing since 2014, and to regions of western Ukraine where the rate of infections has been the most severe

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-gets-first-vaccine-shipment-as-hospitals-struggle-ukraine-country-coronavirus-vaccine-vaccine-hospitals-b1806284.html>

COVID-19: UK reports another 548 coronavirus deaths and 8,489 cases - as vaccine count nears 18m

Nearly 18 million people have now had their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine in the UK, while another 548 deaths have been reported. It compares to 178 deaths reported yesterday and 799 last Tuesday, and takes the total to 121,305. There have been 8,489 more confirmed COVID cases, compared to 10,641 yesterday and 10,625 last Tuesday.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-reports-another-548-coronavirus-deaths-and-8-489-cases-as-vaccine-count-nears-18m-12226768>

COVID-19: Number of deaths falling in all English regions - here's where they are still highest

The number of deaths involving coronavirus is dropping in all regions of England, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said. In its latest figures, it said that during the week ending 12 February (week six), every area of the country recorded a week-on-week fall in the number of registered COVID-19 deaths. The highest number - 974 - was recorded in southeast England - down 31% from 1,415 in the previous week. That was also the biggest decline in the number of fatalities, at 441.

<https://news.sky.com/story/number-of-weekly-deaths-in-england-and-wales-drops-by-nearly-2-000-ons-12226464>

COVID-19: Biden leads candlelit ceremony for COVID victims as US passes half a million deaths

President Joe Biden has led a minute's silence to honour America's coronavirus victims after the

country became the first to record more than half a million deaths. As 500 lit candles lined the White House steps to commemorate the dead, a military band played Amazing Grace and the president made his emotional remarks. "Today we mark a truly grim, heartbreaking milestone - 500,071 dead. That's more Americans who have died in one year in this pandemic than in World War One, World War Two and the Vietnam War combined," he said.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-biden-leads-candlelit-ceremony-for-covid-victims-as-us-passes-half-a-million-deaths-12218886>

As covid-19 death toll nears 500,000, Biden urges Americans to 'fight this together'

Joe Biden began his presidency by marking a devastating milestone in the coronavirus pandemic. One month later, he presided over a somber memorial once again, leading the nation in the mourning of 500,000 American covid-19 deaths. On Monday evening, as the official toll neared half a million, Biden held a moment of silence and a candle-lighting ceremony at the White House, accompanied by Vice President Harris. "That's more lives lost to this virus than any other nation on Earth," Biden said. "But as we acknowledge the scale of this mass death in America, we remember each person and the life they lived."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/02/22/coronavirus-covid-live-updates-us/>

France considers fresh measures to stem Covid-19 spread in Dunkirk

French Health Minister Olivier Véran will head to Dunkirk in northern France on Wednesday as the government eyes new measures to limit the spread of Covid-19 in the region, the prime minister's office said on Tuesday. Prime Minister Jean Castex had discussed the local health situation earlier on Tuesday with the mayor of Dunkirk, a coastal city of 92,000 near the Belgian border. "They agreed that in view of the sharp deterioration in health indicators in recent hours, additional measures to limit the epidemic must be taken," the statement said.

<https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20210223-france-considers-fresh-measures-to-stem-covid-19-spread-in-dunkirk>

New Lockdown

Is Lockdown Necessary in Mumbai? Read What Experts Say

Though Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray warned that lockdown would have to be reimposed if daily coronavirus cases continue to rise, experts believe that there is no need to take such stringent measure now. Notably, Maharashtra has been witnessing a rise in COVID-19 cases for the past few days. Earlier on Sunday, it had recorded nearly 7,000 new Covid-19 cases, the biggest jump in the last 3 months.

<https://www.india.com/news/is-lockdown-necessary-in-mumbai-read-what-experts-say-4443802/>

Kuwait to close land, sea border in latest COVID restrictions

Kuwait says it will close its land and sea border crossings from Wednesday until further notice as it imposes curbs to control coronavirus infections in the Gulf nation. Citizens and domestic workers accompanying them are, however, allowed to return through land and sea ports, as are citizens' first-degree relatives, the cabinet said in its meeting on Monday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/23/kuwait-to-close-land-sea-border-in-latest-virus-restrictions>