

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

2nd Mar 2021

Five Minute Briefing

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TRIPS - The WTO ponder a temporary suspension for the duration of the pandemic to boost manufacturing in the developing world

- The WTO are discussing an on-going proposal to suspend the WTO's agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights for the duration of the pandemic
- The goal behind the proposal is to facilitate scientific technology transfer to developing countries to ramp up the global production of vaccines and other equipment
- Drugmakers might need to do some restructuring and get state funding, but by removing IP temporarily a new manufacturing set-up would be in place
- Considering the potential economic threat posed by COVID19 mutations, the world needs more vaccine and medicine manufacturers and not to rely on just a few which limit the speed of response to pandemic emergencies

Patently unfair: Can waivers help solve COVID vaccine inequality?

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The World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council gathered virtually on Monday for the first of two days of talks amid increasing calls from civil society, states and nongovernmental actors to temporarily waive patents for COVID-19 vaccines and other coronavirus-related medical products. Endorsing a waiver on Friday, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "If not now, when?"

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/1/can-a-waiver-on-ip-rights-solve-vaccine>

Experts discuss the trade-offs needed to make digital passports to help reopen the economy work

Expert Views - What role for vaccine passports in coronavirus fight?

As the rollout of vaccines against COVID-19 gathers pace, countries from Sweden to Israel are exploring how certificates and passports could help reopen economies by identifying those protected against the virus. But a push for identity proofs and digital certificates risks excluding poorer and vulnerable groups from vaccine passports and the benefits that come with them, rights experts warn. The Thomson Reuters Foundation spoke to business executives, researchers and advocates about what role vaccine passports should play in the global fight against the pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-global-tech/expert-views-what-role-for-vaccine-passports-in-coronavirus-fight-idUSL5N2KZ5GR>

Israeli Supreme Court bans unlimited COVID-19 mobile phone tracking

Israel's Supreme Court on Monday banned the government from sweeping use of mobile phone tracking of coronavirus carriers, calling the measure a grave infraction of civil liberties. Used on and off since March 2020 in efforts to curb the pandemic, the Shin Bet counter-terrorism agency's surveillance technology matched carriers' locations against other mobile phones nearby to determine with whom they came into contact. From the outset, civil rights groups had mounted

court challenges over privacy concerns while lawmakers cast doubt about the efficacy of the contact-tracing tool

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-israel-surveillance-i/israeli-supreme-court-bans-unlimited-covid-19-mobile-phone-tracking-idUSKCN2AT25Y>

Africa, Latin America see initial COVAX vaccine deliveries and rollout

Colombia becomes first in Americas to get vaccines through COVAX

The Pan American Health Organization says United Nations-backed programme will boost COVID vaccine access in hard-hit Latin America. Colombia has become the first country in the Americas to receive a shipment of coronavirus vaccines through the United Nations-backed COVAX programme, receiving 117,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on Monday. The shipment's arrival in the capital, Bogota, came a few days after the anniversary of the first COVID-19 case in Latin America.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/1/colombia-becomes-first-americas-vaccines-covax>

Covax: Ivory Coast and Ghana begin mass Covid vaccination rollouts

African countries are starting mass Covid inoculation drives using vaccines supplied through a scheme set up to share doses fairly with poorer nations. Ivory Coast is one of the first to benefit from the UN-backed Covax distribution initiative, with injections beginning on Monday. Ghana is also launching its vaccination drive this week. Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo on Monday became the first to receive a coronavirus vaccine through the scheme. Mr Akufo-Addo urged people to get inoculated and not to believe conspiracy theories casting doubt on the programme, which will see some 600,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine rolled out nationwide on Tuesday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-56239136>

Ivory Coast to launch first vaccination drive with COVAX shots

People began to queue early as the Ivory Coast prepared to become the first country to launch a COVID-19 inoculation drive on Monday with doses from the COVAX vaccine sharing facility. Ivory Coast received 504,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine on Friday, and plans to roll it out to medical workers, security forces members and teachers before vaccinating people over 50, those with chronic diseases and travellers.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/ivory-coast-to-launch-first-vaccination-drive-with-covax-shots/>

COVID-19 cases rebound globally as COVAX immunizations begin in Africa

At a World Health Organization (WHO) media briefing today, Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, PhD, said even as immunization gains traction, vaccines alone won't keep people safe. Globally, cases have increased for the first time in 7 weeks, with infection on the rise in four of the WHO's six regions. They include the Americas, Europe, South East Asia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. "This is disappointing, but not surprising," he said, adding that officials are working to better understand the increased transmission, which Tedros said may partly reflect relaxing of public health measures, circulation of variant viruses, and people letting down their guard. "Vaccines will help to save lives, but if countries rely solely on vaccines, they're making a mistake," he said.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/03/covid-19-cases-rebound-globally-covax-immunizations-begin-africa>

Nigeria begins registering residents for COVID-19 vaccinations

Nigeria launched an online registration portal for COVID-19 vaccinations, its primary healthcare agency said on Monday, the day before the first doses are expected to arrive for its 200 million people. Nigeria is expecting 3.92 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to land on Tuesday. It will be the third West African country to take delivery under the COVAX scheme, after Ghana and Ivory Coast.

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/lifestyle/wellbeing/nigeria-begins-registering-residents-for-covid-19-vaccinations/ar-BB1e>

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Lockdown ramps up once more

Norway's capital tightens lockdown to fight faster virus spread

Norway's capital Oslo will tighten lockdown measures to combat a sharp rise in coronavirus infections linked to a more contagious variant, the city's governing mayor said on Sunday. The variant, which was first identified in Britain, started spreading in Oslo in January and now accounts for 50-70% of infections, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI) said on Saturday. On Friday, Oslo registered a daily record of 245 new coronavirus infections. "We have to tighten the measures," Raymond Johansen, the governing mayor of Oslo, told a news conference.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-norway-idUSKCN2AS0LE>

Czechs tighten COVID lockdown, seek more tests for factory workers

The Czech Republic, battling the world's worst surge in COVID-19 infections, deployed more police officers and soldiers on Monday to help enforce new lockdown measures that seek to confine people mostly to their home districts. Prime Minister Andrej Babis has said the healthcare system faces collapse without the new restrictions due to a record number of patients in a serious condition. The country of 10.7 million has recorded the highest per capita infection rate in the world over the last week, according to the Our World in Data website, 11 times higher than neighbouring Germany.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-czech/czechs-tighten-covid-lockdown-see-more-tests-for-factory-workers-idUSKBN2AT36R>

Finland declares state of emergency as COVID-19 cases rise

The Finnish government declared a state of emergency on Monday due to rising COVID-19 infections, a step that would allow the Nordic country to shutter restaurants and to impose other measures to blunt the pandemic. The decision comes as new variants contribute to a sharp rise in infections in the country, which has already closed its borders. The state of emergency would also allow the government to further shut schools and limit movement between regions. "The government sees it necessary that we all have fewer contacts," Prime Minister Sanna Marin told a news conference. "Everyone now has the opportunity to impact how the spring and summer will turn out."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-finland-restrictio-idUSKCN2AT27P>

COVID-19: New West Bank lockdown as Palestinians face surge of coronavirus cases

A new lockdown has been imposed across the West Bank as Palestinians face a fresh surge of coronavirus cases and a continued wait for a proper vaccine rollout. The Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh announced the 12-day shutdown late on Saturday and blamed it on the struggle to get vaccines delivered to the territory. In the last 24 hours there have been 910 new cases and five deaths in the West Bank.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-new-west-bank-lockdown-as-palestinians-faces-surge-of-coronavirus-cases-12231513>

Slovakia to tighten anti-COVID measures, hard lockdown looms

Slovak government will tighten anti-epidemic measures from March 3, including stricter limits on people's movement, as the country struggles with the resurgent coronavirus. The government of Prime Minister Igor Matovic released details of the new measures after several days of debates with experts as the country has ranked among the world's worst-hit by the recent wave of COVID-19 cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-slovakia-idUSKCN2AS0QS>

WHO warns "If countries rely solely on vaccines, they are making a mistake. Basic public health measures remain the foundation of the response."

Global COVID-19 infections up for first time in seven weeks, WHO says

"We need to have a stern warning for all of us: that this virus will rebound if we let it," Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO technical lead for COVID-19, told a briefing. "And we cannot let it." WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the rise in cases was "disappointing but not surprising" and urged countries not to relax measures to fight the disease. It was too early for countries to rely solely on vaccination programmes and abandon other measures, he said: "If countries rely solely on vaccines, they are making a mistake. Basic public health measures remain the foundation of the response."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-who-rise/global-covid-19-infections-up-for-first-time-in-seven-weeks-who-says-idUSKBN2AT34A?il=0>

COVID-19: Sunshine brings crowds out - but SAGE expert warns we could blow chances of ending lockdown

Britons are being warned making the most of warmer weather and sunshine could jeopardise our chances of sticking to the prime minister's reopening road map. Yesterday's warmer temperatures and bright sunshine brought out crowds across the country, with pictures showing packed parks and waterfronts. But professor Calum Semple, an expert in "outbreak" medicine, warned the public to continue sticking to the lockdown rules or we could "blow it". Asked whether crowds could cause case numbers to rise again, professor Semple, who sits on the government's SAGE advisory board, admitted to Sky News: "This is a big worry to us."

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-sunshine-brings-crowds-out-but-sage-expert-warns-we-could-blow-chances-of-ending-lockdown-12231524>

Tackling vaccine hesitancy head-on

No reason to think vaccines ineffective against COVID variants - UK's Johnson

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday there was no reason to think that COVID-19 vaccines were ineffective against new variants of the coronavirus. "We don't have any reason at the present time to think that our vaccines are ineffective against these new variants of all types," Johnson told broadcasters. Health authorities said on Sunday that up to six cases had been detected in Britain of the "P.1" variant identified in the Brazilian city of Manaus, against which current vaccines appeared to be less effective.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-variants/no-reason-to-think-vaccines-ineffective-against-covid-variants-uks-johnson-idUSKCN2AT2DJ?il=0>

Fauci urges Americans to accept any of three COVID vaccines

Dr Anthony Fauci, the US's top infectious disease official, is encouraging Americans to accept any of the three available COVID-19 vaccines, including the newly approved Johnson & Johnson shot. The US government authorised Johnson & Johnson's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine on Saturday, making it the third to be available in the country following ones from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. However, Fauci and other experts say direct comparison is difficult because the trials had different goals and J&J's was conducted while more contagious new variants of the virus were circulating. Fauci said studies are under way to determine their effectiveness and safety for children under 18, who are less likely to get sick from the virus. Elementary-school students could get doses towards the end of the year or the beginning of next year, while high-school students could get it in the fall, Fauci said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/1/fauci-urges-americans-to-accept-any-of-three-covid-19-vaccines>

Over 60% of Russians do not want Sputnik V vaccine: Reuters poll

Nearly two thirds of Russians are not willing to receive Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, and about the same number believe the new coronavirus was created artificially as a biological weapon, an independent pollster said on Monday. The Levada Center said a poll it conducted last month showed

that 62% of people did not want to get Russia's domestically produced vaccine, and that the highest level of reluctance was identified among 18 to 24-year-olds. Most respondents cited side effects — which can include fever and fatigue — as the main reason for not wanting to get vaccinated.

<https://www.pharmalive.com/over-60-of-russians-do-not-want-sputnik-v-vaccine-reuters-poll/>

Ukraine throws away unused COVID-19 shots as doctors skip their own vaccinations

Ukrainian medical facilities have thrown away some unused COVID-19 vaccines after doctors failed to show up for their own appointments to be vaccinated, ruling party lawmakers said on Monday. Ukraine has just begun vaccinating its 41 million people against COVID-19 after receiving a first batch of 500,000 doses of Indian-made AstraZeneca shots last week, but faces a battle against vaccine skepticism that predates the pandemic. The government has prioritized giving shots to frontline medical workers but cited statistics showing that 47% of Ukrainians do not want the vaccine.

<http://www.msn.com/en-xl/europe/europe-top-stories/ukraine-throws-away-unused-covid-19-shots-as-doctors-skip-their-own-vaccinations/ar-BB1e7hOc>

J&J's next COVID-19 vaccine challenge? Hurdling the '66%' perception to win over a vaccine-hesitant public

With an FDA green light for emergency use, Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 shot now faces a communications hurdle. How will the company handle the comparisons with its vaccine rivals? Already, there's wide and spreading chatter on social media and real-world word-of-mouth discussions about the J&J shot's 66% overall effectiveness rate. The company's response has been communication—and lots of it, with some help from its friend in public health. J&J CEO Alex Gorsky, government officials—and even Pfizer board member and ex-FDA chief Scott Gottlieb—took to multiple media outlets on Sunday and Monday to lay out the detailed facts and nuances in the data.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/marketing/j-j-s-covid-vaccine-gets-fda-ok-but-can-pharma-hurdle-66-perception>