

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 26th Oct 2021

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**China Locks Down Thousands in North as Delta Outbreak Spreads** - [Chinese authorities have shut down Ejina, a county in China's Inner Mongolia region, as they battle the Covid-19 outbreak](#)

**Dutch government looking at reintroducing COVID-19 measures** - [The Dutch government is seeking advice from a panel of experts on whether it needs to reintroduce COVID-19 restrictions amid sharply rising infection rates, the health minister said Monday.](#)

**Russia's COVID-19 cases hit record as some regions impose curbs** - [worsening disease rates and slow take-up of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine by its own population, authorities are introducing stricter measures this week to try to slow the spread of the pandemic.](#)

**Covid Poses Bigger Risk of Brain Conditions Than Vaccines, Study Says** - [While the vaccines were found to result in an increase of neurological complications, like Bell's palsy and Guillain-Barré syndrome, the study found that contracting Covid presented an even bigger risk to the health of your brain](#)

**EU regulator starts real-time review of Merck's COVID-19 pill** - [Merck & Co said on Monday the European Union's drug regulator has initiated a real-time review of its experimental COVID-19 antiviral drug for adults.](#)

**S.Africa's Aspen aiming for 1.3 bln dose/year COVID-19 vaccine capacity by 2024** - [South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare is aiming to ramp up its COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity to 1.3 billion doses a year by February 2024.](#)

**Red Cross urges action for Papua New Guinea as COVID-19 overwhelms health system** - [help is needed to support Papua New Guinea as a surge in COVID-19 cases overwhelms the Pacific country's health system, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said](#)

**UK falling behind most G7 countries in sharing Covid vaccines, figures show** - [The UK is lagging behind other G7 countries in sharing surplus Covid vaccines with poorer countries, according to newly published figures](#)

**China to start vaccinating children to age 3 as cases spread** - [Children as young as 3 will start receiving COVID-19 vaccines in China, where 76% of the population has been fully vaccinated and authorities are maintaining a zero-tolerance policy toward outbreaks.](#)

**Vaccine Cash Incentives Don't Work, US Study Shows** - [Financial incentives and other nudges by local governments and employers have failed to increase Covid-19 vaccinations among Americans who are hesitant about getting the shot, a new study shows.](#)

### **Lockdown Exit**

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#### **Vaccine Cash Incentives Don't Work, US Study Shows**

Financial incentives and other nudges by local governments and employers have failed to increase Covid-19 vaccinations among Americans who are hesitant about getting the shot, a new study shows. What's more, financial incentives and "negative messages" actually decreased vaccination

rates among some groups, underscoring fears about a public backlash, according to the paper circulated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The pace of Covid-19 vaccinations climbed rapidly earlier this year as availability increased, with millions of adults getting the jab each day. However, that pace has slowed sharply. In the last week in the U.S., an average of about 800,000 doses per day were administered.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-25/paying-americans-to-get-a-vaccine-doesn-t-work-new-study-shows>

### **S.Africa's Aspen aims to sharply increase COVID-19 vaccine capacity**

South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare is aiming to ramp up its COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity to 1.3 billion doses a year by February 2024, up from a current annual output of around 250 million doses, the company's CEO told Reuters on Monday. Aspen is doing the final stages of manufacturing for Johnson & Johnson's (JNJ.N) COVID-19 vaccine under a so-called "fill and finish" deal, but CEO Stephen Saad said in an interview that the companies were close to announcing a broader deal for Aspen to produce J&J's COVID-19 shot under licence.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/safricas-aspen-aims-sharply-increase-covid-19-vaccine-capacity-2021-10-25/>

### **Moderna says its COVID-19 vaccine protective, safe in young children**

Moderna Inc said on Monday its COVID-19 vaccine generated a strong immune response in children aged six to 11 years and that it plans to submit the data to global regulators soon. Moderna said its two-dose vaccine generated virus-neutralizing antibodies in children and safety was comparable to what was previously seen in clinical trials of adolescents and adults. It cited interim data that has yet to be peer reviewed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-says-its-covid-19-vaccine-generates-immune-response-young-children-2021-10-25/>

### **Covid vaccines: Brits double-jabbed abroad still forced to self-isolate despite having UK approved shots**

People who were double-jabbed abroad are still being forced to self-isolate after being pinged by Test and Trace, despite their vaccines being recognised by the UK Government, it can reveal. Self-isolation rules were scrapped on 16 August for people in England who have received both doses of a Covid vaccine and are identified as having come into contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. However, the exemption does not apply to people who received both vaccine doses outside of the UK.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brits-double-jabbed-abroad-still-forced-self-isolate-despite-vaccines-recognised-uk-government-1264643>

### **First weekend of enforcement of vaccine passport scheme was an 'unmitigated disaster' according to hospitality industry**

The Scottish Hospitality Group (SHG) said that staff have faced "intolerable levels of abuse" and some venues saw a drop in footfall of up to 40 per cent. It is calling on the Scottish Government to scrap the scheme, which has been legally enforceable since October 18. Proof of full vaccination is required to enter nightclubs and large events as part of the Scottish Government's efforts to limit the spread of coronavirus and increase vaccine take-up.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/covid-scotland-first-weekend-of-vaccine-passport-scheme-being-enforced-was-unmitigated-disaster-3431259>

### **Ministers to ramp up Covid vaccine rollout as hospitalisations rise**

Two million people who are eligible for a Covid booster vaccine in England will receive their invitation this week as ministers seek to intensify the rollout. The government has launched a media blitz encouraging people to get a booster jab, amid mounting concern over the speed of the

vaccination rollout as Covid hospitalisations rise. NHS England said on Sunday that more than 5 million people had had a third jab since the vaccination programme began administering them last month. About 7.5 million people have already been invited by text, email and letter, encouraging them to book through the national booking service. Two million more will receive invitations this week

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/oct/25/ministers-to-ramp-up-covid-vaccine-rollout-as-hospitalisations-rise>

### **COVID-19: Millions of booster jab invitations being sent out as government resists more calls for Plan B**

Two million eligible people will be invited to receive a COVID-19 booster jab from the NHS this week, as the government seeks to see off a sharp rise in cases without introducing Plan B measures. Calls for the reintroduction of masks, social distancing and working from home continued over the weekend, but ministers have so far shown no sign of doing so despite fears over the pressure on hospitals.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-millions-of-booster-jab-invites-being-sent-out-as-government-resists-more-calls-for-plan-b-12443974>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Hong Kong: Stuck between rock and virus hard place**

Hong Kong is stuck in indefinite isolation. Despite recording low single-digit daily infections, counting just 213 virus-related deaths since the pandemic began, and securing Chinese and Western vaccines early in large quantities, entry into Asia's top financial hub remains tightly controlled. Arrivals are generally required to spend 14 to 21 days of quarantine in a government-approved hotel, where rooms as small as 140 square feet leave occupants barely enough room to sweat through a yoga workout.

<https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/hong-kong-stuck-between-rock-virus-hard-place-2021-10-25/>

### **U.S. to invest \$70 mln to boost access to COVID-19 tests**

The Biden administration said it will invest \$70 million to boost the availability and lower costs of rapid, over-the-counter COVID-19 tests in the United States, as it looks to ease a nationwide shortage that drove up testing costs. High demand for the tests from U.S. employers amidst the Delta variant surge, especially with the U.S. government mandating large employers to have their workers inoculated and tested weekly, pushed up costs for state and local testing programs.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-invest-70-mln-boost-access-covid-19-tests-2021-10-25/>

### **UK falling behind most G7 countries in sharing Covid vaccines, figures show**

The UK is lagging behind other G7 countries in sharing surplus Covid vaccines with poorer countries, according to newly published figures. The advocacy organisation One, which is campaigning to end extreme poverty and preventable disease by 2030, described it as shaming for the UK government. The figures show that the UK is behind every member of the G7 - of which Britain is currently the chair - except for Japan. Romilly Greenhill, One's UK director, said the number of vaccines the UK is committed to sharing this year is half that promised by France, less than a third of Germany's, and a tenth of that pledged by the US.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/24/uk-falling-behind-most-g7-countries-in-sharing-covid-vaccines-figure-s-show>

### **Indonesia in talks to buy Merck's COVID-19 antiviral pill - minister**

Indonesia is "finalising" a deal with Merck & co to procure its experimental antiviral pills, named molnupiravir, to treat COVID-19 ailments, its health minister said on Monday. Results from a large clinical trial this month showed that the pill, made with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, cut hospitalisations and deaths by 50%. Merck asked for an emergency use clearance from the United

States earlier this month.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-talks-buy-mercks-covid-19-antiviral-pill-minister-2021-10-25/>

### **Red Cross urges action for Papua New Guinea as COVID-19 overwhelms health system**

Concerted international action is needed to support Papua New Guinea as a surge in COVID-19 cases overwhelms the Pacific country's health system, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said on Monday. Coronavirus cases in the island nation of 9 million have been surging in recent weeks, with 385 new cases recorded on Thursday, according to latest available government data. There have been 26,731 officially confirmed cases and 329 deaths in the country 150 km (90 miles) north of Australia.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/red-cross-urges-action-papua-new-guinea-covid-19-overwhelms-health-system-2021-10-25/>

### **How to talk to your younger kids about the Covid-19 vaccine**

Next, I had her look at photos of medical needles. She reported that she didn't like the pictures, but she could handle looking at them. We continued this gradual approach until she gave "vaccines" to an orange (parental supervision required even with toy needles). What she was doing is exposure therapy, learning to tolerate her discomfort and gradually build up to getting her own vaccine. Using exposure to cope with needle phobia requires time and professional guidance, but many adults are eager to get the Covid-19 vaccine for their vaccine-hesitant little ones as soon as it becomes available. These folks might not have the time or the resources to take a gradual approach to helping their kids overcome this fear, but they need help just the same.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/25/health/younger-kids-covid-vaccine-talk-wellness/index.html>

### **Australia looks to roll out COVID-19 booster shots soon as curbs ease**

Australian officials plan to roll out COVID-19 booster shots soon to prevent a resurgence of cases, as residents in the two largest cities of Sydney and Melbourne begin to enjoy more freedoms after months-long curbs. Australia has ditched its COVID-zero strategy in favour of suppressing the coronavirus, after largely stamping out infections for most of this year, and is now aiming to live with the virus through higher vaccinations. Officials are gradually shifting their focus to booster shots as double-dose vaccinations levels in Australia's adult population nears 75%. Almost 87% of people above 16 have received their first dose since the national rollout began in February.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-looks-roll-out-covid-19-booster-shots-soon-curbs-ease-2021-10-24/>

### **China to start vaccinating children to age 3 as cases spread**

Children as young as 3 will start receiving COVID-19 vaccines in China, where 76% of the population has been fully vaccinated and authorities are maintaining a zero-tolerance policy toward outbreaks. China becomes one of the very few countries in the world to start vaccinating children that young against the virus. Cuba, for one, has begun a vaccine drive for children as young as 2. The U.S. and many European countries allow COVID-19 shots down to age 12, though the U.S. is moving quickly toward opening vaccinations to 5- to 11-year-olds.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-lifestyle-business-beijing-travel-4680b533429a7e3e75c6f99745b3664b>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Facebook takes down Bolsonaro video over false vaccine claim**

Facebook late on Sunday removed a video by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro from its platforms, in which the far-right leader made a false claim that COVID-19 vaccines were linked with developing AIDS. "Our policies don't allow claims that COVID-19 vaccines kill or seriously harm people," a Facebook spokesperson said on Monday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/facebook-takes-down-bolsonaro-video-over-false-vaccine-claim-2021-10-25/>

### **NBA and Covid-19 vaccinations: Anti-vaccine demonstrators support Kyrie Irving in New York**

Anti-vaccine demonstrators gathered outside the Barclays Center on Sunday to show their support for Brooklyn Nets guard Kyrie Irving before his team's NBA home opener. Irving has refused to get vaccinated against Covid-19 and is not allowed to play or practise with his team until he does so because of local vaccine rules. Some protesters broke through barriers outside the arena before being confronted by security. No arrests or injuries were reported.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/basketball/59035453?at\\_medium=RSS&at\\_campaign=KARANGA](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/basketball/59035453?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA)

### **COVID-19: Exclusion zones around schools could be used to stop 'idiot' anti-vaxxers, health secretary says**

Exclusion zones around schools could be used to prevent "idiot" anti-vaxxers from targeting children with their "vicious lies", the health secretary has said. Sajid Javid said the protesters are doing "so much damage" and it was "heartbreaking" that three children were injured during a recent protest after COVID-19 vaccines were opened up to 12-15-year-olds. He told Sky News' Kay Burley: "You've got, frankly, these idiots outside their school spreading vicious lies. "It is becoming a growing problem as time goes by."

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-exclusion-zones-around-schools-could-be-used-to-stop-idiot-anti-vaxxers-health-secretary-says-12444156>

### **Florida's top doctor refuses mask, is told to leave meeting**

Florida's top health official was asked to leave a meeting after refusing to wear a mask at the office of a state senator who told him she had a serious medical condition, officials have confirmed. Florida Senate leader Wilton Simpson, a Republican, sent a memo to senators Saturday regarding the incident at the office of Democratic state Sen. Tina Polsky, asking visitors at the building to be respectful with social interactions. Polsky, who represents parts of Broward and Palm Beach counties, had not yet made public her breast cancer diagnosis. Polsky told The Associated Press about the tense exchange with state Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo that was first reported by the news site Florida Politics. She said Ladapo and two aides were offered masks and asked to wear them when they arrived for the Wednesday meeting. She did not tell him she had breast cancer, but said she had a serious condition.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-florida-b79b9e4308b9ce0b4335cdfa69436b1b>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **WHO to consider granting EUL for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin on Tuesday**

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) technical advisory group will consider granting Emergency use listing (EUL) for Bharat Biotech's covid-19 vaccine Covaxin in a meeting scheduled on Tuesday. Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist at WHO said that WHO's goal is to have a broad portfolio of vaccines approved for emergency use and to expand access to populations everywhere. "The technical advisory group will meet on Oct 26th to consider EUL for #Covaxin. @WHO has been working closely with @BharatBiotech to complete the dossier," Swaminathan said in a recent tweet. If granted, the approval will hold importance of people in India vaccinated with covaxin as WHO's approval will facilitate international travel for Indians who have received the home-made vaccine under India's national covid vaccination programme. The delay has been impacting students and businessmen who want to travel to countries where a vaccination certificate for WHO-approved vaccines is mandatory. As on Monday over 11.70 crores doses of covaxin have been administered in India among different age group above 18. WHO's EUL is a prerequisite for supplying vaccines under the Covax Facility, a multilateral initiative aimed at fostering global access to covid vaccines. If done, the approval, will also place Covaxin in an important spot in the world map as it can be given

to more and more countries.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/who-to-consider-granting-eul-for-bharat-biotech-s-covaxin-on-tuesday-11635174526645.html>

### **Covid Poses Bigger Risk of Brain Conditions Than Vaccines, Study Says**

Covid-19 is more likely to cause rare neurological conditions than vaccines, according to a study published in the Nature Medicine journal. The study, led by the University of Oxford, analyzed the health records of 32 million people in England to identify the risks of developing rare brain conditions before and after testing positive for Covid, or receiving the first dose of either the Oxford-AstraZeneca Plc or Pfizer Inc.-BioNTech SE jabs. The researchers compared how often neurological complications occurred in set windows of time. While the vaccines were found to result in an increase of neurological complications, like Bell's palsy and Guillain-Barré syndrome, the study found that contracting Covid presented an even bigger risk.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-25/covid-poses-bigger-risk-of-brain-conditions-than-vaccines>

### **EU regulator starts real-time review of Merck's COVID-19 pill**

U.S. drugmaker Merck & Co Inc (MRK.N) said on Monday the European Union's drug regulator has initiated a real-time review of its experimental COVID-19 antiviral drug for adults. Under the procedure, also known as a "rolling review", the European Medicines Agency (EMA) would assess data as soon as it becomes available, instead of waiting for a formal application when all required information has been gathered. While vaccines are the main weapons against COVID-19, Merck's experimental pill molnupiravir could be a game-changer after studies showed it could halve the chances of dying or being hospitalised for those most at risk of contracting severe illness.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-regulator-starts-real-time-review-mercks-covid-19-pill-2021-10-25/>

### **Moderna says its COVID-19 vaccine protective, safe in young children**

Moderna Inc said on Monday its COVID-19 vaccine generated a strong immune response in children aged six to 11 years and that it plans to submit the data to global regulators soon. Moderna said its two-dose vaccine generated virus-neutralizing antibodies in children and safety was comparable to what was previously seen in clinical trials of adolescents and adults. It cited interim data that has yet to be peer reviewed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-says-its-covid-19-vaccine-generates-immune-response-young-children-2021-10-25/>

### **Aussie scientist forced to crowd fund homegrown Covid vaccine**

Dr Nikolai Petrovsky has been forced to hit GoFundMe to raise cash for Covax-19. It is the first synthetic protein vaccine for Covid to receive market authorisation. It costs hundreds of thousands to gain TGA approval to release Covax locally. Covax-19 showed strong protection against Delta in a Phase 3 clinical trial.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10126637/Aussie-scientist-forced-crowd-fund-homegrown-Covid-vaccine.html>

### **First vaccine dose could alleviate long Covid symptoms, study suggests**

A first vaccine dose appears to alleviate symptoms in long Covid sufferers, a new study has suggested, although it is unclear whether this improvement lasts until a second dose. People aged 18 to 69 who had received a first dose were 12.8 per cent less likely to report that they were still experiencing persistent symptoms, according to experimental findings published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). A second dose was associated with a further 8.8 per cent drop, with "statistical evidence" of a sustained improvement afterwards.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/first-vaccine-dose-long-covid-b1944768.html>

### **Biological E hopes to roll out Covid vaccine Corbevax by Nov-end**

Hyderabad-based Biological E Limited (BE) is expecting its coronavirus vaccine Corbevax to be rolled out by the end of November even as the city-based company is getting ready with 100 million doses for the launch, Mahima Datla, Managing Director, BE said today. While speaking to reporters on the sidelines of signing a financing agreement with US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Datla said currently the manufactured doses are being sent to Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL), Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh for regulatory testing.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/biological-e-hopes-to-roll-out-covid-vaccine-corbevax-by-novend-11635157922272.html>

### **Russia approves Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccination with flu shot**

Sputnik V has been developed by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology. The Health Ministry of Russia has reportedly granted approval for administering Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V and flu shots simultaneously,

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/russia-sputnik-v-covid-19-vaccination-flu-shot/>

### **Rural areas, hit hard by COVID-19, lack access to new treatment trials**

Three-quarters of rural Americans live more than an hour from the nearest site testing new treatments for COVID-19, research from the University of Virginia School of Medicine reveals. Overall, almost a third of Americans would have to travel more than 60 minutes to access new therapies as they are being tested. This geographic disparity limits access to COVID-19 clinical trials in many parts of the country that are being hit hardest by the latest wave of the pandemic. Native Americans and Alaska Natives are particularly affected, with more than 50% living more than 60 minutes from a trial site.

<https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/932529>

### **Doctors are often unaware of the only treatment for early Covid-19**

On September 17, Mayra Arana made the phone call she says saved her life. Arana had been vaccinated against Covid-19, but she developed a breakthrough infection. She feared the virus might kill her, since her immune system is weak after years of treatment for leukemia. Arana's family physician in California told her there wasn't much she could do besides stay home and rest. At home, following her doctor's advice, Arana felt sicker by the hour. Her husband placed a pulse oximeter on her fingertip, and it showed her blood oxygen levels were dipping dangerously low.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/25/health/covid-antibody-treatment-doctors/index.html>

### **India's Biological E., U.S. body finalise \$50 mln COVID-19 shot financing deal**

The United States and India's Biological E. Ltd said on Monday they had finalised a financing arrangement for \$50 million to expand the vaccine maker's capacity to produce COVID-19 shots. The agreement was struck in March when leaders of the United States, Australia, Japan and India - the so-called "Quad" countries - met during a virtual summit. The United States had said it would work via its International Development Finance Corp to finance Biological E.'s efforts to produce at least 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses for India and developing countries by the end of 2022

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/us-indias-biological-e-finalise-50-mln-financing-deal-covid-19-shots-2021-10-25/>

### **S.Africa's Aspen aiming for 1.3 bln dose/year COVID-19 vaccine capacity by 2024**

South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare is aiming to ramp up its COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity to 1.3 billion doses a year by February 2024, up from annual output of around 250 million doses now, the company's CEO told Reuters. Aspen is doing the final stages of manufacturing for Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine in a so-called "fill and finish" deal, but CEO Stephen Saad said in an interview that the companies were close to announcing a broader deal for Aspen to produce Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 shot under licence.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/safricas-aspen-aiming-13-bln-doseyear-covid-19-vacci>

[ne-capacity-by-2024-2021-10-25/](#)

### **Fake, substandard vaccines and medicines spell trouble for controlling Covid-19**

A notable rallying cry that emerged early during the Covid-19 pandemic was “flatten the curve.” It reflected the reality that hospitals lacked the resources, knowledge, and therapies to accommodate everyone in need. Nearly 18 months later, the situation around the globe is different. Clinicians have a better understanding of how to prevent Covid-19, and how to treat people with severe cases of it. Vaccines have brought much-needed relief. But the picture is now being complicated by the emergence of substandard and falsified Covid-19 vaccines and medical products, which are becoming increasingly pervasive.

[https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/25/counterfeit-vaccines-medicines-spell-trouble-controlling-covid-19/?utm\\_campaign=rss](https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/25/counterfeit-vaccines-medicines-spell-trouble-controlling-covid-19/?utm_campaign=rss)

### **Africa tries to end vaccine inequity by replicating its own**

In a pair of Cape Town warehouses converted into a maze of airlocked sterile rooms, young scientists are assembling and calibrating the equipment needed to reverse engineer a coronavirus vaccine that has yet to reach South Africa and most of the world’s poorest people. The energy in the gleaming labs matches the urgency of their mission to narrow vaccine disparities. By working to replicate Moderna’s COVID-19 shot, the scientists are effectively making an end run around an industry that has vastly prioritized rich countries over poor in both sales and manufacturing. And they are doing it with unusual backing from the World Health Organization, which is coordinating a vaccine research, training and production hub in South Africa along with a related supply chain for critical raw materials. It’s a last-resort effort to make doses for people going without, and the intellectual property implications are still murky.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-technology-business-cape-town-health-48046e5255cc3e4fa27455fc12ab5e52>

### **EU medicines watchdog starts review of Merck COVID pill**

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) – the European Union’s top medicines watchdog – has started a review of a potentially ground-breaking antiviral pill to treat COVID-19. The agency announced on Monday that it has launched a “rolling review” of molnupiravir, which was developed by United States pharmaceutical company Merck.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/25/eu-medicines-watchdog-starts-review-of-merck-covid-19-pill>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Some Russian regions shut workplaces as daily COVID-19 cases hit new peak**

Russia reported its highest single-day COVID-19 case tally since the start of the pandemic on Monday as some regions imposed a workplace shutdown to combat a surge in infections and deaths. Faced with worsening disease rates and frustrated by the slow take-up of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine by its own population, authorities are introducing stricter measures this week to try to slow the spread of the pandemic. President Vladimir Putin last week declared that Oct. 30 to Nov. 7 would be paid non-working days but said every region – could extend that period or start it earlier depending on the epidemiological situation.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russias-covid-19-cases-hit-record-some-regions-impose-curbs-2021-10-25/>

### **Dutch consider new coronavirus curbs as infections soar**

The Dutch government may impose new coronavirus restrictions to reduce pressure on hospitals struggling to deal with a swelling number of COVID-19 patients, Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said on Monday. Coronavirus infections in the Netherlands have been rising for a month and reached their highest level since July in recent days, after most social distancing measures were dropped in

late September. The new wave of infections has driven up the number of COVID-19 patients in hospitals faster than predicted this month, De Jonge said, and many hospitals are already cutting back regular care again to deal with coronavirus cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/dutch-consider-new-coronavirus-curbs-infections-soar-2021-10-25/>

### **Covid-19: Cases could fall in November without the need to implement Plan B, modelling suggests**

Coronavirus cases could fall in November without the need to implement Plan B, according to scientists. Modelling seen by the Government suggests cases could peak before falling sharply in the winter months - without having to introduce Plan B restrictions such as compulsory face masks, vaccine passports and working from home. It is understood ministers have seen forecasts by several groups, with cases dropping to around 5,000 a day before Christmas in one scenario, the Daily Telegraph reports. Professor John Edmunds, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a member of Sage, said: "When we were doing the work about two weeks ago, the Health Secretary had made it very clear that the government was not planning to introduce Plan B in the near future.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid19-cases-fall-november-plan-b-government-modelling-b962272.html>

### **Russia's COVID-19 cases hit record as some regions impose curbs**

Russia reported its highest single-day COVID-19 case tally since the start of the pandemic on Monday as some regions imposed a workplace shutdown to combat a surge in infections and deaths. Faced with worsening disease rates and frustrated by the slow take-up of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine by its own population, authorities are introducing stricter measures this week to try to slow the spread of the pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russias-covid-19-cases-hit-record-some-regions-impose-curbs-2021-10-25/>

### **New Zealand reports second-highest daily COVID-19 cases in pandemic**

New Zealand reported 109 new locally acquired coronavirus cases on Monday, the bulk of them in its largest city, Auckland, as the country saw its second-worst day of daily infections since the pandemic began. Once the poster child for stamping out COVID-19, New Zealand has been unable to beat an outbreak of Delta variant of COVID-19 centred in Auckland, despite the city remaining under a strict lockdown for more than two months. The country over the weekend also reported the first community case of the virus in its South Island in nearly a year, a cause for further headache, though health officials said the risks of a further spread from the case remained low.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-reports-second-highest-daily-covid-19-cases-pandemic-2021-10-25/>

### **Dutch government looking at reintroducing COVID-19 measures**

The Dutch government is seeking advice from a panel of experts on whether it needs to reintroduce COVID-19 restrictions amid sharply rising infection rates, the health minister said Monday. The Netherlands has one of the fastest-rising infection rates in Europe. The 7-day rolling average of daily new cases increased over the past two weeks from 13.43 new cases per 100,000 people to 29.27 new cases per 100,000 people on Oct. 24. "It's just going too fast. We have to face up to the fact that the numbers are rising faster and sooner than expected," Health Minister Hugo De Jonge told reporters in The Hague. He said hospital admissions also are rising faster than anticipated when the government relaxed its lockdown last month.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-europe-health-netherlands-the-hague-82e9b91682d74d873e0da3b9e07cc569>

### **New Virus Cases Hitting Faster Than Ever Challenge China's Covid-Zero Strategy**

China has driven Covid-19 cases back to zero three times over the past five months, but outbreaks

are flaring more frequently than ever before, raising questions about how long the nation can persist with a strategy that's leaving it increasingly isolated. The gaps between major outbreaks in China have fallen from around two months in the second half of last year to as little as 12 days since May, when the country saw its first delta cases. While China is still able to drive locally-transmitted infections back to nil, the amount of time virus-free is getting shorter, data on daily cases compiled by Bloomberg News shows. It's becoming a showdown between a containment regime that's arguably the world's most comprehensive -- featuring sealed borders, mass testing, exhaustive contact tracing and strict rules governing travel and movement -- and a pathogen that's becoming more adept at penetrating those defenses designed to stop transmission.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-25/covid-waves-hitting-faster-than-ever-challenge-china-s-hard-line>

### **COVID cases in Eastern Europe surpass 20m as outbreak worsens**

Coronavirus cases in Eastern Europe have surpassed 20 million, according to a Reuters tally on Sunday, as the region grapples with its worst outbreak since the pandemic started and inoculation efforts lag. Countries in the region have the lowest vaccination rates in Europe, with less than half of the population having received a single dose. Hungary tops the region's vaccination rates with 62 percent of its population having received at least one shot, whereas Ukraine has given just 19 percent of its residents a single dose, according to Our World in Data. New infections in the region have steadily risen and now average at least 83,700 new cases per day, the highest level since November last year, Reuters data through Friday showed. Although it has just four percent of the world's population, Eastern Europe accounts for roughly 20 percent of all new cases reported globally.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/24/as-outbreak-worsens-covid-19-cases-in-eastern-europe-near-20m>

### **New Lockdown**

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### **China Locks Down Thousands in North as Delta Outbreak Spreads**

China locked down a county that has seen the most Covid-19 cases in the nation's latest delta outbreak, as an initial flareup in the northwest quickly spirals into a nationwide surge. Ejin, a county in China's Inner Mongolia region, asked its 35,700 residents to stay home from Monday and warned of civil and criminal liabilities should anyone disobey the order, state broadcaster CCTV reported, citing a local government statement. The small county bordering Mongolia is the current outbreak's hotspot, home to nearly one-third of the more than 150 infections found over the past week in the mainland. The lockdown comes a day after a warning from National Health Commission officials that the outbreak would continue to worsen after spreading to 11 provinces in about a week. China reported 38 Covid infections on Monday, half of which were found in Inner Mongolia.

[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-25/china-locks-down-thousands-in-north-as-delta-outbreak-spreads?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=bd&cmpid=google](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-25/china-locks-down-thousands-in-north-as-delta-outbreak-spreads?utm_source=google&utm_medium=bd&cmpid=google)

### **Fresh lockdowns in China as local Covid-19 infections spread to 11 provinces**

Authorities in northern China are reimposing lockdowns and other emergency measures to curb the spread of coronavirus, with health officials warning of a worsening outbreak after the country recorded more than 100 cases across 11 provinces over the last week. "Since October 17, there have been multiple scattered local outbreaks in China, and they're expanding rapidly," Mi Feng, a spokesman at the National Health Commission (NHC), said at a news conference Sunday. "There is an increasing risk that the outbreak will spread even further." The rapid spread comes despite about 75% of China's population -- or more than a billion people -- being fully vaccinated, according to Mi.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/25/china/covid-update-intl-hnk/index.html>

### **Poland may tighten COVID-19 curbs if cases keep growing, says minister**

Poland will need to consider tighter COVID-19 restrictions if average daily cases exceed 7,000, the

health minister was quoted as saying on Monday, as the government warned that infections were almost doubling each week. Central and eastern Europe, where vaccination rates are lower than in the west of the continent, has seen a surge in cases in recent weeks, with officials in Poland urging the public to get vaccinated and follow the restrictions in place. "If, at the end of October, we are at an average level of over 7,000 cases per day, we will have to consider taking some more restrictive steps," Adam Niedzielski was quoted as saying by state-run news agency PAP.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/poland-may-tighten-covid-19-curbs-if-cases-keep-growing-says-minister-2021-10-25/>