

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Lockdown Exit

Over the top? Denmark to secure 22 million COVID-19 vaccines in 2022

Last year, Denmark spent around 2.4 billion kroner on coronavirus vaccines - a figure that looks set to be surpassed in 2022. The State Serum Institute (SSI) has revealed that it has agreements in place for this year involving 22 million vaccine doses worth some 2.8 billion kroner. And as the Corona Crisis continues to wane in Denmark, some experts question whether so many doses are needed.

<https://cphpost.dk/?p=134515>

US has a "very serious" problem with Covid-19 vaccine uptake

The United States has a "very serious" problem with Covid-19 vaccination uptake, a top health official has warned. Vaccines are by far the most powerful tool available against the coronavirus, protecting people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and dying from the virus. Unlike many less developed countries, the US has enough doses to vaccinate everyone as well as the necessary infrastructure to support the rollout. The problem: not everyone wants the shot. "We do have a problem with vaccine uptake that is very serious in the United States and anything we can do to get people more comfortable to be able to accept these potentially life-saving medical products is something that we feel we are compelled to do," said Dr. Peter Marks, director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/08/world/coronavirus-newsletter-intl-06-08-22/index.html>

COVID vaccine rights waiver within reach, WTO chief says ahead of meeting

Director-General Ngosi Okonjo-Iweala has called COVID-19 vaccine inequity "unconscionable" and given top priority to a deal to facilitate the flow of vaccines more widely. Even though demand for COVID-19 shots has tapered off, India, South Africa and some 100 other backers are seeking a potential waiver of intellectual property rights for vaccines and treatments. However, WTO members remain divided over a draft deal for vaccines negotiated between the four main parties (India, South Africa, the European Union and the United States) that was forged to break an 18-month deadlock. Protest groups are urging members to reject it and China has lodged an objection.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/wto-chief-says-deals-within-reach-ahead-geneva-meeting-2022-06-08/>

After lockdown, Shanghai tries to mend fences with foreign firms

Shanghai officials are seeking to revive confidence among multinational companies bruised and frustrated by the city's COVID-19 lockdown by holding multiple meetings with foreign firms and easing a key border requirement for overseas workers. The image of China's most cosmopolitan city and its biggest business hub was badly damaged by the two-month lockdown, with countless expatriates relocating and foreign businesses warning that they are reconsidering investment plans.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/after-lockdown-shanghai-tries-mend-fences-with-foreign-firms-2022-06-08/>

Novavax's New Covid-19 Vaccine Might Be Late to the Party

Novavax shares jumped 5.4% Wednesday after the agency's vaccine expert panel voted to recommend its two-dose vaccine. It is quite the victory for the 35-year-old Maryland biotech, which was running out of cash in late 2019 before the pandemic came to its rescue. But the nod from the expert group comes as the pool of Americans seeking a booster shot continues to nosedive. The seven-day average for booster shots administered daily was about 55,600 this week, down from

over a million in early December, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency says only about half of booster-eligible people have gotten one so far—a clear sign of vaccine fatigue.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/novavaxs-new-covid-19-vaccine-might-be-late-to-the-party-11654697078>

The kids who have never known life without Covid-19

At this point, two and a half years into the pandemic, many kids have begun to catch up on experiences they missed. Children under 5, however, still aren't able to be vaccinated, leaving some families unsure how much return to normalcy is really safe — or possible. At the same time, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have gone through crucial years of early social and emotional development at a time of trauma and isolation for many Americans.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/the-kids-who-have-never-known-life-without-covid-19/ar-AAYaQCV>

Official warns of COVID wave; PM, health minister hold off new restrictions for now

As cases rise, indoor masking recommended for the public; virus czar says 5th vaccine dose may be needed; transmission rate continues to rise, positive test rate over 20%

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/pm-to-hold-meeting-as-officials-warn-of-new-covid-wave-say-5th-dose-may-be-needed/>

Exit Strategies

What are the entry requirements for France?

On 31 March 2022, the French government relaxed Covid border restrictions to allow unvaccinated travellers entry to the country for leisure and work purposes. Previously, only vaccinated travellers were permitted entry for leisure and work, while unjabbed travellers could only visit the country if they had a compelling reason. Unvaccinated travellers should provide proof of a negative PCR test, taken no more than 72 hours prior to arrival in France, or an antigen test taken no more than 48 hours before arrival. They will no longer need to quarantine for seven days on entering the country. Rules for vaccinated travellers were also relaxed. They no longer need to submit a sworn declaration form stating that they show no Covid symptoms. They are only required to present proof of vaccination.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/esmoney/travel-insurance/what-are-the-entry-requirements-for-france-b955365.html>

White House warning of 'unacceptable tradeoffs' on Covid-19 response amid congressional inaction

The White House issued a new warning to Congress Wednesday on the continued urgent need for Covid-19 funding, highlighting new "unacceptable tradeoffs" as it reallocates and reprioritizes remaining funding toward new vaccines in the absence of congressional action. "Due to a lack of additional funding," a White House official told CNN in a statement, the Department of Health and Human Services "is now forced to pull funds from other essential elements of our response to meet some basic Covid-19 response needs." The official continued, "This will allow the US to get in line to procure some additional lifesaving vaccines for the fall, including next-generation vaccines if available, and procure additional lifesaving treatments."

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/08/politics/white-house-covid-19-response-congress/index.html>

COVID in California: Vaccines for kids under 5 could come as soon as June 21

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's vaccine advisory committee on Tuesday recommended the agency grant emergency use authorization for the COVID-19 vaccine made by Novavax. If approved, it would become the fourth coronavirus vaccine available in the U.S., along with the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson versions. California's chief justice, Tani Cantil-Sakauye, has tested positive for COVID-19 and has mild symptoms, court officials say.

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/health/article/COVID-California-17226295.php>

Dogs to sniff out COVID-19 in patients and visitors at Adelaide's Lyell McEwin Hospital

Dogs will be used to sniff for COVID-19 among patients and visitors at the Lyell McEwin Hospital. Patients and visitors to the emergency department will still have to undergo more mainstream testing. The hospital has faced criticism for its COVID-19 policies

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-08/dogs-sniff-for-covid19-during-adelaide-hospital-trial/101135162>

US diverts COVID-19 funds to secure vaccines amid stalemate

The Biden administration said Wednesday that a funding crunch is forcing it to divert more than \$10 billion in coronavirus relief from test procurement and other efforts as it tries to come up with money to secure the next generation of vaccines and treatments for some high-risk Americans. The White House said it has been left with "no choice" but to cut back on orders of at-home rapid tests that have supported a domestic manufacturing base for the easy diagnostic tests. It also is scaling back funding for research and development of new COVID-19 vaccines and limiting orders of personal protective equipment in an effort to maintain some stockpiles of vaccines and treatments for Americans heading into the winter.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-congress-government-and-politics-237a94c5400216503c24d524c04b29da>

Novavax shares jump as FDA panel backs COVID vaccine

Shares of Novavax Inc surged nearly 20% on Wednesday after advisers to the Food and Drug Administration overwhelmingly backed the use of its COVID-19 vaccine, bringing the shot a step closer to a U.S. launch. The stock tumbled about 20% on Friday after the health regulator's reviewers flagged concerns of a type of heart inflammation following the vaccination, adding uncertainty over the outcome of Tuesday's meeting.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-shares-jump-fda-panel-backs-covid-vaccine-2022-06-08/>

Partisan Exits

COVID-19 information on Victorian government websites was often inaccessible, study finds

An education level of year 10 or above would have been required to understand much of the material, the study found. About half of the Australian population reads at an education level of year 10 or below. The state government defended its public health messages, which it said had been critical in reaching high levels of vaccination coverage

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-08/covid-public-health-information-victorian-government-study/101134738>

Boris Johnson's COVID response 'a joke,' irked airline chief says

A leading airline industry official on Tuesday blasted British politicians for criticizing long airport lines and canceled flights once COVID-19 cases eased and in turn assailed Prime Minister Boris Johnson's own response to the pandemic. "You look at the UK, Boris Johnson, he highlights one of the reasons why he should continue to be prime minister as being the way he handled the pandemic. What a joke. They should have done a hell of a lot better," Willie Walsh, director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), told the Paris Air Forum.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/uk-should-have-done-better-covid-19-iata-director-general-2022-06-07/>

Vietnam's health minister arrested over COVID test gouging

Vietnam's health minister and the mayor of the capital Hanoi have been arrested as part of an expanding investigation into massive price gouging of COVID-19 tests, state media reported. Nguyen Thanh Long was dismissed from his ministry post and Chu Ngoc Anh, who previously was the science minister, was fired as Hanoi mayor, Tuoi Tre online news outlet reported Tuesday. They are being investigated for abuse of power, according to the Ministry of Public Security, and have

been expelled from the ruling Communist Party. An investigation concluded earlier that mismanagement in the science and health ministries had allowed Viet A Technology Corporation to inflate prices for test kits supplied to hospitals and health centers in Vietnam.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-politics-health-business-vietnam-5cf5c71b07923bfb7f0bdfba6836ce45>

Former St. Louis County top official indicted for alleged COVID-19 funding scam

A former top official at the St. Louis County jail, appointed by County Executive Sam Page, has been indicted. Anthony “Tony” Weaver Sr. turned himself in to federal authorities Tuesday. On May 6, 2020, the indictment alleged that he approached a man who owned several small businesses in St. Louis County with a plan to fraudulently apply for grants from the Small Business Relief Program (SBR) in exchange for a share of the proceeds. Weaver was indicted on May 25, 2022 on four felony counts of wire fraud.

<https://www.kfvs12.com/2022/06/07/st-louis-county-top-official-indicted-alleged-covid-19-funding-scam/>

Continued Lockdown

Toyota supplier Toyoda Gosei asks employees to take leave as lockdown bites

A major Toyota Motor Corp supplier has asked employees to take a day off with reduced pay this month, a spokesperson for the supplier, Toyoda Gosei Co, said on Wednesday, reflecting the impact of the chip shortage and China lockdowns. Toyoda Gosei, which makes air bags, brake hoses and radiator grilles, has asked domestic employees to take a day of leave in June following production suspensions by Toyota and other automakers, the spokesperson confirmed to Reuters, declining to name the automakers.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/toyota-supplier-toyoda-gosei-asks-employees-take-leave-lockdown-bites-2022-06-08/>

Scientific Viewpoint

A new coronavirus found in Swedish bank voles

The current study discusses the discovery of a novel beta-CoV in Swedish bank voles and presents its full sequence for the first time. The failure to detect this virus using a published pan-CoV PCR test is traceable to the highly divergent RNA sequence of the Grimso virus. The use of specific spike gene primers in the customized PCR used in the present study yielded several samples over the three-year study period. The two complete sequences obtained in this study showed almost 3.5% non-identity, which amounted to about 1,340 differences at the nucleotide level. This exceeds the expected rate of nucleotide substitution over three years. Either several strains of the Grimso virus are co-circulating in this rodent species, or the true reservoir of this virus includes other species that regularly transmit it to bank voles. The prevalence of the Grimso virus in this rodent species was about 3.4%, thus suggesting that this animal is a suitable host for the virus. As a result, the Grimso virus presents a potential zoonotic host for spillover events between bank voles and human beings.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220607/A-new-coronavirus-found-in-Swedish-bank-voles.aspx>

Revised Moderna Vaccine Works Better Against Omicron, Trial Suggests

Moderna released preliminary results on Wednesday on an updated coronavirus vaccine that targets the Omicron variant, calling it “our lead candidate” to serve as a U.S. booster shot in the fall. The firm’s researchers tested a booster dose combining the original vaccine with one that specifically targeted Omicron, the variant that became dominant last winter. They found that among those with no evidence of prior coronavirus infection, the combination produced 1.75 times the level of neutralizing antibodies against Omicron as the existing Moderna vaccine did alone. While those results may seem encouraging on their face, many experts worry that the virus is evolving so quickly that it is outpacing the ability to modify vaccines, at least as long as the United States relies on human clinical trials for results.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/08/us/politics/moderna-vaccine-omicron-variant.html>

FDA AdCom strongly backs EUA of Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) yesterday voted 21 to 0, with one abstention, to recommend that the FDA grant Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine (NVX-CoV2373) for individuals aged 18 years and over. The vaccine was developed by US biotech firm Novavax (Nasdaq: NVAX), whose shares leapt 22% to \$58.05 in after-hours trading on Tuesday.

<https://www.thepharmaletter.com/article/fda-adcom-strongly-backs-eua-of-novavax-covid-19-vaccine>

Researchers plan to commence a clinical trial on new COVID-19 inactivated vaccine

A medical research team from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) will start a large-scale clinical trial on a new COVID-19 inactivated vaccine (Omicron variant) developed by China National Biotec Group (Sinopharm). Led by Professor Ivan Hung, Chief of Division of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Professor of Department of Medicine, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong (HKUMed) and with the coordination and technical support by HKU Clinical Trials Centre (HKU-CTC), the study aims to evaluate the investigational vaccine's safety and immune response as a booster for adults and will last for around a year. 1,800 adult volunteers who have already received two or three doses of inactivated or mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will be recruited to take part in the study.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220608/Researchers-plan-to-commence-a-clinical-trial-on-new-COVID-19-inactivated-vaccine.aspx>

Pfizer Covid Vaccine Protects Against Omicron Sublineages BA.4 and BA.5: Study

Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine appears to largely prevent severe disease from the coronavirus omicron variants sublineages BA.4 and BA.5, a study by South Africa's biggest health insurer shows. The two-shot Pfizer course offers 87% protection against being hospitalized with the strains that are driving the country's fifth wave of infections, Discovery Health Ltd., basing its study on the more than 1 million clients it has in Gauteng province. That level of protection was based on infection in patients one to two months after receiving their second dose. The study showed that protection waned to 84% three to four months after the second dose and 63% at five to six months post inoculation, Ryan Noach, the company's chief executive officer, said in a LinkedIn post dated June 6.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-08/pfizer-protects-against-omicron-sublineages-discovery-says>

FDA advisers support Novavax's Covid-19 vaccine for authorization

Vaccine advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration decided Tuesday that authorizing Novavax's Covid-19 vaccine -- which uses different technology from the three vaccines currently in use in the US -- for emergency use in adults would be beneficial. Most of the FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee voted "yes" in response to a question of whether the benefits of Novavax's vaccine, given as a two-dose primary series, outweigh its risks in people 18 and older, based on available evidence. Twenty-one members voted yes, one abstained, and none voted no. If the full FDA gives the vaccine the green light, it will become the fourth Covid-19 vaccine authorized in the United States. Novavax's vaccine is made using small laboratory-built pieces of the coronavirus to stimulate immunity. This protein-based approach is a more traditional one for vaccine development than the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/07/health/novavax-covid-vaccine-fda/index.html>

Moderna Says Bivalent COVID-19 Booster Shows Superior Antibody Response Against Omicron

Biotechnology company Moderna Inc. said Wednesday that its omicron-containing bivalent booster candidate mRNA-1273.214, which contained mRNA-1273 (Spikevax) and a vaccine candidate targeting the Omicron variant of concern, demonstrated superior antibody response against omicron. According to the company, mRNA-1273.214 met all primary endpoints in the phase 2/3 trial

including neutralizing antibody response against Omicron when compared to a 50 micrograms booster dose of mRNA-1273 in baseline seronegative participants. The study results showed mRNA-1273.214 exhibited an eight-fold boost in neutralizing geometric mean titers against omicron among baseline seronegative participant

<https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/moderna-says-bivalent-covid-19-booster-shows-superior-antibody-response-against-omicron-1031516215>

Hospital studying long-term effects of COVID-19 in kids

Adriana Vaughan tested positive for COVID-19 in October 2021. Eight months later, the 12-year-old has a string of new medical issues: fatigue, headaches, stomach problems and more. Vaughan can't even walk for six minutes without losing her breath. She says swimming, which she did before getting COVID, is also hard. "I do really love the water and swimming. I tried to do it a few days ago, it was really a lot for me," Vaughan told CBS News.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-long-haul-kids-effects/>

Can I Trust My Rapid Covid-19 Test if It Says I'm Negative?

When my 14-year-old son had a sore throat and congestion recently, I whipped out a Covid-19 rapid antigen test. Negative. The next day I tested him again. Negative. Days later when his friend tested positive for Covid-19 and my son still had cold symptoms, we tested again. Negative again. Could I safely assume he was Covid-19 free? It's a question many people are asking now as Omicron subvariants circulate alongside colds, allergies and other viruses. With Americans largely returning to prepandemic habits, and precautions such as mask mandates dropped, many people have come to rely on rapid testing to avoid spreading the virus. But with so many people having symptoms and still testing negative, it's hard to know whether to trust the results. A positive test has ramifications well beyond validating symptoms, potentially keeping you out of work or your children out of school.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-i-trust-my-rapid-covid-19-test-if-it-says-im-negative-11654650057?mod=hp_listc_pos2

Study: Many children who contracted COVID-19 did not develop antibodies to ward off Omicron

A new study from researchers at Harvard Medical School, Boston Children's Hospital, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration shows that fewer than 10 percent of kids who contracted COVID-19 in 2020 or early 2021 developed antibodies capable of warding off the Omicron variant of the virus, according to a statement posted to the medical school's website. The statement said the study findings, published May 27 in the journal Nature Communications, track with prior studies of adults that showed getting COVID-19 once sadly doesn't guarantee antibody protection against repeat infection at a later date. "I hear parents say, 'oh, my kid had COVID last year,'" said Dr. Adrienne G. Randolph, a co-senior investigator on the HMS/Children's study and HMS professor of anesthesia and of pediatrics at Boston Children's, in the statement. "But we found that antibodies children produced during prior infections don't neutralize Omicron.

<https://www.boston.com/news/coronavirus/2022/06/08/study-many-children-who-contracted-covid-19-did-not-develop-antibodies-to-ward-off-omicron/>

Moderna says updated Covid-19 vaccine booster shows stronger antibody response against Omicron

Moderna said on Wednesday its bivalent Covid-19 vaccine booster that contained a vaccine targeting the Omicron variant showed a stronger immune response against the variant.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/moderna-says-updated-covid-19-vaccine-booster-shows-stronger-antibody-response-against-omicron/ar-AAydGc6>

Catalent, MigVax enter deal to develop tablet vaccine for Covid-19

Catalent and Israeli biopharmaceutical firm MigVax have entered a development agreement to use

the former's Zydis Bio orally disintegrating tablet (ODT) technology for delivering the Covid-19 vaccine, MigVax-101. A lead oral vaccine programme of MigVax, MigVax-101 is an orally disintegrating freeze-dried tablet vaccine against Covid-19. It demonstrated positive data in preclinical tests. The oral formulation of the vaccine could provide substantial potential benefits in low-and middle-income nations over the existing first-generation injected vaccines. These benefits include ease of dosing, storage and transportation, the potential to address variants in the future and applicability to a wider population.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/catalent-migvax-vaccine-covid/>

Novavax COVID shot, aimed at vaccine skeptics, overwhelmingly backed by FDA panel

Advisers to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to recommend that the agency authorize Novavax Inc's (NVAX.O) COVID-19 vaccine for use in adults, which the drugmaker hopes can become the shot of choice among some American vaccine skeptics. The panel of outside vaccine experts voted 21-0 with one abstention in favor of the vaccine for those 18 and older after discussing whether the shot's benefits outweigh risks, including rare occurrences of heart inflammation that may be associated with the vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/novavax-covid-vaccine-heads-us-fda-advisory-committee-2022-06-07/>

Moderna says Omicron-targeted COVID shot shows better response

Moderna Inc said on Wednesday a new version of its coronavirus vaccine produced a better immune response against Omicron than the original shot, as the drugmaker pursues a booster against a surge in infections in the fall season. The vaccine, which was given as a fourth dose in a trial that enrolled more than 800 people, raised virus-neutralizing antibodies by eight-fold against Omicron. The company said it plans to submit data on the vaccine, which targets Omicron as well as the original coronavirus strain, to regulators in the coming weeks and the doses could be available to consumers in late summer, sending its shares up 3%.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-says-omicron-specific-booster-generates-strong-immune-response-2022-06-08/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Coronavirus: Hong Kong logs 558 new infections, even after officials tighten rules on caseloads

After too many residents submitted misleading results, government now only includes checked results in daily tally. All residents who declare a positive RAT result on the official online portal must take a confirmatory PCR test

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3180876/coronavirus-hong-kong-logs-558-new-cases-even>

South Korea reports 13,358 new Covid-19 cases, tally rises to 18,188,200

Article reports that South Korea reported 13,358 new COVID-19 cases as of midnight Tuesday compared to 24 hours ago, raising the total number of infections to 18,188,200, the health authorities said Wednesday. The daily caseload was up from 6,172 in the previous day, but it was lower than 15,790 tallied a week ago, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA). For the past week, the daily average number of confirmed cases was 9,839. Among the new cases, 59 were imported from overseas, lifting the total to 33,117.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/south-korea-reports-13-358-new-covid-19-cases-tally-rises-to-18-188-200-122060800394_1.html

Omicron sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5 account for up to 13% of COVID variants in U.S. - CDC

The BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of Omicron are estimated to make up nearly 5% and 8% of the

coronavirus variants in the United States as of June 4, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday. The two sublineages, which were added to the World Health Organization's monitoring list in March and designated as variants of concern by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), were present in all U.S. regions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-sub-variants-ba4-ba5-account-up-13-covid-variants-us-cdc-2022-06-07/>

New coronavirus infections in India jump to cross 5,000-mark

Daily coronavirus infections in India were recorded above 5,000 after 93 days taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 43,190,282, while the active cases rose to 28,857, according to the Union health ministry data updated on Wednesday. A total of 5,233 infections were recorded in a span of 24 hours, while the death toll climbed to 524,715 with seven fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. The active cases comprise 0.07 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate was 98.72 per cent, the ministry said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/new-coronavirus-infections-in-india-jump-to-cross-5-000-mark-122060900074_1.html