COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis
31st Aug 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

One Minute Overview

WHO warns of 236,000 more COVID deaths in Europe by December - The World Health Organization has warned that another 236,000 people could die from COVID-19 in Europe by December 1, sounding the alarm over rising infections and stagnating vaccine rates on the continent. Countries across the region have seen infection rates tick up as the highly transmissible Delta variant takes hold, particularly among the unvaccinated.

COVID-19: Indonesia death rate in under-18s more than three times the world average - Indonesian doctors have seen a surge in COVID cases and deaths in children since July 2021 as the Delta variant spread. Under-18s make up 1% of COVID deaths in Indonesia - compared to the worldwide average of around 0.3%. Paediatricians tell Sky News that a surge in cases has been seen since the Delta variant became prevalent. More than 1,272 children have died in total according to figures from the Ministry of Health.

South Africa detects new coronavirus variant, still studying its mutations - The C.1.2 variant contains mutations present in WHO variants of concern. Scientists are now running lab tests to understand more about this new variant. It still appears to account for only a small share of South Africa's cases

Pfizer 'variant hunters' race to stay ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic - Hundreds of millions of doses have been injected worldwide, but at the Pearl River research center where the vaccine was created, the pace has not let up. A team of “variant hunters,” as they call themselves, race to track changes in the fast-mutating SARS-CoV-2. A “virus farmer” grows the latest variants so researchers can test how they fare against the vaccine. And a colleague known as the “graphing unicorn” converts the data into intelligible results overnight. The scientist leading all this work, Phil Dormitzer, was among the first to open the email bearing results of tests on how well Pfizer’s shot worked against Delta. For a heart-stopping moment, he thought the vaccine was indeed less protective against this wildfire of a variant. Then he looked again

England will suffer a worse Covid outbreak than Scotland following the return of children to schools, experts fear - Scotland has seen its infections spiral to record highs, with the uptick blamed on reopening schools. Experts fear England will be hit even harder by the virus with millions set to return to school later this week. Last September, Covid cases in England more than quadrupled after children returned to the classroom

COVID-19: Third coronavirus vaccines aren't 'luxury boosters' taken from people without their first, WHO Europe boss says - Third coronavirus vaccines are not 'luxury boosters' making vaccine inequity worse but a means of keeping the vulnerable safe, WHO's Europe director has said. Hans Kluge appeared to contradict his World Health Organisation (WHO) colleagues at a news briefing on Monday, saying third COVID-19 jabs are an important way of protecting the most clinically vulnerable. Earlier this month, WHO senior officials criticised countries such as the US and Israel for rolling out a booster vaccine programme, when many people across the world have had no jabs at all.

India's COVID vaccine supply jumps, raising export hopes - India's rising output of COVID-19 vaccines and the inoculation of more than half its adult population with at least one dose are raising hopes the country will return as an exporter within months, ramping up from early next year. After donating or selling 66 million doses to nearly 100 countries, India barred exports in the middle of April to focus on domestic immunisation as infections exploded, upsetting the inoculation plans of many African and South Asian countries.

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https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/30/who-fears-236000-more-covid-deaths-in-europe-by-december

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C.1.2 contains mutations present in WHO variants of concern. Scientists running lab tests to understand more about variant. Still appears to account for small share of South Africa's cases

https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africa-detects-new-coronavirus-variant-still-studying-its-mutations-2021-08-30/

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https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-indonesia-death-rate-in-under-18s-more-than-three-times-the-world-average-12394947

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https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9939509/England-suffer-WORSE-Covid-outbreak-Scotland-following-children-returning-schools.html?ito=social-twitter_dailymailUK

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https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-third-coronavirus-vaccines-arent-luxury-boosters-taken-from-people-without-their-first-who-europe-boss-says-12395090

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https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-covid-vaccine-supply-jumps-raising-export-hopes-2021-08-30/

Brazil Overtakes U.S. in First-Dose Count After Vaccine Drive

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About 63% of Brazilians have now received at least one dose, versus 62% of people in the U.S., according to Bloomberg's Covid-19 Vaccine Tracker. Countries including Germany, France and the U.K. have vaccinated at least 65% of the population with one shot, the data show. While Brazil was late to start administering vaccines, deploying the first shots in mid-January and often struggling with shortages, the campaign has gained momentum. Relying on a de-centralized public health-care system that's known for excelling in mass immunizations, the country has regularly deployed more than 2 million jabs a day this month, according to the 10-day moving average compiled by Bloomberg.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-30/brazil-overtakes-u-s-in-first-dose-count-after-vaccine-drive

Covid-19 vaccine pass plan for Hong Kong 'could backfire'

Covid-19 vaccine pass plan for Hong Kong 'could backfire'
Any policy perceived as making inoculations mandatory could leave some residents more suspicious of shots, health and economic experts say. Patrick Nip, the minister in charge of city's inoculation programme, raised the idea on Sunday
https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3146843/coronavirus-vaccine-pass-not-necessarily-good

Brutal benchmark: Arizona passes 1 million COVID-19 cases

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Arizona surpassed 1 million COVID-19 cases Friday, becoming the 13th state to reach the grim milestone while contending with yet another major spike in infections. The benchmark is the latest in a tumultuous year and a half where Arizona went from being touted as a pandemic success story to being "the hot spot of the world" and then being a model again when vaccinations became available. Now, the state, like the rest of the country, is coping with a surge — mostly of the unvaccinated — and ongoing conflicts over mask and vaccine mandates. It ranks 13th nationwide in the number of cases per 100,000 residents, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID Data Tracker.
https://apnews.com/article/health-arizona-coronavirus-pandemic-a737794f6c2f9400fd82124d81d9a1e4

Australia's Melbourne to extend sixth COVID-lockdown

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Lockdown in Melbourne was due to end on Thursday, but authorities say this is no longer possible

due to rising cases.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/29/australias-melbourne-to-extend-sixth-covid-lockdown

Saudi students return to school with masks and checks

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Pupils have to keep their distance during the day - the children sit far apart on blue tables. But the return was still something to celebrate, Waleed and his friends said. "At least now we can understand what our teacher is saying. We could barely follow our lessons remotely," said Fahd al-Fares, 13.
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-students-return-school-with-masks-checks-2021-08-30/

EU countries drop U.S. from safe travel list

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European Union governments agreed on Monday to remove the United States from the EU's safe travel list, meaning U.S. visitors and those from five other countries are likely to face tighter controls, such as COVID-19 tests and quarantines. Israel, Kosovo, Lebanon, Montenegro, and North Macedonia have also been taken off. The list seeks to unify travel rules across the bloc, although it does not bind individual EU nations, which are free to determine their own border policies.
https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-countries-drop-us-safe-travel-list-2021-08-30/

Czechs to offer booster vaccine shot to all after eight months

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The Czech government will offer a booster COVID-19 vaccine shot from Sept. 20 to any previously vaccinated person, Health Minister Adam Vojtech said on Monday.
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/czechs-offer-booster-vaccine-shot-all-after-eight-months-2021-08-30/

France to donate 10 million coronavirus vaccines to Africa

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France will donate 10 million coronavirus vaccine doses to the African Union member states as part of the European country’s commitment to give at least 60 million shots before the end of 2021. AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccine doses will be delivered in the next three months, the Elysee Palace said in a statement Monday. The step comes within the framework of the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) initiative launched by the AU and COVAX, the global scheme that enables the supply of donor-funded vaccines to low and middle-income countries.
https://www.laprensalatina.com/france-to-donate-10-million-coronavirus-vaccines-to-africa/

Lagging in COVID-19 vaccinations, Brussels takes vaccination campaign to shops

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Health authorities in Brussels began offering COVID-19 jabs in supermarkets and shopping centres on Monday to increase vaccination rates in the Belgian capital that have not kept up with Belgium's rapid inoculation roll-out. Host to the European Union and NATO, Brussels has only given vaccinations to about 65% of its population, much lower than the surrounding Belgian regions, mainly because people did not respond to requests to go to vaccination centres.
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/lagging-covid-19-vaccinations-brussels-takes-vaccination-campaign-shops-2021-08-30/

Virgin Australia moves to make coronavirus vaccines mandatory for all staff

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Virgin Australia is moving to make coronavirus vaccines mandatory for all staff from November 15. The airline will begin a consultation process between employees and unions, arguing the vaccine is

"necessary" to keep workers, customers and "the wider Australian community safe". It follows a decision by Qantas to make the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for staff, also by November 15.
https://www.9news.com.au/national/virgin-to-make-coronavirus-vaccines-mandatory-for-all-staff/7ef25287-0f43-44bf-b22b-ee3afe306c4a

Ardern Partially Eases New Zealand Lockdown Outside Auckland

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New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said lockdown restrictions will be partially eased outside of largest city Auckland amid encouraging signs that a community outbreak of Covid-19 is being brought under control. All areas south of Auckland will move to Alert Level 3 at midnight tomorrow, Ardern told a news conference Monday in Wellington. The Northland region in the far north may also move to Level 3 later this week but Auckland, the epicenter of the outbreak, will remain at Level 4 for another two weeks, she said.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-30/ardern-confirms-easing-of-new-zealand-lockdown-outside-auckland?utm_source=twitter&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business&utm_medium=social&utm_content=business&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic

Even Xbox is telling you to get the Covid-19 vaccine

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Microsoft is using the Xbox social media accounts to promote getting vaccinated and dispelling myths surrounding it. There are already plenty of people urging others to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, be they doctors, celebrities, or those who unfortunately caught it. And now even Microsoft is pushing it through the Xbox social media channels. Recently, the official Xbox Twitter account posted 'The power of play makes us heroes in new worlds every day. You can be a hero in real life too by getting vaccinated against Covid-19, protecting yourself & the people around you.
https://metro.co.uk/2021/08/30/even-xbox-is-telling-you-to-get-the-covid-19-vaccine-15175024/

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Cook County Judge James Shapiro then made what the parents' attorneys called an unprecedented decision: He said the mother could not see her 11-year-old son until she got a coronavirus vaccine. The child's father is vaccinated, the Sun-Times reported. Firlit filed a petition to appeal the judge's decision, her attorney Annette Fernholz told The Washington Post. In an interview with WFLD, Fernholz said the ruling was an overreach.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/08/30/chicago-vaccine-custody-rebecca-firlit/

Journalist Alex Berenson is permanently suspended by Twitter over anti-vax COVID-19 tweets

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Former New York Times journalist Alex Berenson has been permanently banned from Twitter after posting an anti-vaccination COVID-19 related tweet. 'The account you referenced has been permanently suspended for repeated violations of our COVID-19 misinformation rules,' a Twitter spokesperson said. Berenson, who has long been a skeptic over the coronavirus risk, has previously called the pandemic an excuse for the government to overstep its boundaries. 'This was the tweet that did it,' Berenson wrote alongside a the screenshot of the tweet that got him permanently banned from the social media platform. 'Entirely accurate. I can't wait to hear what a jury will make of this.' Berenson had previously enjoyed a large social media following, with over 340,000 followers prior to his permanent Twitter ban. Berenson began writing for the New York Times in 1999 before

leaving the newspaper in 2010 to pursue a career as a full-time author and novelist
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9937751/Journalist-Alex-Berenson-permanently-suspended-Twitter-anti-vax-COVID-19-tweets.html

Foxconn founder asks BioNTech to reserve 30 mln more vaccines for Taiwan

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Terry Gou, the billionaire founder of major Apple Inc supplier Foxconn, has asked BioNTech SE to reserve 30 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine for Taiwan, saying he had received a "very good" response. Taiwan's quest to access the vaccine, jointly developed with Pfizer Inc, has dragged on for months, hampered by accusations from Taipei of political interference from Beijing, which claims the island as Chinese territory. Beijing has denied the allegations.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/foxconn-founder-asks-biontech-reserve-30-mln-more-vaccines-taiwan-2021-08-30/

Japan govt says needs more data before deciding on mixed use of COVID-19 vaccines

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Japan's top government spokesman, Katsunobu Kato, said on Monday there was not enough data yet to actively promote the mixed use of COVID-19 vaccines, and that further information was needed before reaching any decision on the matter.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-govt-says-needs-more-data-before-deciding-mixed-use-covid-19-vaccines-2021-08-30/

Japan's Moderna vaccine contamination woes widen as 1 mln more shots suspended

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Total of over 2.6 mln Moderna shots affected in Japan. Contaminants found in vaccines in Gunma and Okinawa. Contamination could be due to wrong needle extraction -ministry. Rovi shares sink more than 20%
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japans-gunma-prefecture-reports-contaminant-moderna-covid-19-vaccine-2021-08-30/

NHS hospitals warned over infection risks of masks and respirators brought in during pandemic

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NHS hospitals have been warned about the risk of wearing the wrong kind of face mask during surgeries following a number of serious infections. Respirator masks have been acquired by the millions during the coronavirus pandemic but sometimes have been deployed in inappropriate settings, according to a patient safety alert issued by NHS
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/nhs-hospitals-masks-respirators-covid-b1909075.html?utm_content=Echobox&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1630315879

New Zealand reports first death linked to Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

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New Zealand reported its first recorded death linked to U.S. drugmaker Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, the health ministry said on Monday, after a woman suffered a rare side-effect leading to inflammation of the heart muscle. The report comes as the country battles an outbreak of the Delta variant after nearly six months of being virus free. It followed a review by an independent panel monitoring the safety of the vaccines.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-reports-death-woman-after-pfizer-covid-vaccine-2021-08-30/

Two Experts Weigh In on Delta

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We asked two of our favorite regular Sunday Covid Q&A experts — Monica Gandhi of University of California, San Francisco, and Bertha Hidalgo of the University of Alabama at Birmingham — to answer questions about the variant during a live Q&A for Bloomberg Terminal subscribers last week. Today, we're giving our newsletter readers a peek at what our experts had to say. Here are some excerpts:

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2021-08-29/coronavirus-q-a-two-experts-weigh-in-on-delta-vaccines-and-immunity-data?utm_source=twitter&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&utm_medium=social

First, surges in Covid-19 infections led to shortages of hospital beds and staff. Now it's oxygen

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Hospitals in parts of the South are running out of oxygen supply as Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations continue soaring, driven by the swaths of people who remain unvaccinated and a dangerous coronavirus variant that has infected millions of Americans. Several hospitals in Florida, South Carolina, Texas and Louisiana are struggling with oxygen scarcity. Some are at risk of having to use their reserve supply or risk running out of oxygen imminently, according to state health officials and hospital consultants.

https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/29/health/us-coronavirus-sunday/index.html

Victorian nurse speaks of harrowing experiences in hospitals inundated with COVID-19 patients

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A Western Health nurse working on the frontline sent an impassioned plea to Victorians today at the latest COVID-19 press conference, urging people to get vaccinated to protect the community. Kylie Fisher described the harrowing experiences last year as Western hospitals were inundated with cases before vaccines were available.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-30/nurse-speaks-out-on-impact-of-covid-on-hospitals/100418072

COVID-19 surge pummels Hawaii and its native population

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Hawaii was once seen as a beacon of safety during the pandemic because of stringent travel and quarantine restrictions and overall vaccine acceptance that made it one of the most inoculated states in the country. But the highly contagious delta variant exploited weaknesses as residents let down their guard and attended family gatherings after months of restrictions and vaccine hesitancy lingered in some Hawaiian communities.

https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-health-coronavirus-pandemic-hawaii-097137d852609f37e4aada899da5938f

Australian state warns COVID-19 hospitalisations to peak in October

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Intensive care cases in Australia's New South Wales will hit a peak in October as COVID-19 infections accumulate, said the premier of the country's most populous state, which reported record daily new infections on Monday. New South Wales, the epicentre of Australia's current outbreak, declared a record 1,290 new cases as the nation struggles to contain the highly contagious Delta variant.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australian-state-warns-covid-19-hospitalisations-to-peak-in-october-idUSKBN2FU0N0

Covid-19: Six more Covid-linked deaths and 1,259 new cases

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Six further coronavirus-related deaths have been reported in Northern Ireland. Deaths are measured by recording those who died within 28 days of receiving a positive result in a test for coronavirus. The total number of deaths linked to Covid-19 in Northern Ireland since the start of the pandemic is 2,358. Another 1,259 cases of coronavirus were reported on Monday, up from 1,225 on Sunday.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-58386077

Israel doubles down on booster shots as daily Covid cases set new record

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Israeli lawmakers are keen to avoid another lockdown after overseeing one of the world's fastest vaccination drives. New daily coronavirus infections, however, have just climbed to record levels. Covid-19 transmission in Israel declined sharply as the country vaccinated more than half of its population in around two months.

https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/30/israel-doubles-down-on-covid-booster-shots-as-breakthrough-cases-rise.html

Covid 19 Delta outbreak and lockdown: All Blacks partied at Covid location of interest - then flew to Perth for Rugby Championship

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A group of All Blacks celebrated winning the Bledisloe Cup against Australia at a Covid-19 location of interest - less than two weeks before flying to Perth for their Rugby Championship campaign. New Zealand Rugby confirmed to the Herald a group of players visited Auckland's HeadQuarters bar after their second-test victory against the Wallabies at Eden Park on August 14. It was one of four new locations added to the Ministry of Health's list on Sunday night. According to the ministry, the popular Viaduct bar HeadQuarters had been visited by a positive Covid-19 case between 11.30 pm and 1.30am on Saturday, August 14, the same night the All Blacks registered their record 57-22 win over the Wallabies to lock away the Bledisloe Cup for a 19th straight year.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/covid-19-delta-outbreak-and-lockdown-all-blacks-partied-at-covid-location-of-interest-then-flew-to-perth-for-rugby-championship/JVL5NKHUZMR6ZBMZEFJ6DCZKA4/