COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

19th Oct 2021

One Minute Overview

Why Are U.K. Covid Cases So High Compared to the Rest of Europe? - Surging Covid cases in the U.K. have left the country behind the rest of Europe with former U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb calling for urgent research into a mutation known as delta plus. Britain, faster to reopen and relax restrictions than other European countries, reported the highest daily jump in new cases on Sunday since mid-July. Weekly deaths from the virus topped 800 for each of the past six weeks, higher than in other major western European nations, according to Bloomberg's tracker.

Russia's Low Vaccination Rates Leads to Record-Breaking Toll - After Sofia Kravetskaya got vaccinated with Russia's Sputnik V vaccine last December, she became a pariah on the Moscow playground where she takes her young daughter. "When I mentioned I volunteered in the trials and I got my first shot, people started running away from me," she said. "They believed that if you were vaccinated, the virus is inside you and you're contagious." For Ms. Kravetskaya, 36, the reaction reflected the prevalent mistrust in the Russian authorities that has metastasized since the pandemic began last year. That skepticism, pollsters and sociologists say, is the main reason only one third of the country's population is fully vaccinated, despite the availability of free inoculations.

Enforcement of Covid-19 vaccine passports comes into effect in Scotland - Enforcement of Scotland's controversial Covid-19 vaccine passport scheme has come into effect. 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. The measures technically came into effect from October 1, but an 18-day grace period was announced following backlash from affected industries and significant problems with the new app. The policy will now be enforceable for nightclubs, strip clubs and unseated indoor events with more than 500 people, unseated outdoor events with over 4,000 and any event with more than 10,000 people. Scots will have to show proof they have had both vaccine doses, with a paper copy of the certificate or a QR code on a new app, although the latter has been plagued with problems since its launch. More than 700,000 people had downloaded the app, and a further 750,000 people have a paper copy of their vaccination status.

Latvia announces four weeks of lockdown as COVID-19 cases spike - Latvia announced a COVID-19 lockdown from Oct. 21 until Nov. 15 to try to slow a spike in infections in one of the least vaccinated European Union countries. 'Our health system is in danger ... The only way out of this crisis is to get vaccinated,' Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins said after an emergency government meeting, blaming low vaccination rates for the spike in hospitalisations. Only 54% of Latvian adults have been fully vaccinated, well below EU average of 74%, EU figures show.

UK government ordered to reveal firms awarded 'VIP' Covid contracts - The UK government has been ordered to reveal which companies were given "VIP" access to multimillion-pound contracts for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the early months of the Covid pandemic, in a ruling from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has previously refused to disclose the names of 47 companies that had contracts awarded through the privileged, fast-track process allocated to firms with political connections. A report by the National Audit Office (NAO) last year found that companies referred as possible PPE suppliers by ministers, MPs or senior NHS officials were given high priority by the DHSC procurement process, which

resulted in a 10 times greater success rate for securing contracts than companies whose bids were processed via normal channels. The Good Law Project (GLP), which first revealed the existence of a VIP lane, is together with fellow campaign group EveryDoctor challenging the DHSC over the lawfulness of the VIP lane and large contracts awarded to three companies: PestFix, Ayanda Capital and Clandeboye Agencies.

EU has exported over 1 bln COVID-19 vaccines, von der Leyen says - More than a billion COVID-19 vaccines produced in the European Union have been exported since December 2020, making the bloc the biggest exporter of the shots, European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen said on Monday. The vaccines had gone to more than 150 countries, and the EU had exported as many doses as it had distributed to its own citizens, von der Leyen added in a statement. The bloc started exporting vaccines at the start of the global roll out at a time when other major producers such as the United States were building up their own supplies and restricting exports.

Gordon Brown calls for airlift of 240 million COVID-19 vaccines - Former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown has called for an immediate airlift of unused COVID jabs to countries in the global south. Brown, an adviser to the World Health Organization (WHO), is pressing the leaders of Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States to hold an emergency summit to agree on the airlift ahead of the G20 meeting later this month. He said an airlift of 240 million doses this month could save 100,000 lives. It would be the first part of a plan to transfer a billion vaccine doses from rich countries to lower-income countries over several months, a plan he says could prevent "many of the one million COVID-induce deaths projected over the next year." "While vaccines have been pledged for donation from all donors, we are not getting the vaccines into people's arms and urgently need a month-to-month timetable to meet our interim targets and prevent further loss of lives," Brown was quoted as saying by the Observer newspaper.

Burundi starts COVID jabs; just North Korea, Eritrea remain - One of the world's last three countries to administer COVID-19 vaccines started giving out doses on Monday as the East African nation of Burundi launched its national campaign. The vaccinations started in the commercial capital, Bujumbura, though health workers told The Associated Press that barely more than a dozen people had received doses by mid-afternoon. Recipients included the ministers of health and security. Only North Korea and the Horn of Africa nation of Eritrea have not administered any COVID-19 vaccines, according to the World Health Organization. Burundi's previous government under the late President Pierre Nkurunziza had been criticized for taking the pandemic lightly.

UK lab investigated for false negative Covid tests is not fully accredited - A private laboratory that is under investigation for potentially issuing more than 40,000 false negative Covid tests was not fully accredited to perform the work, contrary to assurances made by health officials. The UK's independent accreditation service, Ukas, told the Guardian on Monday that neither Immensa Health Clinics Ltd nor its sister company, Dante Labs, had ever been accredited by the service, and that it had informed the Department of Health that statements suggesting otherwise were incorrect. The UK Health Security Agency announced on Friday that it was suspending operations at Immensa's laboratory in Wolverhampton pending an investigation into concerns that at least 43,000 people with coronavirus had been wrongly told their swabs tested negative for the virus.

New Zealand extends Auckland lockdown in battle on Delta variant - New Zealand's biggest city of Auckland will retain its lockdown for two more weeks in the battle on the Delta variant of coronavirus, as the country pushes to step up vaccinations, Prime Minster Jacinda Ardern said on Monday.

Covid-19 news: Valneva reports positive results from vaccine trial - A covid-19 vaccine made by Valneva produced stronger antibody responses and fewer side effects than the

Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in a clinical trial, the French company has announced. The trial included more than 4600 participants in the UK, who were randomly allocated one of the two vaccines, while delta was the predominant coronavirus variant in circulation. The rate of covid-19 cases was similar in the two groups and no participants developed severe illness from covid-19. Valneva's experimental vaccine, VLA2001, consists of inactivated whole virus particles, in combination with two adjuvants – drugs given to augment the immune response. "This is a much more traditional approach to vaccine manufacture than the vaccines so far deployed in the UK, Europe and North America and these results suggest this vaccine candidate is on track to play an important role in overcoming the pandemic," said Adam Finn at the University of Bristol, UK, chief investigator for the trial, in a press release.

U.K. Covid Surge Sparks Call for Probe Into Delta Plus Mutation - Former U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb called for "urgent research" into a mutation of the delta variant -- known as delta plus -- following a surge in Covid-19 cases in the U.K. "We need urgent research to figure out if this delta plus is more transmissible, has partial immune evasion," Gottlieb said in a tweet. "There's no clear indication that it's considerably more transmissible, but we should work to more quickly characterize these and other new variants. We have the tools."

South Africa regulator not authorising Russian COVID-19 vaccine for now - South Africa's drugs regulator said on Monday that it was not approving an emergency use application for Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 shot for now, citing concerns about its safety for people at risk of HIV.

UK Covid cases near 50,000 in one day as No 10 warns of 'challenging' winter - Downing Street has warned of "challenging" months ahead as UK coronavirus cases reached their highest level since mid-July. The reported number of Covid cases in the UK increased steadily through October and reached 49,156 on Monday, the highest reported since 17 July and a 16% rise in new cases over the past week. The figure is only 19,000 cases short of the peak number of cases ever recorded in the UK. On 8 January 2021, 68,053 new cases were reported at the height of the most devastating wave of the pandemic last winter. The prime minister's official spokesperson said a rise in coronavirus cases was expected over the winter and that the government would keep a "close watch" on the statistics.

Lockdown Exit

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https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-18/u-k-falls-behind-europe-on-covid-19-as-mutation-draws-focus-kuwlrzjo?srnd=premium-europe

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https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/oct/18/uk-government-told-reveal-firms-given-vip-covid-contracts-ppe

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https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/18/world/europe/russia-virus-vaccine.html

Latvia announces four weeks of lockdown as COVID-19 cases spike

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https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/latvia-announces-four-weeks-lockdown-covid-19-cases-spike-2021-10-18/

Enforcement of Covid-19 vaccine passports comes into effect in Scotland

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https://www.itv.com/news/border/2021-10-18/enforcement-of-covid-19-vaccine-passports-comes-into-effect-in-scotland

Some Sydney school students return as more COVID-19 curbs eased

Thousands of children returned to school in Sydney on Monday, putting an end to months of home learning as Australia's largest city eased more COVID-19 curbs, thanks to rising rates of vaccinations. Masks are no longer mandatory in offices and larger groups are to be allowed in homes and outdoors after the state of New South Wales, home to Sydney, hit a double-dose inoculation rate of 80% at the weekend among those older than 16. The latest in a series of planned relaxations is part of a shift in strategy by Australia's largest cities towards living with the virus, though officials have warned it will bring more COVID-19 cases.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sydney-eases-more-covid-19-restrictions-vaccinations-pass-key-milestone-2021-10-17/

Social distancing at Mecca's Grand Mosque dropped

The Grand Mosque in the Muslim holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, has returned to operating at full capacity, with worshippers praying shoulder-to-shoulder for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic began. On Sunday, floor markings that guide people to social distance in and around the Grand Mosque were removed. "This is in line with the decision to ease precautionary measures and to allow pilgrims and visitors to the Grand Mosque at full capacity," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. Pictures and footage on Sunday morning showed people praying side by side in straight rows of worshippers, the formation revered in Muslim prayers, for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold last year. While social distancing measures were lifted, authorities said visitors must be fully vaccinated against coronavirus and must continue to wear masks on mosque grounds.

https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/17/grand-mosque-in-mecca-drops-social-distancing

Exit Strategies

Nearly a Third of Chicago Police Have Failed to Report Their Vaccine Status

About one-third of Chicago Police Department employees have not reported their Covid-19 vaccination status to the city, defying Friday's deadline to provide the information or risk unpaid leave. About 64% of the department's 12,770 employees have reported their vaccine status with about 36% of police staffers not providing the required information, according to data released by city officials on Monday. That's the lowest reporting rate among the city's departments. The figures show that 6,894 say they're fully vaccinated and 1,333 report they are not, according to the data. About 4,500 from the department have not responded as mandated by the city amid a standoff between Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Fraternal Order of Police Chicago Lodge #7 President John Catanzara Jr.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-18/third-of-chicago-police-department-defies-vaccine-status-mandate

Russian regions introduce QR codes for entry to public venues as COVID-19 cases hit record

Many Russian regions on Monday announced plans to keep cafes, museums and other public venues open only to those who have recently recovered from COVID-19, have proof of inoculation with a Russian vaccine or a negative coronavirus test, as new cases in the country hit a record. The round of unpopular measures that limits freedoms in Russia comes as the number of daily COVID-19 infections reached an all-time high of 34,325 despite the state-driven vaccination programme.

https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-regions-introduce-qr-codes-entry-public-venues-covid-19-cases-hit-record-2021-10-18/

Biden: Teachers 'most consequential' people after parents

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden hosted a White House ceremony Monday to recognize the 2021 and 2020 national teachers of the year, the state teacher finalists for those years and teachers nationwide, all of whom had to work longer and harder during the pandemic. The president was a surprise guest, walking out onto the South Lawn after the first lady, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona and both national teachers had spoken at the ceremony. Biden said teachers are the "single most consequential people in the world," beyond one's parents, because of the influence they have over their students.

https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-joe-biden-health-education-jill-biden-ab7820e91a3c7bcd08263b393482dc9a

Burundi launches COVID-19 vaccination drive

Burundi on Monday rolled out its first COVID-19 vaccines, months after most African countries, the latest step in the East African nation's shift towards a more active approach to containing the

pandemic. The vaccination campaign started in the commercial capital of Bujumbura without fanfare. Dozens of city residents queued quietly at a vaccination site, telling Reuters they heard about the drive through word of mouth. No government officials were present to officially inaugurate the launch.
https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burundi-launches-covid-19-vaccination-drive-2021-10-18/

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk announces COVID-19 roadmap to reopening as state records zero local cases

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk has outlined a roadmap to reopen the state's borders to COVID-19 hotspots for fully vaccinated people by Christmas. Fully vaccinated travellers will be allowed to enter Queensland without the need to quarantine from December 17. It comes as the state recorded zero new locally acquired COVID cases in the past 24 hours, while more than 8,000 people remain stranded interstate, having applied for border passes to enter Queensland. Ms Palaszczuk said Queensland would begin a phased border reopening for fully vaccinated people from November 19.
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-18/qld-coronavirus-covid-border-date-roadmap-cases/100547720

Merck COVID-19 pill sparks calls for access for lower income countries

The plan to roll out Merck & Co's (MRK.N) promising antiviral pill to treat COVID-19 risks repeating the inequities of vaccine distribution, potentially leaving the nations with the greatest need once again at the back of the line, international health groups say. For example, only about 5% of Africa’s population is immunized, creating an urgent need for therapeutics that could keep people out of hospitals. That compares with more than a 70% inoculation rate in most wealthy nations. Merck on Oct 11 applied for U.S. emergency clearance of the first pill for COVID-19 after it cut hospitalizations and deaths by 50% in a large clinical trial.
https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/merck-covid-19-pill-sparks-calls-access-lower-income-countries-2021-10-17/

How the Covid-19 booster shots could make the vaccination gap worse

"We're all triply-vaccinated!" friends gleefully told me last week, as they invited me to their home for dinner. They were thrilled. I had rarely seen such big smiles since the Covid-19 pandemic began. These are important developments, but they arrive at a time when major challenges remain, since about 66 million American adults have still not yet been fully vaccinated. Forty-six percent of Whites, 49% of Hispanics and 54% of Blacks in the country have not yet gotten a single shot. While my friends were delighted to receive extra protections and invite other people to dinner, much of the country remains wary. To overcome the growing pandemic, we as a nation must all now push to address this widening gap.
https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/17/opinions/covid-19-vaccine-booster-klitzman/index.html

U.S. administers 408.3 mln doses of COVID-19 vaccines - CDC

The United States has administered 408,265,959 doses of COVID-19 vaccines as of Sunday morning, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The figures are up from the 407,446,961 vaccine doses the CDC said had gone into arms by Oct. 16. The agency said 218,805,579 people had received at least one dose while 189,141,481 people were fully vaccinated as of 6 a.m. ET Sunday.
https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-administers-4083-mln-doses-covid-19-vaccines-cdc-2021-10-17/

EU has exported over 1 bln COVID-19 vaccines, von der Leyen says

More than a billion COVID-19 vaccines produced in the European Union have been exported since December 2020, making the bloc the biggest exporter of the shots, European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen said on Monday. The vaccines had gone to more than 150 countries, and the EU had exported as many doses as it had distributed to its own citizens, von der Leyen added in a

statement. The bloc started exporting vaccines at the start of the global roll out at a time when other major producers such as the United States were building up their own supplies and restricting exports.
https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-has-exported-over-1-billion-covid-19-vaccines-since-start-rollout-2021-10-18/

Should COVID-19 vaccines be mandatory?
Governments across the world are turning to vaccine mandates as the Delta variant continues to wreak havoc and vaccine uptake in some communities begin to slow down. New Zealand – which has abandoned its COVID-Zero strategy amid persistent infections – introduced last week a "no jab, no job" policy for doctors and teachers, while neighbouring Fiji says all of its public and private sector workers are liable to lose their jobs if they fail to get fully inoculated by November.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/18/should-covid-19-vaccines-be-mandatory

Thailand to cease Sinovac vaccine use when stocks end this month
Thailand will stop using the COVID-19 vaccine of China's Sinovac when its current stock finishes, a senior official said on Monday, having used the shot extensively in combination with Western-developed vaccines. Thailand used over 31.5 million Sinovac doses since February, starting with two doses to frontline workers, high-risk groups and residents of Phuket, a holiday island that reopened to tourists early in a pilot scheme.
https://news.yahoo.com/thailand-cease-sinovac-vaccine-stocks-082710604.html

Vaccines, masks? Japan puzzling over sudden virus success
Almost overnight, Japan has become a stunning, and somewhat mysterious, coronavirus success story. Daily new COVID-19 cases have plummeted from a mid-August peak of nearly 6,000 in Tokyo, with caseloads in the densely populated capital now routinely below 100, an 11-month low. The bars are packed, the trains are crowded, and the mood is celebratory, despite a general bafflement over what, exactly, is behind the sharp drop. Japan, unlike other places in Europe and Asia, has never had anything close to a lockdown, just a series of relatively toothless states of emergency.
https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-business-lifestyle-japan-e60d760da11f9cadda1d8acab2a6fbf5

Burundi starts COVID jabs; just North Korea, Eritrea remain
One of the world's last three countries to administer COVID-19 vaccines started giving out doses on Monday as the East African nation of Burundi launched its national campaign. The vaccinations started in the commercial capital, Bujumbura, though health workers told The Associated Press that barely more than a dozen people had received doses by mid-afternoon. Recipients included the ministers of health and security. Only North Korea and the Horn of Africa nation of Eritrea have not administered any COVID-19 vaccines, according to the World Health Organization. Burundi's previous government under the late President Pierre Nkurunziza had been criticized for taking the pandemic lightly.
https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-kenya-eritrea-east-africa-1614de45dfae8b438aecd264515f520a

Gordon Brown calls for airlift of 240 million COVID-19 vaccines
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Partisan Exits

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https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/18/uk-lab-immensa-false-negative-covid-tests-not-fully-accredited

Reluctant men: reaching South Africa's most hesitant groups with the Covid-19 vaccine

Many men must choose between hustling to find something that will put bread on the table, or going to queue at a health facility." Laura Lopez Gonzalez explores South Africa's efforts to persuade men to get the jab.
https://uk.news.yahoo.com/reluctant-men-reaching-south-africa-141715018.html

COVID-19: Italian police use water cannon to disperse workers protesting against mandatory COVID pass

Italian police used water cannon and tear gas to break up a demonstration in the port of Trieste, where workers protested against the government's mandatory COVID pass. Under the new rule, workers will be suspended without pay and could face a fine of up to 1,500 euros if they try to work without the COVID pass.
https://news.sky.com/video/covid-19-italian-police-use-water-cannon-to-disperse-workers-protesting-against-mandatory-covid-pass-12437450

The political fight over COVID-19 vaccine mandates is deepening

The science is clear: Vaccines are a safe and effective way to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and death from the coronavirus, and vaccine mandates are an effective tool in promoting widespread vaccinations. Still, the battle to inoculate the nation against the coronavirus has reached a fever pitch in recent months. President Biden has focused on getting as many Americans as possible vaccinated against the coronavirus, most notably rolling out wide-reaching vaccine mandates for government employees and for businesses with more than 100 workers.
https://www.npr.org/2021/10/17/1046598351/the-political-fight-over-vaccine-mandates-deepens-despite-their-effectiveness

Continued Lockdown

New Zealand extends Auckland lockdown in battle on Delta variant

New Zealand's biggest city of Auckland will retain its lockdown for two more weeks in the battle on the Delta variant of coronavirus, as the country pushes to step up vaccinations, Prime Minster Jacinda Ardern said on Monday.
https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-pm-ardern-extends-covid-19-lockdown-auckland-2021-10-18/

Scientific Viewpoint

US to Consider Boosting J&J Vaccines With Pfizer or Moderna Shots, Fauci Says

President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser said he expects U.S. regulators to consider whether people who got the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine should get an mRNA shot against Covid-19 as a booster. "If you boost people who have originally received J&J with either Moderna or Pfizer, the level of antibodies that you induce in them is much higher than if you boost them with the original J&J," Anthony Fauci said on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday. "But the data of boosting the J&J first dose with a J&J second dose is based on clinical data," he said. "So what's going to happen is that the FDA is going to look at all those data, look at the comparison, and make a determination of what they will authorize."

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-17/fauci-says-mix-and-match-booster-shots-will-be-considered

U.K. Covid Surge Sparks Call for Probe Into Delta Plus Mutation

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Covid-19 news: Valneva reports positive results from vaccine trial

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https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-valneva-reports-positive-results-from-vaccine-trial/

Why COVID boosters weren't tweaked to better match variants

More COVID-19 booster shots may be on the way -- but when it's your turn, you'll get an extra dose of the original vaccine, not one updated to better match the extra-contagious delta variant. And that has some experts wondering if the booster campaign is a bit of a missed opportunity to target delta and its likely descendants. "Don't we want to match the new strains that are most likely to circulate as closely as possible?" Dr. Cody Meissner of Tufts Medical Center, an adviser to the Food and Drug Administration, challenged Pfizer scientists recently. "I don't quite understand why this is not delta because that's what we're facing right now," fellow adviser Dr. Patrick Moore of the University of Pittsburgh said last week as government experts debated whether it's time for Moderna boosters. He wondered if such a switch would be particularly useful to block mild infection.

https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-business-health-1810900835cdc9f58cb4384ca5fcf03e

What Scientists Know About the Risk of Breakthrough Deaths

The death of former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell on Monday from complications of Covid-19 has provided fuel for vaccine skeptics and opponents, who immediately seized on the news that Mr. Powell had been vaccinated to stoke doubts about the effectiveness of the vaccines. But Mr. Powell's immune system had most likely been weakened by multiple myeloma, a cancer of white blood cells.

Both the disease and the treatment can make people more susceptible to infections. His age, 84, may also have increased his risk, scientists said. Mr. Powell received his second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in February, said Peggy Cifrino, his longtime aide. He had been scheduled for a booster last week but fell ill before he received it, she said.
https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/10/18/us/colin-powell/breakthrough-covid-deaths

Valneva reports positive results from Covid-19 vaccine trial

French pharmaceutical firm Valneva – whose UK contract for vaccines was cancelled last month – has reported positive results from its Covid-19 trial. Last month, the UK Government scrapped a deal for Valneva's Covid-19 vaccine, with the firm saying the UK Government had served notice over allegations of a breach of the agreement, which Valneva "strenuously" denied. The UK had about 100 million doses on order and Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited Valneva's Scottish manufacturing site in Livingston in January.
https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/valneva-reports-positive-results-from-covid-19-vaccine-trial-40958716.html

The WHO is letting down long Covid patients

It is unclear why the WHO definition snubs and does not embrace the term "long Covid". The term was coined by patients who also refer to themselves as long-haulers. These patients-advocates-researchers galvanized attention around the existence of this disease and brought long Covid to the spotlight. In a short few months, they created a formidable patient-led advocacy and research movement that changed the arc of medical history. They were the first to survey their membership and catalogue the broad array of clinical problems caused by Covid-19. Their contributions will go down in the annals of history as an important inflection point.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/17/who-long-covid-patients

South Africa regulator not authorising Russian COVID-19 vaccine for now

South Africa's drugs regulator said on Monday that it was not approving an emergency use application for Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 shot for now, citing concerns about its safety for people at risk of HIV.
https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africa-regulator-not-authorising-russian-covid-19-vaccine-now-2021-10-18/

WHO expects more information from India's Bharat Biotech for its COVID-19 vaccine

The World Health Organization on Monday asked for further data from India's Bharat Biotech to consider the company's request for an emergency-use listing for its COVID-19 shot, saying the WHO could not "cut corners" in making a decision. Bharat Biotech, which developed Covaxin with an Indian state research body, started sharing data with the WHO from early July. The vaccine was given emergency-use authorisation in India in January even before the completion of a late-stage trial, which later found the shot to be 78% efficacious.
https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-expects-more-information-indias-bharat-biotech-its-covid-19-vaccine-2021-10-18/

Doctor who advocated Covid-19 therapy including ivermectin applied for patent on same unproven treatment

A Sydney gastroenterologist who has been enthusiastically promoting an unapproved Covid-19 treatment, including to Australian politicians and general practitioners, has filed a patent in the US for the same treatment, allowing him to commercialise and profit from it, if approved. Prof Thomas Borody has been quoted in medical newsletters and publications, and in news outlets including the Financial Review, the Daily Telegraph and the Australian, promoting what he describes as a "triple therapy protocol" to treat and cure Covid-19. The protocol involves a combination of the anti-parasitic drug ivermectin, zinc and the antibiotic doxycycline. In December 2020 Borody filed a

patent in the US for therapeutic combinations of drugs, including a combination of ivermectin, an antibiotic and zinc. Patenting a treatment means the owner of the patent is allowed to exclusively manufacture, market and profit from the drug until the patent expires, usually after 20 years.
https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/oct/18/doctor-who-advocated-covid-19-therapy-including-ivermectin-applied-for-patent-on-same-unproven-treatment

Coronavirus Resurgence

UK Covid cases near 50,000 in one day as No 10 warns of 'challenging' winter

Downing Street has warned of "challenging" months ahead as UK coronavirus cases reached their highest level since mid-July. The reported number of Covid cases in the UK increased steadily through October and reached 49,156 on Monday, the highest reported since 17 July and a 16% rise in new cases over the past week. The figure is only 19,000 cases short of the peak number of cases ever recorded in the UK. On 8 January 2021, 68,053 new cases were reported at the height of the most devastating wave of the pandemic last winter. The prime minister's official spokesperson said a rise in coronavirus cases was expected over the winter and that the government would keep a "close watch" on the statistics.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/18/uk-covid-cases-50000-in-one-day-no-10-challenging-winter

Britain reports highest number of COVID-19 cases since mid-July

Britain reported the highest number of new COVID-19 cases in three months on Monday as the number of infections reached levels last seen when lockdown restrictions were in place in England during the summer. Infection numbers in Britain are currently much higher than in other western European countries and have risen more 60% in the last month. Government data showed there were 49,156 new cases of coronavirus, up from 45,140 on Sunday, and the highest daily total since July 17.
https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-records-49156-new-covid-cases-45-deaths-2021-10-18/

Colin Powell dies of COVID-19 complications, was fully vaccinated

Colin L. Powell, the first Black secretary of state and a key figure in Republican administrations, died Monday of complications from COVID-19, his family said. The 84-year-old's family announced the news on Facebook, saying he was "fully vaccinated." "We have lost a remarkable and loving husband, father, grandfather and a great American," the family said on Facebook about the retired four-star Army general.
https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/oct/18/colin-powell-dies-covid-19/

Covid-19: India reports 13,596 fresh cases in 24 hours, lowest in 230 days

India reported 13,596 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, the lowest in 230 days, according to the latest Covid-19 bulletin of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) on Monday. It was 3.9 per cent lower than what the country had witnessed a day before. The total caseload in India has now reached 3,40,81,315. The top five states which registered maximum cases are Kerala with 7,555 cases, followed by Maharashtra with 1,715 cases, Tamil Nadu with 1,218 cases, West Bengal with 624 cases and Odisha with 443 cases.
https://www.indiatoday.in/coronavirus-outbreak/story/covid-19-india-reports-13596-fresh-cases-1865960-2021-10-18

The ACT has recorded 17 new cases of COVID-19 as 80 per cent vaccination milestone is reached

The ACT has reached 80 per cent full vaccination coverage of Canberrans aged 12 and over. ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr made the announcement this afternoon, and said the high vaccination rate will trigger the next stage of the COVID-19 roadmap. "Details of the next step will be outlined tomorrow," he said. The milestone comes as 17 new locally acquired COVID-19 cases were recorded in the ACT. Eleven of today's cases can be linked to a known source. There are 17 people in hospital

with the virus — nine of those are in intensive care, with seven people requiring ventilation.
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-18/act-records-17-new-cases-of-covid-19/100546882

Covid-19 Australia: Victoria records 1,903 cases as state prepares to leave lockdown
Victoria has recorded 1,903 new Covid-19 cases and seven deaths overnight as the state prepares for an early exit from its long-running sixth lockdown. Phones will be running hot for pubs, hairdressers and restaurants on Monday as fully vaccinated Melburnians race for a taste of freedom. From 11.59pm on Thursday, all restrictions for leaving home will be abolished, along with the city's nightly curfew. The state is also preparing to scrap hotel quarantine for international travellers fully vaccinated against Covid-19. However, Premier Daniel Andrews says Victoria will not follow NSW in abolishing quarantine altogether for double-dosed international arrivals from November 1.
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10101823/Covid-19-Australia-Victoria-records-1-903-cases-state-prepares-leave-lockdown.html

Russia COVID-19 cases hit record daily high as deaths spike with infection surge and sluggish vaccine rollout
Russia has reported a record number of new coronavirus infections in the last 24 hours with cases hitting 34,303 - the highest since the pandemic began. It represents a hike of more than 70% when compared with last month's figure of 20,174. Meanwhile, the number of daily COVID deaths in Russia stood at 997 - just five fewer than the record-high of 1,002 seen the previous day.
https://news.sky.com/story/russia-covid-19-cases-hit-record-daily-high-as-deaths-spike-with-infection-surge-and-sluggish-vaccine-rollout-12436408

COVID-19: UK records 57 more coronavirus-related deaths and 45,140 new cases, daily figures show
The UK has recorded 45,140 new cases of COVID-19 and 57 virus-related deaths in the latest 24-hour period, government figures show. It marks the fifth consecutive day the number of people testing positive for coronavirus across the country has exceeded 40,000. On Saturday, official data showed 148 deaths and 43,423 infections had been recorded and this time last week 38 fatalities were reported along with 34,574 positive cases.
https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-records-57-more-coronavirus-related-deaths-and-45-140-new-cases-daily-figures-show-12436619

New Lockdown

Latvia Plans to Reimpose Lockdown After Covid Spike
Latvia plans to impose a 4-week lock down to slow the spread of coronavirus after a surge in cases threatened to overwhelm hospitals, Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins said, according to the Leta newswire. The Baltic country will impose the stricter measures, including restrictions on schools, shops and public events from Oct. 21 until Nov. 15, Leta reported. The government still must confirm the decision on the proposed measures.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-18/latvia-plans-to-reimpose-lockdown-after-covid-spike-leta-says