

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 24th May 2021

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### Overnight NewsRoundUp

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#### **Why Covax, the fund to vaccinate the world, is struggling**

- Early on in the pandemic, global health experts envisioned a nightmare scenario: Covid-19 vaccines are created, but they go almost exclusively to rich countries that can afford to buy them.
- [People in poorer countries are left to get sick and die. To prevent this, the experts set up an international initiative called Covax, designed to make sure every country in the world gets access to vaccines regardless of its ability to pay.](#)
- In the fall of 2020, Covax set a clear goal: Buy 2 billion doses and make them available to nations in need before the end of 2021. But we're now nearly five months into the year, and Covax has delivered just over 68 million doses. In other words, it's only 3.4 percent of the way to its goal.
- The nightmare has become a reality. Around 1.5 billion vaccine doses have been administered around the world - yet only 0.3% have gone to low-income countries. And in places like India and Brazil, thousands of unvaccinated people are dying of COVID-19, even as many Americans revel in their unvaccinated status.
- 'People keep asking me, 'What keeps you awake at night? The variants?' Christ no! It's human behaviour - the unwillingness to share!' said Brice Aylward, a senior adviser at the World Health Organization who works on COVAX. 'How do other people sleep at night? They should be so energized to fix this!'
- If the epidemiologist and his colleagues at COVAX have not managed to avert global vaccine inequity, it's not for lack of trying. They've gotten lifesaving doses to 124 countries from Argentina to Zambia, and they've pushed wealthy countries to help them do more.
- 'COVAX has been an essential tool. I think that's pretty indisputable,' said Kate Dodson, the vice president for global health at the UN Foundation. But, she added, 'They're struggling right now.'

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<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/22440986/covax-challenges-covid-19-vaccines-global-inequity>

#### **Samsung BioLogics shares rise after agrees to make Moderna COVID-19 vaccine**

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Shares in South Korean drug contract manufacturer Samsung BioLogics rose as much as 5.2% in

early Monday trade, after it agreed to fill-finish manufacture Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine. The agreement was part of Moderna Inc and Novavax Inc entering into a deal with the South Korean government to manufacture their COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/samsung-biologics-shares-rise-after-agrees-make-moderna-covid-19-vaccine-2021-05-24/>

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### **Australia Can Get Enough Pfizer Doses by End-2021: Sun-Herald**

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Australia's government is promising enough Pfizer Inc. vaccines to have all Australians vaccinated by the end of 2021, the Sun-Herald newspaper reported. Two million Pfizer doses are expected to be available in Australia each week from the beginning of October, which would mean all who are keen can get their two shots by the end of the year, the paper said, citing the Australian Medical Association. Health Minister Greg Hunt told the paper that 4.5 million Pfizer doses will arrive by the end of June, and there will be 7 million doses expected in both the third and fourth quarters. He added that people should not delay getting their shots as there are AstraZeneca Plc vaccines available now for Australians above 50.

[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-23/australia-can-get-enough-pfizer-doses-by-end-2021-sun-herald?cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business&utm\\_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm\\_content=business&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-23/australia-can-get-enough-pfizer-doses-by-end-2021-sun-herald?cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social)

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### **France urges citizens to keep a lid on post-lockdown euphoria**

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French officials urged citizens not to let down their guard against COVID-19, after some people responded to the easing of restrictions by staging street parties late into the night. Starting on Wednesday, cafes and restaurants were allowed to serve customers in outside areas, and the nightly curfew was pushed back by two hours, to 9:00 pm (1900 GMT). In the city of Rennes, 350 km (217 miles) west of Paris, a large crowd of people danced around a bonfire in a central square after the 9:00 p.m. curfew fell on Wednesday evening, video footage posted on social media showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/france-urges-citizens-keep-lid-post-lockdown-euphoria-2021-05-20/>

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### **Covid Vaccination Campaign Off To Strong Start Among Young Teens, With Almost 2 Million Getting Jab**

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Since federal regulators began allowing younger teenagers to receive Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine last week, about 1.87 million Americans ages 12 to 15 have already gotten at least their first shot, as U.S. vaccination efforts pivot from higher-risk groups to adolescents and hesitant adults.

[https://www.forbes.com/sites/joewalsh/2021/05/22/covid-vaccination-campaign-off-to-strong-start-among-young-teens-with-almost-2-million-getting-jab/?utm\\_source=ForbesMainTwitter&utm\\_campaign=socialflowForbesMainTwitter&utm\\_medium=social&sh=2d7e0ba441b6](https://www.forbes.com/sites/joewalsh/2021/05/22/covid-vaccination-campaign-off-to-strong-start-among-young-teens-with-almost-2-million-getting-jab/?utm_source=ForbesMainTwitter&utm_campaign=socialflowForbesMainTwitter&utm_medium=social&sh=2d7e0ba441b6)

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### **France could impose tougher coronavirus measures on Britain, says Le Drian**

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France does not rule out "slightly tougher" health measures for travellers from Britain, the French foreign affairs minister said on Sunday, citing the spread in the UK of the coronavirus variant first found in India. "We worry about the Indian variant and we remain on high alert regarding that matter, in cooperation with British authorities", Jean-Yves Le Drian told RTL radio.

[https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/france-could-impose-tougher-coronavirus-measures-britain-says-le-drian-2021-05-23/?taid=60aa65c134e77e00018aaaac&utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_medium=trueAnthe](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/france-could-impose-tougher-coronavirus-measures-britain-says-le-drian-2021-05-23/?taid=60aa65c134e77e00018aaaac&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthe)

[m&utm\\_source=twitter](#)

## **India's capital Delhi to ease COVID-19 restrictions as cases drop**

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India's capital New Delhi will start relaxing its strict coronavirus lockdown next week if new cases continue to drop in the city, its chief minister said on Sunday. The nation on Sunday reported 240,842 new infections nationwide over 24 hours - the lowest daily new cases in more than a month - and 3,741 deaths. For weeks, India has battled a devastating second wave of COVID-19 that has crippled its health system and led to shortages of oxygen supplies. New Delhi, one of the worst hit cities, went into lockdown on April 20, but new cases have declined in recent weeks and test positivity rate has fallen under 2.5%, compared to 36% last month, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

[https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-reports-daily-rise-coronavirus-cases-240842-2021-05-23/?taid=60a9e3af01ef8e00017b4ac2&utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=twitter](https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-reports-daily-rise-coronavirus-cases-240842-2021-05-23/?taid=60a9e3af01ef8e00017b4ac2&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter)

## **New pledges at global summit target COVID vaccine gap**

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At the G20 Global Health Summit in Italy today, world leaders and drug companies announced major commitments to boost the supply of COVID vaccine for low- and middle-income countries, but stopped short of endorsing a full waiver of vaccine patent rights. So far, about 1.59 billion vaccine doses have been given worldwide, about 84% of it deployed in higher-income countries, according to the New York Times. The summit today, hosted by the European Commission and Italy, comes as the vaccine gap becomes more acute, with supplies expected from India delayed due to the country's catastrophic surge.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/new-pledges-global-summit-target-covid-vaccine-gap>

## **Ontario prepares to reopen after punishing third COVID-19 wave**

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### **Ontario prepares to reopen after punishing third COVID-19 wave**

Ontario expects to permit outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people and allow non-essential retail to operate at 15% capacity starting the week of June 14, contingent on certain vaccination rates being met, the premier said on Thursday. Canada's most-populous province has been under lockdown since early April when a third wave of the coronavirus threatened to overwhelm hospital capacity. The reopening will be confirmed closer to the date, Premier Doug Ford said. The province will reopen outdoor amenities - including playgrounds, basketball courts and golf courses - on Saturday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/ontario-prepares-allow-outdoor-gatherings-up-10-people-2021-05-20/>

## **Covid-19: Should all children get a vaccine?**

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### **Covid-19: Should all children get a vaccine?**

Vaccinating children is routine and widely accepted - measles, mumps, polio, diphtheria, rotavirus, multiple strains of meningitis, whooping cough... the list goes on. All this starts from just a few weeks old. So, what about Covid-19? Some countries are cracking on - the US has already immunised around 600,000 children, aged between 12 and 15. It expects to have enough safety data to go even younger next year. The UK is rattling through the adults - who should all have been offered their first dose by the end of July - but has yet to come to a decision on children. There is a scientific question - will vaccinating children save lives? - which is complex as the answer may vary from country to country. There is also a moral and ethical dimension if doses destined for children would save more lives if they were given to health workers and vulnerable adults in other countries.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-57203521>

## **California to lift most COVID-19 limits, freeing up businesses**

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California will lift most remaining crowd-capacity limits and physical distancing requirements related to COVID-19 on June 15, proceeding to fully reopen its economy as the pandemic abates and vaccination rates rise, health officials said on Friday. The new policy will end California's complicated, color-coded system of tiered restrictions, imposed on a county-by-county basis last August. California, the most populous U.S. state with some 40 million people, was the first to impose statewide stay-at-home orders and mandatory business closures in March 2020 as the pandemic began to take hold.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/california-lift-covid-19-capacity-physical-distancing-requirements-june-15-2021-05-21/>

## **AstraZeneca chief admits UK got 'priority' access to coronavirus vaccine**

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The U.K. received preferential access to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, AstraZeneca chief Pascal Soriot revealed, while defending the jab and saying that it "has a future." Soriot told the Financial Times that the British government was guaranteed priority supplies as part of a return-for-investment agreement with the University of Oxford, which developed the vaccine. Soriot said that deal had been struck before AstraZeneca teamed up with the university to manufacture and distribute the jab on the international market. "Of course when you do something like this as a government, you don't do it for free," he said. "What you want in return, and it's fair enough, is priority."

<https://www.politico.eu/article/astrazeneca-pascal-soriot-uk-priority-access-coronavirus-vaccine/>

## **Covid-19: More than 50m vaccine doses given in England**

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Coronavirus vaccine rollout opening up to people aged 32 and 33  
Tivyside Advertiser  
More than 50 million doses of coronavirus vaccine now given in England  
LBC  
Coronavirus vaccine booster trial begins in UK  
POLITICO Europe  
COVID-19: More than 70% of UK adults have now had a first coronavirus vaccine dose  
Sky News  
View Full coverage on Google News

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-57212470>

## **Get a Covid-19 vaccine in this town and you could win a live cow**

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### **Get a Covid-19 vaccine in this town and you could win a live cow**

A district of northern Thailand has launched a raffle campaign for its vaccinated residents to win a live cow per week for the rest of the year, in a bid to boost the local Covid-19 vaccination drive. From next month, one lucky vaccinated villager in the Mae Chaem district of Chiang Mai province will be randomly chosen every week to win a young cow worth about 10,000 baht (\$318.78). The campaign, set to run for 24 weeks, has been met with enthusiasm in the town of 43,000 since it was announced earlier this week. "Our vaccine registration numbers have gone from hundreds to thousands in a couple of days," district chief Boonlue Thamtharanurak told Reuters. "The villagers love cows. Cows can be sold for cash."

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/20/asia/thailand-covid-vaccines-cows-intl-hnk-scli/index.html>

## **No 10 'tried to block' data on spread of new Covid variant in English schools**

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### **No 10 'tried to block' data on spread of new Covid variant in English schools**

Downing Street leaned on Public Health England not to publish crucial data on the spread of the new Covid variant in schools, documents seen by the Observer have suggested. Scientists, union officials and teachers said that the lack of transparency was "deeply worrying". The focus of their anger concerns the pre-print of a PHE report that included a page of data on the spread of the India Covid-19 variant in schools. But when the report was published on Thursday 13 May, the page had

been removed. It was the only one that had been removed from the pre-print. Days later, the government went ahead with its decision to remove the mandate on face coverings in English schools. Evidence seen by the Observer suggests No 10 was directly involved in the decision not to publish it. The prime minister's office acknowledged it was in correspondence with PHE officials about presentation of the data but vigorously denied this constituted "interference" or "pressure".

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/22/no-10-tried-to-block-data-on-spread-of-new-covid-variant-in-english-schools>

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### **Wuhan lab staff sought hospital care before COVID-19 outbreak disclosed - WSJ**

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With the already-postponed Summer Olympics in Tokyo just over two months away, Japan is racing to suppress its biggest wave of COVID-19 infections to date. Yet unlike other large and wealthy nations, Japan has vaccinated only a sliver of its population. Now, Japanese officials are calling in reinforcements. Japan on Friday approved the emergency use of the two-dose COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna and AstraZeneca for people aged 18 and older. Up until now, Japan had only authorized the jab from Pfizer and its partner BioNTech.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/wuhan-lab-staff-sought-hospital-care-before-covid-19-outbreak-disclosed-wsj-2021-05-23/>

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### **COVID-19: Vaccine hesitancy in some of Africa's poorest nations risks jabs going out of date**

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When the world-wide vaccine alliance, GAVI, announced that 132,000 AstraZeneca vaccines had been designated for South Sudan, doctors and health officials in this impoverished country were both surprised and overjoyed. Health facilities in South Sudan - one of the poorest and least stable countries in the world - are rudimentary. The government depends on aid agencies and NGOs to operate them and it can barely afford to pay the staff. Nevertheless, the first batch of vaccines, along with 132,500 syringes and 1,325 disposal boxes touched down at the airport in the capital, Juba, at the end of March and the authorities drew up plans to distribute them at three vaccination centres in the city.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-vaccine-hesitancy-in-some-of-africas-poorest-nations-risks-jabs-going-out-of-date-12313361>

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### **Brazil senator says Bolsonaro never wanted COVID-19 vaccines, preferred herd immunity**

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Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro never wanted to buy COVID-19 vaccines and originally bet on herd immunity beating the coronavirus, the senator leading the upper house's inquiry into the government's handling of the crisis said on Friday. In an interview, Senator Renan Calheiros said it is too early to say if Bolsonaro had committed any criminal offense in his management of the public health crisis, and that more investigation is required. "I think everything points in that direction," Calheiros said, regarding Bolsonaro's preference for herd immunity.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-senator-says-bolsonaro-never-wanted-covid-19-vaccines-preferred-herd-2021-05-22/>

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### **Breaking evangelical resistance to coronavirus vaccines will be hard**

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Evangelicals make up one quarter of the United States population and they are the Americans least likely to get vaccinated against the coronavirus. Even as the Biden administration works fervently to overcome vaccine hesitancy and some in the evangelical community like Franklin Graham, son of

legendary preacher Billy Graham, pledge to help them, they face a daunting task. The hurdle: For many evangelicals, the vaccine, and proof that you have had it, are tools of the Antichrist.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/05/21/breaking-evangelical-resistance-coronavirus-vaccines-will-be-hard/>

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### **AstraZeneca chief hits back at 'armchair generals' after criticism**

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The chief executive of AstraZeneca has defended the company against "armchair generals" and said its vaccine has a future. Pascal Soriot disclosed the UK had priority access to the jab in a deal with Oxford University in return for investment and that it was only slightly less effective against the India variant than the strain identified in Kent. The French executive, 61, told the Financial Times a new booster had performed well against other variants in animal studies and the firm is in negotiations with the UK and other governments about contracts for booster shots. Soriot said the company's plan of delivering the vaccine non-profit in order to repair the industry's image had been disrupted by "bad luck" and "people misunderstanding things".

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/may/22/astrazeneca-chief-hits-back-at-armchair-generals-after-criticism>

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### **Coronavirus: How to determine when the pandemic ends**

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A look to New Zealand and a small handful of other countries shows an example that billions of people would like to follow. Young people there show tens of thousands of people at a rock concert, packed together and bawling along to their favorite hits — without masks and without social distancing. But a look to India shows the coronavirus still spreading with deadly and devastating effects. India's health system has collapsed beneath the strain of the country's second wave of COVID-19 infections. There isn't enough oxygen to treat people; corpses are left to float down the Ganges River. The death toll there from COVID-19 hit a new high on Wednesday when around 4,500 people died of the disease. Data from Johns Hopkins University shows no other country has reported so many deaths in a single day — and the true figure is assumed to be much higher.

<https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-how-to-determine-when-the-pandemic-ends/a-57599876>

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### **CDC Ramps Up Research on Highly Contagious Variant from India**

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Federal Health officials are ramping up their surveillance of the highly transmissible Covid-19 variant first identified in India as experts warn that under-vaccinated areas in the U.S. could become hot spots for the mutation. While U.S. cases attributed to the B.1.617 variant currently sit below 1%, the growth rate remains unclear due to the small sample size. Meanwhile, one science group said the strain could be as much as 50% more transmissible than B.1.1.7, the variant that emerged from the U.K. That mutation was first seen in the U.S. in late December, and is now dominant nationally.

[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-23/cdc-ramps-up-research-on-highly-contagious-variant-from-india?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm\\_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-23/cdc-ramps-up-research-on-highly-contagious-variant-from-india?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business)

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### **Moderna, Novavax to produce more COVID-19 vaccines in S.Korea**

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Moderna Inc and Novavax Inc entered into a deal with the South Korean government to manufacture their COVID-19 vaccines, as the country has been under pressure to secure more and faster deliveries of U.S.-made vaccines. Saturday's agreements with the U.S. drugmakers came a day after U.S. President Joe Biden said that he and South Korean President Moon Jae-in had agreed on a comprehensive partnership on COVID-19 vaccines and that the United States would provide vaccinations for 550,000 South Korean soldiers

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-south-korea-sign-production-deal-mrna-vaccines-2021-05-22/>

## **Two COVID shots effective against India variant - English health body**

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A double dose of COVID-19 vaccines is almost as effective against the fast-spreading variant of the coronavirus first identified in India as it is against Britain's dominant strain, English health officials said on Saturday. Britain's health minister said the data was groundbreaking and he was increasingly hopeful that the government would be able to lift more COVID restrictions next month. A study by Public Health England found the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 88% effective against symptomatic disease from the B.1.617.2 variant two weeks after the second dose.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/two-covid-shots-effective-against-india-variant-english-health-body-2021-05-22/>

## **COVID-19 may have killed 20% more than reported in US**

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The COVID-19 pandemic may have exacted a 20% higher US death toll than previously estimated, particularly among racial minorities, underscoring the need to adapt policies to address deepening ethnic and sociodemographic disparities, according to a study led by Boston University researchers. The study, published yesterday in PLOS Medicine, consisted of analyzing provisional county-level COVID-19 and all-cause death data from the National Center for Health Statistics from Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2020. The sample included 2,096 counties (out of more than 3,000 in the country) that reported at least 20 coronavirus deaths during that time, representing a total of 319.1 million people.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/05/covid-19-may-have-killed-20-more-reported-us>

## **Novavax hunts for Australian manufacturer as CSL homes in on AstraZeneca vaccine production**

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### **Novavax hunts for Australian manufacturer as CSL homes in on AstraZeneca vaccine production**

Once a likely contender to produce Novavax's late-stage COVID-19 vaccine in Australia, local biotech CSL now says it'll be too busy manufacturing AstraZeneca's shot. CSL lacks the capacity to make both AstraZeneca and Novavax's vaccines at the same time, a company spokeswoman told Fierce Pharma via email. The company is under contract to produce 50 million AZ doses for Australia and, at the government's behest, will "remain fully focused on the production of the AstraZeneca vaccine," she said. The company had previously suggested it might be able to chip in on Novavax's production, too.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/manufacturing/novavax-hunts-for-australian-manufacturer-as-csl-homes-astrazeneca-vaccine-production>

## **With the Olympics just months away, Japan issues emergency nod for AstraZeneca, Moderna vaccines**

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With the already-postponed Summer Olympics in Tokyo just over two months away, Japan is racing to suppress its biggest wave of COVID-19 infections to date. Yet unlike other large and wealthy nations, Japan has vaccinated only a sliver of its population. Now, Japanese officials are calling in reinforcements. Japan on Friday approved the emergency use of the two-dose COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna and AstraZeneca for people aged 18 and older. Up until now, Japan had only authorized the jab from Pfizer and its partner BioNTech.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/olympics-just-months-away-japan-issues-emergency-nod-for-astrazeneca-moderna-vaccines>

## **COVID-19: Just 15 people test positive among nearly 60,000 who attended trial mass gatherings, figures show**

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Just 15 people tested positive for coronavirus among nearly 60,000 who attended trials of mass gatherings including the FA Cup final and the Brit Awards, official figures show. Nine large-scale events were staged as part of the government's plan to allow for the return of big crowds this summer. Those who attended were exempt from certain coronavirus rules, such as the rule-of-six.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-just-15-people-test-positive-among-nearly-60-000-who-attended-trial-mass-gatherings-figures-show-12312532>

## **COVID-19: Current coronavirus vaccines unlikely to protect against new variants in future, SAGE warns**

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### **COVID-19: Current coronavirus vaccines unlikely to protect against new variants in future, SAGE warns**

Current COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to protect against new variants of the virus in the future, the government's scientific advisers have warned. In a paper published on Friday, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) said coronavirus may continue to evolve for years to come and that "eradication is extremely unlikely". The experts warn that eventually it is likely "current vaccines will fail to protect against transmission, infection, or even against disease caused by newer variants".

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-current-coronavirus-vaccines-unlikely-to-protect-against-new-variants-in-future-sage-warns-12312976>

## **India has seen 1 million Covid deaths so far, The Economist's model estimates**

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Around 1 million people have died of Covid-19 in India so far, The Economist has estimated in a modeling report to gauge excess deaths worldwide caused by the pandemic. "On the basis of the model it would appear that around 1 million people have died of Covid-19 in India so far," the report said. According to the report, India is witnessing between 6,000 and 31,000 excess deaths per day. This estimate is well above the daily official figures that are hovering around the 4,000-mark. Earlier this month, an editorial in the Lancet journal had said that India could potentially record 1 million deaths due to Covid by 1 August. The editorial had quoted projections made by The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, a global health research organisation.

<https://theprint.in/health/india-has-seen-1-million-covid-deaths-so-far-the-economists-model-estimates/662011/?fbclid=IwAR2sZEgH7rMjt2uFYRQOyR7d1RzD4gPuDUOz8C4sFXNXijt2FHnjGE2Djjo>

## **Japan approves more COVID-19 vaccines, expands state of emergency**

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Japan expanded a state of emergency to cover the southern island of Okinawa on Friday, as authorities approved two more coronavirus vaccines to speed a lagging inoculation campaign. The newly approved vaccines, from Moderna Inc and AstraZeneca PLC, will join the one co-developed by Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE in a vaccination drive that began in mid-February.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-approve-more-covid-19-vaccines-state-emergency-set-widen-2021-05-21/>

## **In Rural India, Less COVID-19 Testing, More Fear — And A Few Ventilators For Millions**

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### **In Rural India, Less COVID-19 Testing, More Fear — And A Few Ventilators For Millions**

Watching horrifying scenes in India's big cities, where COVID-19 patients have been unable to get ambulances, and even the best-equipped hospitals have run out of oxygen, Saurav Kumar shuddered to think what this wave of the pandemic would do to his hometown. Kumar, a 30-year-old

tech worker in New Delhi, grew up in a rural area of the eastern state of Bihar. With a population of more than 100 million, Bihar is one of the country's most populous states and one of its poorest, where the average income is about \$600 per year. Most people he knows back home have never used the internet and don't have access anyway. Kumar worries about how they'll ever manage to book vaccination appointments, which has to be done through the government's buggy CoWIN app and website.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/05/22/998489469/in-rural-india-less-covid-19-testing-more-fear-and-a-few-ventilators-for-million>

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## **Thailand sees first local cases of Indian COVID-19 variant**

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Thailand has detected its first 36 domestically transmitted cases of the highly infectious COVID-19 variant first found in India, authorities said on Friday, a discovery that could complicate efforts to address its most deadly outbreak so far. All 36 cases with the B.1.617.2 variant were found among people staying in construction workers' accommodation in the capital Bangkok and included 15 migrant workers, the health ministry said. The B.1.617.2 variant, which ravaged India, is believed by some experts to be even more transmissible than the B.1.1.7 variant first detected in Britain, which Thailand's health ministry on Friday said was found in the majority of recent cases in the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-sees-first-local-cases-indian-covid-19-variant-2021-05-21/>

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## **US's daily COVID-19 cases fall below 30K for first time since last summer**

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COVID-19 cases on Thursday fell below 30,000 for the first time since June. There were 29,128 new reported coronavirus cases in the U.S. on Thursday, a Wall Street Journal analysis of Johns Hopkins University data showed.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/uss-daily-covid-19-cases-fall-below-30k-for-first-time-since-last-summer/ar-AAKgV7w>

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## **Malaysia Announces Rules to Reduce Movements in Virus Fight**

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Malaysia on Saturday detailed further restrictions on movements to contain a record surge in Covid cases. Businesses will only be allowed to operate from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. daily from May 25, Defense Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob told a briefing. About 80% of government officers and 40% of private sector employees will work from home, with the move affecting 7 million to 8 million workers.

[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-22/malaysia-announces-rules-to-reduce-movements-in-virus-fight?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm\\_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-22/malaysia-announces-rules-to-reduce-movements-in-virus-fight?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business)

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## **Argentina announces 'circuit-breaker' lockdown as pandemic rages**

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Argentina will tighten pandemic lockdown measures to combat a severe second COVID-19 wave, President Alberto Fernandez said on Thursday, underscoring concern as daily cases and deaths have broken records over the last week. The strict "circuit-breaker" measures will come into force on Saturday and last until May 31. They include school and non-essential commerce closures and the banning of social, religious and sporting events in the nation of 45 million people.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/argentina-tighten-lockdown-pandemic-rages-sources-say-2021-05-20/>

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## **Bangladesh orders lockdown in Rohingya camps as COVID-19 cases jump**

### **Bangladesh orders lockdown in Rohingya camps as COVID-19 cases jump**

Bangladesh ordered a strict lockdown in five camps that are home to nearly 100,000 Rohingya

refugees following a sharp rise in coronavirus cases in the world's largest refugee settlement this week, government officials said on Friday. Nearly a million Rohingya refugees who fled persecution in Myanmar live in 34 sprawling camps in southeastern Bangladesh, and campaigners have warned that the crowded conditions make it difficult to stem the virus's spread. Cases in the camps have stayed relatively low since the pandemic began, but test results on Wednesday and Thursday showed a higher rate of transmission, said government official Shamsud Douza. On Thursday, 45 out of 247 tests were positive.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-bangladesh-refugees/bangladesh-orders-lockdown-in-rohingya-camps-as-covid-19-cases-jump-idUSL5N2N823Y>

### **England pilots new support initiatives to boost self-isolating in higher COVID areas**

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New support initiatives will be piloted in nine areas of England with higher COVID rates, including from variants, as part of government efforts to boost testing and self-isolation, the health ministry said on Monday. The incidence of infections in Britain is still low but clusters of the Indian variant, believed to be more transmissible than the dominant Kent variant, are growing, and could derail plans to further ease lockdown measures. A total of 12 million pounds (\$17 million) will be provided by government for accommodation for those in overcrowded households, social care support and communications assistance for those who don't have English as their first language, among other steps.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/england-pilots-new-support-initiatives-boost-self-isolating-higher-covid-areas-2021-05-23/>

### **Britons Shun Boris Johnson's Call to Take 2 Covid Tests Per Week**

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The number of rapid Covid-19 tests being carried out in England fell to just over five million per week at the start of May, despite a government campaign calling on members of the public to test themselves twice weekly at home. Official data shows that almost 5.1 million so-called lateral flow tests were conducted in the week to May 12, down from a high of 7.6 million in the week to March 17 when schools reopened after the winter lockdown. The rapid test total has fallen for three weeks in a row in England, which has a total population of about 56 million people. Boris Johnson's government has long pointed to mass testing as the key to the U.K. getting back to normal, after suffering one of the worst death tolls from coronavirus in the world.

[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-23/britons-shun-boris-johnson-s-call-to-take-2-covid-tests-per-week?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm\\_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-23/britons-shun-boris-johnson-s-call-to-take-2-covid-tests-per-week?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=business&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business)