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Martin Belam

Covid news live: Russia death toll breaks records again; US set to open land borders

Нові новини в прямому ефірі: кількість загиблих в Росії знову б'є рекорди; США мають намір відкрити сухопутні кордони

В Україні щодня зростає кількість загиблих та випадків смертей. Станом на 11.10. в Україні зареєстровано 471 смертей від коронавірусу, свідчать дані міністерства охорони здоров'я. Це означає, що країна наближається до рекордної щоденної кількості смертей 481, про яку повідомлялося 7 квітня. Кількість нових щоденних коронавірусних інфекцій в Україні, населення якої становить 41 млн осіб, також зросла за останні кілька тижнів. В Україні за минулу добу зареєстровано 16 309 нових випадків коронавірусу.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2021/oct/13/covid-news-live-us-set-to-open-land-borders-bali-prepares-to-welcome-back-tourists?page=with:block-616677398f08880f7f054a80>

Former NBA player **Etan Thomas** has written [an open letter to current player Jonathan Isaac](#), warning him that certain sections of America will co-opt him for their own ends. Here's an excerpt:

You – and some other vaccine hesitant players – have clearly stated that you are not against vaccinations. More importantly you have not discouraged others to get them. Instead, you've articulated that you are personally "uncomfortable with getting the vaccine at this time". While we hold different opinions on the vaccine, I'm not going to demean, ridicule or purposely misrepresent you because of them. If I did that, I would be as bad as the hypocritical right-wing media, Donald Trump and his followers who purposely misrepresented Colin Kaepernick's reasons for taking a knee. The same people who once told all athletes to "shut up and dribble" are now praising you for expressing your hesitancy in taking the vaccine, and are attempting to co-opt your uncertainty to promote their agenda – a push against vaccine mandates – which was the sole reason Fox News invited you to appear. Getting the support of Fox News, Trump supporters and Texas senator Ted Cruz of all people should ring alarm bells. Cruz has castigated NBA players for his entire career for speaking out, but he now tweets that "he stands" with players like yourself who are unvaccinated. **Read more here: Etan Thomas – Fox News and the right will praise unvaccinated NBA players ... then use them**

49m ago 10:15

CNN has what it describes as an exclusive today from Nick Paton Walsh, that China is to test thousands of Wuhan blood samples in a new Covid-19 probe. **He writes:** The store of up to 200,000 samples, including those from the closing months of 2019 were pinpointed in February this year by the World Health Organization's panel of investigators as a possible source of key information that could help determine when and where the virus first crossed into humans. The samples are kept in the Wuhan Blood Center, and are thought to span 2019, providing real-time tissue samples from a wide swathe of the population in the Chinese city where SARS-CoV-2 is thought to have first infected humans. The blood bank samples have been retained for two years, Chinese officials have said, in

case they are needed as evidence in any lawsuits related to the blood donations they are from. That two-year waiting period will soon expire for the key months of October and November 2019, when most experts think the virus could first have infected humans. An official from China's National Health Commission, told CNN preparation for testing is currently underway, and confirmed testing would happen once the two-year limit was reached. They "absolutely will contain vital clues," said Maureen Miller, associate professor of epidemiology at Columbia University. She urged China to permit foreign experts to observe the process. "No one will believe any results that China reports unless there are qualified observers at the very least," she said. Read more here: [CNN – China to test thousands of Wuhan blood samples in Covid-19 probe](#)

1h ago09:56

Russia reports record number of Covid deaths for second day running

The numbers coming out of **Russia** continue to gradually ratchet up. Reuters are carrying the news that the country has set a record number of Covid-related deaths in a 24-hour period for the second day in the row. The new peak now stands at 984, after yesterday recording a then-record 973 deaths. Russian president **Vladimir Putin** told lawmakers on Tuesday that the country had to "increase its pace" of vaccinations. Roughly a third of the country's 144 million people have had at least one shot of a vaccine so far. Health minister **Mikhail Murashko** revealed yesterday that the country was treating 1.1 million people with Covid symptoms. There were 28,717 new cases reported in the last 24 hours.

1h ago09:40

Andrew Sparrow has launched his [UK politics live blog for today](#). It will be very dominated by Brexit and the Northern Ireland protocol, so I'll be continuing here with UK coronavirus lines as they emerge. If you do fancy UK politics instead, then you can find that over [here](#). The Washington Post has a lead item this morning looking at the increasingly partisan politicising of vaccine mandates in the US. **It reports:** The anti-mandate cause is becoming increasingly central to pro-Trump Republicans, with figures such as Texas Gov Greg Abbott and Florida Gov Ron DeSantis loudly promoting it, a development that complicates President Biden's efforts to fight the pandemic. The clash over mandates is playing out far beyond Texas. On Tuesday, a federal judge said New York state, which has imposed a mandate on health-care workers, must allow religious exemptions while the mandate works its way through the courts. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), an outspoken conservative, tweeted that "Ohio should ban all vaccine mandates." And the Brooklyn Nets basketball team told superstar guard Kyrie Irving on Tuesday that he must get vaccinated or he cannot play or practice with the team — prompting a tweet from Donald Trump Jr., the former president's son, lauding Irving over what he had "sacrificed." This growing clamour over vaccine mandates — which public health experts say are the best way to end the nearly two-year pandemic, and which have proved effective in other countries — poses a direct challenge to Biden. After initial hesitancy, he has embraced vaccine requirements as he seeks to deliver on the central promise of his presidency to take the country past Covid. Read more here: [Washington Post – Ban on vaccine mandates in Texas sharpens political battle lines](#)

2h ago08:41

Bars and festivals lift UK economy in August after restrictions dropped UK economic growth picked up in August after an unexpected fall in July, as bars, restaurants and festivals benefited from the removal of most remaining pandemic restrictions. The [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) said gross domestic product rose by 0.4% in August as consumers increased their spending on leisure during the first full month without Covid controls in England. However, the ONS cut its growth estimate for July from a **rise of 0.1%** to a fall of the same amount, after fresh economic data revealed a worse hit for

car manufacturing caused by global supply chain problems and microchip shortages. Growth in August was offset by a decline in the health sector amid a drop in testing and vaccinations for Covid-19. Retail sales fell, reflecting shortages on the high street and consumers switching more of their spending from goods to services after the easing of pandemic controls. **Read more of Richard Partington's report here: [Bars and festivals lift UK economy in August after July fall](#)**

Bars and festivals lift UK economy in August after July fall

3h ago 08:18

Ed Miliband is doing the UK media round for the opposition Labour party this morning. He's just been questioned on Sky News about whether Labour should be apologising, in the wake of yesterday's damning report on the country's Covid response, for failing to force the government into an earlier lockdown. He said that he felt "collectively the whole of politics should apologise". He went on to say: Government as a whole, politics as a whole, let down the families and the people who died. The government is the lead on that, and they need to be held accountable for that. We've got to learn lessons from this, about what went wrong. But there are deeper lessons about the inequalities and deprivation in our country. The way the government handled it was chaotic, and they were deeply unprepared.

3h ago 08:06

My colleagues Andrew Gregory and Robert Booth have this report today on **[the NHS in the UK facing a beds crisis as care homes stop taking patients from hospitals](#)**: The NHS faces a mounting beds crisis as care homes suffering unprecedented staff shortages are forced to stop taking patients from hospitals, health and care leaders have warned. Ministers are desperately trying to free up space in the NHS to tackle a backlog of 5.6 million people – equivalent to almost 10% of people in England – awaiting treatment. But efforts to speed up the discharge of hospital patients into the community are being hampered by care worker shortages. Thousands of staff who are declining Covid vaccinations are expected to be told they can no longer be deployed in care homes in the coming weeks. Many have already quit. Nearly 13% of staff in older adult care homes had not been double vaccinated by 3 October – over 59,000 workers. Staffing levels in certain areas are likely to be disproportionately hit. Almost one in four care workers in Manchester have not had two jabs, and around one in five in Stoke, Thurrock, and Hackney and Lambeth in London, NHS England data shows. The government has made double vaccination a "condition of deployment" in care homes in England from 11 November to limit infection spread. Care home operators have called for the deadline to be postponed. **Read more here: [NHS faces beds crisis as care homes stop taking patients from hospitals](#)** **NHS faces beds crisis as care homes stop taking patients from hospitals**

3h ago 07:58

Caitlin Cassidy

A regional Victorian newsagent in Australia has backed down on her [refusal to be administered a Covid-19 vaccination after she closed her post office, citing state health orders](#). Angela Spedding, who had operated Merrigum's only post office for more than six years, said she had booked in a job after being told the post office would close if she hadn't secured an appointment by the end of the working week. "I have booked in for the vaccination next week," she said. A spokesperson for Australia Post said the licensee had recently informed the organisation they would be complying with the latest health order requirements which **[mandated the vaccine for about 1.25 million authorised workers](#)** – including newsagents and post office workers – by Friday. "We are pleased to say the outlet will continue to operate as normal," the spokesperson said. **Read more of Caitlin**

Cassidy's report here: [Victorian post office licensee backs down over refusal to get Covid jab](#)

3h ago07:49

There is a little bit of news on the Reuters wire, which is coming out of Russia's Interfax news agency. They are reporting that the Russian health ministry has said it will be having talks with the EU to discuss terms for the mutual recognition of Covid-19 vaccine certificates for their respective shots. The European Medicines Agency is yet to approve Russia's Sputnik V vaccine for use, which is the source of some friction between the two parties. Russia has accused the EU of doing so for political reasons, while the EU has in turn suggested that the vaccine's manufacturer has not been forthcoming with the required data for approval.

3h ago07:39

Developing countries are increasingly turning to homegrown Covid vaccinations as the UN-backed [Covax](#) programme falls behind. While [western countries roll out booster jabs](#) to their own populations, Covax, which was set up by UN agencies, governments and donors to ensure fair access to Covid-19 vaccines for low- and middle-income countries, has said it will miss its target to distribute 2bn doses globally by the end of this year. According to the [latest supply forecast](#), on 8 September, the programme is now expecting to provide 1.4bn vaccine doses over 2021 – a shortfall of nearly a third. The shortage is largely a result of [export and manufacturing constraints](#) and increasing demand from vaccine-producing countries. India – a key producer – only delivered 28m of a promised 40m doses in March when infections surged domestically as the Delta variant spread around the country. Developing countries have responded by producing new local vaccines. Among them is Egypt, which has [launched human trials for its homemade vaccine](#) Covi Vax, after successful laboratory tests. Earlier this year, researchers in [Saudi Arabia announced the start of early-stage human trials](#) of a vaccine developed by researchers at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University. Cuba is [seeking WHO approval](#) for its own vaccines as it seeks to reach full immunisation, including children as young as two, by the end of 2021. Several Brazilian research institutes are also betting on the development of homegrown vaccines against Covid-19. **Read more of Hazem Badr, Helen Mendes and Papiya Bhattacharya's report here: [Local Covid vaccines fill gap as UN Covax scheme misses target](#)**

Local Covid vaccines fill gap as UN Covax scheme misses target

4h ago07:31

I've just been watching Conservative co-chair **Oliver Dowden** be interviewed by Kay Burley on Sky News in the UK. After a bit of pressing he was much clearer in offering an apology to her viewers for the [criticism of the government handling of Covid](#). He stressed that prime minister **Boris Johnson** had said earlier in the year that [he was "deeply sorry"](#) for the suffering of people and families with Covid. Dowden went on to say: We're sorry for the losses that all those families have suffered. And of course, we accept that during this Covid crisis, this was an unprecedented crisis, a once in a hundred year event. There wasn't a perfect rulebook to follow, and of course, we would do some things differently with hindsight. He was keen to stress areas like the vaccine rollout where he said the government had acted quickly. There was a somewhat awkward exchange when Burley pointed out that on the previous day's show, [as we reported yesterday](#), Stephen Barclay, the minister for the Cabinet Office, refused to offer any apology. Burley said he had refused to do so on eleven occasions during the interview, and that it was the kind of behaviour that made her viewers feel politicians were out of touch with their feelings and lives. In a not exactly ringing endorsement of his colleague, Dowden said "Steve said what Steve said yesterday." It should be noted that [when the prime minister offered that apology in January](#), Johnson also said: "Of course as I was prime minister I take

full responsibility for everything that the government has done. What I can tell you is that we truly did everything we could, and continue to do everything that we can, to minimise loss of life and to minimise suffering.”The handling of the coronavirus crisis was yesterday **described as “one of UK’s worst ever public health failures”** in a report led by two former Conservative ministers.

4h ago07:20

Here’s how the New York Times has been reporting the news that the US is to **reopen its land borders with Canada and Mexico** in November. Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Emily Cochrane write that:The lifting of the two bans will effectively mark the reopening of the United States to travelers and tourism, signaling a new phase in the recovery from the pandemic. But the new requirements also indicate that the country will be a welcoming destination only for those who are vaccinated.They quote New York senator **Kirsten Gillibrand** claiming that the closure had cost “cost Erie County in New York at least \$660m annually”, and saying:Finally, the New York-Canadian border will be open again to vaccinated travelers from both nations. This reopening will be welcome news to countless businesses, medical providers, families and loved ones that depend on travel across the northern border.They also have quotes from Texas Democrat representative **Veronica Escobar** saying:Border communities have been hamstrung because of port closures. Not only did we suffer more significant health devastation in 2020, but the economic devastation has been longer for us because of those port closures. This is great, and long overdue, newsRead more here: **New York Times – The US will open the Canada and Mexico borders for fully vaccinated travelers in November**

Ukraine daily death toll and cases rise

A quick snap from Reuters here that **Ukraine** registered 471 coronavirus-related deaths over the past 24 hours health ministry data showed.

That sees the nation approaching the record daily toll of 481, which was reported on 7 April. The number of new daily coronavirus infections in Ukraine, which has a population of 41 million, has also increased over the past several weeks. Ukraine registered 16,309 new coronavirus cases over the past 24 hours.