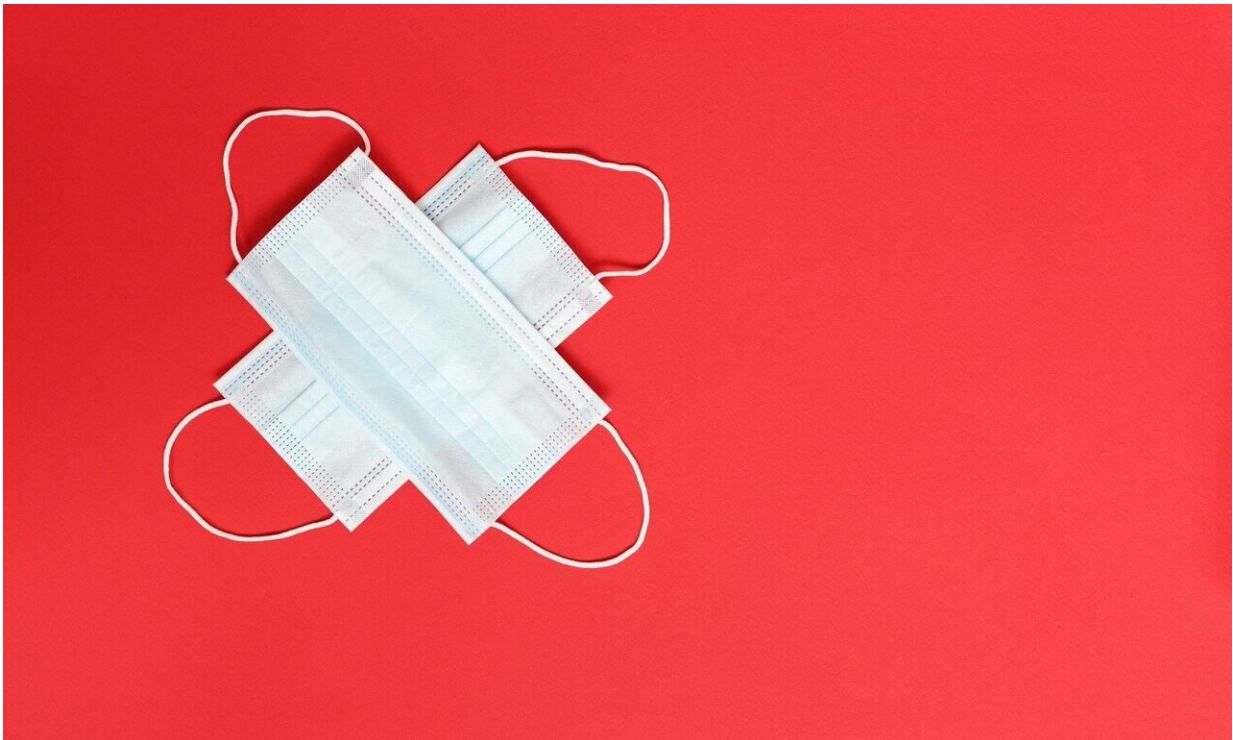


US surpasses 18 mn reported COVID-19 cases

December 22 2020



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The United States surpassed 18 million reported COVID-19 cases on Monday, figures from Johns Hopkins University showed, as the virus surges nationwide.

The US has the world's highest absolute number of cases as well as the

most deaths related to the [virus](#), according to the figures.

It had a total of 18,006,061 reported cases on Monday evening and more than 319,000 deaths.

The country began administering vaccines a week ago and has given approval to immunizations developed by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

States and cities have imposed varying levels of restrictions in a bid to slow the virus spread, but outgoing President Donald Trump has repeatedly downplayed its seriousness and urged reopenings.

Trump's behavior has come despite having been hospitalized with the virus himself.

President-elect Joe Biden, who defeated Trump in the November 3 election, has been far more cautious, urging mask-wearing and abiding by social-distancing rules.

Earlier Monday, Biden received a COVID-19 vaccine live on television in a campaign to boost Americans' confidence in the jabs.

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