Twitter Thread by Faisal Islam



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Different type of vaccine being developed at Scottish factory of a French company - an “inactivated whole virus” - UK task force secured 60m dose preorder in July for €470m with options for 130m more 2022-25, invested in factory. EU finalised first order of 30m this month.

> It\u2019s brilliant that @ValnevaSE is starting the large-scale manufacture of its potential vaccine, creating 100 high-skilled jobs at their Livingston facility.
>
> We\u2019ve secured 60m doses due to be delivered by the end of the year if it is approved for use.https://t.co/4pDUbczlVl
>
> — Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) January 28, 2021

Basically the Government through @katebingham acted like a venture capital fund, funding many vaccine candidates, expensively, across different types of tech, with companies from different countries (at time of some scepticism that a working vaccine could be produced so quickly)

Though despite the fact French Valneva had been funded for its vaccines in general in 2018 by EU’s investment bank, UK funding guaranteed its production in UK (speculative VC style investment) - similarly UK signed deal with Pfizer for German developed/ funded Biontech vaccine

UK approach explicitly focussed on speed (and boosting poor UK vaccine supply chain), at expense of cost. cost of individual batches, and cost of investing in spread of vaccines, not all would eventually be needed/ used...

EU focussed on lower price, & helping smaller EU nations

approach with Astra Zeneca went further - UK Govt via Matt Hancock involved in matchmaking AZ with Oxford University, funded early clinical trials that eg enabled private jets to ferry samples etc - 100m doses and pricing at cost were part of that deal struck at April wave 1 peak

Important thing is AZ was not a vaccine specialist - alliance was encouraged by Govt, ie other possible ones being considered by Ox were effectively blocked by Hancock because of national interest

Not sure EU approach clocks intimate involvement/ risk taken by UK Govt here...

good news for everyone, is that UK should, in theory, have access to too much vaccine over course of this year, and could therefore be in a position to help. Already tens of millions of Oxford vaccine is being mass manufactured in India and shipped to other developing countries..

appropriate analogy here with EU would have been it at an early stage funding and developing Biontech in Germany (it did).

But then at point Biontech did a deal with Pfizer, either have blocked that or insisted on first use in the EU, and paid handsomely, over odds for pleasure

Government playing EU-AZ spat very straight - even AZ supply chain stretches into EU.

And we don't know which is the best performing vaccine, and that matters as we expect this will become an annual event...

UK, may yet be reliant on EU vaccines in future...

Things to discuss:

Paying over odds for quicker vaccines, & for some vaccines which will never be used can still be vg value for money vs lockdown cost.

Did UK turn necessity of coping with poor vaccine supply chain to advantage?

Were EU listening overly to its big Pharma cos?