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Inside C3

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Several board members of Texas’s electric grid operator to resign: filing



(Reuters) - Top directors of Texas’s electric grid operator, who faced sharp criticism from the massive failure of the state power system last week that left millions without heat or light, resigned en masse on Tuesday.

The board’s chairman, vice chairman and two other directors of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) resigned effective on Wednesday, according to a notice to the state Public Utility Commission.

Craig Ivey, who was nominated Feb. 16 to fill a board vacancy, also withdrew before he could be seated, according to the notification.

“To allow state leaders a free hand with future direction and to eliminate distractions, we are resigning,” wrote Chairman Sally Talberg, Vice Chairman Peter Cramton and directors Terry Bulger and Raymond Hepper in a joint resignation.

“Our hearts go out to all Texans who had to go without electricity, heat and water during frigid temperatures and continue to face the tragic consequences of this emergency,” they added.

## Trump may soon have to answer rape allegations under oath

(Reuters) - During a December visit to New York City, writer E. Jean Carroll says she went shopping with a fashion consultant to find the “best outfit” for one of the most important days of her life - when she’ll sit face-to-face with the man she accuses of raping her decades ago, former President Donald Trump.

The author and journalist hopes that day will come this year. Her lawyers are seeking to depose Trump in a defamation lawsuit that Carroll filed against the former president in November 2019 after he denied her accusation that he raped her at a Manhattan department store in the mid-1990s. Trump said he never knew Carroll and accused her of lying to sell her new book, adding: “She’s not my type.”

She plans to be there if Trump is deposed.

“I am living for the moment to walk into that room to sit across the table from him,” Carroll told Reuters in an interview. “I think of it everyday.”

Carroll, 77, a former Elle magazine columnist, seeks unspecified damages in her lawsuit and a retraction of Trump’s statements. It is one of two defamation cases involving sexual misconduct allegations against Trump that could move forward faster now that he

has left the presidency. While in office, Trump’s lawyers delayed the case in part by arguing that the pressing duties of his office made responding to civil lawsuits impossible.

“The only barrier to proceeding with the civil suits was that he’s the president,” said Jennifer Rodgers, a former federal prosecutor and now an adjunct professor of clinical law at the New York University School of Law.

“I think there will be a sense among the judges that it’s time to get a move on in these cases,” said Roberta Kaplan, Carroll’s attorney.

An attorney for Trump and another representative of the former president did not respond to requests for comment.

Trump faces a similar defamation lawsuit from Summer Zervos, a former contestant on his reality television show “The Apprentice.” In 2016, Zervos accused Trump of sexual misconduct, saying that he kissed her against her will at a 2007 meeting in New York and later groped her at a California hotel as the two met to discuss job opportunities.

Trump denied the allegations and called Zervos a liar, prompting her to sue him for defamation in 2017, seeking damages and a retraction. Trump tried unsuccessfully to have the case dismissed, arguing that, as president, he was immune from suits filed in state courts. His lawyers appealed to the New York Court of Appeals, which is still considering the case. Zervos filed a motion in early February asking the court to resume the case now that Trump’s no longer president.

Zervos and Carroll are among more than two dozen women who have publicly accused Trump of sexual misconduct that they say occurred in the years before he became president. Other accusers include a former model who claims Trump sexually assaulted her at the 1997 U.S. Open tennis tournament; a former Miss Universe pageant contestant who said Trump groped her in 2006; and a reporter who alleges Trump forcibly kissed her without her consent in 2005 at his Mar-a-Lago resort. Trump has denied the allegations and called them politically motivated.

In September, after several unsuccessful attempts by Trump’s lawyers to get Carroll’s case dismissed or delayed, U.S. Justice Department officials under his administration took the unusual step of asking that the government be substituted for Trump as the defendant in the case. Justice Department lawyers argued that Trump, like any typical government employee, is entitled under federal law to immunity from civil lawsuits when performing his job. They argued that he was acting in his capacity as president when he said Carroll was lying.

Legal experts said it was unprecedented for the Justice Department to defend a president for conduct before he took office. When Judge Lewis Kaplan of the Federal District Court in Manhattan rejected that argument, the Justice Department appealed. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has yet to rule on it.

It’s yet to be seen whether Justice Department officials under President Joe Biden, who took office last month, will continue to defend the case on Trump’s behalf. The White House and the Justice Department declined to comment.

## Tom N Tom Galleria and Dak & Bop 18th

韓式小吃與美餐碰撞會激起怎樣的火花呢？

本期節目，我們的體驗員們來到了剛剛新開張的

**DAK&BOP 18TH**

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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

02/23/2021

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Wealee@scdaily.com

## Our Nation Will Smile Again

Millions of Texans who have gone through a devastating week of freezing temperatures and a relentless winter storm, now along with all the politicians, are pointing fingers at each other.

President Biden has now approved more counties in Texas as major disaster areas. The water systems in both Austin and Houston were hit hard by the winter storm and now are finally fully restored.

President Biden honored more than a half million Americans whose lives have been lost to the coronavirus and spoke to the nation from his own experience when it came to describing the grief of losing a loved one. He said, "I know that when you stare at that empty chair



around the kitchen table, it brings it all back, no matter how long ago it happened, as if it just happened that moment."

The president also expressed optimism telling Americans, "We will get through this I promise you."

In the White House, President Biden and his wife Jill participated in a moment of silence, standing by 500 lighted candles.

The President also ordered the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff for five days.



Southern News Group Chairman / CEO  
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Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

**Southern DAILY** Make Today Different

## Editor's Choice



Disabled dogs in mobility aids run during a daily walk at The Man That Rescues Dogs Foundation in Chonburi, Thailand. REUTERS/Athit Perawongmetha



President Joe Biden, first lady Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and second gentleman Doug Emhoff attend a moment of silence and candle lighting ceremony to commemorate the grim milestone of 500,000 U.S. deaths from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at the White House in Washington, February 22, 2021. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst



A man tries to chase away a swarm of desert locusts away from a farm, near the town of Rumuruti, Kenya, February 1. REUTERS/Baz Ratner



Demonstrators protest against a military coup in Mandalay, Myanmar, February 22. REUTERS/Stringer



Ice sits at the base of the American Falls due to cold temperatures in Niagara Falls, New York, February 21. REUTERS/Lindsay DeDario



Goats are seen on a sidewalk, as the spread of the coronavirus continues, Llandudno, Wales, Britain February 22. REUTERS/Carl Recine



*The President Warned That Things Will ‘Get Worse Before They Get Better’*

Biden Signs 10 Executive Orders On The Coronavirus Pandemic

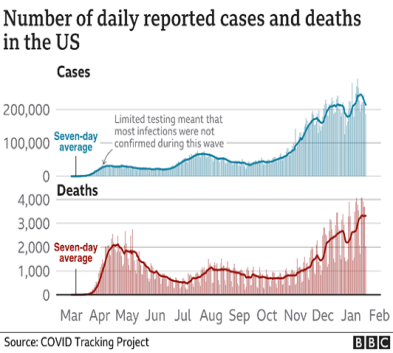


Biden signs 10 pandemic-related executive orders.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Joe Biden signed 10 executive orders to kick start his national COVID-19 strategy, which includes ramping up vaccinations and testing, reopening schools and businesses and increasing the use of masks. But Biden issued a stark warning to Americans even as he promised that “help is on the way.” “Let me be clear: Things are going to continue to get worse before they get better,” Biden said. Biden spoke Thursday amid a worsening global pandemic that has now killed more than 400,000 Americans, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. “I understand the despair and frustration of so many Americans and how they’re feeling. I understand why many governors mayors ,county officials, tribal leaders feel like they’re left on their own without a clear national plan to get them through the crisis,” Biden said. Despite Biden’s warnings that the U.S. could see more than 500,000 total deaths by next month, he assured Americans that “help is on the way.” Biden said his national strategy reflects ideas he

set forward during his presidential campaign, and has been further refined by his coronavirus task force, which includes Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s top infectious disease expert. Biden said that the nearly 200-page plan can be viewed on the White House website, where it is published in full.



The president called for “an aggressive, safe and effective” vaccination campaign which includes FEMA immediately setting up “community vaccination centers” around the coun-

try. Biden also addressed inequities in hard-hit minority communities as he signed 10 pandemic-related executive orders on Thursday. Those orders were a first step, Biden said, and specific details of many administration actions are still being spelled out. The new president has vowed to take far more aggressive measures to contain the virus than his predecessor, starting with stringent adherence to public health guidance. He faces steep obstacles, with the virus actively spreading in most states, slow progress on the vaccine rollout and political uncertainty over how willing congressional Republicans will be to help him pass a \$1.9 trillion economic relief and COVID response package. “We need to ask average Americans to do their part,” said Jeff Zients, the White House official directing the national response. “Defeating the virus requires a co-ordinated nationwide effort.” Biden officials say they’re hampered by lack of cooperation from the Trump administration during the transition. They say they don’t have a complete understanding of their predecessors’ actions on vaccine distribution. And they face a litany of complaints from states that say they are not getting enough vaccine even as they are being asked to vaccinate more categories of people. Biden acknowledged the urgency of the mission in his inaugural address. “We are entering what may well be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus,” he said before asking Americans to join him in a moment of silence in memory of the more than 400,000 people in the U.S. who have died from COVID-19. Biden’s top medical adviser on COVID-19, Dr. Anthony Fauci, also announced renewed U.S. support for the World Health Organization after it faced blistering criticism from the Trump administration, laying out new commitments to tackle the coronavirus and other global health issues. Fauci said early Thursday that the U.S. will join the U.N. health agency’s efforts to bring vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics to people in need, whether in rich or poor countries and will resume full funding and staffing support for WHO.



The U.S. mask order for travel being implemented by Biden will apply to airports and planes, ships, intercity buses, trains and public transportation. Travelers from abroad must furnish a negative COVID-19 test before departing for the U.S. and quarantine upon arrival. Biden has already mandated masks on federal property. Although airlines, Amtrak and other transport providers now require masks, Biden’s order makes it a federal mandate, leaving little wiggle room for passengers tempted to argue about their rights. It marks a sharp break with the culture of President Donald Trump’s administration, under which masks were optional, and Trump made a point of going maskless and hosting big gatherings of like-minded supporters. Science has shown that masks, properly worn, cut down on coronavirus transmission. Biden also is seeking to expand testing and vaccine availability, with the goal of 100 million shots in his first 100 days in office. Zients called Biden’s goal “ambitious and achievable.” The Democratic president has directed the Federal Emergency Management Agency to begin setting up vaccination centers, aiming to have 100 up and running in a month. He’s ordering the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to begin a program to make vaccines available through local pharmacies starting next month. And he’s mobilizing the Public Health Service to deploy to assist localities in vaccinations.



There’s also support for states. Biden is ordering FEMA to reimburse states for the full cost of using their National Guards to set up vaccination centers. That includes the use of supplies and protective gear

as well as personnel. But some independent experts say the administration should be setting a higher bar for itself than 100 million shots. During flu season, the U.S. is able to vaccinate about 3 million people a day, said Dr. Christopher Murray of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in Seattle. “Given the number of people dying from COVID, we could and should do more — like what we’re able to do on seasonal flu,” he said. To ramp up supplies, Biden is giving government agencies a green light to use a Cold War-era law called the Defense Production Act to direct manufacturing. (Courtesy <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/>)



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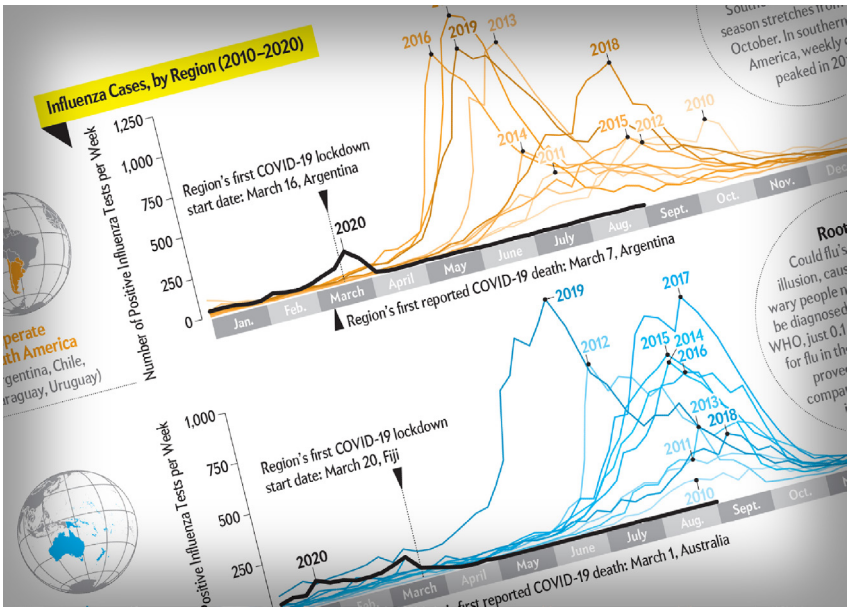
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COMMUNITY

Study: Weather Has A Larger Impact On COVID Spread Than Social Distancing

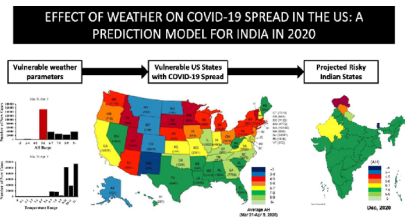


Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

WASHINGTON — A lot of the blame for COVID-19’s “second wave” has been pointed at people not following safety guidelines put out by health experts and government officials. A new report however, says don’t blame people, blame the weather. Researchers from the University of Nicosia in Cyprus find hot weather and wind have a bigger impact on virus transmission rates than social distancing during a pandemic. Their study concludes that two outbreaks in one year is a natural phenomenon during a massive outbreak. Temperature, humidity, and wind can help predict when a second wave will peak, which the researchers call “inevitable.” **Science isn’t using all of the science it should be** Though face masks, travel restrictions, and social distancing guidelines may help slow the number of new infections in the short term, study authors say the lack of climate data included in epidemiological models has left a glaring hole in the plans to de-

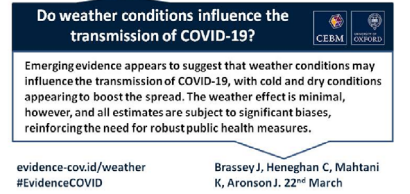
fend against COVID. Looking at Paris, New York City, and Rio de Janeiro, scientists discovered they could accurately predict the timing of the second outbreak in each city. Their research suggests two outbreaks per year is a natural weather-dependent phenomenon during any pandemic. Typical models for predicting the behavior of an epidemic contain only two basic parameters, transmission and recovery rates. Professors Talib Dbouk and Dimitris Drikakis say these rates tend to be treated as constants, but that this is not actually the case. Since temperature, relative humidity, and wind speed all play a significant role, the researchers aimed to modify typical models to account for these climate conditions. They call their new weather-dependent variable the Airborne Infection Rate (AIR) index. **Different hemispheres will have different COVID waves** When applying the AIR index to mod-

els of major cities, the team discovered the behavior of the virus in Rio de Janeiro is markedly different from the behavior of COVID in Paris and New York.



**Transmission rates of the coronavirus vary in the northern and southern hemispheres depending on the time of year, pointing to a weather dependence. (Credit: University of Nicosia)** This is due to seasonal variations in the northern and southern hemispheres, consistent with real data. The authors emphasize the importance of accounting for these seasonal variations when designing virus safety measures. “We propose that epidemiological models must incorporate climate effects through the AIR index,” says Prof. Drikakis in a media release by the American Institute of Physics. “National lockdowns or large-scale lockdowns should not be based on short-term prediction models that exclude the effects of weather seasonality.” “In pandemics, where massive and effective vaccination is not available, the government planning should be longer-term by considering weather effects and design the public health and safety guidelines accordingly,” Prof. Dbouk adds. “This could help avoid reactive responses in terms of strict lockdowns that adversely affect all aspects of life and the global economy.” As temperatures rise and humidity falls, Drikakis and Dbouk expect another improvement in infection numbers. They note, however, that mask and distancing guidelines should continue to be followed with the appropriate weather-based modifications. The research group’s previous work showed that droplets of saliva can travel up to 18 feet in just five seconds when unmasked people cough. The new findings appear in the journal

Physics of Fluids. (Courtesy <https://www.studyfinds.org/>) **Related** **Like The Flu, COVID-19 May Turn Out to Be Seasonal** TUESDAY, Feb. 2, 2021 (HealthDay News) -- Like influenza, could COVID-19 evolve to wax and wane with the seasons? New research suggests it might. Early in the pandemic, some experts suggested that SARS-CoV-2 -- the virus that causes COVID-19 -- may behave like many other coronaviruses that circulate more widely in fall and winter. To find out if that could be true, researchers analyzed COVID-19 data -- including cases, death rates, recoveries, testing rates and hospitalizations -- from 221 countries. The investigators found a strong association with temperature and latitude.



“One conclusion is that the disease may be seasonal, like the flu. This is very relevant to what we should expect from now on after the vaccine controls these first waves of COVID-19,” said senior study author Gustavo Caetano-Anollés. He is a professor at the C.R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Similar viruses have seasonal increases in mutation rates, so the researchers looked for connections between mutations in SARS-CoV-2 and temperature, latitude and longitude. “Our results suggest the virus is changing at its own pace, and mutations are affected by factors other than temperature or latitude. We don’t know exactly what those factors are, but we can now say seasonal effects are independent of the genetic makeup of the virus,” Caetano-Anollés said in a university news release. Further research is needed to learn more about how climate and different seasons may affect COVID-19 rates, the

team added. The study authors suggested that people’s immune systems may play a role. The immune system can be influenced by temperature and nutrition, including vitamin D, which plays an important role in immunity. With less sun exposure during the winter, most people don’t make enough vitamin D. “We know the flu is seasonal, and that we get a break during the summer. That gives us a chance to build the flu vaccine for the following fall,” Caetano-Anollés said. “When we are still in the midst of a raging pandemic, that break is nonexistent. Perhaps learning how to boost our immune system could help combat the disease as we struggle to catch up with the ever-changing coronavirus.” This study was published online Jan. 26 in the journal *Evolutionary Bioinformatics*. (Courtesy healthday via webmd.com)



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