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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Myanmar police launch most extensive crackdown; hundreds arrested



(Reuters) - Police in Myanmar launched their most sweeping crackdown in three weeks of nationwide protests against military rule on Saturday, arresting hundreds of people and shooting and wounding at least one person.

State television announced that Myanmar's U.N. envoy had been fired for betraying the country, a day after he urged the United Nations to use "any means necessary" to reverse the Feb. 1 coup that ousted elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the army seized power and detained Suu Kyi and much of her party leadership, alleging fraud in a November election her party won in a landslide.

The coup, which stalled Myanmar's progress toward democracy, has brought hundreds of thousands of protesters onto the streets and drawn condemnation from Western countries, with some imposing limited sanctions.

Police were out in force early on Saturday, taking up positions at usual protest sites in the main city of Yangon.

Confrontations developed as people came out despite the police operation, chanting and singing. They scattered into side streets and buildings as police advanced, firing tear gas, setting off stun



grenades and shooting guns into the air. Police set upon some people with clubs, witnesses said.

State-run MRTV television said more than 470 people had been arrested across the country. It said police had given warnings before dispersing people with stun grenades.

"People blocked the roads without reason. Among those arrested, we will scrutinize those who organize the protests and take tough action," it said.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners rights group said it believed the number of arrests was higher, with at

least 10 prison buses carrying 40 to 50 people each taken to the Insein Prison in Yangon.

Several journalists were among those detained, their media organisations and colleagues said.

"People are protesting peacefully but they're threatening us with weapons,"

However, the United Nations has not officially recognised the junta as Myanmar's new government.

U.N. Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews said he was overwhelmed by the ambassador's "act of courage", adding on Twitter "It's time for the world to answer that courageous call with action". China's envoy did not criticise the coup and said the situation was an internal Myanmar affair, adding that China supported a diplomatic effort by Southeast Asian countries to find a solution.

The Myanmar generals have traditionally shrugged off diplomatic pressure. Australia's Woodside Petroleum Ltd said it was cutting its presence in Myanmar over concern about rights violations and violence.

Suu Kyi, 75, spent nearly 15 years under house arrest during military rule. She faces charges of illegally importing six walkie-talkie radios and of violating a natural disaster law by breaching coronavirus protocols.

youth activist Shar Yamone told Reuters.

"We're fighting to end to this military bullying which has been going on for generation after generation."

Police confronted protesters across the country. Among those detained in the second city of Mandalay was Win Mya Mya, one of two Muslim members of parliament for Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), media said.

WOUNDED

One woman was shot and wounded in the central town of Monywa, local media 7Day News and an emergency worker said. 7Day and two other media organisations had earlier reported that she was dead.

Junta leader General Min Aung Hlaing has said authorities have been using minimal force. Nevertheless, at least three protesters have died over the days of turmoil. The army says a policeman has been killed in the unrest.

Activists called for another day of protests on Sunday.

Saturday's violence came a day after Myanmar's Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun told the U.N. General Assembly he was speaking on behalf of Suu Kyi's government and appealed for help to end the military coup.

MRTV television said he had been fired in accordance with civil service rules because he had "betrayed the country" and "abused the power and responsibilities of an ambassador".

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

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Buffett upbeat on U.S. and Berkshire, buys back stock even as pandemic hits results

(Reuters) - Not even the coronavirus pandemic could dampen Warren Buffett's enthusiasm for the future of America and his company Berkshire Hathaway Inc.

FILE PHOTO: Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett walks through the exhibit hall as shareholders gather to hear from the billionaire investor at Berkshire Hathaway Inc's annual shareholder meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S., May 4, 2019. REUTERS/Scott Morgan/File Photo

Buffett used his annual letter to investors to assure he and his successors would be careful stewards of their money, where "the passage of time, an inner calm, ample diversification and a minimization of transactions and fees" would serve them well.

He also retained his trademark optimism for Berkshire, buying back a record \$24.7 billion of its stock in 2020 in a sign he considers it undervalued, and the economy's capacity to endure "severe interruptions" and enjoy "breathtaking" progress.

"Our unwavering conclusion: Never bet against America," he said. ((here))

The letter breaks an uncharacteristic silence for the 90-year-old Buffett, who has been almost completely invisible to the public since Berkshire's annual meeting last May.

"He's a deep believer in his company and the country," said Tom Russo, a partner at Gardner, Russo & Gardner in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and longtime Berkshire investor.

But Buffett's letter also did not specifically mention the coronavirus pandemic, a prime factor behind last year's loss of more than 31,000 jobs in Berkshire's workforce, or the recent social upheaval and divisive politics that some companies now address more directly.

"The letter highlighted the innovation and values

that have become the backbone of America, and that's perfectly acceptable," said Cathy Seifert, an analyst at CFRA Research with a "hold" rating on Berkshire.

"Given the reverence that investors have for him, the letter was striking for what it omitted," she added. "A new generation of investors demands a degree of social awareness, and that companies like Berkshire set out their beliefs, standards and goals."

Buffett also signaled a long-term commitment to Apple Inc, calling Berkshire's \$120.4 billion stake and its ownership of the BNSF railroad its most valuable assets - "it's pretty much a toss-up" - after its insurance operations.


PROFIT RISES EVEN AS JOBS ARE LOST

Berkshire on Saturday also reported net income of \$35.84 billion in the fourth quarter, and \$42.52 billion for the year, both reflecting large gains in its stock holdings.


Operating income, which Buffett considers a more accurate measure of performance, fell 9% for the year to \$21.92 billion.

The stock buybacks have continued in 2021, with Berkshire repurchasing more than \$4 billion of its own stock. It ended 2020 with \$138.3 billion of cash.

Berkshire has more than 90 operating units including the

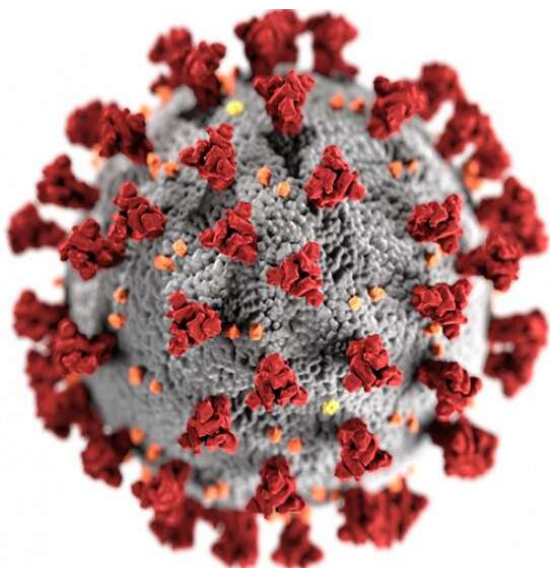


BNSF railroad, Geico car insurer, Dairy Queen ice cream, See's candies, and namesake energy and real estate brokerage businesses.

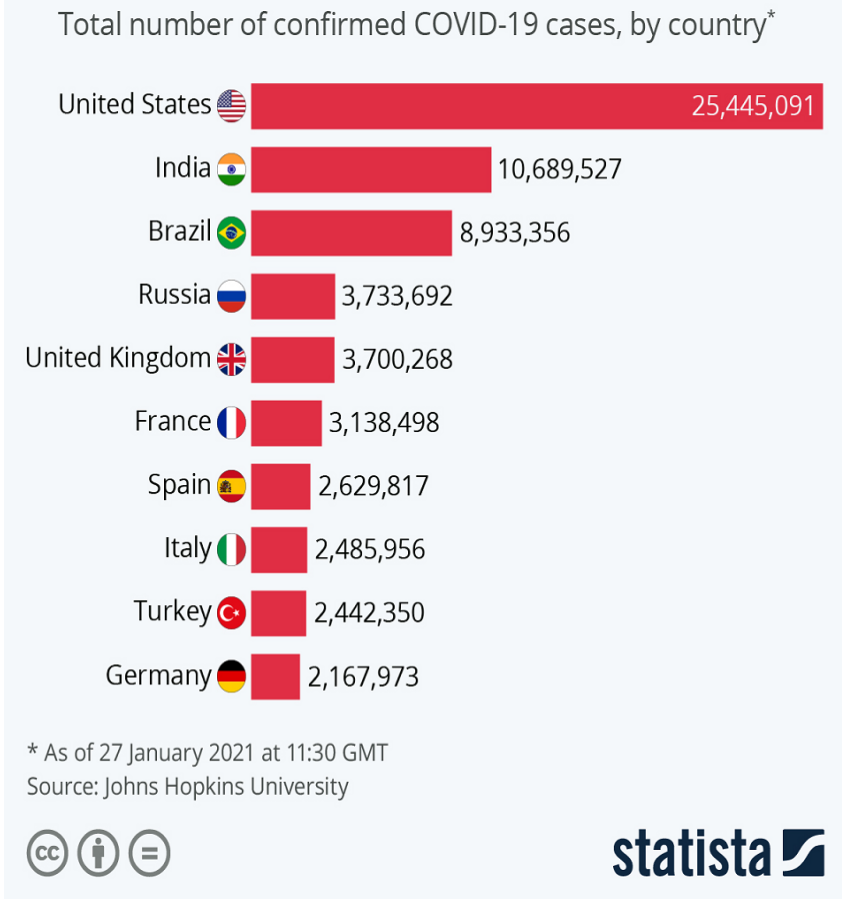




One Year Of The Coronavirus



The Countries With The Most COVID-19 Cases



Total Cases			
Total	Worldwide		
Cases	Recovered	Deaths	
100M	55.4M	2.16M	
100,000,000	55,400,000	2,160,000	
Location	Cases	Recovered	Deaths
United States	25.6M 25,600,000 +156K	—	429K 429,000 +4,101
India	10.7M 10,700,000 +11,666	10.4M 10,400,000 +14,301	154K 154,000 +123
Brazil	9M 9,000,000 +63,520	7.96M 7,960,000 +67,886	220K 220,000 +1,283
Russia	3.73M 3,730,000 +17,464	3.17M 3,170,000 +27,440	69,971 69,971 +580
United Kingdom	3.72M 3,720,000 +25,308	—	102K 102,000 +1,725

"+" shows new cases reported yesterday · Updated less than 6 hours ago·Sources: Wikipedia

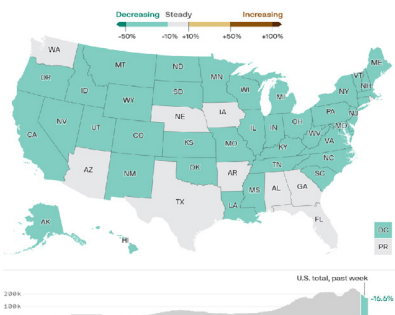
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

One year ago today, a novel coronavirus was barely beginning to catch the public's eye. There were just over 2,000 confirmed cases worldwide, mostly in China, and five cases in the U.S.

The big picture: The sea of red (dark color) says it all. Today, there have been over 100 million cases worldwide, led by the U.S. with 25 million.

Coronavirus Cases Fall In 41 U.S. States

Change in new COVID-19 cases in the past week



Data: The COVID Tracking Project, state

health departments; Map: Andrew Wither- spoon/Axios

New coronavirus infections fell by 16% over the past week in the U.S. — the third straight week of significant improvement.

But the U.S. is still averaging roughly 165,000 new cases per day, meaning the virus is still spreading largely unchecked. And the rise of more contagious variants will ensure that Americans' risk remains high.

Details: In 41 states, the average number of new daily cases was lower over the past week than the week before. No states got worse.

• Nationwide, new cases are now at about the same level they were at in mid-December — down from their peak, but still a lot.

What's next: If Americans can accelerate this progress, we'll reduce the number of people who die before vaccines become universally available.

• But that will be a challenge, given the country's track record and the continued spread of more easily transmissible variants.

Coronavirus Dashboard



Illustration: Eniola Odetunde/Axios

- Health:** One year of the coronavirus — Bill and Melinda Gates warn of “immunity inequality” — Communities of color are falling behind in America's vaccine effort.
- Vaccine:** Vaccine hesitancy is decreasing in the U.S.
- Politics:** Biden admin to boost COVID vaccine delivery to states for at least 3 weeks — Hundreds of Biden staffers receive COVID vaccine — Axios-Ipsos poll: Trust in federal COVID-19 response surges.
- Business:** Bankruptcy filings hit decade-high last year.
- World:** U.K. surpasses 100,000 COVID-19 deaths — 44% of Israelis have already received at least one vaccine dose.
- Sports:** Europe's 20 richest soccer clubs report 12% revenue hit due to coronavirus — Pandemic has cost the NCAA \$600 million — CDC looks at lessons learned from NFL's testing and contact tracing.

Cases:

- Global:** Total confirmed cases as of 12 p.m. ET Wednesday: 100,418,923 — Total deaths: 2,161,547 — Total recoveries: 55,560,956 (no longer includes U.S. recoveries as of Dec. 15).
- U.S.:** Total confirmed cases as of 12 p.m. ET Wednesday: 25,450,135 — Total deaths: 425,406 — Total tests: 295,369,233.

COMMUNITY

What Covid Treatments Are Working And What More Is On The Horizon?



New data from a large U.K. trial added to evidence indicating plasma may not make a difference in treating Covid-19. (Photo/Alex Edelman/AFP via Getty Images)

Key Point

Some therapies that faced early questions are regaining their promise as we learn more. Others aren't, but it's important news either way.

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

The arrival of Covid-19 vaccines has put the focus of the pandemic fight on inoculating as many people as quickly as possible. But outbreaks are still raging worldwide, with thousands of new infections every day and health systems under pressure to care for the sick, a reality that will continue for some time. Vaccine timelines also keep getting more and more stretched. With that in mind, it's a good time to take stock of where we are in treating the disease. The short answer is, there's progress but it's mixed.

For months, Gilead Sciences Inc.'s **remdesivir** and the generic steroid dexamethasone have been used on the front lines after being shown to reduce hospital stays and improve recovery speeds. Now, as we learn more about Covid-19, more treatments — including some that at first drew skepticism from physicians and scientists — are proving effective in certain circumstances. Others, such as convalescent plasma, are not. Let's take a look:

“Toci”: Two arthritis drugs that previously failed in treating Covid-19 — Roche Holding AG's **tocilizumab** and Sanofi-Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.'s **sarilumab** — are now showing a meaningful effect in helping reduce the burden of

disease in some patients. It seems that when the drugs are used is key. The latest data comes from a trial involving patients who were treated within 24 hours of needing hospital care in an intensive care unit. The drugs reduced mortality, suggesting that seven or eight lives would be saved for each 100 people treated.



The hope is that this data will be corroborated in the U.K.'s much larger and pioneering Recovery trial now underway, with more than 3,000 of the 28,000 and rising participants treated with “toci.” This will provide the most concrete data behind the drug and will potentially enable global approvals beyond Britain.

“Bam-bam”: Next up are new drugs developed by Eli Lilly & Co. and Regeneron, part of a promising group of therapies called monoclonal antibodies that mimic the body's

response to infection. Lilly's **bamlanivimab**, affectionately known as “bam-bam,” was the first to gain emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration. Both Lilly's and Regeneron's treatment have now been cleared for high-risk patients to help prevent hospitalization. One obstacle for adoption of these drugs has been the logistics of administering them — they need to be delivered using specialized infusion equipment. This difficulty was compounded in bam-bam's case with a confusing efficacy story and lukewarm comments about it in the Covid-19 treatment guidelines from the National Institutes of Health, resulting in doses piling up on hospital shelves. This situation may be about to change, though, given an early read from a 2,000-patient Mayo Clinic study in which the use of bam-bam was shown to reduce hospitalizations and emergency-room visits by 70%.



There are also indications of a reduction in mortality. When data from this study is published, it is likely to drive increased interest in the use of bam-bam, and possibly Regeneron's antibody treatment, too. I do still remain cautious about the broad use of these drugs because of the risk they may hasten development of resistant mutations in virus, which may, though unlikely, also impact vaccine-induced immunity.

Plasma: Convalescent plasma, a source of hope in the early days of the pandemic, has had a lot of subsequent failures and questions about its use. While not a drug per se, it is supposed to work in a similar way as monoclonal antibodies by giving patients ready-made immunity in a bottle in the form of plasma from recovered patients that is full of antibodies to the virus. The problem with previous attempts in showing a benefit from this approach was a lack of standardization and its use at the wrong time. Then recent data from a trial in Argentina raised hopes that if you use plasma with high amounts of antibodies early enough, when the infection itself is still active, it does make a difference. Unfortunately, there's since been another setback, and this time a very serious one. The

U.K.'s aforementioned Recovery trial has been comparing Regeneron's antibody treatment and convalescent plasma to standard care without those treatments in a very large patient group, making the data and its statistical analysis very robust.



Findings released Friday from the trial showed no difference in the mortality of those receiving plasma and those on placebo. We still need to see the data in published form to be able to judge if there were any other potential explanations for the outcome. But if the result is unequivocal, it at least means there will be no more time and money wasted treating patients with an ineffective therapy that carries some risks. In a way, the negative outcome is still a step forward in sharpening treatments of Covid-19.

Once A Relic Of Medical History, Radiation Emerges As An Intriguing — And Controversial — Treatment For Covid-19

The idea of low-dose radiation as therapy had long been dismissed in favor of more modern treatments. That all changed when Covid-19 snowballed into a crisis, fueling fresh interest in anything that might ease the devastating cases of pneumonia in some patients. At least 52,000 of the more than 135,000 deaths due to Covid-19 in the U.S. have involved pneumonia, according to federal health data.

There are currently at least a dozen trials worldwide testing low-dose radiation therapy, or LDRT, as a treatment for pneumonia related to Covid-19, some spurred by the same historical data Calabrese and colleagues scoured years ago. The theory: Targeted radiation to the lungs will halt the out-of-control inflammation responsible for the devastating pneumonia that bookends the course of some Covid-19 patients.

General Photographic Agency/Getty Images But the revived interest in radiotherapy has sparked a debate among physicians and researchers, who are divided on whether the idea is even ready for test-driving in clinical trials. With little known about the way LDRT works on inflamed lungs, some experts say it might

exacerbate respiratory damage, while introducing the additional risk of cancer. Others say patients participating in the trials may suffer by missing out on more promising treatments.

On the other side, though, are experts who say there's a clear and urgent need for Covid-19 treatments that work, particularly for cases that become severe. Antibiotics can help treat cases of pneumonia from bacterial infections, but not those caused by viruses. Those experts argue compelling historical data gives LDRT a promising head start.

“It seems to be such an almost emotional topic,” said Dörthe Schae, a radiation oncologist at UCLA, on the debate raging over LDRT. “You get two extremes on the spectrum and the truth is probably somewhere in the middle, where you have to consider all the pluses and minuses.”



The new wave of low-dose radiation trials are registered at academic centers and hospitals around the world, including in Italy, Spain, Iran, India, and the U.S. The studies are recruiting anywhere from five to 106 Covid-19 patients with pneumonia, and half require participants to be at least 40 years of age.

Amab Chakravarti, chair of Ohio State's radiation and oncology department, is spearheading two of the four LDRT trials in the U.S. The first trial, PREVENT, will enroll around 100 oxygen-dependent Covid-19 patients at up to 20 hospitals around the country. The second trial, VENTED, is limited to Ohio State, where it will recruit 24 critically-ill patients who require ventilator support. Unlike PREVENT, VENTED is open to participants as young as 18.

The end of the pandemic may be in sight, assuming we can control infections and the development of new variants, but it's still many months away. Fortunately, the more we learn, the better we know which treatments are helpful and how to use them. The arsenal is growing. We can use all the help we can get. (Courtesy Bloomberg.com and https://www.statnews.com/)