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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Cuba blames unrest on U.S. interference as Biden backs protests

HAVANA, July 12 (Reuters) - Cuba blamed historic protests that took place over the weekend on U.S. “economic asphyxiation” and social media campaigns by a minority of U.S.-financed counter-revolutionaries, while U.S. President Joe Biden said he stood with the Cuban people.

The streets of Havana were quiet on Monday, although there was a heavy police presence. Outages in mobile internet - the only way many Cubans have of accessing the web - were frequent.

Chanting “freedom” and calling for President Miguel Diaz-Canel to step down, thousands of Cubans joined street protests from Havana to Santiago on Sunday in the biggest anti-government demonstrations on the Communist-run island in decades.

At least 80 protesters, activists, and independent journalists had been detained nationwide since Sunday, according to exiled rights group Cubalex.

“It’s becoming impossible to live here,” said Havana resident Maykel, 21, who declined to give his surname for fear of retaliation. “I don’t know if this can happen again, because at the moment, Havana is militarized.”

“Still, Cubans are losing their fear,” he said.



tions that has pushed some hospitals to the edge of collapse in a country that prides itself on its healthcare system.

The tightening of decades-old U.S. sanctions under former U.S. President Donald

Trump and the pandemic have exacerbated shortages of food and medicine, as well as power outages.

A minority of counter-revolutionaries were fomenting unrest, Cuban President Miguel Di-

az-Canel said in a more than four-hour-long televised address alongside his Cabinet. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez blamed U.S.-financed mercenaries. The U.S. State Department did not provide an immediate comment.

The protests followed the launch of an ‘SOS Cuba’ campaign on social media calling for

humanitarian assistance, which the government said was a disguised attempt to sow unrest.

Diaz-Canel denounced vandalism that took place during the demonstrations.

“They threw stones at foreign currency shops, they stole items... and at police forces, they turned over cars - a totally vulgar, indecent and delinquent behavior,” he said.

But the president said pro-government supporters had finally restored order, after on Sunday instructing them to fight back and “defend the revolution” - orders that caused consternation among some Cubans.

Reuters witnesses saw protesters in Havana on Sunday confronted by smaller pro-government counter-rallies, while police officers stopped their attempt to march to Revolution Square.

Amnesty International said it had received with alarm reports of “internet blackouts, arbitrary arrests, excessive use of force – including police firing on demonstrators.” Reuters was unable to immediately independently verify the use of firearms.

Network monitoring company Kentik said it had observed the entire country go offline for less than 30 minutes at around 4pm on Sunday, followed by several hours of intermittent outages.

“Until very recently, large internet outages were very rare,” said Doug Madory, Kentik’s director of Internet analysis. “Internet shutdowns are new to Cuba in 2021.”

The United Nations said it was monitoring the protests and called for the rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to be respected.

Some Cuban celebrities who have to date not touched on sensitive political issues publicly came out in support of the protesters.

“Their voices should be heard and their rights to express themselves



Others Reuters spoke to, however, said they hoped there would be no more protests, citing fears of violence, and saying they would prefer there to be more dialogue.

The protests erupted amid both Cuba’s deepest economic crisis since the fall of former ally the Soviet Union and a surge in COVID-19 infec-

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

07/12/2021



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Branson Rocketed To Space

Richard Branson successfully rocketed to more than 50 miles above earth in the space plane from his rocket venture Virgin Galactic.

He founded Virgin Galactic in 2004 with the goal to create a winged spacecraft capable of taking eight people to reach more than 50 miles above earth. Sunday morning Branson's flight took off from Spaceport

America in New Mexico.

A spokesman for Branson said his job was to use his observation skills from his flight training and space flight experience to enhance the journey for all future astronaut customers.

Mr. Branson's flight will give hope for many private citizens and not just for the professional astronauts.



Another American billionaire, Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, also plans to make a similar space journey in the next nine days.

We are so grateful that these people risk their lives and fortunes to test the way to space.

The coronavirus pandemic has really hit hard for the whole

nation. Many problems around the globe have brought so many tragedies. We are so glad that all of us have another hope to bring the world a brighter future.



Southern
DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Asylum-seeking migrant families arrive to the bank of the Rio Grande river on an inflatable raft after crossing into the United States from Mexico in Roma, Texas. REUTERS/Go Nakamura



Italy celebrate with the trophy after defeating England to win the Euro 2020, at Wembley Stadium in London. Pool via REUTERS/Michael Regan



Men and children with their cameras and mobile phones take photos of a sacrificial cow being lowered from a rooftop by a crane, ahead of the Eid al-Adha festival in Karachi, Pakistan. REUTERS/Akhtar Soomro



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates with the trophy after winning his final match against Italy's Matteo Berrettini at Wimbledon. REUTERS/Paul Childs



Former Mujahideen hold weapons to support Afghan forces in their fight against Taliban, on the outskirts of Herat province, Afghanistan. REUTERS/Jalil Ahmad



A statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee is removed after years of a legal battle over the contentious monument, in Charlottesville, Virginia. REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein

Despite New COVID Variants, CDC Says You Don't Need Any Booster Doses Right Now



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

As new coronavirus variants test the protections of the available vaccines, federal health officials say there's no need for booster doses right now.

"Americans who have been fully vaccinated do not need a booster shot at this time," read a joint statement sent Thursday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration. The agencies added that people who are fully vaccinated are protected from severe illness and death, including from emerging variants such as the highly contagious delta variant that's now the dominant strain in the U.S. and in other countries.

The news comes shortly after Pfizer and BioNTech announced plans to seek FDA authorization for a booster dose of their COVID-19 vaccine.

Pfizer and BioNTech say initial trial results from an ongoing booster trial show that a third shot given six months after the initial two shots can bring antibody levels to a point that should increase protection against disease caused by either the original strain of the coronavirus or the beta variant (the variant first detected in South Africa).

Pfizer and BioNTech say they are also developing a new version of their vaccine

designed specifically to target the delta variant, which they hope to start testing in volunteers this summer. (Courtesy npr.org)

Related

Gottlieb: 'We've probably missed a window' for providing booster shot for delta variant.

Dr. Scott Gottlieb, a former Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner who sits on Pfizer's board of directors, said on Sunday that the nation has "probably missed a window" for providing a booster shot to protect against the more infectious delta variant of COVID-19.

Appearing on CBS's "Face the Nation," Gottlieb said that many people who were vaccinated early, including those in elder care homes and front-line health care workers, may begin showing a decline in immunity, pointing to a recent Israeli study that found vaccine efficacy fell among these groups.



Dr. Scott Gottlieb, speaking on "Face The Nation"

"If you go out and get vaccinated right now, that vaccine's going to carry you through the fall and the winter. What we're really talking about is people who were vaccinated a while ago, where there may be some declining efficacy," Gottlieb said, adding that the delta variant could potentially "overwhelm their residual antibodies."

Face The Nation
@FaceTheNation
Dr. Scott Gottlieb:
"If we don't get started, we're not going to be in a position to have boosters available should we need them come fall."
@ScottGottliebMD says. "I think, quite frankly, we've probably missed the window for providing boosters for the Delta variant."

Face The Nation
@FaceTheNation
Dr. Anthony Fauci
Dr. Fauci says declining U.S. vaccination rate is "very, very frustrating situation": "We have more vaccines in this country than we know what to do with - everybody & anybody can get vaccinated. And we have people throughout the world who would do anything to get vaccinated." Last week, Pfizer announced that it planned to seek FDA authorization for a third dose its COVID-19 vaccine, saying another dose provided five to 10 time more antibodies when administered six months after a second dose.



According to Gottlieb, regardless of whether the FDA approves the third shot, the application needed to be made now in order to have it ready in time for the 2021-2022 COVID-19 season.

"I think, quite frankly, we've probably missed a window in terms of providing boosters for the delta variant. The delta variant's likely to play out really over the months of August and September, maybe

in October. This wave of infection will have passed us," Gottlieb said on Sunday. "But you still want to consider boosters for people going forward, particularly vulnerable elderly people in nursing homes, people who we know are more vulnerable to the infection." (Courtesy thehill.com)

Related
Highly Infectious Delta Variant Is Now The Dominant Covid Strain In U.S. CDC Says



The Delta variant is causing outbreaks among kids in some countries. (GETTY IMAGES)

The highly infectious Delta variant is now the dominant coronavirus strain in the U.S., according to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates, accounting for more than half of the country's Covid-19 infections over the last two weeks and risking new waves of infection as the country fully reopens despite dangerously low levels of vaccine uptake in some areas and groups, including children.

The Delta variant, which was first detected in India and is also known as B.1.617.2, now accounts for 51.7% of Covid-19 cases in the U.S., according to the latest CDC estimates from the two week period between Jun. 20 and Jul. 3.

The Alpha or B.1.1.7 variant, which was first identified in the U.K. and became the dominant U.S. strain in April, now makes up 28.7% of cases.

The Delta variant has spread rapidly to become the dominant U.S. variant: It represented just 10% of cases around a month ago and around 30% of cases between Jun. 6 and Jun 19. In two of 10 regions the CDC monitors—one covering Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, and the other Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming—the Delta variant already accounts for 80.7%



and 74.3% of cases respectively.

Though Delta has driven a wave of new infections among unvaccinated groups in highly vaccinated countries—notably in children and young people—the CDC has so far declined to follow the World Health Organization in encouraging vaccinated Americans to wear masks and the White House has said it will leave decisions on new pandemic restrictions to individual states.

Vaccines appear to be effective at preventing serious disease from Delta, but coverage is uneven, uptake is falling and hesitancy remains high, with five states—Mississippi, Louisiana, Idaho, Wyoming and Alabama—still not having given at least one vaccine to more than 40% of residents.

KEY BACKGROUND

Public health experts have expressed concern Delta could undermine American efforts to manage Covid-19, especially given the vast disparities in vaccine uptake as the U.S. is almost fully reopened. The variant has caused a surge in cases in highly vaccinated countries that had already asserted control over the virus, pushing parts of Europe and Australia back into lockdown and driving a surge in cases in the U.K. and Israel. Delta is more contagious than other variants circulating and is between 40% to 60% more transmissible than Alpha, itself already 50% more transmissible than the original strain first detected in Wuhan.

While an increase in infections alone is troubling and can lead to more deaths—both through the increase in cases and by overwhelming the health system—early research suggests Delta is possibly more dangerous than the Alpha variant and twice as likely to lead to hospitalization. (Courtesy <https://www.forbes.com/>)

New Alief Neighborhood Center Represents Future Cultural Reality Of Area

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



The Alief Neighborhood Center combines three City of Houston departments (Library, Parks, & Health) to create a civic center at the heart of the redeveloped 37-acre urban park. Raised out of the floodplain, the building's elevated 'front porch' frames a space for the diverse community to come together, share ideas, and express an identity unique to Alief. The Center is a model for resilient design in a post-hurricane Harvey environment—a 'Lilly-pad' for those seeking shelter from the storm.

BUILDING AWARDS-

Rethinking The Future Awards 2020
First Award | Public Building (Concept)

The \$52 million, 63,000-square-foot multi-purpose facility at 11903 Bellaire will combine a health clinic, community center and library into one space. The structure, which will sit in 37-acre Alief Park, will consolidate the Hennington-Alief Regional Library at 7979 South Kirkwood and the park's existing community center, both of which are aging. It also will replace the area's Women, Infants and Children Center, which today leases space at 12660 Beechnut. City council passed one item appropriating \$4.8 million for contractor EYP Inc. to begin construction on the new center, and another item giving Manhattan Construction \$100,000 for construction management services.

The 70,000sf 2-story new building is elevated over a parking area providing convenient access to the building programs directly above. Health Department programs provided include W.I.C. (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), DAWN (Diabetes

Awareness Network) that provides support for a variety of chronic illnesses, and a Senior Center. The Parks Department programs include a full-size competition gymnasium with a perimeter elevated walking track above, a community fitness center and spaces to support youth after-school and summer programs.



The library, located on the second floor, and accessed through a grand 'stair-a-torium' in the lobby contains light-filled stack-space and reading

areas with expansive views both to the park to the south and to the existing grove of preserved trees on the north. Directly adjacent to the library, HPL's technology-rich TechLINK youth maker-doer program contains spaces for collaboration, the 'Tiny Techs' children's area, music recording studio, virtual reality stations, photo/video lab, and a maker space.

Site amenities include a competition soccer field, two full-size practice soccer fields, two futsal courts (fast-paced soccer played on a hard-surfaced smaller court) baseball field, skate park, tennis courts, children's playground, outdoor swimming pool facility, community gardens, a marketplace venue, and outdoor event space areas. The Alief Neighborhood Center is

Related

Community Resource Center Opens

Sponsored by the ITC Community Empowerment Organization with the collaboration of the SE-ONE Corporation, the Community Resource Center opens its door on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at the Southern News Group building. The mission of the Community Resource Center is to serve as a "one stop-shop" for the underserved minority population in the southwest area of Houston. The Center will provide members of the community with information that will empower them to improve their quality of life and to also serve as a way for participants to access the rich pool of resources available to them.



Members of the community who have questions about any of the variety of issues the Center will address are encouraged to schedule interviews with the Center. The Center will link the person with a professional who can best address their needs. The areas the Center will address include disaster assistance, loans and grants, small business development, tax information, immigration, legal issues, workforce, housing and renting, veterans issues, medical, healthcare service, education, skills development, children and child welfare and civics services. The Center's services will be led by senior educator, Dr. Tina Agosa and many other assistants.



The Mission Of The Alief Neighborhood Center



To Foster A Culture Of Health



To Create A Heart For Civic Engagement



All In A Spirit Of Shared Collaboration



With The Biggest Front Porch In Texas!