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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Death toll rises to 36 in U.S. Florida building collapse, 109 still missing

The confirmed death toll in the partial collapse of a 12-story residential building in Surfside, southeastern U.S. state Florida, has risen to 36, Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said at an evening news briefing on Tuesday.

There are 109 "reports of people who are potentially unaccounted for," the mayor said.

Miami-Dade County Fire Chief Alan Cominsky said they failed to find any positive signs in regard to voids or livable spaces as rescue workers continue to search the rubble left behind.

"Unfortunately we're not seeing anything positive," Cominsky said.

Search and rescue were forced to pause for about two hours Tuesday afternoon because of lightning and some gusts of wind that went above 30 miles (48 km) per hour with Tropical Storm Elsa approaching, according to a CNN report.

The collapse occurred on June 24 at the Champlain Towers South condominium in the beachside town that sits around 9.6 km north of Miami Beach.

Since the collapse, multiple Miami-area buildings have been evacuated, local media reported



COVID-19 takes heavy toll on SDGs: UN report

UNITED NATIONS, July 6 (Xinhua) -- The COVID-19 pandemic has rolled back years, or even decades, of progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a UN report shows.

The effects of the pandemic have reversed much of the progress made in reducing poverty, with global extreme poverty rising in 2020 for the first time since the late 1990s, according to the report released on Tuesday.

Even before COVID-19, the world was not on track to achieve the goal of ending poverty by 2030. Based on current projections, the global poverty rate is expected to be 7 percent (around 600 million people) in 2030, missing the target of eradicating poverty, SDG1.

COVID-19 has had a further and profound impact on hunger and food security, triggered by disruptions in food supply chains, income losses, widening social inequities, an altered food environment and price hikes. Between 83 million and 132 million addition-

al people globally are likely to have experienced hunger as a result of the pandemic in 2020, according to The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021.

Hunger was already on the rise prior to the pandemic. In 2019, some 688 million people were going hungry, compared with 628 million in 2014. In 2019, some 2 billion people were suffering from food insecurity.

The pandemic has interrupted essential health services and poses major health threats beyond the disease itself. A decade of progress in reproductive health, maternal health and child health could be stalled or reversed, according to the report.

COVID-19 has wiped out 20 years of education gains, with an additional 101 million children in Grades 1 through 8 falling below minimum reading proficiency levels in 2020, it said.

One year into the crisis, two in three

students were still affected by full or partial school closures. The poorest and most vulnerable children are bearing the brunt of the crisis, exacerbating long-standing inequalities. Many risk never returning to school; some are forced into child marriage or child labor.

The social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have adversely affected progress toward gender equality. Violence against women and girls has intensified; child marriage, which was on the decline in recent years, is expected to increase; and women have suffered a disproportionate share of job losses and increased care work at home.

The pandemic is exacerbating existing inequalities within and among countries and hitting the most vulnerable people and the poorest countries hardest. COVID-19 is estimated to increase the average Gini index, which measures income inequality, for emerging market and developing countries by 6 percent, it said.

Despite a pandemic-related economic

slowdown, the climate crisis continues largely unabated. A temporary reduction in human activities resulted in a dip in emissions. However, concentrations of greenhouse gases continued to increase in 2020, reaching new record highs. It was one of the three warmest years on record, with the global average temperature about 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The world remains woefully off track in meeting the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees and reaching net-zero carbon dioxide emissions globally by 2050.

Biodiversity is declining, and terrestrial ecosystems are being degraded at alarming rates, said the report.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in the foreword of the report, voiced concern about the trends, and expressed hope.

With a surge in global solidarity and leadership from the highest political level, countries can still deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the 2015 Paris Agreement, he said.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

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Texas Democrats Fight Against Election Law Reform

A charter plane with a load of Texas Democratic house members took off from Austin and landed in the nation's capital. They are attempting to fight against the passage of one of the nation's most stringent voting laws.

What the Democrats did by leaving the state was to rob Republicans in the Texas legislature of a quorum. Republicans pledged to do everything they

could to find a legislative workaround for the lack of quorum, but if the Democratic members stay in Washington DC, then the clock will run out for this special session. This means the Democrats will have about a month away at home. If they return to Texas, the governor could have them arrested. But in reality, the governor could call for another special session after this special session, all the

way up until the election next year.

Texas Democrats knew that when they took the flight to DC, it was all really about drawing national attention to the voting bill.

Chris Turner, Chairman of the Texas House Democratic Caucus, told reporters that we need the Congress to pass federal voting rights legislation to save our democracy



because these Republican attacks will continue to occur over and over again in Texas and across the country.

The Bill 7 which could make mail-in voting more difficult and ban drive-thru voting was introduced during the pandemic in Houston which is a Democratic stronghold.

Today we are facing a big challenge in Texas politics. Many

Democrats live in the big cities such as Houston and San Antonio. Now we are having more and more minorities move into the smaller areas of the state. The minorities now are becoming the majority. Now the whole state is turning to blue and later will control most of the elected officials.

We all hope that both parties will compromise and let the political turmoil come to an end.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



A humvee belonging Afghan Special Forces is seen destroyed during heavy clashes with Taliban during the rescue mission of a police officer besieged at a check post, in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. REUTERS/Danish Siddiqui



Alpha jets from the French Air Force Patrouille de France fly past Carrousel du Louvre during the Bastille Day celebrations in Paris, France. REUTERS/Gonzalo Fuentes



Thick smoke causes the sun to glow red over an abandoned farmhouse as the Bootleg Fire expands to over 200,000 acres, near Beatty, Oregon. REUTERS/Mathieu Lewis-Rolland



Demonstrators hold up "Stand Up To Racism" banners in front of the Marcus Rashford mural in Manchester after it was defaced following the Euro 2020 Final between Italy and England. REUTERS/Peter Powell



Cast members Tim Roth and Vicky Krieps pose at the photocall for the film "Bergman Island" in competition at Cannes. REUTERS/Eric Gaillard



A worker using his mobile phone sits at a looted shop as the country deploys army to quell unrest linked to jailing of former President Jacob Zuma, in Soweto, South Africa. REUTERS/Siphiwe Sibeko

Infectious Delta Variant Is Now The Dominant Covid Strain In U.S.

President Biden Ramps Up Vax Drive With New Initiatives



President Joe Biden

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

President Joe Biden on Tuesday unveiled new initiatives aimed at the one-third of the eligible U.S. population that has not gotten any COVID-19 vaccine shots, focusing on providing easier access. Two days after his administration came up short in its goal to have 70% of U.S. adults at least partially vaccinated by July 4 – the current figure is 67% – Biden lauded the progress the nation has made against the coronavirus but warned about the dangers the highly transmissible delta variant presents.

The president outlined several areas his team is emphasizing to ramp up vaccination efforts, including door-to-door outreach, sending vaccines to health care providers and pediatricians who can encourage adolescents to get shots, wider availability at pharmacies and expanding mobile clinics and vaccination sites for workers. Biden also highlighted that by the end of the week, the U.S. is expected to have fully vaccinated 160 million residents, more than 55% of the eligible population.

“We are emerging from one of the darkest years in our nation’s history into a summer of hope and joy,” Biden said. “We can’t get complacent now. The best thing you can do to protect yourself and your family and the people you care about the most is to get vaccinated.”

Also in the news

► The CDC says the delta variant is now the dominant strain in the U.S., accounting for nearly 52% of new infections. About 7,550 out of 19.5 million fully vaccinated Californians have contracted the coronavirus, a rate of infection of one in 2,582 that’s a testament to the vaccines’ effectiveness, according to an analysis by CalMatters of state data through June 23.



► Hundreds of Italian health care workers have sued local health authorities to avoid being suspended after they refused to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Germany will ease strict rules on travel from Britain, Portugal, Russia, India and Nepal that were imposed because of a surge in cases from the delta variant.

*Today’s numbers: The U.S. has more than 33.7 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and more than 605,800 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University data. The global totals: More than 184.3 million cases and nearly 3.99 million deaths. More than 157.3 million Americans have been fully vaccinated – 47.4% of the population, according to the CDC. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a third of the 64 people who oversee the nation’s vaccination programs have left their jobs. In the midst of the largest vaccination effort in the country’s history, the nation lost a staggering amount of institutional knowledge.

Vaccines could get full FDA approval in 4-5 weeks, ex-White House official says

A former top pandemic-response official for the Biden administration believes the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will get full approval from the Federal Drug Administration in a

matter of weeks, which might help win over some vaccine skeptics.



Andy Slavitt, who in early June ended his run as senior adviser to the White House for COVID response, told CNN on Tuesday that he expects the Pfizer vaccine to be approved in four to five weeks, followed shortly afterward by the Moderna inoculation. Both vaccines, which have been shown to be more than 90% effective against the coronavirus, are being administered under an emergency use authorization from the FDA. Getting full approval requires passing a higher level of scrutiny.

“For many of the people ... who are on the fence, that will be a tell-tale sign for them to say, ‘Why am I on the fence any longer? This is now fully approved by the FDA,’” Slavitt said. “Even though it’s got a great record already, that will I think be another stamp of approval.”

He also said the increased risk presented by the delta variant, which is already the dominant strain in some states, might motivate some to get the vaccine.

Houston camp outbreak: 125-plus infected

More than 125 children and adults who attended a five-day camp run by a Houston-area church tested positive for the coronavirus. Clear Creek Community Church, which has four locations in and around Houston, canceled services this week because of the outbreak. Authorities have confirmed the highly infectious delta variant was detected among those infected. The camp, held June 23-27, had more than 450 participants, a large number of them middle schoolers and high schoolers. The church acknowledged the amount of infections stemming from the event may increase beyond what’s currently known.



“Hundreds more were exposed to COVID-19 at camp,” the church said on its website. “And hundreds of others were likely exposed when infected people returned home from camp. “We are surprised and saddened by this turn of events,” the statement continued. “Our hearts break for those infected with the virus.”

Infections rising in nearly half of states

COVID-19 cases were up in nearly half of U.S. states, a USA TODAY Network analysis of Johns Hopkins University data shows. Alaska and Arkansas more than doubled cases in just the last week. South Carolina and Kansas are up more than 50%.

In Missouri, the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients jumped by nearly 30% over the Fourth of July weekend in a hard-hit area where immunization rates are low, leading to a temporary ventilator shortage and a public call for help from respiratory therapists. The delta variant, first identified in India, is spreading rapidly throughout the state, straining hospitals in Springfield and raising fresh fears that the situation could soon grow worse as holiday gatherings seed fresh cases. Missouri leads the nation with the most new cases per capita in the past 14 days; 39.4% of residents there are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 cases in Mississippi increased by almost 15% in June. Mississippi’s fully vaccinated rate of 31% is the lowest in the nation.

“It feels very reminiscent of where we were in an early part of the pandemic,” State Epidemiologist Paul Byers said during a June 29 press conference. “It feels like we’re in the same situation now with the delta variant.” (Courtesy usatoday.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. However, data from the U.K., where almost all cases are now driven by Delta, indicates high vaccination rates are driving a possible decoupling between infection, severe illness and death, prompting the government to forge ahead with controversial plans to drop almost all social restrictions on July 19, despite the country having one of the highest rates of new cases in the world.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Even if vaccine coverage is able to protect Americans from serious illness, there is a lot that remains unknown about Covid-19 infections. Long Covid, identified as persistent and lingering symptoms long after the infection has passed, threatens to leave millions chronically ill. Research suggests children are not immune to this, and a significant number could already be these Covid “long haulers.”

BIG NUMBER

47%. That’s how much of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, according to the CDC. Given the diminished protection of just one dose against Delta, getting this figure up is a priority for public health officials. (Courtesy https://www.forbes.com/)

Future Work: Will Your Career Of Tomorrow Be On Mars?



By Louis Efron

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

Look around the space where you are sitting. How many of the things you see were not available to you as a child? Perhaps you note a laptop, smart phone or Wi-Fi connection? Now imagine these things vanished. What would your life be like? Think back to when you were a child. Could you have imagined the items you now can’t live without? This same dynamic may soon be on the horizon for jobs on Mars—we may one day wonder how we ever confined our human activities to Earth.

Advancing technology continues to create more unique and interesting jobs—for now, all of them based on planet Earth. But change may be upon us.

If the human race is to continue for another million years, we will have to boldly go where no one has gone before,” the late Stephen Hawking argued.

As Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, NASA scientists and others continue to bring the possibility of living on another planet into the foreseeable future, the reality of an interplanetary economy and job market could be just around the corner.

By 2024, Musk’s SpaceX aims to send the first astronauts to Mars. President Trump’s 2020 budget includes funding for a manned Mars mission to launch as soon as 2026, with a goal of bringing back samples of the Red Planet. Such studies of rock, soil and atmosphere samples could bring new insights into the sphere’s geology and water presence, and may even locate evidence of

past or current life. In fact, multiplanet settlements maybe crucial for the long-term survival of humans. Amazon’s founder and CEO Jeff Bezos believes that expanding our living options in our solar system “is not something that we may choose to do; this is something we must do.” Environmental destruction, natural resource constraints, rapid population growth and potentially deadly asteroids or other natural disasters could leave Mother Earth with a limited capacity to sustain our continued growth. Colonizing another planet could lift the barriers Earth may present to the continued expansion of humanity.



Why Mars?

While planets in our solar system are subject to extreme temperatures and the dangerous elements of space, Mars has some similarities to Earth. It is also in what is called the Habitable Zone, an area where conditions might potentially support life. While its air is too thin to breathe and its surface temperature too cold for unsheltered

life, Mars—unlike other planets in our solar system—has the benefit of a 24-hour day, four seasons, canyons, volcanoes, polar ice caps, river beds, dried lakes and even some liquid water. Based on our current exploration and understanding of our solar system, there is no planet better suited to interplanetary migration than Mars.

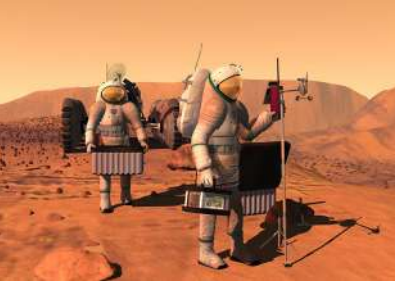
What Jobs Will Be Available On Mars?

Initially, a strong background in science and mathematics will be most desirable. However, as a yearning to see more of Mars accelerates, films, television programs, and reality shows marketed on Earth will attract talent of all kinds to the Red Planet.

The opportunity to be highly innovative on Mars will be another aspect of work on the planet and a strong additional talent attractor. An early Mars colony could generate a lot of income by being an inventors colony. Isolated from the distractions of Earth and challenged to come up with solutions to problems on the planet, Mars will be a pressure cooker for innovation with inhabitants being free to innovate without the bureaucracy on Earth,” explains Dr. Robert Zubrin, founder of the Mars Society and author of the new book *The Case for Space*.

How Do I Apply For Interplanetary Work?

Interplanetary job seekers can apply for desired opportunities on the career web pages of organizations such as SpaceX, Bezos’s Blue Origin and NASA. Also helpful will be specialized industry job sites like Space Individuals and Space Careers. NASA has even released poste advertising jobs on Mars for surveyors, farmers, teachers and technicians. While most jobs working in space are currently based on Earth, space exploration companies require people in every career discipline. Opportunities in engineering, design, software development, manufacturing, human resources, finance, IT, legal, marketing, sales and many other jobs that exist on our planet will be available.



How Will I Get To My New Job?

To make Mars a viable option for a new economy, affordable, safe, reliable and frequent transportation must be available to the general public. Reusable rocket technology like Musk’s will be essential to creating the equivalent of an airline industry in space. Initial passenger rockets could potentially carry up to 100

people or more and 450 tons of cargo.

Will It Be Safe To Live And Work On Mars?

If terraforming, or any other transformative process, is used in an attempt to alter the environment to make Mars habitable, there is no guarantee of a positive outcome. Warming the planet could awaken previous or current Martian life forms, with unknown consequences. A lower gravitational pull could weaken our bones and muscles, and increased radiation may heighten our chances of cancer. In all cases, safety is a concern and the loss of life is a distinct possibility for early settlers. Initial isolation from larger groups of people or a sustained dramatic change to social, living and dietary conditions, along with sleep disorders due to slightly longer days, could present a challenge to the mental and emotional well-being of those living and working on Mars.

How Will I Communicate With Those On Earth?

Eventually, near-real-time holoportation capable of virtually placing people in the same room, even if they are on different planets, will make communicating with family, friends and co-workers on Earth a natural and seamless experience. As image and personal bot technologies advance, your physical location may not matter all that much.



Are Earth Visits An Option?

With the doubling of technological advancement about every 12 to 18 months, return visits to Earth will certainly be in the cards someday. Until then, hologram rooms and other technologies could provide virtual reality visits that come fairly close to feeling like you are back on Earth. If you decide to break up your travels and live on the moon first, as Bezos advises, the chances of an Earth holiday are pretty good.

Where Will I Live, Eat and Shop?

Initially, all living, eating and shopping spaces will be indoors to insulate humans from unbreathable air and cold temperatures. If the planet behaves favorably in our attempts to inhabit it, future communities could mirror those on Earth, and familiar activities could even include grabbing lunch at McDonalds. But considering the likely cost of raising cattle on Mars or developing and producing lab-grown meat, you should expect to pay a lot more for your Big Mac. Vegetables will most likely be the first crops grown on Mars, so a salad may be the best choice for your budget. As for shopping, Amazon could still be your desired option:

Bezos is already planning deliveries to the moon.

Healthcare On Mars?

Recruitment decisions will need to be thoughtful and measured, and contingencies must be in place for re-deploying skills and talents to other meaningful work when a person no longer fulfills his or her job responsibilities or the position isn’t needed. This will also lead to considerations of disability and retirement. To ensure a high quality of life for all Mars citizens, programs must be in place to house and care for those who can no longer do these things for themselves, and a universal health care and universal basic income model could guarantee health care and a minimum livable income to everyone, regardless of circumstance. However, the social-economic dynamic on the Red Planet could change as a space airline industry develops, as noted earlier.

Will I Feel Like I Belong On Mars?

Once a homogenous Martian population evolves, will those from Earth be welcome on Mars? Will an independent Mars economy evolve, or will Earth be fiscally strengthened and positioned as the central economic hub of our solar system?



If Mars does develop an independent economy with little to no reliance on an import/export market, will it become sovereign from Earth? Will such sovereignty create political and power struggles, divided ideals and, ultimately, lead to a scenario like that in H.G. Wells’ War of the Worlds? Education and understanding will be key as humans seek to inhabit other planets in our solar system and, perhaps someday, beyond. Organizations like the National Space Society, a non-profit group dedicated to the creation of a spacefaring civilization, has been leading the charge in this area since 1974 and is a good source for research, articles, publications and general information about how those on Earth can leverage “the vast resources of space for the dramatic betterment of humanity.” The Mars Society, founded in 1998, is another helpful source of information specifically related to human settlement on the Red Planet.

On Mars, humans will discover unique ways to contribute meaningfully to our cosmos and perhaps even sustain the human race. (Courtesy forbes.com)

About the Author

Louis Efron (LouisEfron.com) is a globally recognized thought leader, speaker, writer and Fortune 200 HR Executive.