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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Wednesday, January 19 2022 |

## Microsoft to gobble up Activision in \$69 billion metaverse bet



Gamers play Call of Duty: Black Ops 4 at the Paris Games Week (PGW), a trade fair for video games in Paris, France, October 25, 2018. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier

Jan 18 (Reuters) - Microsoft Corp (MSFT.O) is buying "Call of Duty" maker Activision Blizzard (ATVI.O) for \$68.7 billion in the biggest gaming industry deal in history as global technology giants stake their claims to a virtual future.

The deal announced by Microsoft on Tuesday, its biggest-ever and set to be the largest all-cash acquisition on record, will bolster its firepower in the booming videogaming market where it takes on leaders Tencent (0700.HK) and Sony (6758.T). It also represents the American multinational's bet on the "metaverse," virtual online worlds where people can work, play and socialize, as many of its biggest competitors are already doing. read more "Gaming is the most dynamic and exciting category in entertainment across all platforms today and will play a key role in the development of metaverse platforms," Microsoft Chief Executive Satya Nadella said.

Microsoft, one of the biggest

companies in the world largely thanks to corporate software such as its Azure cloud computing platform and Outlook franchise, is offering \$95 per share - a 45% premium to Activision's Friday close.

Activision's shares were last up 26% at \$82.10, still a steep discount to the offer price, reflecting concerns the deal could get stuck in regulators' crosshairs. Microsoft has so far avoided the type of scrutiny faced by Google and Facebook but this deal, which would make it the world's third largest gaming company, will put the Xbox maker on lawmakers' radars, said Andre Barlow of the law firm Doyle, Barlow & Mazard PLLC. "Microsoft is already big in gaming," he said.

However, a source familiar with the matter said Microsoft would pay a \$3 billion break-fee if the deal falls through, suggesting it is confident of winning antitrust approval. The tech major's shares were last down 1.9%. The deal comes at a time of weakness for Activision, maker of games

such as "Overwatch" and "Candy Crush". Before the deal was announced, its shares had slumped more than 37% since reaching a record high last year, hit by allegations of sexual harassment of employees and misconduct by several top managers.

The company is still addressing those allegations and said on Monday it had fired or pushed out more than three dozen employees and disciplined another 40 since July.

CEO Bobby Kotick, who said Microsoft approached him about a possible buyout, would continue as CEO of Activision following the deal, although the Wall Street Journal reported he was expected to leave after it closes.

In a conference call with analysts, Microsoft boss Nadella did not directly refer to the scandal but talked about the importance of culture in the company "It's critical for Activision Blizzard to drive forward on its renewed cultural commitments," he said, adding "the success of this acquisition will

depend on it."

### 'METAVERSE ARMS RACE'

Data analytics firm Newzoo estimates the global gaming market generated \$180.3 billion of revenues in 2021, and expects that to grow to \$218.8 billion by 2024.

Microsoft already has a significant beachhead in the sector as one of the big three console makers. It has been making investments including buying "Minecraft" maker Mojang Studios and Zenimax in multibillion-dollar deals in recent years.

It has also launched a popular cloud gaming service, which has more than 25 million subscribers.

According to Newzoo, Microsoft's gaming market share was 6.5% in 2020 and adding Activision would have taken it to 10.7%.

Executives talked up Activision's 400 million monthly active users as one major attraction to the deal and how vital these communities could play in Microsoft's various metaverse plays.

Activision's library of games could give Microsoft's Xbox gaming platform an edge over Sony's PlayStation, which has for years enjoyed a more steady stream of exclusive games.

"The likes of Netflix have already said they'd like to foray into gaming themselves, but Microsoft has come out swinging with today's rather generous offer," said Sophie Lund-Yates, equity analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Microsoft's offer equates to 18 times Activision's 2021 earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA). That compares with the 16 times EBITDA valuation of "Grand Theft Auto" maker Take-Two Interactive's (TTWO.O) cash-and-shares deal for Zynga last week.

According to Refinitiv data, the Microsoft-Activision deal would be the largest all-cash acquisition on record, trumping Bayer's \$63.9 billion offer for Monsanto in 2016 and the \$60.4 billion that InBev bid for Anheuser-Busch in 2008.

Tech companies from Microsoft to Nvidia have placed big bets on the so-called metaverse, with the buzz around it intensifying late last year after Facebook renamed itself as Meta Platforms to reflect its focus on its virtual reality business.

"This is a significant deal for the consumer side of the business and more importantly, Microsoft acquiring Activision really starts the metaverse arms race," David Wagner, Equity Analyst and Portfolio Manager at Aptus Capital Advisors said. "We believe the deal will get done," he said, but cautioned: "This will get a lot of looks from a regulatory standpoint."

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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

01/18/2022

## Is Omicron Bringing The Covid Endgame?



White House chief medical advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci said it is still too soon to predict whether the omicron Covid-19 variant will mark the final wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

transmissible, has been found to be less severe than previous variants. It could hasten the end of the pandemic.

Fauci said, "Control means that you have it present, but it is present at a level that does not disrupt

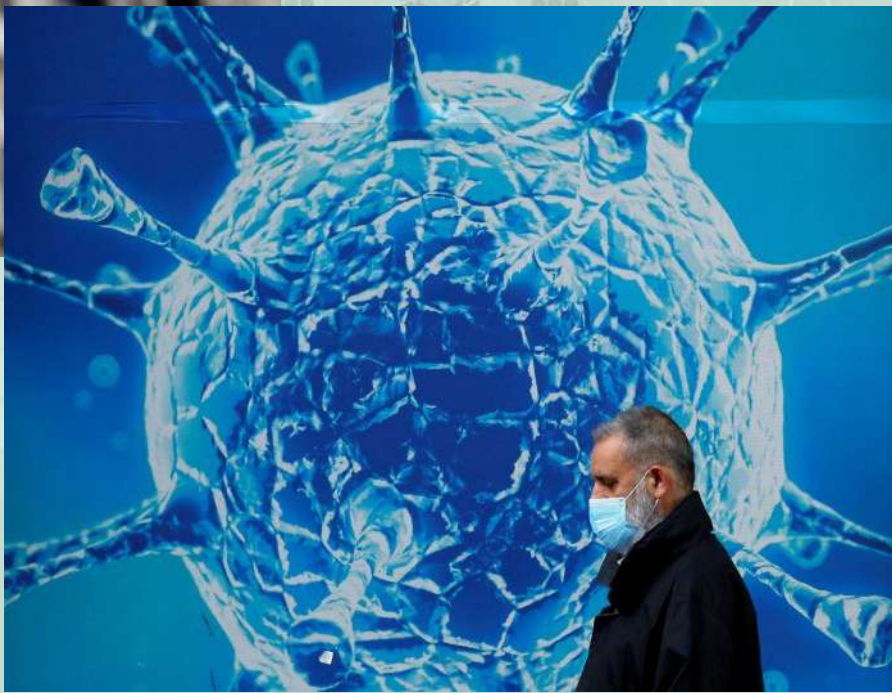
The omicron variant, while highly

society. That is my definition of what immunity would mean."

This is now exactly the one-year anniversary of the Biden administration. We are here still fighting the virus. This is the most

important agenda for President Biden to give people a normal life.

Every day we see the priests in the churches and monks in the temples praying for their believers. They all want peace to come back to our community.



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**Southern DAILY** Make Today Different

## Editor's Choice



The hearse carrying the casket of Ashling Murphy, arrives for her funeral as a guard of honour of the children whom she taught pays respect near Tullamore, Ireland January 18, 2022. REUTERS/Clodagh Kilcoyne



A musician reacts during the funeral of late 23-year-old teacher, Ashling Murphy, who was murdered while out jogging, outside the St Brigid's Church in Mountbolus near Tullamore, Ireland January 18, 2022. REUTERS/Clodagh Kilcoyne



A guard of honour of the children which 23-year-old teacher, Ashling Murphy taught, hold her picture as people gather for her funeral near Tullamore, Ireland January 18, 2022. REUTERS/Clodagh Kilcoyne



Mourners take part in the funeral of late 23-year-old teacher, Ashling Murphy, in Mountbolus near Tullamore, Ireland January 18, 2022. REUTERS/Clodagh Kilcoyne



Gabby Barrett performs on stage. REUTERS/Harrison McClary



People attend a protest at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), in Glasgow, November 12. REUTERS/Yves Herman



# BUSINESS

## U.S. Records 837,274 Lives Lost To The Coronavirus As Death Rate Accelerates



Mary Estime-Irvin, a councilwoman in North Miami, Fla., writes the name of a friend lost to COVID-19 on a symbolic tombstone that is part of a pandemic memorial at Griffing Park in North Miami in October. (Photo/Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

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

While millions wait for a lifesaving shot, the U.S. death toll from the coronavirus continues to soar upward with horrifying speed. More than 100,000 Americans have perished in the pandemic in just the past five weeks. In the U.S., someone now dies from COVID-19 every 26 seconds. And the disease is now claiming more American lives each week than any other condition, ahead of heart disease and cancer, according to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

Given its relatively large population, the U.S. death rate from COVID-19 remains lower than that of many other countries. But the cumulative death toll of 837,274 now exceeds any other country's overall mortality — close to double what Brazil has recorded, and four times the death count in the United Kingdom.

"It's very hard to wrap your mind around a number that is so large, particularly when we've had 10 months of large numbers assaulting our senses and really, really horrific images coming out of our hospitals and our morgues," says Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, chair of epidemiology at the University of California, San Francisco.



Kristin Urquiza and her father, Mark, at a family celebration in Phoenix in 2016. After her father's death on June 30, Urquiza co-founded a group for grieving family members, Marked By COVID. (Photo/Christine Keeves)

"It's important to understand virology. It's important to understand epidemiology. But ultimately, what we've learned is that human behavior and psychology is a major force in this pandemic," she says.

The U.S. is now averaging more than close to one million deaths a day - well above the most devastating days of the early spring surge when the daily average deaths hovered around 2,000.

"At this point, looking at the numbers, for me

the question is: Is there any way we can avoid half a million deaths before the end of February?" says Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health. "I think of how much suffering as a nation we seem to be willing to accept that we have this number of people getting infected and dying every day."

### How did the U.S. go from 300,000 deaths to 837,274?

The path to over 800,000 deaths was painfully familiar, with patterns of sickness and death repeating themselves from earlier in the pandemic. A shocking number of people in nursing homes and assisted living facilities continue to die each week — more than 6,000 of those residents died just in the first week of January. Deaths linked to long-term care now account for more than a third of all COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. since the beginning of the pandemic. In a handful of states, long-term care contributed to half of the total deaths. Certain parts of the country have a disproportionately high death rate. Alabama and Arizona, in particular, have experienced some of the highest death rates, given their populations. The virus continues to kill Black and Indigenous Americans at much higher rates than white Americans.



Artist Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg walks among thousands of white flags planted in remembrance of Americans who have died of COVID-19, near Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium in Washington, October 27, 2020. (Photo/Patrick Semansky/AP File)

In rural America, the chance of dying from COVID-19 remains much higher than in the urban centers. People over 65 make up the overwhelming majority of deaths, but Jha says more young people are dying than earlier in the pandemic simply because the virus is so widespread. In this newest and grimmest chapter of the pandemic, the virus has preyed upon a public weary of restrictions and rules, and eager to mix socially with family and friends over the holiday season.

Like many health care workers, Dr. Panagis Galiatsatos at Johns Hopkins Hospital is now witnessing the tragic consequences in his daily rounds.

Galiatsatos still recalls a grandmother who was transported six hours from her home to his hospital — because there were no beds anywhere closer. On the phone, he heard her family's shock at her sudden passing.

"They said: 'But she was so healthy, she cooked us all Thanksgiving dinner and we had all the family over,' " he says. "They were saying it with sincerity, but that's probably where she got it."

### Vaccine rollout has yet to catch up with an accelerating mortality rate

The enormous loss of life this winter has happened paradoxically at a time that many hope marks the start of the final chapter of the pandemic. A quarter of all COVID-19 deaths have happened during the five-week period since the Food and Drug Administration authorized the first vaccine on Dec. 14.



A health worker carries a special refrigerated box of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines for use at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center in Boston on December 24, 2020. (Photo/ by J. Prezioso/AFP via Getty Images)

"The trickle of vaccine is so tragically scant — what we need is more of a river of it," says Dr. Howard Markel, who directs the University of Michigan's Center for the History of Medicine. Markel, who has written about the 1918-19 flu pandemic, says it's estimated that killed upward of 700,000 Americans.

The first COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. was given on Dec. 14. A disjointed and often frustrating rollout followed as states, counties and even individual hospitals struggled to store the first refrigerated shipments of vaccine and arrange for busy health care workers to get it. So far, about 3 in every 100 people have gotten at least one dose of the vaccine, placing America

ahead of many other countries, but behind the optimistic promises made in the early days of the rollout.

Given the current pace of vaccination, experts warn Americans cannot depend solely on the vaccine to prevent a crushing number of additional deaths in the coming months. Bibbins-Domingo of the University of California, San Francisco worries the relief of knowing that a vaccine will eventually be widely available — the so-called light at the end of the tunnel — may lull millions of more Americans into a false sense of safety.

"This tunnel is actually a very long tunnel, and the next few months, as the last few months have been, are going to be very dark times," she says.



The emergence of new, more contagious variants of SARS-CoV-2 only complicates the picture and makes it all the more imperative that Americans spend the coming months doubling down on the same tactics — face masks and physical distancing — that have kept many people safe from the virus so far. But Jha says the country now faces a different task compared with the fall when "big behavioral changes and large economic costs" were required to prevent deaths.

"Right now what is required is getting people vaccinated with vaccines we already have," he says. "The fact that's going super slow still is incredibly frustrating."

It is this polarity — the advent of a lifesaving vaccine and hospitals filled with more dying patients than ever before — that makes this particular moment in the pandemic so confounding.

"I can't help but feel this immense somberness," Urquiza says. "I know that a vaccine isn't going to make a difference for the people that are in the hospital right now, or who will be in the hospital next week, or even next month." (Courtesy npr.org)

Southern

DAILY

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# COMMUNITY

### A COVID-19 Recovery Tutorial

## The Road To Recovery After COVID: How To Manage Your Long COVID Symptoms

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



### Learning to manage your long COVID symptoms after recovery

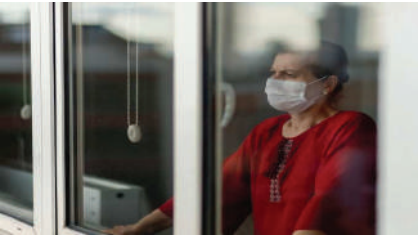
Recovery from novel coronavirus can take a while, depending on your symptoms. For many, it can also span into weeks, often a months battle, leaving them vulnerable to other medical frailties. Known as long COVID, it has been estimated that 1 in 4 patients suffer from post COVID complications after recovery.

### What does post COVID or long COVID mean?



With symptoms ranging from heart ailments, impaired lung functions, cognitive decline and compromised immunity, long COVID-19 tends to affect the ones who have severe COVID-related illness. Dealing with long COVID-19 can also be problematic. Post-COVID syndrome can go on to affect anywhere between 25-30% of people suffering from COVID. In cities across the world, special post COVID care clinics have also been thrown open.

### What are the symptoms you can experience with long COVID?



Considering the nature of the virus, the infection strain can affect people differently. Expect a multitude of symptoms, which can be mild or moderate in nature. Headache, extreme and chronic exhaustion, backache, muscle pain, appetite loss, lingering cough can be experienced commonly in the first few weeks after recovery. It could be a persisting symptom or result of the remainder viral load in the body. Reports that have come out in the recent months suggest that the most common long-term complications are damage to the heart, respiratory system, nervous system.

### Dealing with different symptoms post COVID



Since long COVID symptoms are varied, they are managed and treated, depending on the type and severity of the signs you have. While some may slowly recover over time, some symptoms of long COVID-19 can demand acute attention from day 1. If you suffer from respiratory problems such as chest pain, experience shortness or difficulty in breathing, you might have to prepare yourself to make some changes in your routine, and additions. Some respiratory symptoms can also induce stress on your body and take longer to recover. Since oxygen saturation is a common complication associated with COVID, many patients are often advised to use medical equipment like a nebulizer, oxygen concentrators and cylinders to make up for the deficiency.

### Be prepared for long-term care



Heart problems, which can occur when there

is sizeable damage to the heart valves or blood clotting can worsen over years. Hence, long-time care and prevention tactics may need to be adopted.

### You may face fatigue and tiredness



Exhaustion and fatigue is also something that needs to be taken into concern. Remember, your body has just fought off a major infection. So, try and not exert yourself and take your time to recover, no matter how long or how arduous it may seem. What one also needs to know is that COVID-19 also impairs your immunity to an extent and makes you vulnerable to chronic diseases. To safeguard yourself, adopt all preventive strategies and stay safe from danger. Good hygiene habits and post-op plans may also cut down your risk of reinfection.

### Keep up with the medications and devised treatment



Even though the viral load may have gone away, but it's doubly important to keep a track of your vitals when you are on the road to recovery. Follow up on doctor's appointments, keep taking medications on time and any precautionary measures you may have been advised. If you suffer from co-morbidities of any kind, you might be in need of altering or changing some of your medications. Diabetic patients report a major spike/ loss in blood sugar levels after recovery. BP levels may remain unstable too.

Keep your doctor in the loop about any changes, or health prognosis. Lastly, remember to go for regular scans and checkups, which you may have been advised. Even if you feel well and healthy, the virus can often cause silent damage to the body which may create problems over time. Preventive checkups and tests may rule out problems before it gets too troublesome.

### Diet/ Exercise moderations to follow



Now more than ever should be the time one needs to concentrate on getting health back to normal and strengthen immunity. Following a good diet can help you with that. Ensure that you consume a rich source of important nutrient groups- Vitamin C, D, B12, Zinc and Protein should be had in abundance. These will help your body recover faster, smoothen metabolism as well. If you have been following a diet or special eating plan before COVID-19, pause for a while before getting back. The only focus should be eating plenty of nutrient-rich foods right now. Extreme weight loss can also be a side-effect after fighting any viral infection so make sure you eat well during recovery. At the same time, do not pressure yourself to follow extreme workouts right after recovery. Slow down, adopt easy physical exercises which keep you brisk and get the heart rate up. Give your body the time it needs to heal first.

### When should one approach a doctor?



While most of the symptoms can be managed

well, it is also important to be aware of any unforeseen or major symptoms which could be a cause of worry during your days of recovery. Health problems like stroke, pulmonary distress can strike up out of nowhere, so consider seeking help or calling a doctor if you experience any of the symptoms:

-Extreme shortness of breath-Oxygen deprivation-Chest pain-Built-up pressure around the heart

-Appetite loss-Fever for more than 10 days-Losing sensation in any part of your body.

Remember to alert your doctor about any new or worsening symptom(s).

### Devoting time for your mental well-being and seeking help



Lastly, fighting COVID-19- even after you have made a healthy recovery can be cumbersome. There's a lot of stress which patients may experience. A changed, or degraded quality of life can also be difficult to accept for some. Some may also require help in completing normal tasks or chores which they were once able to do easily. This can drain you mentally. Long haulers should consider seeking help or support to deal with physical as well as psychological symptoms of the virus. There are a lot of support groups online, as well as offline which help coronavirus survivors on their road to recovery and resume life. As you heal, also make space for mindful practices like yoga and meditation. Not only can these practices relieve stress and anxiety, it can also help heal faster. (Courtesy <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>)



# 美南國際電視 15.3 《美南時事通》 專訪 Envirooneer Engineering Consulting 管理顧問 Michael 張嘯宇



(本報記者黃梅子) 環境諮詢屬於合規諮詢的一種形式，主要是幫助客戶（通常是企業、政府、組織機構）滿足/達到相關的環境法規/條例的要求，根據服務對象和領域的不同，有很多細分方向，包括建設項目的環境影響評估、幫助企業完成針對環境達標方向的盡職調查報告以避免因環境不合规的問題遭受處罰等等。環境諮詢：environmental consulting 包括 impact assessment 環境評價, due diligence 合規性, compliance audit...。環境諮詢公司這個行業現在有很多比較大型且成熟的工程諮詢類公司，業務都是國際範 global 的，下附 list：

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總的來說，這類環境諮詢公司，還是很偏工程技術型的公司。不同國家的法律政策不一樣，環境工程諮詢往來和市政公共基礎設施建設聯繫在一起的。

環境諮詢業務最早在 20 世紀 70 年代的西方國家就已經開始了，到目前為止在歐美國家已經發展成為了規範和成熟的產業，但其涵蓋的內容依然隨著產業的發展和法規的完善，不斷在延伸和增長。直到今天，環境諮詢已經延伸成為涵蓋環境影響評價（項目環評與規劃環評）、環保竣工驗收、環境應急預案、環境監理等問題。

環境諮詢一般都是為石油、能源以及其他工業做評估，但是地產也是需要環境評估的。在美國，大約有 80,000 位房地產評估師。他們在房屋銷售中扮演著重要作用：通常直到評估師通過權衡

評估出房產的價值時，購房者才確定抵押貸款（評估師也在財產稅上訴和房屋淨值貸款等其他事務中，發揮著重要作用）。

然而，在房地產繁榮與蕭條的時期，該職業有“黑色眼睛”之稱。在許多情況下，包括聯邦起訴房地產數據公司和評估人員被指控偽造數據以便銀行貸款給不合格的買家。

作為對這類指控的反映，Dodd-Frank 華爾街改革和 2010 保護方案需要跟多的州和聯邦估價人員的監督。同時通過評估管理公司或者資產管理公司（AMCs），從而對銀行借貸者施加更大的壓力。擔任紐約布魯克林的評估公司 Nadlan Valuation 經理職位的 Sam

Heskel 解釋稱，建立獨立的公司是為了阻止評估師與貸款者過於密切。

從技術角度而言，房屋檢查員、房地產代理商和承包商是為消費者工作。評估師是為銀行工作。在某些情況下，業主和買家自己並不能發現房屋的不利方面。

消費者擁有追索權：聯邦法律要求任何鑑定副本都應該以書面的形式交與消費者。與檢查人員和代理人不同，評估人員必須回答購房者的問題。在 2010 年的 Dodd-Frank 金融改革法案中，購房者對評估人員的監管權力得到加強。它也是聯邦金融機構改革委員會的一部分。最終資產評估管理公司將擬定評估管理公司的註冊政策，監管國家的房屋評

估工作。

為了滿足銀行，現在要求評估人員完成更多的文書工作。典型的評估紀錄有的大約有 30 多頁。本質上來看，大部分工作仍是保守性的。如果評估工作處理不好，第一個被指責的就是評估師。

請關注美南國際電視 15.3 頻道《子天訪談錄》，主持人子天採訪 Envirooneer Engineering Consulting 管理顧問 Michael 張嘯宇。您也可以通過 iTalkBB 平臺收看，美南新聞網站 scdaily.com，也可以在 youtube 上搜索 Stv15.3 Houston，訂閱美南新聞頻道，隨時收看美南國際電視的節目。



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