

WEA LEE'S

02/10/2021

GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

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Impeachment Trial Is Constitutional

With a final vote of 56–44 with six Republicans joining all of their Democratic colleagues on Tuesday, the Senate voted that the impeachment trial against former President Trump is constitutional.

During the presentation, the House impeachment managers showed how rioters violently breached the U.S. Capitol and attacked police officers as they invoked Trump's name as they tried to disrupt the certification process for the

result of the election.

Trump's legal team has contended that the impeachment trial itself is unconstitutional and argued that Trump did not incite the rioters and that his speech about the election was protected by the first amendment.

In the argument, Congressman Neguse said, "The President can't inflame insurrection in his final week and then walk away like nothing happened, and yet that is the rule that President Trump asks you to adopt."

The Senate plans to continue the trial every day until it concludes including the weekend.

The trial ultimately will not let Trump be impeached because it is impossible to get 67 votes in the Senate, but in reality, the damage to our reputation as the greatest democratic nation on earth will be deep and lasting.

Today many nations are following us to be a democratic country. If we are not going to believe the system we live under, how can we expect the rest of the world to do so? In the case of Burma, the same thing is happening.



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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.

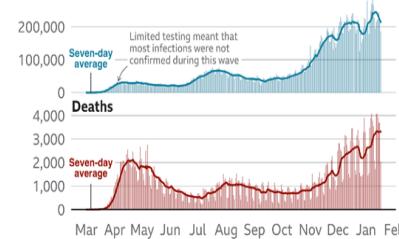
"I understand the despair and frustration of so many Americans and how they're feeling. I understand why many governors, mayors, county officials, tribal leaders feel like they're left on their own without a clear national plan to get them through the crisis," Biden said.

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.

Number of daily reported cases and deaths in the US



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 coordinated 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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Editor's Choice



Police fire a water cannon at protesters rallying against the military coup and to demand the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. REUTERS/Stringer



Medical workers move a patient at the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Sotiria hospital in Athens, Greece. REUTERS/Giorgos Moutafis



Eva Martinez and Sandra Vaden receive vaccination against the coronavirus at a drive-through site in Robstown, Texas. REUTERS/Go Nakamura



House impeachment managers process through Statuary Hall to present arguments in the Senate impeachment trial against former President Donald Trump at the U.S. Capitol in Washington. REUTERS/Erin Scott



Migrants cross the Rio Bravo river to turn themselves in to U.S. Border Patrol agents to request for asylum in El Paso, Texas. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez



Fans celebrate during the second round match between Australia's Nick Kyrgios and France's Ugo Humbert at the Australian Open. Crowd capacity for this years event has been capped at 30,000. REUTERS/Asanka Brendon Ratnayake

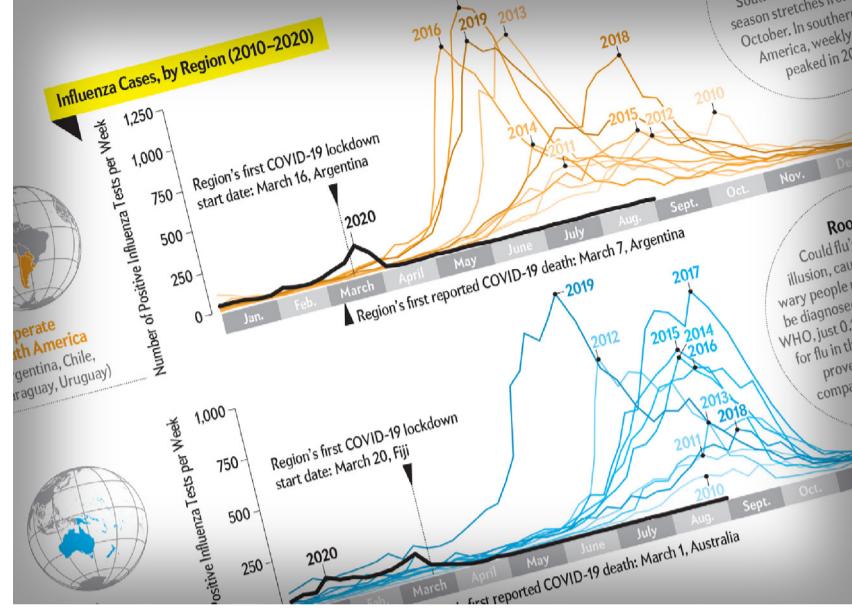


A view shows the snow-covered Bay of Mont Saint-Michel in the French western region of Normandy, as winter weather with snow and cold temperatures hits a large northern part of the country, France. REUTERS/Stephane Mahe



Medical workers, seen through a window of an observation room as they work inside an underground ward treating patients with the coronavirus at the Critical Care Coronavirus Unit at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan, Israel. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun

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.

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.



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

Do weather conditions influence the transmission of COVID-19?

Emerging evidence appears to suggest that weather conditions may influence the transmission of COVID-19, with cold and dry conditions appearing to boost the spread. The weather effect is minimal, however, and all estimates are subject to significant biases, reinforcing the need for robust public health measures.

evidence-covid19/weather #EvidenceCOVID

Brassey J, Heneghan C, Mahtani K, Aronson J. 22nd March

"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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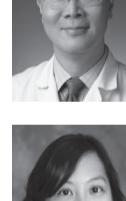


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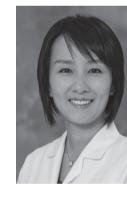


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