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John Robbins 281-965-6390
Jun Gai 281-498-4310



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

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U.S. congressional aid results in hospital mergers, pricey medical care: media

WASHINGTON, May 22 (Xinhua) -- Generous COVID-19 aid from Congress has enabled some of the largest U.S. hospital chains to merge weakened competitors, inflating medical expenses and making it harder for ordinary people to receive treatment, reported The New York Times on Saturday.

"More consolidation by several major hospital systems enhanced their market prowess in many regions of the United States, even as rural hospitals and underserved communities were overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients and struggled to stay afloat," the report said.

"The buying spree is likely to prompt further debate and scrutiny of the Provider Relief Fund, a package of 178 billion U.S. dollars in congressional aid that drew sharp criticism early on for allocating so much to the wealthiest hospital systems, and that had no limits on mergers and acquisitions," it said.

"It was not the intent to be a capital infusion to the largest and most financially stable providers to allow them to simply grow their slice of market share," House Representative Katie Porter, Democrat of California, was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, hospitals say the COVID-19 aid played no role in these deals, some of which were in the works before the pandemic. Major hospital chains also argue that their size and reach helped them better care for patients, allowing them to divert supplies and people to hard-hit areas during the health crisis, according to the report.

Lawmakers are pushing for greater oversight of hospitals. In a hearing on Wednesday, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Democrat of Minnesota, asked for more resources so regulators could tackle "the vicious cycle" of hospital consolidation. "When mergers are anti-competitive, they must be stopped," she said.

According to the report, major fund receivers are all buying or already bought some smaller hospitals. The relief money they won from Congress was usually counted in billions of dollars.



U.S. race massacre survivors call for justice: media

WASHINGTON, May 22 (Xinhua) -- The oldest survivor of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre in the United States and her two brothers have testified at a hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives recently and appealed to Congress for justice, according to U.S. National Public Radio (NPR).

"I will never forget the violence of the white mob when we left our home. I still see Black men being shot, Black bodies lying in the street," said Viola Fletcher, aged 107 now, the oldest survivor of the massacre that occurred on Greenwood Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921.

"I still smell smoke and see fire. I still see Black businesses being burned. I still hear airplanes flying overhead. I hear the screams," Fletcher was quoted as saying by NPR on Wednesday when she testified before a House Judiciary Subcommittee hearing, which was also attended by her two younger brothers.



"I am 107 years old and I have never ... seen justice. I pray that one day I will," she told U.S. lawmakers.

31, 1921 and the two-day massacre left hundreds of Black people dead, according to NPR.

Greenwood was destroyed by the attack that was launched on May



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11122 BELLAIRE BLVD., HOUSTON, TX 77072

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

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This Is Our Responsibility To Support "Justice Alert Alliance"



Wea H. Lee
Wealee@scdaily.com

Chairman of International District Houston Texas

Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas



SOS APP to help crime victims when they are in a dangerous situation. Once the device or smartphone is activated it will immediately begin televising the event in progress and immediately report the situation to police as well as notify other members or relatives of the victim.

we will let our congressmen and law enforcement agencies know about this life-saving APP and device. Very soon we are going to team up with them to fight the crime.

We all came from different corners of the world. And now our home is here. We're all in the same family. This is the time we need to be united to fight for our safety and our future.

The new APP will be ready to use in the next couple of months. We are so glad that

We are here to express our appreciation for the hard work of Congresswoman Grace Meng and Judy Chu who sponsored the anti-Asian hate crime bill which passed last week in the Congress.

Today a group of Asian American leaders are working to form the Justice Alert Alliance nationwide. Our mission is to protect and fight for our community.

According to the latest census, there are twenty-two mil-

lion Asian Americans in the United States, with 23% being Chinese Americans or about 5.4 million. Most of the Asians live on the east and west coasts and in Texas.

The Alliance is working to develop a new



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Editor's Choice



Soldiers work in a building damaged by a rocket launched from the Gaza Strip, in Ashdod, southern Israel, May 11, 2021. REUTERS/Avi Roccah



Smoke and flames rise from a tower building as it is destroyed by Israeli air strikes amid a flare-up of Israeli-Palestinian violence in Gaza City May 12, 2021. Israel launched its offensive after Hamas fired rockets at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in retaliation for Israeli police clashes with Palestinians near al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem during Ramadan. REUTERS/Ibraheem Abu Mustafa



Grace Peterson, 14, is inoculated with Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine after Georgia authorized the vaccine for ages over 12 years, at Dekalb Pediatric Center in Decatur, Georgia, May 11, 2021. U.S. states are set to begin using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to inoculate young adolescents against COVID-19 after advisers to the CDC backed the plan in a unanimous vote.



Laser beams are shot through the air as demonstrators hurl rocks during a protest demanding government action to tackle poverty, police violence and inequalities in healthcare and education systems in Bogota, Colombia, May 10, 2021. REUTERS/Luisa Gonzalez



A woman prays next to the carcasses of elephants that according to the forest officials possibly died because of a lightning strike, on the foothills of the Kundoli reserve forest area in Nagaon district in the north-eastern state of Assam, India. REUTERS/Anuwaz Hazarika



Ruqia Bakhshi, 14, one of the students who was injured in a car bomb blast outside a school, receives treatment at a hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan May 10, 2021. At least 80 people were killed in the massive bomb blast as girls left school in the minority Hazara neighborhood that has repeatedly been targeted by militants. REUTERS/Stringer

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

Updates On The Coronavirus Pandemic And Vaccines Sunday, May 23, 2021



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

Johnson & Johnson Working On Booster For Coronavirus Variants, CEO Says

Johnson and Johnson is currently ently working on a booster to help its Covid-19 vaccine deal with coronavirus variants, CEO Alex Gorsky told CNN's Jim Sciutto on Monday. While we're encouraged and we're confident in the current vaccine that we have, you've always got to be preparing for the future, and frankly for the unknown," Gorsky said. "So, we're doing that as we speak.

The EU Begins Laying Groundwork To Pave The Way For Covid-19 Vaccine Passports This Summer



European Commission spokesman Eric

Mamer speaks during a conference in Brussels, Belgium, on March 5, 2020. (Photo/Dursun Aydemir/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images)

The European Commission has started laying the groundwork for a vaccine passport that could let European Union citizens travel this summer, it announced.

The Commission intends to publish a legislative proposal for vaccine certification by the end of March, Commission chief spokesperson Eric Mamer said.

In January, the European Union and its 27 member states agreed a set of guidelines that would form the basis of the passports, "but the exact information still needs to be determined," he said.

To avoid discrimination and citizens being turned away at a border, the Commission's intention is that the passports "would not only state whether or not a person had been vaccinated, but also whether this person has had recent PCR test, or can be deemed Covid immune, for health reasons i.e., antibodies," Mamer added.

Decline In UK's Covid-19 Cases Is Due To Lockdown And Vaccine Roll-out, UK Foreign Secretary Says



A paramedic draws up the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine at a vaccination center in Darlington, England, on March 1. (Photo/Ian Forsyth/Getty Images)

With a strict, government-imposed lockdown in place, the United Kingdom has seen a continued decline in its Covid-19 cases over the last few weeks.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab attributes it to the lockdown and the "swift rollout of the vaccines."

"Over 20 million people now have had their first dose, and that clearly is protecting people, having an impact on transmission. So, of course, there's a long way to go, but the signs, the progress is all positive, and we've got light at the end of the tunnel here," he told CNN.

Although the country was set to reopen its schools on March 8, it will be back non-essential retail, such as hairdressers, gyms, museums, zoos and theme parks on April 12.

Raab said it's important to stick to the roadmap, which he called optimistic but cautious.

He added: "We want to know that when we come out of this lock down, we stay out of it."

Johnson & Johnson Delivered 20 Million Vaccine Doses In March And 100 Million Due For June Delivery, Official Says



In this file photo, Johnson & Johnson

vials of the Janssen Covid-19 vaccine are seen in the United States, on December 2, 2020. Johnson & Johnson via AP

Now that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine in the US, the company delivered 20 million Covid-19 vaccine doses in March and will deliver 100 million doses by June, said Dr. Paul Stoffels, the company's chief scientific officer.

"This is a single-shot vaccine so 100 million US citizens will be able to get vaccinated before the summer with our vaccine," he told CNN, adding that the company is producing as much as it can. "You can't accelerate it by yelling at it," he said Monday. "You have to have the cells growing and the viruses extracted and put into vials, and that's what it is."

Nordic Nations Tighten Restrictions As Cases Surge



Just three months ago, Finland had Europe's lowest average of Covid-19 infections and deaths per capita, and had managed to contain local outbreaks while sticking to some of the most relaxed restrictions on the continent.

But now it's facing a new surge -- and the government has changed tack.

On Monday, Finland's government declared a state of emergency due to a sharp rise in cases that they have attributed partially to the spread of new variants. The country will go into a three-week lockdown on March 8, according to Prime Minister Sanna Marin.

In a statement, the government said: "The number and incidence of Covid-19 cases in Finland have risen very rapidly since the beginning of February 2021. The number of infections caused by new virus

variants has clearly increased, which may further accelerate the epidemic and place significant strain on hospital and intensive care capacity if we are unable to bring the number of infections down." The strictest restrictions were already introduced in seven hospital districts last Thursday, including in the capital, Helsinki.

One European Nation Is Locking Down While The Rest Of The World Is Starting To Open Up



A medical worker wearing protective equipment takes a sample at a drive-in Covid-19 testing station in Prague, Czech Republic, on February 23. (Photo/Michael Cizek/AFP/Getty Images)

While much of the world is starting to think about lifting their coronavirus restrictions, the Czech Republic has today entered a strict new lockdown. The Central European nation of 10 million has been experiencing near record levels of new infections and its death toll has just topped 20,000.

There is no reason for the country to be among the worst hit. As a relatively wealthy nation and a member of the European Union, the Czech Republic has access to vaccines, medical equipment and track-and-trace tech solutions. It has a democratically elected government. Its health care system is well respected, its economy fairly strong.

Instead, the current Czech catastrophe is akin to death by a thousand cuts, a result of dozens of tiny missteps, late decisions and botched public health messages, experts tell CNN.

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Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

(Article Continues From Page C7-1)

Updates On The Coronavirus Pandemic And Vaccines Sunday, May 23, 2021



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

Authorities Are Still Hunting For 1 Of The 6 Cases Of The Brazilian Covid Variant Identified In The UK



UK vaccine minister Nadhim Zahawi in Westminster, London, in December 2020. Justin Tallis/AFP/Getty Images

Health officials in England are still trying to track down one of the UK's six recorded cases of the coronavirus variant first detected in Brazil. On Sunday, Public Health England said that six cases of the variant first identified in Manaus, Brazil (known as P.1) have been detected in the UK -- with three of those cases identified in England.

The other two cases of the P.1 variant were identified in South Gloucestershire "who have been self-isolating correctly" and there is "minimal reason to believe that there may be further spread," the minister added.

The three other cases of the variant were identified in Scotland and are not linked to the cases in England, the British government said in a statement on Sunday.

The Brazilian variant, P.1, also carries the E484K mutation.

Germany's Covid Death Toll Tops 70,000, As Bavaria PM Warns That Mutations Are "Starting To Dominate"



A crematorium employee affixes a "Corona" marker to a coffin in Dachshausen, Germany, on January 22. Thomas Frey/picture alliance/Getty Images

More than 70,000 people have died from Covid-19 in Germany, according to official figures.

The country's agency for disease control and prevention, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), on Monday recorded 4,732 new coronavirus cases over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of infections to 2,447,068. The RKI also reported 60 additional deaths, bringing the total death toll to 70,105. Recorded numbers are always low at weekends because not so many people get tested.

Meanwhile, Bavarian Prime Minister Markus Soeder also warned that new variants of the coronavirus are taking over.

"The mutations are starting to dominate," he said at a news conference Monday AM.

Soeder also warned there are coronavirus hotspots on the German border with the Czech Republic.

"Corona[virus] will keep us busy in the next few months, make no mistake," Soeder said.



The Bavarian leader said more vaccinations and more tests were needed. Soeder also called for general practitioners, as well as company and factory doctors to start giving vaccinations.

The RKI said Germany's seven-day incidence rate has risen to 65.8 -- representing the number of cases per 100,000 inhabitants. It is aiming to reach an incidence rate of 35 before lifting restrictions.

Soeder was speaking ahead of Wednesday's meeting between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the prime ministers of the country's federal states, when the next steps of the pandemic restrictions will be discussed.

More Than 2,400 Reported Cases Of Covid Variants In The U.S.



A patient enters a Covid-19 testing site on February 13 in Seattle, Washington. (Photo/David Ryder/Getty Images)

The United States has reported at least 2,463 cases of coronavirus variants that were first spotted in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC warned that these figures don't represent the total number of such cases circulating nationwide -- just those that have been detected by analyzing positive samples.

The UK variant: The vast majority of these cases, 2,400, are the more contagious variant known as B.1.1.7, which was originally detected in the UK. This variant has been found

in 44 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. About a quarter are in Florida.

South Africa variant: There are 53 cases of the B.1.351 variant, first seen in South Africa, reported in 15 states and Washington, DC.

Brazil variant: 10 cases of the P.1 variant first linked to Brazil have been discovered in five US states.

India variant: The India variant, named B.1.617, has been reported in 17 countries, raising global concern. Scientists are scrambling to understand what role B.1.617, the variant discovered in India, will play in future surges of Covid-19. It may also be linked to recently rising cases among unvaccinated people in the United Kingdom. The variant is believed more contagious than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, but as yet there's no clear evidence it causes more severe disease or more deaths

Indian Prime Minister Receives First Dose Of Covid-19 Vaccine



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi received his first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine on Monday, kicking off the second phase of the country's immunization campaign. He received India's home-grown vaccine, Covaxin, at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi.

The second phase: This next part of the vaccination drive will allow shots for those aged 60 years and older, and those aged above 45 with serious medical conditions.

The first phase had been targeted at health-care and frontline workers, but vaccines will now be available to the general public within the age bracket.

India has distributed more than 14.3 million vaccines since the program began on January 16, according to the Indian Ministry of Health.

Update: South Asia, including the countries

of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, has been hit hard by a second wave of COVID-19 infections. In India, experts believe infections are underreported, even as the country records nearly 350,000 new cases every day. The crisis is exacerbated by limited hospital beds and oxygen supply, and there have been recent reports of vaccinated individuals getting infected, increasing fears about the variant spreading in the country.

Mexico's President Expected To Ask Biden To Share U.S. Covid-19 Vaccines, Source Says



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador looks on during a ceremony at Palacio Nacional in Mexico City, Mexico on February 23. (Photo/Hector Vivas/Getty Images)

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is expected to ask US President Joe Biden to share some of the Covid-19 vaccine supply on Monday, according to a Mexican government official briefed on plans for the conversation. The two leaders are due to hold a virtual bilateral meeting on Monday. What the collaboration could look like -- a purchase agreement, donation, or loan -- is undefined, the official told CNN. The first step is to ask whether the United States is willing to cooperate, the source said.

Mexico has purchase agreements in place for hundreds of millions of vaccine doses with different vaccine makers around the world, the large majority of which have yet to be fulfilled.

It has also purchased vaccine supplies from both Russia and China, but it hasn't received any vaccines directly from the US, its most important ally and largest trading partner. Pfizer, an American company, has shipped Covid-19 vaccines to Mexico -- but they were produced in European laboratories and have arrived in relatively limited supply. As of Sunday evening, Mexico reported having administered just under 2.5 million doses of coronavirus vaccines. (Courtesy edition.cnn.com)