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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. says ransomware attack on meatpacker JBS likely from Russia

The White House said on Tuesday that Brazil’s JBS SA (JBSS3.SA) has informed the U.S. government that a ransomware attack against the company that has disrupted meat production in North America and Australia originated from a criminal organization likely based in Russia.

JBS is the world’s largest meatpacker and the incident caused its Australian operations to shut down on Monday and has stopped livestock slaughter at its plants in several U.S. states. read more

The ransomware attack follows one last month by a group with ties to Russia on Colonial Pipeline, the largest fuel pipeline in the United States, that crippled fuel delivery for several days in the U.S. Southeast. read more

White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said the United States has contacted Russia’s government about the matter and that the FBI is investigating.

“The White House has offered assistance to JBS and our team at the Department of Agriculture have spoken to their leadership several times in the last day,” Jean-Pierre said.

“JBS notified the administration that the ransom de-



If the outages continue, consumers could see higher meat prices during summer grilling season in the United States and meat exports could be disrupted at a time of strong demand from China.

JBS said it suspended all affected systems and notified authorities. It said its backup servers were not affected.

“On Sunday, May 30, JBS USA determined that it was the target of an organized cybersecurity attack, affecting some of the servers supporting its North American and Australian IT systems,” the company said in a Monday statement.

“Resolution of the incident will take time, which may delay certain transactions with customers and suppliers,” the company’s statement said.

The company, which has its North American operations headquartered in Greeley, Colorado, controls about 20% of the slaughtering capacity for U.S. cattle and hogs, according to industry estimates. “The supply chains, logistics, and transportation that keep our society moving are especially vulnerable to ransomware, where attacks on choke points can have outsized effects and encourage hasty payments,” said threat researcher John Hultquist with security company FireEye.

U.S. beef and pork prices are already rising as China increases imports, animal feed costs rise and slaughterhouses face a dearth of workers. read more

The cyberattack on JBS could push U.S. beef prices even higher by tightening supplies, said Brad Lyle, chief financial officer for consultancy Partners for Production Agriculture.

Any impact on consumers would depend on how long production is down, said Matthew Wiegand, a risk management consultant and commodity broker at FuturesOne in Nebraska. “If it lingers for multiple days, you see some food service shortages,” Wiegand added. Two kill and fabrication shifts were canceled at JBS’s beef plant in Greeley due to the cyberattack, representatives of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union Local 7 said in an email. JBS Beef in Cactus, Texas, also said on Facebook it would not run on Tuesday.

mand came from a criminal organization likely based in Russia. The White House is engaging directly with the Russian government on this matter and delivering the message that responsible states do not harbor ransomware criminals,” Jean-Pierre added.

JBS sells beef and pork under the Swift brand, with retailers like Costco carrying its pork loins and tenderloins. JBS also owns most of chicken processor Pilgrim’s Pride Co (PPC.O), which sells organic chicken under the Just Bare brand.

The disruption to JBS’s operations have already had an impact, analysts said. U.S. meatpackers slaughtered 94,000 cattle on Tuesday, down 22% from a week earlier and 18% from a year earlier, according to estimates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pork processors slaughtered 390,000 hogs, down 20% from a week ago and 7% from a year ago.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

06/01/2021



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Honoring Our Fallen Service Members

President Biden went to Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day to honor those who died serving in the military and urged Americans to strengthen and protect the nation's democracy.

Biden said, "Democracy itself is in peril here at home and around the world. What we do now and how we honor the memory of the fallen will determine whether or not democracy will long endure."

The president said, "We owe the honored dead a debt we can never fully repay."

On this Memorial Day the U.S. also decided to fully withdraw from Afghanistan. According to the Department of Defense we lost a total of 2,312 service members there. This number does not include all of the lives lost at home from service-related illnesses and suicides.

When we review all of the



wars we have participated in over the last seventy years, including in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America we have lost so many lives and spent billions of dollars on these wars. We have witnessed over this time so many people at home who have suffered and lost their loved ones.

On this day, especially on Memorial Day, our nation

needs to rethink about the future of America and the rest of the world. We really need peace and not war.

In this coronavirus pandemic we have now lost more than six hundred thousand lives. The world is in a serious crisis. As human beings we need to help each other. We need to stop these senseless wars.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



People flock to the beach to enjoy the Memorial Day long weekend, in Santa Monica, California. REUTERS/David Swanson



A girl sits in front of a headstone during Memorial Day as visitors honor veterans and those lost in war at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. REUTERS/Michael A. McCoy



Survivors and siblings Viola Fletcher and Hughes Van Ellis attend the soil dedication at Stone Hill on the 100 year anniversary of the 1921 Tulsa Massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma. REUTERS/Lawrence Bryant



A performer wearing a face shield looks on during a ceremony held by the Bangkok National Museum to celebrate the return of two ancient relics, believed to have been stolen from Thailand about 60 years ago, from the United States, in Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS/Soe Zeya Tun



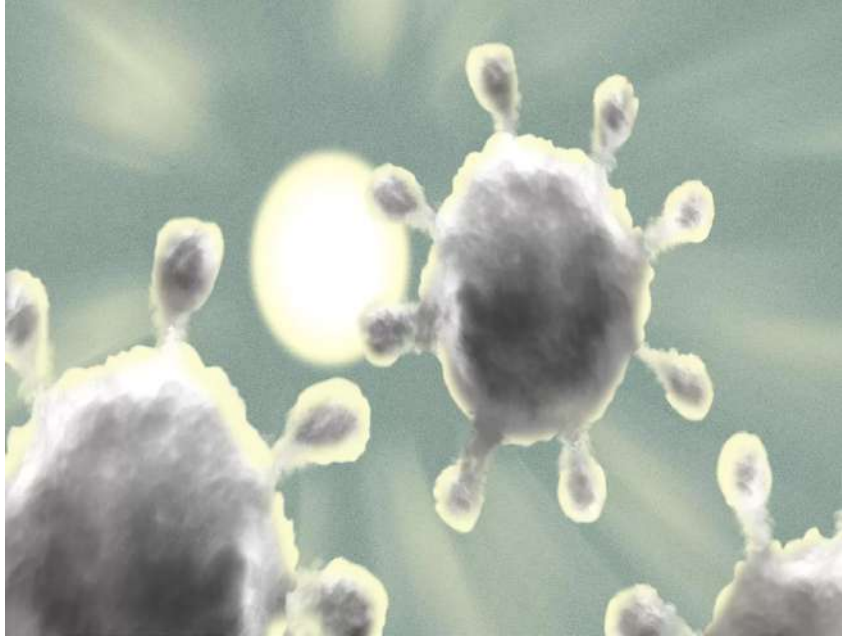
People walk past a memorial in front of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School after the remains of 215 children, some as young as three years old, were found at the site last week, in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. REUTERS/Dennis Owen



A rider is covered in mud as Native Americans from all over the United States participate in an Indian relay race over Memorial Day weekend at the Osage County Fairgrounds in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. REUTERS/Stephanie Keith

COVID – Still Impacting Our Lives

Coronavirus Dashboard For June 2, 2021



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

COVID – Still Impacting Our Lives

Health: How will we memorialize COVID? — CDC relaxes guidance for summer camps, saying kids don't always need masks — Memorial Day celebrations were back in full force as COVID cases drop.

Vaccines: The incentives states and cities are offering to boost COVID-19 vaccinations.

Business: Prices expected to continue rising this summer — Gun sales spike as U.S. re-emerges from pandemic.

World: EU health regulator backs Pfizer COVID vaccine for 12- to 15-year-olds — U.K. authorizes Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

Cases:

Global: Total confirmed cases as of 12:15 p.m. ET on Monday: 170,429,219 — Total deaths: 3,543,357 — Total vaccine doses administered: 1,891,943,541 —

U.S.: Total confirmed cases as of 12:15 p.m. ET on Monday: 33,260,464 — Total deaths: 594,461 — Total tests: 465,204,258 —

Related

India Reports World Record In Daily COVID Deaths



Family members in PPE carry the body of a person, who died due to COVID-19 at a makeshift crematorium in New Delhi, India, on May 8. Photo: Mayank Makhija/NurPhoto via Getty Images

India's health ministry reported 4,529 deaths from COVID-19 in a single day on Wednesday and another 267,122 new cases.

Why it matters: It's the most number of deaths from the coronavirus reported by a country in a 24-hour period since

the pandemic began, per the Washington Post, citing Johns Hopkins data.

India's total number of cases confirmed now exceed 25 million and the official death toll has increased past 283,000, though scientists and local health workers say the actual numbers are much higher.

• Since the beginning of last month, infection numbers have doubled and more than 100,000 deaths have been recorded amid "shortages of hospital beds, oxygen and critical drugs," AFP notes.

V.K. Paul, head of the government's COVID-19 task force, said the fact the number of new cases has remained below 300,000 for three days in a row shows the "pandemic curve is stabilizing," though he noted the big picture was "mixed," the Indian Express reports.



Experts say the "slowing down" in infection numbers in cities like New Delhi and Mumbai can be attributed to successful local government lockdowns, per the New York Times, which notes the virus is accelerating in some rural areas.

• "The death toll has remained over 4,000 for several days, suggesting that even if new infections are going down in urban centers, those infected earlier are dying," the Times notes. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related

117 Employees Sue Houston Hospital Network Over Vaccination Mandate – We Don't Want To Be 'Guinea Pigs'

More than a hundred healthcare workers have filed a lawsuit against a hospital network in Houston, Texas, arguing that they don't want to be forced to take an "experimental" Covid-19 vaccine out of fear of getting fired.

Marc Boom, the CEO of Houston Methodist, a firm that runs eight hospitals with more than 26,000 employees, gave personnel a June 7 deadline to get vac-

inated. The consequences of not getting the shot include "suspension and eventually termination," he wrote in an April letter to doctors and nurses, which was cited in the lawsuit filed on Friday.



A volunteer healthcare worker prepares a dose of Covid-19 vaccine in Houston, Texas, May 13, 2021. Brandon Bell / Getty North America / AFP

A total of 117 plaintiffs are insisting that the hospital is "illegally requiring its employees to be injected with an experimental vaccine." The hospital is forcing the staff to be "human 'guinea pigs' as a condition for continued employment," the lawsuit says. "It is a severe and blatant violation of the Nuremberg Code and the public policy of the state of Texas," attorney Jared Woodfill, who filed the lawsuit in Montgomery County, told ABC News. Written shortly after WWII, the Nuremberg Code lays out the basic ethical principles of medical experimentation on humans.

A group of medical workers held a protest against the vaccination mandate outside Houston Methodist this month. "This is my body, this is my choice, and I don't think employers, or anyone should mandate what goes into my body," Kim Mikeska, a registered nurse, told the Houston Chronicle. Houston Methodist nurse Jennifer Bridges, the lead plaintiff in the case, told the Washington Post this month that she had received "every vaccine known to man" in the past, but believed the coronavirus vaccines needed further study.



The lawsuit referred to the vaccines as "ex-

perimental COVID-19 mRNA gene modification injection." The US Food and Drug Administration approved the emergency use of the vaccines made by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson after the required trials were completed. They are yet to be granted full approval, which requires a more rigorous review. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explained that the mRNA-type Pfizer and Moderna vaccines not affect or interact with the human DNA in any way. Marc Boom issued a statement to the media, saying that 99% of the hospital network's employees have been vaccinated. "It is legal for health care institutions to mandate vaccines, as we have done with the flu vaccine since 2009," the CEO said, adding that the Covid-19 vaccines were proven to be "very safe and very effective, and are not experimental."

Boom said that more than 165 million people across the US were vaccinated, which "has resulted in the lowest numbers of infections in our country and in the Houston region in more than a year." (Courtesy <https://www.rt.com/usa/>)



New Coronavirus Detected In Patients At Malaysian Hospital - Source May Be Dogs



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

In the past 20 years, new coronaviruses have emerged from animals with remarkable regularity. In 2002, SARS-CoV jumped from civets into people. Ten years later, MERS emerged from camels. Then in 2019, SARS-CoV-2 began to spread around the world. For many scientists, this pattern points to a disturbing trend: Coronavirus outbreaks aren't rare events and will likely occur every decade or so.

Now, scientists are reporting that they have discovered what may be the latest coronavirus to jump from animals into people. And it comes from a surprising source: dogs.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first exploded, Dr. Gregory Gray started to wonder whether there might be other coronaviruses out there already making people sick and threatening to trigger another outbreak.



The problem was that he didn't have a tool to look for them. The test for COVID-19, he says, is extremely limited. It tells whether one particular virus — SARS-CoV-2 — is present in a person's respiratory tract, and nothing else.

"Diagnostics are very specific. They generally focus on known viruses," says Gray, an infec-

tious disease epidemiologist at Duke University's Global Health Institute.

So he challenged a graduate student in his lab, Leshan Xiu, to make a more powerful test — one that would work like a COVID-19 test but could detect all coronaviruses, even the unknown ones. Xiu not only rose to the challenge, but the tool he created worked better than expected.

In the first batch of samples tested last year, Gray and Xiu found evidence of an entirely new coronavirus associated with pneumonia in hospitalized patients — mostly in kids.

This virus may be the eighth coronavirus



known to cause disease in people, the team reports Thursday in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

The samples came from patients at a hospital in Sarawak, Malaysia, taken by a collab-

orator in 2017 and 2018. "These were deep nasal swabs, like doctors collect with the COVID-19 patients," says Gray.

The patients had what looked like regular pneumonia. But in eight out of 301 samples tested, or 2.7%, Xiu and Gray found that the patients' upper respiratory tracts were infected with a new canine coronavirus, i.e., a dog virus.

"That's a pretty high prevalence of a [new] virus," Gray says. "That's remarkable." So remarkable, in fact, that Gray actually thought maybe he and Xiu had made a mistake. Perhaps Xiu's test wasn't working quite right. "You always wonder if there was a problem in the lab," he says.

To find out, he sent the patients' samples over to a world expert on animal coronaviruses at Ohio State University. She was also dubious. "I thought, 'There's something wrong,'" says virologist Anastasia Vlasova. "Canine coronaviruses were not thought to be transmitted to people. It's never been reported before."

With a lot of virus on hand, Vlasova could decode its genome. From the virus's gene sequences, she could see that the virus had likely infected cats and pigs at one point. But it likely jumped directly from dogs into people. "The majority of the genome was canine coronavirus," she says.

Altogether, this genetic data suggest that Vlasova and her colleagues are catching this new coronavirus early on in its journey in people, while it's still trying to figure out how to infect people efficiently — and possibly, before it can spread from person to person and trigger a big outbreak.



"There's no evidence yet of transmission from human to human," says virologist Xuming Zhang at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. But it's not known

how these patients became infected with the virus or whether they had direct contact with infected animals. Zhang has studied coronaviruses for more than 30 years. He thinks it's too early to call this new virus a human pathogen. "As the authors are careful to say in their paper, they have not proven what's called Koch's postulates," he says. That is, Vlasova, Gray and colleagues haven't shown that the new coronavirus causes pneumonia; so far, it has only been associated with the disease.

"To do that, strictly, they need to inject the virus into humans and see if it reproduces the disease," he says. "Of course [for ethical reasons], we cannot do that."



Instead, Zhang says, they can look to see how common the virus is in pneumonia patients around the world — and they can test to see whether it makes mice or another animal sick. Zhang says he wouldn't be surprised if this dog virus is, in fact, a new human pathogen.

"I believe there are many animal [coronaviruses] out there that can transmit to humans." (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org/>)

Related

Discovery shows need to monitor animal viruses, researchers say

New Human Coronavirus That Originated In Dogs Identified



Researchers have identified and completed the genetic analysis of a newly discovered coronavirus — one that has evolved from a coronavirus that afflicts dogs to infect humans and may contribute to respiratory symptoms.

The discovery of the first dog coronavirus found

to have crossed over to infecting people underscores the treacherous nature of coronaviruses and the need to monitor animal viruses as a way of predicting possible threats to public health, researchers say.

"At this point, we don't see any reasons to expect another pandemic from this virus, but I can't say that's never going to be a concern in the future," said Anastasia Vlasova, an assistant professor in The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES). She conducted the study with Gregory C. Gray, a professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases of the Duke University School of Medicine, and Teck-Hock Toh, a professor at SEGi University in Sarawak, Malaysia.



In a study published on May 20, 2021 in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, researchers describe the genetic characteristics of CCoV-HuPn-2018, suggesting it's a new coronavirus that moved from infecting dogs to infecting people.

"We don't really have evidence right now that this virus can cause severe illness in adults," Vlasova said, citing the fact that only one person in the study found to have been infected with the new coronavirus was an adult. "I cannot rule out the possibility that at some point this new coronavirus will become a prevalent human pathogen. Once a coronavirus is able to infect a human, all bets are off." Vlasova and her colleagues plan to further study the CCoV-HuPn-2018 virus to determine how harmful it is — or could become — to people. It's unknown if the virus can be passed from person to person, or how well the human immune system can fight it off. (Courtesy <https://news.osu.edu/>)