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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Tens of thousands march in Vienna against COVID measures before lockdown

VIENNA, Nov 20 (Reuters) - Tens of thousands of people, many of them far-right supporters, protested in Vienna on Saturday against coronavirus restrictions a day after Austria's government announced a new lockdown and said vaccines would be made compulsory next year.

Whistling, blowing horns and banging drums, crowds streamed into Heroes' Square in front of the Hofburg, the former imperial palace in central Vienna, in the early afternoon, one of several protest locations. Many demonstrators waved Austrian flags and carried signs with slogans such as "no to vaccination", "enough is enough" or "down with the fascist dictatorship".

By mid-afternoon the crowds had swelled to roughly 35,000 people, according to the police, and were marching down Vienna's inner ring road before heading back towards the Hofburg.

A police spokesman said there had been fewer than 10 arrests, for breaches of coronavirus restrictions and the ban on Nazi symbols. Police officers stand guard as demonstrators gather to protest against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) measures in Vienna, Austria, November 20, 2021. REUTERS/Leonhard Foeger

Roughly 66% of Austria's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, one of the lowest rates in western Europe. Many Austrians are sceptical about vaccines, a view encouraged by the far-right Freedom Party, the third-biggest in parliament.

With daily infections still setting records even after a lockdown was imposed on the unvaccinated this week, the government said on Friday it would reintroduce a lockdown on Monday and make it compulsory to get vaccinated as of Feb. 1.

The Freedom Party (FPÖ) and other vaccine-critical groups had already been planning a show of force in Vienna on Saturday before Friday's announcement, which prompted FPÖ leader Herbert Kickl to respond that "As of today, Austria is a dictatorship".

Kickl could not attend because he has caught COVID-19.

"We are not in favour of our government's measures," said one protester, who was part of a group wearing tin foil on their heads and brandishing toilet brushes. Like most protesters who spoke to the media, they declined to give their names, though the mood was festive.



Police officers stand guard as demonstrators gather to protest against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) measures in Vienna, Austria, November 20, 2021. REUTERS/Leonhard Foeger

Apple tells workers they have right to discuss wages, working conditions

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 20 (Reuters) - Apple delivered a message to employees on Friday that was striking given its reputation for secrecy: a reminder that workers may discuss wages, hours and working conditions.

The notice came as some employees have been pushing Apple to do more to ensure there are no unfair gaps in pay across the company.

In a post on an internal site, Apple said its policies do not preclude employees from "speaking freely" about working conditions, according to a copy of the message viewed by Reuters.

"We encourage any employee with concerns to raise them in the way they feel most comfortable, internally or externally," the post states.

A spokesperson for Apple declined to comment.

Apple's business conduct policy already included language stating that workers were not restricted in their ability to discuss wages, hours and working conditions, which is generally protected under U.S. law.

But employees who have spoken out in recent months have faced resistance, said former Apple program manager Janneke Parrish.

Parrish, who was fired after playing a leading role in employee activism, said she is hopeful that Apple's message will ease the path for others.

"The first step is making sure people are aware of their rights," she said.

Apple has previously said it does not discuss specific employee matters and is "deeply committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive workplace."

The move comes amid a broader push by Silicon Valley workers to speak out about their working conditions and the impact of technology on society.

Earlier this week, another prominent activist, Apple software engineer Cher Scarlett, wrote on Twitter that she is leaving the company.

Scarlett filed a charge with the Na-

tional Labor Relations Board alleging that Apple halted discussions of pay among employees. Her lawyer, Aleksandr Felstiner, said the matter had been settled and the charge would be withdrawn. Scarlett said she could not comment.

Scarlett and Parrish worked together on "#AppleToo," a group through which current and former employees have been sharing stories of what they call harassment and discrimination.

Apple is known for its secretive culture, intended to keep details of new products under wraps. Employees sometimes are unaware of their right to speak about topics such as pay and working conditions, Parrish said.

Ashley Gjovik, a senior engineering program manager who was fired by Apple in September after raising concerns about harassment and workplace safety, has filed NLRB charges in which she alleges that Apple policies violate the National Labor Relations Act.



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China coal prices notch worst week since May on govt intervention

BEIJING, Oct 22 (Reuters) - China's thermal coal futures plunged on Friday and turned in their worst week in five months, following Beijing's strongest intervention in years to boost supply and cool runaway prices of the commodity amid a widespread power crunch.

The most-traded contract on Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange, for delivery in January, hit the lower daily trading limit of 14% and settled at 1,408.4 yuan (\$220) a tonne.

That was nearly 30% below a record high hit on Tuesday and down nearly 15% for the week, the biggest weekly drop since May.

The contract later fell a further 6.1% in Friday's night session, which counts as part of the Monday trading day, and was down 3.4% at 1,360.4 yuan as of 1343 GMT.

Coking coal shed 11.1% and coke futures dropped 9% on the Dalian Commodity Exchange on Friday, extending losses from prior sessions.

"We're now seeing the fruits of China's supply response, as the government has given miners carte blanche to produce at full tilt - even permitting the relaxation of safety inspections in some cases," said Atilla Widnell, managing director at Navigate Commodities in Singapore.

"The parabolic pricing action largely represented the fear of buyers being unable to source sufficient volumes to feed power plants and coke ovens," Widnell said.

"Therefore, we can expect prices to fall almost as fast as they've risen now that a wave of supply is inbound," he added. China has been pushing coal miners to ramp up output and hiking imports so that power stations can rebuild stockpiles before the winter heating season, but analysts say shortages are likely to persist for at least another few months. read more

On Friday, President Xi Jinping said China will make efforts to ensure the stable supply of coal and electricity for economic and social use and also called up more exploration and development of oil and gas, state media reported. read more



Men stand by a car near a coal-fired power plant in Shanghai, China October 21, 2021. REUTERS/Aly Song

China's state planner, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), has put out several statements since Tuesday night that it was studying ways to guide prices back to a "reasonable range" and to crack down on "excessive profits" at coal firms. read more

On Friday, the NDRC said it held a meeting with large state-run companies including oil refiner Sinopec, aluminium giant Chinalco and steel-maker China Baowu on "rational" energy usage by industry on Thursday and said they should take the lead in energy-saving and carbon reduction.

The NDRC "has concluded that the unbridled soaring of coal prices is partly driven by those

hoping to hit the jackpot by taking advantage of the power supply falling short of actual need", Chinese state media outlet China Daily wrote on Thursday.

There should be "zero tolerance to the hoarding of coal", the newspaper added. "It is of the utmost importance to rein in coal prices as they will pose a threat to people's daily lives when winter sets in."

Due to cold winds and rain, temperatures in most parts of central and eastern China are currently lower than normal, the National Meteorological Center said.

WAIT AND SEE

Spot coal prices also hit the brakes after a week of daily increases as some of China's major coal producers vowed to cap thermal coal prices in the winter and next spring. Key coal transporting ports such as Qinhuangdao have also pledged not to hike prices.

Editor's Choice



Mechelle Meyer, dressed in a Handmaid's Tale costume, takes part in a pro-abortion rights protest outside of the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, REUTERS/Leah Millis



Supporters of reproductive choice take part in the nationwide Women's March, held after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures and access to abortion-inducing medications, in New York City, New York, REUTERS/Caitlin...



Brita Filter and supporters of reproductive choice take part in the nationwide Women's March, held after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures and access to abortion-inducing medications, in Manhattan, New York, . REUTERS/Caitlin Ochs



A woman dressed as late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg looks on as supporters of reproductive choice take part in the nationwide Women's March, held after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures and access to abortion-inducing medications, outside the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., . REUTERS/Tom Brenner



Elena Berriolo sews photos of uteri as supporters of reproductive choice take part in the nationwide Women's March, held after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures and access to abortion-inducing medications, at Washington square park in New York City, New York, . REUTERS/Jeenah Moon



A member of Pussy Riot performs in the nationwide Women's March, held after Texas rolled out a near-total ban on abortion procedures and access to abortion-inducing medications, in Austin, Texas, October 2, 2021. REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein

WMO Chief Prof Petteri Taalas: "We Are Way Off Track." World Greenhouse Gas Levels Hit Record; Countries Struggle To Curb Damage



The concentration of carbon dioxide, the most important greenhouse gas, is now 50% higher than before the Industrial Revolution. (Photo: sturti/Getty Images)

KEY POINTS

UN seeks 'dramatic increase' in climate commitments Summit will seek to avert menacing levels of warming UK's Johnson says COP26 outcome is 'touch and go'

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

GENEVA/GLASGOW, Oct 25 (Reuters) - Greenhouse gas concentrations hit a record last year and the world is "way off track" on capping rising temperatures, the United Nations said on Monday, showing the task facing climate talks in Glasgow aimed at averting dangerous levels of warming. A report by the U.N. World Meteorological Organization (WMO) showed carbon dioxide levels surged to 413.2 parts per million in 2020, rising more than the average rate over the last decade despite a temporary dip in emissions during COVID-19 lockdowns.

WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said the current rate of increase in heat-trapping gases would result in temperature rises "far in excess" of the 2015 Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average this century.

"We are way off track," he said. "We need to revisit our industrial, energy

and transport systems and whole way of life," he added, calling for a "dramatic increase" in commitments at the COP26 conference beginning on Sunday.

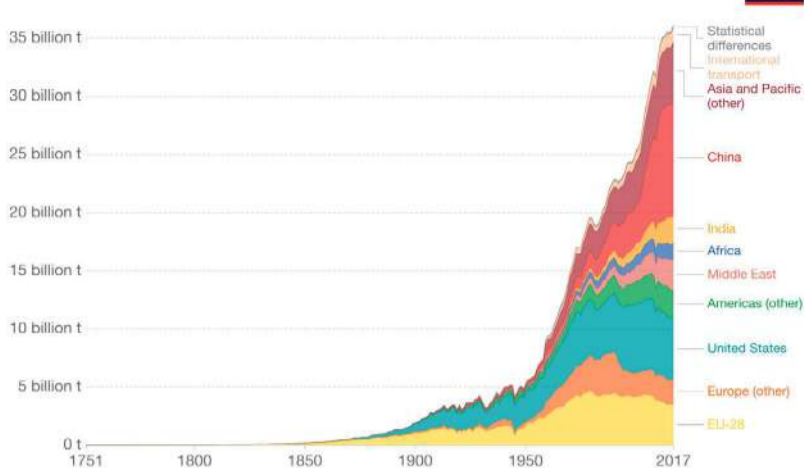
The Scottish city of Glasgow was putting on the final touches before hosting the climate talks, which may be the world's last best chance to cap global warming at the 1.5-2 degrees Celsius upper limit set out in the Paris Agreement.

"It is going to be very, very tough this summit," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said during a news conference with children.

"I am very worried because it might go wrong and we might not get the agreements that we need and it is touch and go, it is very, very difficult, but I think it can be done," he said.

The German government announced Chancellor Angela Merkel will travel to Glasgow to take part.

Annual total CO2 emissions, by world region



Source: Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center (CDIAC); Global Carbon Project (GCP). Note: The difference between the global estimate and the sum of national totals is labeled "Statistical differences". OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions · CC BY

STAKES ARE HUGE

The stakes for the planet are huge - among them the impact on economic livelihoods the world over and the future stability of the global financial system.

Saudi Arabia's crown prince said on Saturday that the world's top oil exporter aims to reach "net zero" emissions of greenhouse gases, mostly produced by burning fossil fuels, by 2060 - 10 years later than the United States. He also said it would double the emissions cuts it plans to achieve by 2030. An official plan unveiled in Ottawa showed developed nations were confident they can reach their goal of handing over \$100 billion a year to poorer countries to tackle climate change by 2023, three years late.

The plan on how to reach the goal, prepared by Canada and Germany, said developed countries still needed to do more and complained private finance had not lived up to expectations.

A Reuters poll of economists found that hitting the Paris goal of net-zero carbon emissions will require investments in a green transition worth 2%-3% of world output each year until 2050, far less than the economic cost of inaction.

By contrast governments since January 2020 have spent a total of \$10.8 trillion - or 10.2% of global output - in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

'WE DON'T HAVE TIME'

A "business-as-usual" trajectory leading to temperature rises of 1.6C, 2.4C and 4.4C by 2030, 2050 and 2100 respectively would result in 2.4% lost output by 2030, 10% by 2050 and 18%

by 2100, according to the median replies to the survey.

Australia's cabinet was expected to formally adopt a target for net zero emissions by 2050 when it meets on Monday to review a deal reached between parties in Prime Minister Scott Morrison's coalition government, official sources told Reuters.

The ruling coalition has been divided over how to tackle climate change, with the government maintaining that harder targets would damage the \$2-trillion (\$1.5-trillion) economy.



Smoke and steam billow from Belchatow Power Station, Europe's largest coal-fired power plant, near Belchatow, Poland. Picture taken November 28, 2018. REUTERS/Kacper Pempel/File Photo

In London, climate activists restarted their campaign of blockading major roads by disrupting traffic in the city's financial district, while in Madrid a few dozen people staged a sit-in protest, briefly blocking the Gran Via shopping street.

"Greenhouse gas emissions are provoking climate catastrophes all over the planet. We don't have time. It's already late and if we don't join the

action against what's happening, we won't have time to save what is still left," said Alberto, 27, a sociologist who took part in the protest. (Courtesy https://www.reuters.com/)

Related

Climate Crisis: Despite Lockdowns Greenhouse Gas Levels Hit New Record, Per UN Report

The data send a 'stark' message to the nations tasked with increasing action at the Cop26 climate summit, UN meteorology chief says

Levels of climate-heating gases in the atmosphere hit record levels in 2020, despite coronavirus-related lockdowns, the UN's World Meteorological Organization has announced. The concentration of carbon dioxide, the most important greenhouse gas, is now 50% higher than before the Industrial Revolution sparked the mass burning of fossil fuels. Methane levels have more than doubled since 1750. All key greenhouse gases (GHG) rose faster in 2020 than the average for the previous decade and this trend has continued in 2021, the WMO report found.

The data shows the climate crisis continues to worsen and send a "stark" message to the nations meeting at the Cop26 climate summit in Glasgow in a week's time, according to WMO chief Prof Petteri Taalas: "We are way off track."



The negotiators at the summit must deliver action to keep alive the goal of ending GHG emissions by 2050 and avoiding the worst climate impacts. Only stopping emissions will stabilise the levels of the gases and halt the temperature rises that drive the increasing damage from heatwaves, floods and droughts.

"At the current rate of increase in GHG concentrations, we will see a temperature increase by the end of this century far in excess of the Paris Agreement targets of 1.5C to 2C," said Taalas. "[Rising levels of GHGs] have major negative repercussions for our daily lives and wellbeing, and for the future of our children and grandchildren." (Courtesy theguardian.com)

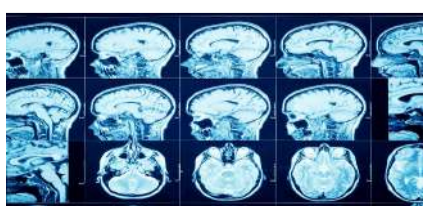
COVID-19: Research Points To Long-Term Neurological Effects



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

A recent paper examining existing evidence argues that SARS-CoV-2 infection might increase the risk of long-term neurological problems, including cognitive decline and dementia. Nearly 1 year after the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, was identified, global cases have surpassed 88 million. Although a number of vaccines have been approved, the rollout will take time. In the meantime, researchers continue studying COVID-19 in an attempt to slow the spread and reduce severe symptoms.

A recent perspective article, which appears in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, reviews research into past viral illnesses, including the flu pandemic from a century earlier. The authors believe the research indicates COVID-19 could cause a lasting effect on the brain.



Other scientists are trying to piece together a picture of what life may look like in the long run for someone who has

had COVID-19. **Neurotropic viruses** Scientists consider the SARS-CoV-2 virus a "neurotropic" virus, because it can enter nerve cells. Neurotropic viruses include the mumps, rabies, and Epstein-Barr viruses. While some neurotropic viruses cause milder symptoms, others can cause swelling in the brain, paralysis, and death. Some flu-like viruses are neurotropic and similar in structure to the novel coronavirus. As such, researchers looked at these viruses to try to gain insight into what type of long-term effects to expect in people who have recovered from COVID-19. Dr. de Erausquin, who is a neurology professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, explains: "Those respiratory viruses included H1N1 and SARS-CoV. The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, is also known to impact the brain and nervous system."

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"Since the flu pandemic of 1917 and

1918, many of the flu-like diseases have been associated with brain disorders," says lead author Dr. Gabriel A. de Erausquin.

According to the scientists, an elevated risk of Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and mental health problems could potentially be connected to these flu-like illnesses.

Importance of neurological symptoms Some people with COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms, while others have symptoms ranging from mild to severe.

Some of the hallmark symptoms include: dry cough, fever, and difficulty breathing. Additionally, an estimated 15-25% of people with the viral illness may have neurological symptoms, including: loss of sense of taste and smell, altered mental state and headache. To enter cells, SARS-CoV-2 binds to ACE2 receptors on cell membranes. The olfactory bulb, which is the part of the brain receiving sensations of smell, harbors a high concentration of these receptors. The olfactory bulb also has strong connections to the hippocampus — the area responsible for memory.



While losing the sense of smell may not seem serious at first, it is still important, since it is tied directly to brain function.

According to Dr. de Erausquin, "The trail of the virus, when it invades the brain, leads almost straight to the hippocampus." "That is believed to be one of the sources of the cognitive impairment observed in COVID-19 patients. We suspect it may also be part of the reason why there will be an accelerated cognitive decline over time in susceptible individuals," he adds.

Among severe neurological issues during SARS-CoV-2 infection, patients may develop fluid on the brain, inflam-

mation in the brain, and seizures.

Lasting impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 can cause severe damage to the lungs, and that damage can be irreversible. However, according to the authors' research, it appears that the possible fallout from COVID-19 may extend far beyond lung damage.

The authors write that "respiratory problems due to SARS-CoV-2 are thought to be due in part to brain stem dysregulation, as are possibly some of the gastrointestinal symptoms."

Based on the idea that COVID-19 can cause damage to the brain, it is possible that people who have had the novel coronavirus but were either asymptomatic or experienced mild symptoms may face problems down the road. However, because COVID-19 is a new disease, scientists will need to carry out longer-term studies to confirm these theories.

"As the *Alzheimer's & Dementia* article points out, the under-recognized medical history of these viruses over the last century suggests a strong link to brain diseases that affect memory and behavior," comments Dr. Maria C. Carrillo,



Alzheimer's Association chief science officer and paper co-author. "In this difficult time, we can create a 'silver lining' by capitalizing on the Alzheimer's Association's global reach and reputation to bring the research community together to illuminate COVID-19's long-term impact on the brain," says Dr. Carrillo. (Courtesy medicalnewstoday.com)

Related

Stanford Researchers Develop Single-Dose Nanoparticle Covid-19 Vaccine That Doesn't Need Cold Storage

Researchers have successfully tested a nanoparticle Covid-19 vaccine which, as yet, doesn't appear to have any of the

side effects or distribution issues plaguing the current generation of vaccines in use. The scientists at the lab of Stanford University biochemist Peter S. Kim were already working on vaccines for the likes of Ebola, HIV and pandemic influenza when the coronavirus pandemic hit, and they quickly channeled all of their efforts into fighting the new scourge. The team has already produced and tested a promising new vaccine which could provide the solution to many of the issues frustrating global vaccination efforts. Nanoparticle vaccines are often just as effective as their virus-based counterparts, while encountering fewer of the drawbacks. For example, nanoparticle vaccines can be produced faster, don't require the extensive cold storage supply chain for delivery to immunization centers, are less likely to produce side effects, and can be produced at a lower cost, if all goes to plan.

Early results from vaccine tests on mice indicate that Stanford's nanoparticle inoculation may grant immunity after just one dose. (Courtesy rt.com)

