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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Ukraine's Zelenskiy declares 'day of unity' for Feb. 16, cited as possible invasion

MOSCOW/KYIV, Feb 14 (Reuters) - President Volodymyr Zelenskiy called on Ukrainians to fly the country's flags from buildings and sing the national anthem in unison on Feb. 16, a date that some Western media have cited as a possible start of a Russian invasion.

Ukrainian officials stressed that Zelenskiy was not predicting an attack on that date, but responding with skepticism to foreign media reports. Several Western media organisations have quoted U.S. and other officials citing the date as when Russian forces would be ready for an attack. "They tell us Feb. 16 will be the day of the attack. We will make it a day of unity," Zelenskiy said in a video address to the nation.

"They are trying to frighten us by yet again naming a date for the start of military action," Zelenskiy said. "On that day, we will hang our national flags, wear yellow and blue banners, and show the whole world our unity."

Zelenskiy has long said that - while he believes Russia is threatening his country - the likelihood of an imminent attack has been overstated by Ukraine's Western allies, responding to Moscow's efforts to intimidate Ukraine and sow panic.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskiy's chief of staff, told Reuters the president was responding in part "with irony" to media reports of the potential date of the invasion.

"It is quite understandable why Ukrainians today are skeptical about various 'specific dates' of the so-called 'start of the invasion' announced in the media," he said. "When the 'start of the invasion' becomes some sort of rolling tour date, such media announcements can only be taken with irony."

Zelenskiy's office released the text of a decree calling for all villages and towns in Ukraine to fly the country's flags on Wednesday, and for the entire nation to sing the national anthem at 10 am. It also called for an increase in salaries of soldiers and border guards.

U.S. officials said they were not predicting an assault ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin on a specific day, but repeated warnings that it could come at any time.



"I won't get into a specific date, I don't think that would be smart. I would just tell you that it is entirely possible that he could move with little to no warning," Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby told reporters. Earlier, Kirby said Moscow was still adding to its military capabilities on the Ukrainian frontier.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington, which has already sent most of its diplomats home, was moving its remaining diplomatic mission in Ukraine from Kyiv to the western city of Lviv, much further from the Russian frontier. He cited a "dramatic acceleration in the buildup of Russian forces".

Russia has more than 100,000 troops massed near the border of Ukraine. It denies Western accusations that it is planning an invasion, but says it could take unspecified "military-technical" action unless a range of demands are met, including barring Kyiv from ever joining the NATO alliance.

Russia suggested on Monday that it was ready to keep talking to the West to try to defuse the security crisis.

In a televised exchange, Putin was shown asking his foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, whether there was a chance of an agreement to address Russia's security concerns, or whether it was just being dragged into tortuous negotiations.

Lavrov replied: "We have already warned more than once that we will not allow endless negotiations on questions that demand a solution today."

But he added: "It seems to me that our possibilities are far from exhausted... At this stage, I would suggest continuing and building them up."

Western countries have threatened sanctions on an unprecedented scale if Russia does invade. The Group of Seven large economies (G7) warned on Monday of "economic and financial sanctions which will have massive and immediate consequences on the Russian economy".

After speaking with the foreign minis-

ters of Russia and Ukraine, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he still believed "from his own analysis, his own hopes" that there would not be a conflict, a U.N. spokesperson said. [read more](#)

Moscow says Ukraine's quest to join NATO poses a threat. While NATO has no immediate plans to admit Ukraine, Western countries say they cannot negotiate over a sovereign country's right to form alliances.

ECONOMIC DAMAGE

Ukraine is already suffering economic damage from the standoff. A surge in the price of 5-year credit default swaps on Ukrainian sovereign bonds suggested that markets gave Kyiv a 42% probability of defaulting.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan told congressional leaders on Monday that Washington was considering offering Ukraine up to \$1 billion in sovereign loan guarantees to calm markets, a source familiar with the adviser's call told Reuters.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

02/14/2022

Contribution To Our Community



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Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
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Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas

In order to support and encourage local kids, entrepreneurs at the fun event last weekend participated in the Love Bugs Children's Business Fair hosted at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

In the last two years, because of the spread of the pandemic and social unrest, we have witnessed so many people living in poverty and helplessness. The gap



between the poor and rich is increasing. No matter how much politicians promise, they turn a blind eye to the dark side of social justice.

We were so glad last weekend that we were able to participate with our granddaughter and her friends. She made a beautiful bookmark and sold

it at the fair.

As part of society, we as Asian American citizens need to do more to help the needy people and the less fortunate.

We are so glad that our younger generation fully understands their role in the community.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



A protester stands atop a vehicle as cars parade during their "Convoi de la liberte" (The Freedom Convoy), a vehicular convoy to protest coronavirus vaccine and restrictions in Paris, France, February 12. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier



People stand next to a car with the flags of Israel and Canada as it takes part in an Israeli "Freedom Convoy" heading towards Jerusalem, near Ein Hemed, February 14. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun



A protester waves a Canadian flag on the Champs-Elysees avenue as cars parade during their "Convoi de la liberte" (The Freedom Convoy) to protest coronavirus vaccine and restrictions in Paris, February 12. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier



A protestor holds a flag and takes a selfie before heading to Jerusalem as part of an Israeli "Freedom Convoy" in Latrun, Israel, February 14. REUTERS/Amir Cohen

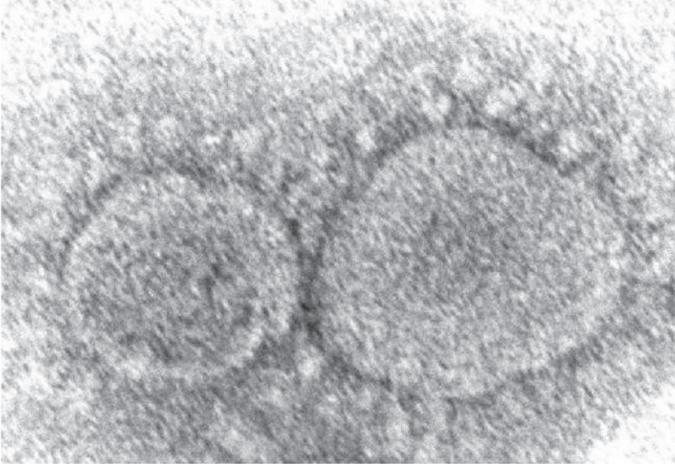


Tear gas grenades are fired during a protest on the Champs-Elysees avenue as cars try to block the traffic during their "Convoi de la liberte" (The Freedom Convoy) in Paris, France, February 12. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier



Arianna Fontana of Italy celebrates after winning gold in the Women's Short Track Speed Skating - 500m. REUTERS/Aleksandra Szmigiel

New COVID-19 Variants Raise Concerns About Virus Reinfections



A 2020 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows SARS-CoV-2 virus particles which cause COVID-19. According to research released in 2021, evidence is mounting that having COVID-19 may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants. People also can get second infections with earlier versions of the coronavirus if they mounted a weak defense the first time. (Hannah A. Bullock, Azaibi Tamin/CDC via AP)

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

Evidence is mounting that having COVID-19 may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants. People also can get second infections with earlier versions of the coronavirus if they mounted a weak defense the first time, new research suggests.

How long immunity lasts from natural infection is one of the big questions in the pandemic. Scientists still think reinfections are fairly rare and usually less serious than initial ones, but recent developments around the world have raised concerns.

In South Africa, a vaccine study found new infections with a variant in 2% of people who previously had an earlier version of the virus. In Brazil, several similar cases were documented with a new variant there. Researchers are exploring whether reinfections help explain a recent surge in the city of Manaus, where three-fourths of residents were thought to have been previously infected. In the United States, a study found that 10% of Marine recruits who had evidence of prior infection and repeatedly tested negative before starting basic training were later infected again. That work was done before the new variants began to spread, said one study leader, Dr. Stuart Sealfon of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.



“Previous infection does not give you a

free pass,” he said. “A substantial risk of reinfection remains.”

Reinfections pose a public health concern, not just a personal one. Even in cases where reinfection causes no symptoms or just mild ones, people might still spread the virus. That’s why health officials are urging vaccination as a longer-term solution and encouraging people to wear masks, keep physical distance and wash their hands frequently.

“It’s an incentive to do what we have been saying all along: to vaccinate as many people as we can and to do so as quickly as we can,” said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government’s top infectious disease expert. “My looking at the data suggests ... and I want to underline suggests ... the protection induced by a vaccine may even be a little better” than natural infection, Fauci said.



Doctors in South Africa began to worry when they saw a surge of cases late last year in areas where blood tests suggested many people had already had the virus. Until recently, all indications were “that previous infection confers protection for at least nine months,” so a second wave should have been “relatively subdued,” said Dr. Shabir Madhi of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Scientists discovered a new version of the virus that’s more contagious and less susceptible to certain treatments. It now causes more than 90% of new cases in South Africa and has spread to 40 countries including the United States. Madhi led a study testing Novavax’s vaccine and found it less effective against the new variant. The study also revealed that infections with the new variant were just as common among people who had COVID-19 as those who had not.

“What this basically tells us, unfortunately, is that past infection with early variants of the virus in South Africa

does not protect” against the new one, he said. In Brazil, a spike in hospitalizations in Manaus in January caused similar worry and revealed a new variant that’s also more contagious and less vulnerable to some treatments.



“Reinfection could be one of the drivers of these cases,” said Dr. Ester Sabino of the University of Sao Paulo. She wrote an article in the journal Lancet on possible explanations. “We have not yet been able to define how frequently this is happening,” she said. California scientists also are investigating whether a recently identified variant may be causing reinfections or a surge of cases there.

“We’re looking at that now,” seeking blood samples from past cases, said Jasmine Plummer, a researcher at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Dr. Howard Bauchner, editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association, said it soon would report on what he called “the Los Angeles variant.”

A study by the Naval Medical Research Center involved several thousand Marine recruits who tested negative for the virus three times during a two-week supervised military quarantine before starting basic training. Among the 189 whose blood tests indicated they had been infected in the past, 19 tested positive again during the six weeks of training. That’s far less than those without previous infection — “almost half of them became infected at the basic training site,” Sealfon said.



Evidence is mounting that having

COVID-19 before may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants emerging around the world. (Feb. 8)

The amount and quality of antibodies that previously infected Marines had upon arrival was tied to their risk of getting the virus again. No reinfections caused serious illness, but that does not mean the recruits were not at risk of spreading infection to others, Sealfon said.

“It does look like reinfection is possible. I don’t think we fully understand why that is and why immunity has not developed” in those cases, said an immunology expert with no role in the study, E. John Wherry of the University of Pennsylvania.

“Natural infections can leave you with a range of immunity” while vaccines consistently induce high levels of antibodies, Wherry said. “I am optimistic that our vaccines are doing a little bit better.” (Courtesy apnews.com)



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How Do We Prevent Future Pandemics?



There are 1.7 million ‘undiscovered’ viruses in mammals and birds, 827,000 of which could infect humans. (Image: Unsplash/Mika Baumeister)

KEY POINTS

Human activity is to blame for COVID-19, say 22 international experts.

But we can prevent future pandemics by better protecting Earth’s natural resources.

There are 1.7 million ‘undiscovered’ viruses in mammals and birds, 827,000 of which could infect humans.

But it’s not too late to change course and rebuild our defences.

Experts say switching our efforts to prevention would reduce the threat.

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

The good news: we can prevent future pandemics. But only if we take steps to protect the environment and restore its natural defences, according to an international group of 22 leading scientists.

“There is no great mystery about the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic – or of any modern pandemic,” said Dr Peter Daszak, chair of the panel which was convened by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

COVID-19 is the sixth global health crisis since the flu pandemic of 1918 and “its emergence has been entirely driven by human activities,” the report says, adding

that there are 1.7 million “undiscovered” viruses in mammals and birds – up to 827,000 of which could infect people.

“The same human activities that drive climate change and biodiversity loss also drive pandemic risk through their impacts on our environment. Changes in the way we use land, unsustainable trade, production and consumption disrupt nature and increase contact between wildlife, livestock, pathogens and people.” This contact allows viruses to cross over between species and spread more rapidly around the world.



This is how pandemics start and spread – and their frequency is increasing, say scientists. (Image: IPBES)

Prevention is better than reaction

The group says that, rather than tackling pandemic outbreaks after they occur, we should be acting now to prevent them through greater conservation efforts and ending the overexploitation of Earth’s resources.

“The overwhelming scientific evidence points to a very positive conclusion,” said Daszak. “We have the increasing ability to prevent pandemics – but the way we are tackling them right now largely ignores that ability.”

Daszak says the fact that human activity has brought about such a rapid change in the natural environment proves we also have the ability to make change in the right direction – but “our approach has effectively stagnated”.

Global action needed

Forecasting that the global cost of the COVID-19 pandemic may already be as high as \$16 trillion, the IPBES report calls for the creation of a high-level intergovernmental council on pandemic prevention to coordinate a global action to prevent future outbreaks. If no action is taken, the report says future pandemics will happen more often, spread faster and kill more people than COVID-19. The panel says the economic cost of the current pandemic is 100 times the estimated cost of preventing it by protecting nature.

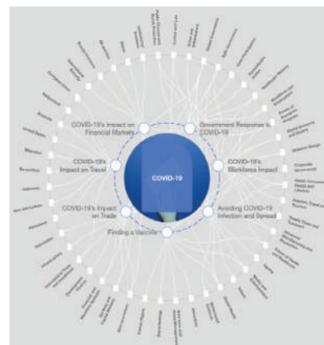
They call for “changes to reduce the types of consumption, globalized agricultural expansion and trade that have led to pandemics. This could include taxes or levies on meat consumption, livestock production and other forms of high pandemic-risk activities,” the report says.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) forecasts that by 2030

global meat consumption per head will reach 45.3 kg, almost double the level in the mid-1960s. Although COVID-19 lockdowns have reduced air pollution, a recent study warned that increased poverty caused by the pandemic could lead to more environmental damage as people return to activities like wildlife poaching and clearing forests for crops to survive.

COVID-19 –

Connected To The World



COVID-19 threatens to become one of the most difficult tests faced by humanity in modern history. As the pandemic has spread it has taken lives, stirred anxiety and political drama, overwhelmed health systems, and triggered potentially lasting geopolitical change. The International Monetary Fund says the global economy faces a critical juncture, and Oxfam International has warned that half a billion people could be pushed into poverty as a result of the crisis. Around the world, desperate efforts are underway to contain what has become a profoundly disruptive outbreak.

The World Economic Forum’s recent report, Vision Towards a Responsible Future of Consumption, called on consumer industries to encourage sustainable consumption, reducing environmental impacts and developing a circular economy, reusing resources to reduce waste. They call for “changes to reduce the types of consumption, globalized agricultural expansion and trade that have led to pandemics. This could include

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