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U.S. manufacturing contracts; private payrolls post first drop since 2017

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U.S. food banks run short on staples as hunger soars



FILE PHOTO:
People queue to pick up fresh food at a Los Angeles Regional Food Bank giveaway of 2,000 boxes of groceries, as the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues, in Los Angeles, California, U.S., April 9, 2020. REUTERS/

(Reuters) - It's pitch black in El Paso, Texas, when the minivans and pickups start lining up at 4 a.m., snaking for more than a mile down the desert roadway leading to the city's largest food bank.

When rations are finally distributed five hours later, many boxes are filled with too many castoff beefsteak tomatoes but no pasta. Nor is there any rice, beans or other dry or canned goods.

"We really have no dry goods," said Bonnie Escobar, chief development officer of El Pasoans Fighting Hunger.

Food banks nationwide are squeezed between short supplies and surging demand from needy families as the coronavirus pandemic has put more than 26 million Americans out of work. In New York City, the mayor appointed a food czar as lines of masked people form outside overstretched charities. More than a third of the city's food banks have closed for lack of supplies, donations or volunteers, who are harder to recruit because of infection fears, according to the New York Mission Society. In San Diego, a local food bank waits on a \$1 million order it placed weeks ago. Chicago and Houston food banks say they are nearly out of staples.

Before the pandemic, 1 in 7 Americans relied on food banks, according to Feeding America, a national network of the charities. Now, demand has doubled or tripled at many organizations, U.S. food bank operators told Reuters.

And yet farmers are destroying produce, dumping milk and culling livestock because the pandemic has upended supply chains, making it impossible for many to get crops to market. Grocery stores struggle to stock shelves because suppliers can't adjust to the sudden shift of demand away from shuttered restaurants to retailers, which requires different packaging and distribution networks.

"The U.S. likely has a surplus of food right now," said Keith Dailey, group vice president of corporate affairs at Kroger Co,

the No. 1 U.S. supermarket operator. "It's just hard to recover and redistribute."

Before the pandemic, Feeding America member organizations received about a third of their food from grocery store programs that "rescue" fresh food and dry goods that are imperfect or close to expiration. Almost a quarter came from government programs that provide meat, cheese and other products.

The rest came through donations from farmers and grocers and purchases by the food banks.

Now those supply lines are disrupted. Panic-buying of groceries stripped store inventories of often-donated surplus items, causing grocers to shift to cash donations for food banks.

Surging demand from needy families, along with higher prices on some products, is busting food banks' cash budgets - one Nebraska food bank, for instance, will spend up to \$1 million on food in April compared to about \$70,000 in a normal month.

"This is not an anomaly" across the region, said Angie Grote, a spokeswoman for Omaha's Food Bank for the Heartland, which serves communities in 93 counties in Nebraska and Western Iowa.

Many farmers would rather donate food than destroy it, but overwhelmed charities do not have the labor or storage to handle such bulk donations. Neither can the government act fast enough to fill the gap left by disruptions of other sources and the sudden spike in hunger.

The Trump administration faces mounting pressure from trade groups such as the National Pork Producers Council and the National Potato Council to buy more surplus foods and redirect them to charities or schools that continue to provide meals to low-income families after halting classes. That could include, for instance, between \$750 million and \$1.3 billion worth of potatoes and derivative products that are trapped in the pipeline, the potato council said.

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U.S. FDA warns against malaria drugs Trump championed for COVID-19

(Reuters) - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday cautioned against the use of malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, touted by President Donald Trump, in COVID-19 patients outside of hospitals and clinical trials, citing risks of serious heart rhythm problems.

FILE PHOTO: Researchers at the Microbiology Research Facility work with coronavirus samples as a trial begins to see whether malaria treatment hydroxychloroquine can prevent or reduce the severity of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S. March 19, 2020. REUTERS/Craig Lassig

The decades-old drug has been called a "game changer" by Trump in the fight against the novel coronavirus and anecdotal reports that it may provide some benefit have spurred sales of the drug.

There is no evidence yet of the drugs' effect on the virus. COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, has no approved treatment or vaccine.

Within hours of Trump's initial endorsement on March 19, pharmaceutical supply chain experts reported shortages as doctors began prescribing hydroxychloroquine for themselves and their families. Patients have also pressured doctors to use the therapies widely touted by Trump and other supporters.

The FDA said on Friday it was aware of increased use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine through outpatient prescriptions and the drugs could cause abnormal heart rhythms and dangerously rapid heart rate. (bit.ly/3cH-vepp)

The agency's announcement comes a day after the European Union's drug regulator warned of the side effects of the drugs, urging medical professionals to closely monitor patients on the medicines.



Hydroxychloroquine was also associated with potentially higher risk of death for patients at U.S. veterans hospitals, according to an analysis submitted for expert review earlier this week.

Rick Bright, the ousted director of a U.S. agency charged with developing drugs to fight the pandemic, said on Wednesday he was dismissed because he called for careful vetting of the therapies.

The FDA has allowed healthcare providers to use the drugs for COVID-19 through its emergency use authorization, but has not approved them to treat the disease.

The heart rhythm risks may increase when the medicines are combined with other drugs, such as antibiotic azithromycin, as well as in patients with existing heart and kidney disease, the agency said on Friday.

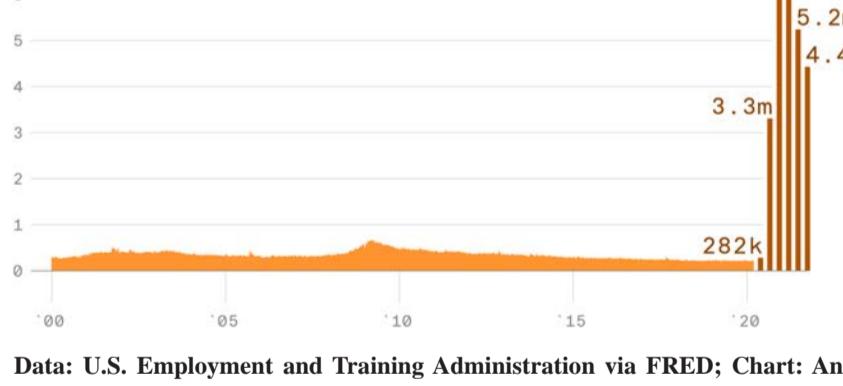
FILE PHOTO: Researchers at the Microbiology Research Facility work with coronavirus samples as a trial begins to see whether malaria treatment hydroxychloroquine can prevent or reduce the severity of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota,

Stay Healthy! BUSINESS Wash Your Hands!

Another 4.4 Million Filed For Unemployment Last Week Amid Coronavirus Crisis

Weekly U.S. jobless claims

Jan. 1, 2020 to April 18, 2020



Data: U.S. Employment and Training Administration via FRED; Chart: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

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

Another 4.4 million Americans filed for unemployment last week, according to Labor Department data released Thursday.

Why it matters: While the pace of layoffs is easing, more than 26 million Americans have filed jobless claims in recent weeks as the coronavirus pandemic takes a never-before-seen toll on the job market.

Between the lines: The labor market wreck is likely worse than the government's figures suggest.

• Unemployment offices across the country have been overwhelmed by the deluge of filings and processing has been delayed. Additionally, they're racing to catch up to the adjusted requirements for unemployment laid out in the federal coronavirus stimulus.

• California, Florida, Texas and Georgia saw the biggest surge in new unemployment claims.

The bottom line: The official unemployment rate for April won't be released until next month, but economists predict

the figure could rival that seen during the Great Depression.

Related

High Unemployment Could Be With Us For A While

Unemployment is likely to hit levels not seen since the Great Depression and remain elevated, economists warn, weakening the U.S. economy and making a V-shaped recovery increasingly doubtful.

Why it matters: That will be true even if states allow businesses to reopen sooner than expected, as surveys show most Americans aren't ready to go back to their normal routines.



Illustration: Eniola Odetunde/Axios
The big picture: Many are looking to

China's return from its coronavirus outbreak as a model, but the U.S. economy is "a different ball of wax," S&P Global chief U.S. economist Beth Ann Bovino tells Axios.

• The U.S. is a democracy and far more reliant on the services sector, which provides 80% of American jobs.

• "China was locked down for a month and it was specific to one region, whereas [in] the U.S., we're approaching two months and 90% of the population is under lockdown," she adds.

• "That's a big difference in terms of the impact on the labor market."

Driving the news: Analysts expect today's initial jobless claims report to show another 4.5 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, taking the total number of filings to more than 26 million in just the past five weeks.

Between the lines: While unprecedented government spending has helped boost sentiment on both Wall Street and Main Street, it is unlikely to accomplish its goal of keeping most workers tied to their employers, Bovino says.

By the numbers: The Small Business Administration recorded 30.2 million small businesses in the U.S. as of 2018. So, even with the expected Paycheck Protection Program funding of \$322 billion being added to the initial \$350 billion tranche, that would equal only around \$22,250 per firm.



• "That might help some mom and pop stores that only have one part-time worker, but it's not going to help those companies that have many more," Bovino says.

• "I just don't see the incentive for businesses to hold onto workers. And that's why we're seeing all these businesses shed jobs."

So, of the roughly 60 million Americans

employed by a small businesses, only one-third work at companies with 20 employees or less, SBA data show.

• And PPP loans are only forgiven if 75% of funds are used to cover employee salaries.

• That leaves little for rent, utilities, supplies and other costs incurred by business owners, who are seeing significantly decreased or zero revenue.

Where it stands: Ratings agency Fitch said Wednesday it expects global GDP to decline by 3.9% this year, "twice as large as the decline" it predicted just weeks ago and "twice as severe as the 2009 recession."

• Bovino and S&P Global senior U.S. economist Satyam Panday expect U.S. GDP will shrink by 5.2% this year — about four times their March forecast of a 1.3% contraction — and unemployment will hit 19%.

• "The current recession has likely reduced economic activity by 11.8% peak to trough, which is roughly three times the decline seen during the Great Recession in one-third of the time," they wrote in a recent note to clients.

Global Unemployment



Global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years but slowing global economic growth means that, as the global labor force increases, not enough new jobs are being generated to absorb new entrants to the labor market.

UN Report: The number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million. In addition, 165 million people do not have enough paid work, and 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour

market. In total, more than 470 million people worldwide are affected

Global unemployment is projected to increase by around 2.5 million in 2020 and almost half a billion people are working fewer paid hours than they would like or lack adequate access to paid work, according to UN's International Labour Organization report.

The World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO) report, released last Monday, states that global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years but slowing global economic growth means that, as the global labor force increases, not enough new jobs are being generated to absorb new entrants to the labor market.



The International Labor Organization (ILO) forecasts that unemployment will rise by about 2.5 million this year. The ILO is a UN agency whose mandate. The number of people unemployed around the world now stands at about 188 million.

"For millions of ordinary people, it's increasingly difficult to build better lives through work," ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said. (Courtesy <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>)



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Saturday, April 25 2020

Editor's Choice



Demonstrators protest the extension of the emergency Safer at Home order by State Governor Tony Evers to slow the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), outside the State Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin



U.S. President Trump signs the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act response to the coronavirus disease outbreak at the White House in Washington



Demonstrators protest the extension of the emergency Safer at Home order by State Governor Tony Evers to slow the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), outside the State Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin



An elderly man wearing a face mask is arrested by the police during a demonstration against the anti-coronavirus measures taken by the Austrian government as the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues in Vienna, Austria, April 24, 2020. REUTERS/Leonhard Foeger



Demonstrators protest the extension of the emergency Safer at Home order by State Governor Tony Evers to slow the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), outside the State Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin



A girl does school work with her mother at her home at the Orfei circus, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Santa Teresa di Riva, Italy, April 24, 2020. REUTERS/Antonio Parrinello



A staff member wearing a protective face mask and gloves at the Peppo al Cosimato Pizzeria makes pizzas for delivery, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Rome, Italy, April 24, 2020. REUTERS/Alberto Lingria



Demonstrators protest the extension of the emergency Safer at Home order by State Governor Tony Evers to slow the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), outside the State Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin

How Coronavirus Antibody Tests Will Help In The Fight Against The Virus

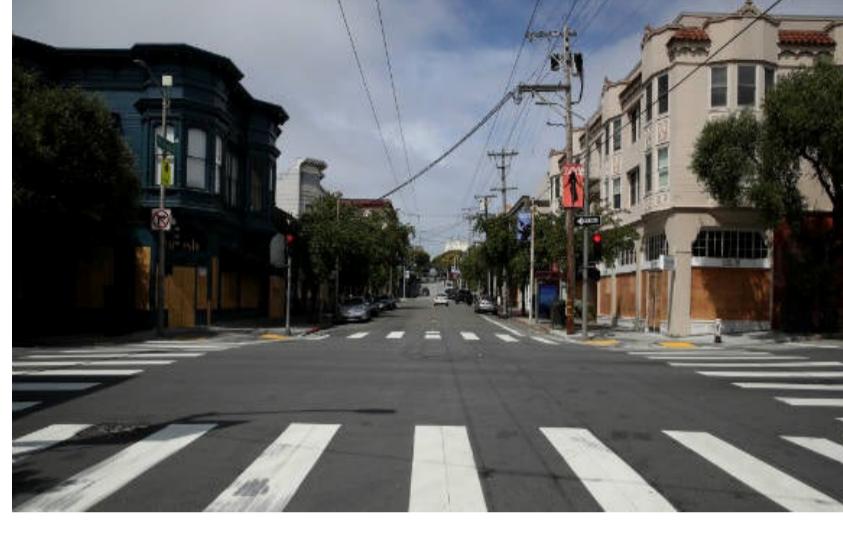


Photo: Angela Weiss/AFP via Getty Images, Bruce Bennett/Getty Images, and Europa Press News/Europa Press via Getty Images

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

Health care workers and those in other front-line, highly vulnerable sectors will likely benefit the most as new tests come on the market to determine whether a person has had the coronavirus.

The big picture: Serological testing, along with diagnostic testing and contact tracing, is one of the basic tools public health experts say are key to managing the pandemic.

Serological tests identify the antibodies a patient's body produces when it fights this strain of the coronavirus. They test for past infections, not current ones. • Some people likely contracted the coronavirus but didn't feel sick, or weren't able to get a diagnostic test. Serology tests will confirm whether they had it. And on a larger scale that will provide more information about where the virus spread, the real number of cases and the actual death rate from the virus.

"People just think this is the solution, that this is finally the thing, that

everybody is going to have immunity passports ... and I am very skeptical of this for a variety of reasons," said Ashish Jha, professor of global health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

"It's going to have limited utility outside of hotspot cities and outside of professions where you're going to see higher exposure," former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb stated.



Serological testing.

Between the lines: Enthusiasm for serology tests as a way to help get people

back to work is rooted in the belief that if you have antibodies for the virus in your system, you're immune from catching it again.

- But we don't actually know whether that's true, or how strong that immunity might be.

- And though the basic science is well-established, some officials, including Anthony Fauci, have cautioned the new tests haven't yet been proven to work well.

Serology testing will be most useful in hotspots like New York City, Detroit, New Orleans, and Miami — areas where a larger percentage of the population has been infected.

- And if the antibodies these tests detect do end up conferring immunity, the tests will be primarily helpful for workers who are at a particularly high risk of spreading the virus — including health care workers, first responders, grocery store workers and people who work with the elderly.

- But "outside of the hotspots,

I think that the overall rate of positivity is going to be sufficiently low that it's not going to be a useful tool to return to work," Gottlieb said.

The bottom line: The value here is in understanding the virus' true spread and helping the highest-risk workplaces operate more safely — not as any kind of universal, nationwide get-back-to-normal permit.

The Other Coronavirus Test We Need

Researchers are racing to develop tests that detect whether someone may have developed immunity to the coronavirus, which could help society return to normal faster.

Why it matters: These tests could help people know if they are able to go back to work, as well as aid researchers in tracking the scale and death rate of the disease — key data for current and future

pandemic policies.

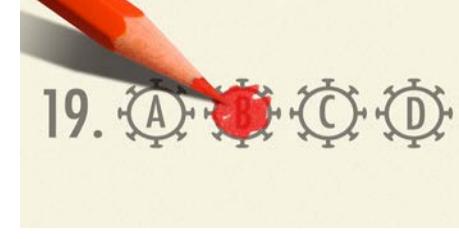


Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

Researchers are racing to develop tests that detect whether someone may have developed immunity to the coronavirus, which could help society return to normal faster.

Why it matters: These tests could help people know if they are able to go back to work, as well as aid researchers in tracking the scale and death rate of the disease — key data for current and future pandemic policies.

Background: SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is new to the human body, meaning it has no immunity to it yet. And, since there isn't a vaccine — and there won't be for a while — it's difficult to ensure someone will be protected from the virus unless they know they've had the infection.

- But people without symptoms can have COVID-19 and not know it, making it more difficult to pinpoint who's had the infection.

How it works: When the body is exposed to a virus, the immune system begins to produce antibodies to fight the virus and future infections from it.

- Those antibodies stick around after the virus is cleared from the body, making them an indicator of past infection.

- Serological tests check the blood for these antibodies — providing confirmation of infection and possible protection.

- That's different from the diagnostic tests receiving most of the public's attention; those confirm whether someone has an active infection.



These tests could be especially useful for determining whether health care workers have

some immunity and are at lower risk if they go back to work, says Nick Evans, an assistant professor at UMass Lowell.

- They can also be used to sample the population in order to form better estimates of the scale of infection and the death rate of the virus, says Jesse Bloom, a virologist at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Where it stands: Researchers at universities, companies and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working to develop tests to detect antibodies to SARS-CoV-2.

- Academic labs can develop the tests relatively quickly but to carry them out on a clinical scale with a large number of samples is "in some ways as much a matter of logistics as science," says Bloom, who's also an investigator with Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

- British officials said Wednesday they were ordering at least 3.5 million "finger-prick" serological tests that could be purchased via online entities like Amazon and taken at home, per Nature.

The catch: The utility of the test hinges on the supposition that people who've had COVID-19 are immune to new infections — an open question as "the evidence is not ironclad," Bloom tells Axios.

- But preliminary research suggests that, unlike influenza viruses, SARS-CoV-2 isn't mutating fast and infection with the virus could confer immunity for months to years.

- And in a small study that has not been peer-reviewed, researchers were unable to reinfect macaque monkeys that had been previously infected with the virus.

What to watch: Widespread testing could raise privacy concerns. "People still have privacy rights, even in a pandemic, and I don't see a reason for public disclosure. That's important, because my hunch is people's worst natures will show up and they'll start demanding disclosure, much like with other infectious diseases (e.g. HIV)," Evans said. (Courtesy axios.com)

现在的人类，有可能一夜之间就从地球上消失吗？

玛雅人为什么一夜间消失在地球上了？这是很多信奉“玛雅预言”者的疑惑，也是很多对玛雅人并不了解的人在听了坊间传闻之后的疑惑。更多的人认为它们并不是真的消失，而是隐居在地球的某个不为人知的角落，又或是通过先进的仪器飞往了地球之外的星球生活。

然而，随着最近人类社会并不是风平浪静，森林大火、沙漠蝗灾、病毒爆发、南极“血雪”、北极甲烷大爆发和古老病毒复活等问题接二连三。于是便有人开始怀疑，当时的玛雅人或许是因突发性的灾难而整体消失，不是真的隐居起来了、或是在另一颗星球上制造地外文明，并担忧现代人类会不会因为某次灾难而被击溃，然后像玛雅人一样彻底从地球上消失。

首先，我们需要清楚一个基本事实，玛雅人并不是真的在一夜之间就从地球上消失了，它们既没有飞往外星球，也没有因为自然因素而灭亡。现代社会也有玛雅人存在，我们可以根据生活地

域和语言类型对他们进行区别（人口总数量不大，但分布的区域较多，且使用的语言不同），比如，目前主要居住在尤卡坦半岛（墨西哥）的尤卡坦玛雅人，以及生活在韦拉克鲁斯（墨西哥中东部）的瓦斯特克人。

一开始生活在中美洲和墨西哥局部区域的玛雅人充满神秘色彩，他们原本是古代印第安人的一族，更是美洲历史上留下文字记录的唯一民族。其实，玛雅人并不是一个民族，而是多种多样的美洲土著人的集体代号，预计他们的人口数量在公元前2500年的时候有大约200万左右。事实上，由于玛雅预言的存在，再加上没有人知道他们的起源是什么地方。

所以，有人甚至认为他们是外星人的后代，或是某个失落部族的后裔。而玛雅文明急剧衰落的时间点应该是在公元900年以后，正是因为衰落的原因也一直是未解之谜，所以才让他们身上的神秘色彩变得更加浓郁。也就是说，这些不知道真正起源，也不知道为何衰落



的玛雅人，给后来的人们遗留了所谓的玛雅预言和数十种玛雅预言。

整体而言，低地文化（如，犹加敦人）和高地文化就是玛雅文化的两个主要类型。

客观而言，玛雅人在数学和天文这两个领域取得的特别高的成就，比如，当时的他们就已经将太阳、月球和金星等天体的运行规律掌握，并一次

定制了365日安的圣年历和260天的太阳历。都说欧洲人的数学成就高，要知道玛雅人对“0”的使用竟然要比欧洲人还早800多年，在计数方面使用的二十进位制，更是一直沿用到了数百万年之后。

要知道那时的玛雅人可是衣不蔽体，我们现代人类也几乎只有在测算宇宙

某单位距离、又或是星际航行相关的问题中才用得上。简单来说，玛雅人当时所拥有的数学和天文能力，已经远超出他们的生活所需。只不过很可惜，玛雅人的预言虽然很丰富，但它们流传下来的书本却只有四本，因为，玛雅人所写的其他书籍都被当时的欧洲人视为异端而被彻底销毁。

超过25亿人“禁足”后 地球开始自我拯救！

现在的全球变暖已经不再是存在于我们脑海当中的一个名词，而是真真切切地感受到了全球变暖给我们带来的影响。

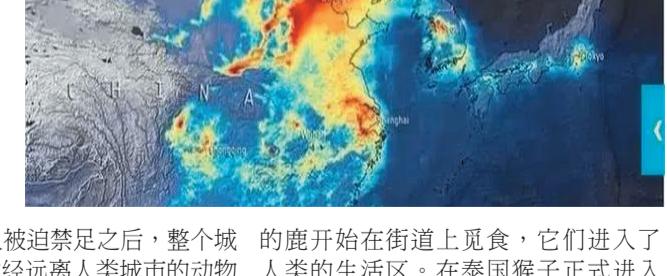
全球变暖是指在某一段时间之内，地球的大气和海洋因为温室效应而导致温度上升的气候变化的结果，现在由于全球变暖的到来，大多数的山脉冰川出现了退却的现象，在未来或许我们将会迎来高山无雪或者是无冬之年。

二氧化碳逐步的增高，对海洋造成

最大的影响就是海水的PH值正在降低，对海底的一些浮游生物生活将会产生巨大的影响，浮游生物的数量减少，以浮游生物为食的海洋生物数量也会骤减。南北极圈附近的地表均温开始逐步的上升，永久冻土层正在消融，释放出了更多的甲烷气体和史前病毒。同时还会伴随着一系列的极端天气，比如台风或飓风，这是由于全球海水均温升高，增加了海水蒸发的能力所导致的。全球变暖已经成为了势在必行需要解决的一大环

境问题。

此前曾有科学家预测在2020年我们将会迎来人类历史上最温暖的一年，但是随着冠状病毒的到来，让多个国家的经济体几乎处于停滞的状态，超过了25亿人被迫禁足。自然环境也发生了巨变，今年的二氧化碳排放量或许是自从第2次世界大战开始下降最多的一年。负责全球碳计划的主席表示，2020年的碳排放量同比下降了5%，这是自从2008年金融危机之后的首次下降。



超过25亿人被迫禁足之后，整个城市归于安静，曾经远离人类城市的动物开始再次回归。意大利的威尼斯水城，由于游客数量的大幅度减少，城市的污水水平开始下降，威尼斯运河开始清澈起来，甚至在运河中发现了海豚的身影，各种鱼类天鹅在河中嬉戏，在威尼斯成为人类旅游胜地之前，这些海鸟和天鹅曾经是这里的常客。

在日本奈良游客数量逐步减少，奈良市区的街道上，曾经已经被投喂

的鹿开始在街道上觅食，它们进入了人类的生活区。在泰国猴子正式进入了市政厅的大楼，为了寻找食物攻占了这里。

在人类饱受新型冠状病毒影响的时候，大自然却再次悄悄地焕发出新的生机。全球的碳排放量也在逐步的下降，但是这所有一切的改变都是工厂关闭，人类无法正常活动才换来的。

这也是为什么有人说，是这次病毒的来到阻止了全球变暖的再次加剧。