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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Stalling U.S. labor market bolsters Biden's drive for big stimulus package



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. employment growth rebounded moderately in January and job losses in the prior month were deeper than initially thought, strengthening the case for a sizable relief package from the government to aid the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report on Friday showed job losses in manufacturing and construction, two sectors which have been propping up the economy. There were further job losses at restaurants and bars. Retailers and employers in the transportation industry also laid off workers.

Millions of Americans are experiencing long spells of unemployment and permanent job losses, while others have given up searching for work. President Joe Biden on Friday cited the weak report to push the U.S. Congress to pass a \$1.9 trillion recovery plan amid resistance from Republicans, now worried about the ballooning national debt.

"It's very clear that our economy is still in trouble," Biden said in an address to the nation. "I see enormous pain in this country. I am going to act

fast."

Biden's fellow Democrats in Congress approved a budget outline that will allow them to muscle the stimulus through in the coming weeks without Republican support.

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 49,000 jobs last month. Data for December was revised to show 227,000 jobs lost instead of 140,000 as previously reported. Employment is 9.9 million jobs below its peak in February 2020.

The economy also created 250,000 fewer jobs in the 12 months through March 2020 than previously estimated. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated employment would not return to its pre-pandemic level before 2024. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls rising by 50,000 jobs in January.

"The weakness portrayed in today's labor report opens the door for the Biden administration to push forward with a higher spending package and provide relief for many Americans and businesses that continue to struggle with the pandemic," said Charlie Ripley, senior investment strategist at Allianz Investment Management.

ment Management.

December's drop in payrolls was the first in eight months and came amid renewed restrictions on businesses like restaurants and bars to slow a resurgence in coronavirus infections. Though those curbs on businesses continued into the first half of January, there is reason for cautious optimism as some employment measures have been stabilizing since the second half of January as authorities began easing restrictions.

### RELATED COVERAGE

Instant view: January U.S. jobs rebound falls short, December COVID bite looks worse  
U.S. jobs report underscores need for Biden recovery plan -adviser  
The government surveyed businesses for January's employment report in the middle of the month. It noted the response rate to the survey was "slightly below average."

Nearly \$900 billion in additional relief money provided by the government at the end of December and the acceleration in the distribution of vaccines for the virus could lift hiring in the months ahead. In addition, the pace of COVID-19 infections appears to have peaked in early January.

"We are hopeful that January will mark the low point for 2021 job creation," said James Knightley, chief international econ-

mist at ING in New York. "Much stronger jobs figures are likely from the second quarter onwards."

Stocks on Wall Street rose. The dollar fell against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices were lower.

Last month, manufacturing payrolls decreased by 10,000 jobs, while employment at construction sites dropped by 3,000.

FILE PHOTO: Job seekers break out to visit corporate employment personnel at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation "Hiring Our Heroes" military job fair in Washington January 8, 2016. REUTERS/Gary Cameron

Retailers shed 38,000 jobs and healthcare employment declined by 30,000. The transportation and warehousing industry lost 28,000 jobs. There were 61,000 job losses in the leisure and hospitality sector. But employment in professional and business services increased by 97,000, with temporary hiring accounting for nearly all the gains.

Government payrolls rose by 43,000 jobs, lifted by state and local government education.

Though the unemployment rate dropped to 6.3% in January from 6.7% in December, that was because many people stopped looking for work. The jobless rate was also pulled down by people misclassifying themselves as being "employed but absent from work." Without this misclassification, it would have been 6.9%.

Just over 4 million Americans have been unemployed for more than six weeks, accounting for 39.5% of the jobless in January. The ranks of those who have permanently lost their jobs increased to 3.5 million from 3.4 million in December. These people could struggle to find work or get higher pay the longer they remain unemployed.

The labor force participation rate, or the proportion of working-age Americans who have a job or are looking for one, dipped to 61.4% from 61.5% in December. The participation rate has declined significantly during the pandemic, with women accounting for the biggest share of dropouts.

That has been attributed to difficulties securing childcare as many schools remain closed for in-person learning.

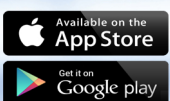
"There is still an enormous amount of work to do to get back to maximum employment," said Chris Low, chief economist at FHN Financial in New York.

The report also underscored the so-called K-shaped recovery, where better-paid workers are doing well while lower-paid workers are losing out. The continued decimation of lower-paying jobs boosted annual wage growth to 5.4% from 5.1% in December. The average workweek increased to 35 hours from 34.7 hours.

"Businesses and the administration will need to work together to implement policies and programs which close this diverging gap and ensure displaced Americans can return to the workforce," said Karen Fichuk, Randstad North America chief executive officer.



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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

02/06/2021

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Wealee@scdaily.com

## We Are Opening A New Chapter Of The New Media

Since June 16, 1979, when the first issue of the Southern Chinese News was published in Houston, Texas, we became one of the largest Asian news groups in America. When we look back at forty-two years ago, we were using a very traditional typesetting machine to publish the newspaper. And then when computers and software arrived, we totally changed our editing and pre-press production work.

Because new technology has arrived the whole world is changing. New Smartphones, iPads and 5G internet connec-

tions all bring new life to the world.

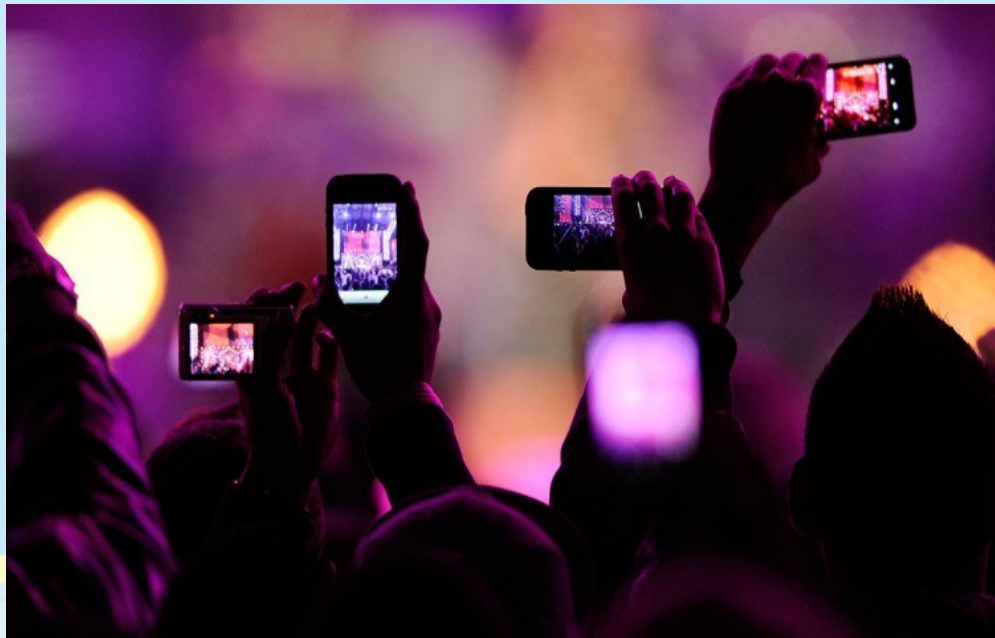
Today Southern News Group will be a part of this new era to manage and edit our news products to go on all the social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and WeChat to bring the latest information to all our readers and listeners and through these new platforms we can reach more people than ever before.

Our news team will set up a new production line for presenting the daily news and television programs and will connect

with all the different social media platforms so that more people will have access to the news immediately through messages on their smartphones and small iPad devices.

For our media business this is the time we need to change, adapt and adjust to the new digital environment. Our goal is to keep our readers and listeners in touch with the news through the power of social media.

We are ready to welcome the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Metal Ox. Our team will continue to try our best to serve our community here and all around the world.



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Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Home!

## BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

### Biden Administration To Send Covid Vaccines Directly To Pharmacies -- Increasing Shipments To States



A man waits for pharmacist Joe Borge in Danvers, MA on Feb. 1, 2021. On the first day of Phase 2 of the COVID-19 rollout, seniors, 75 and over, will get vaccinated in the Walgreens Pharmacy, at 107 High Street, in Danvers. (Photo/Pat Greenhouse | Boston Globe | Getty Images)

#### KEY POINTS

**The U.S. will increase its weekly supply of Covid-19 vaccines to states by 5%, providing at least 10.5 million doses for the next three weeks, a Biden administration official said Tuesday.**

**That bump comes a week after the White House said it would increase supply to states by 16% over the next three weeks.**

**The federal government will also turn on its first phase of a federal partnership to send doses directly to retail chains beginning Feb. 11.**

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

The Biden administration said last Tuesday it will start distributing limited supplies of vaccines directly to retail pharmacies beginning Feb. 11, in effort to make it faster and easier for people to get inoculated. These doses are separate from those allocated to states. Jeff Zients, Biden's coronavirus coordinator, cautioned that supply constraints will limit the early availability of shots in drugstores. He said the administration wanted to target supplies to pharmacies serving "socially vulnerable communities." The U.S. will increase its weekly shipments of Covid-19 vaccine doses to states by 5% and send some doses directly to pharmacies to expand access to the lifesaving shots nationwide, the Biden administration's Covid-19 response team said Tuesday. The federal government will now send a minimum of 10.5 million doses per week for the next three

weeks across the U.S. Zients said on a conference call with reporters Tuesday. The increase comes a week after the White House said it would up supply to states by 16% over the next three weeks. The administration is also buying an additional 100 million doses of both Pfizer's and Moderna's two-shot vaccines and said last week it will provide enough doses for 300 million Americans by the end of the summer or early fall.



The Biden administration will start distrib-

uting limited supplies of vaccines directly to retail pharmacies beginning Feb. 11th.

The federal government will send doses directly to drugstores beginning on Feb. 11, Zients said. Due to constrained supply of the vials, however, the program will start with about 6,500 retail stores nationwide with plans to eventually expand it to 40,000 pharmacies. The U.S. has allocated 1 million doses to pharmacies in addition to the 10.5 million it has set aside for states, tribes and U.S. territories beginning next week, Zients said.

Zients said the expanded vaccine supply is "all a result of the manufacturing scaling up." He said the administration has been able to secure the resources necessary to extract an extra sixth dose from Pfizer's vaccine vials, which were originally supposed to hold five shots.

The supply kits sent to states with the company's vaccine will now include a special "low dead space" syringe needed to draw the extra shot, which should result in a 20% increase in the nation's supply of Pfizer's vaccine.

The federal government has already paired with CVS and Walgreens to vaccinate people residing in long-term care facilities. That program, however, is different from a plan announced in November under the former Trump administration that would make doses available at a wider swath of retail pharmacies. Some drugstore chains have already started vaccinating people in certain states that directly allocate some of their doses to those pharmacies. The new partnership would allow the shots to be directly routed from the federal government to brick-and-mortar retail chains. "This pharmacy program will expand access in neighborhoods across the country so you can make an appointment and get your shot conveniently and quickly," Zients said.



Drugstore chains and pharmacies were supposed to take on a larger role in distributing the vaccine once the government expanded access to more people. But the slower-than-expected rollout has frustrated pharmacy chains, which have said

they could leverage their existing footprint to speed up distribution. The Biden administration had previously indicated it would "quickly jumpstart" efforts to ensure vaccines are available at local pharmacies across the U.S. President Joe Biden has said that the plan would ensure that most Americans have access to a vaccine just miles from their home.

#### Pharmacy chains prep for vaccines

CVS on Tuesday said the company will begin administering Covid-19 vaccines to eligible populations across 11 states beginning Feb. 11 through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program. Those states include California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York (excluding New York City), Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia. The company said it will receive a supply of about 250,000 doses to start.

CVS, which has nearly 10,000 pharmacies nationwide, said it has the capacity to administer up to 25 million shots a month. People will be able to sign up for an appointment on the company's website or by calling its customer service representatives. Walgreens also said Tuesday that it will begin administering vaccinations as part of the program across 15 states and jurisdictions beginning Feb. 12.



Those include Chicago, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, New York City, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Vermont, Wisconsin and West Virginia, the company said. Appointments for the shots can be made through the company's online vaccine scheduler. (Courtesy <https://www.cnbc.com/>)

#### Related

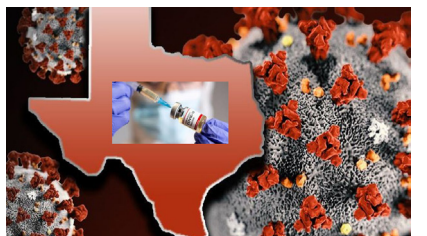
#### Texas Expecting More Than Half A Million COVID-19 Vaccine Doses This Week

Texas this week expects to receive more than half a million first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine from the federal government, state health officials announced Friday. The 520,425 doses will be shipped to 344 providers, including 82 hubs, in 166 counties across the state, according to the Department of State Health Services. Officials attributed the boost in available vaccine to a 30 percent increase in Moderna doses being sent to the state and a "one-time return" of 126,750 doses of the Pfizer vaccine that

the state had been required set aside for a program that overestimated the number of needed doses. Doses that had been set aside, for a long-term care facilities program, will specifically go to providers located in counties that have been allocated "significantly" fewer vaccines than their share of the population, including in the suburban Houston area, health officials said.

"Texas continues to vaccinate health care workers, residents of long-term care facilities, people 65 and older and those with medical conditions that put them at greater risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19," state health officials said in a statement. "Vaccine remains limited based on the capacity of the manufacturers to produce it, so it will take time for Texas to receive enough vaccine for all the people in the priority populations who want to be vaccinated."

Additionally, the state plans to order 188,225 doses meant to serve as second doses for people who a few weeks ago received their first vaccine.



**520,425 doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be shipped to 344 providers, including 82 hubs, in 166 counties across the state, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.**

"DSHS is working with providers to make sure that they order the number of second doses they need at the appropriate time," officials said. "People should be able to return to the same provider to receive their second dose."

As of Friday, providers across the state had administered about 2.2 million doses, according to DSHS. More than 1.75 million people had received at least one dose while more than 410,000 people were considered fully vaccinated. The short stock of vaccine has tested patience across the Houston region as older individuals and those with conditions that expose them to greater risk have struggled to set appointments. Some of those who've already received one dose don't know when or where they will be able to receive their second dose. (Courtesy [houstonchronicle.com](https://www.houstonchronicle.com))



Editor's Choice



Chicago Bears Devin Hester runs past cheering teammates as he scores a touchdown on the opening kick of Super Bowl XLI against the Indianapolis Colts in Miami, 2007. REUTERS/Gary Cameron



New England Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady holds the Vince Lombardi trophy after defeating the Atlanta Falcons, winning his fifth Super Bowl title, at Super Bowl LI in Houston, 2017. REUTERS/Adrees Latif



New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees holds up his son Baylen after the Saints defeated the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLIV in Miami, 2010. REUTERS/Jeff Haynes



Michael Jackson performs during the halftime show at Super Bowl XXVII in Pasadena, 1993. REUTERS/Gary Hershorn



Prince performs during the halftime show of Super Bowl XLI between the Indianapolis Colts and the Chicago Bears in Miami, 2007. REUTERS/Marc Serota



Students arrive at a court after being arrested in a demonstration against the military coup, in Mandalay, Myanmar, February 5, 2021. REUTERS/Stringer



Students from Dagon University take part in a demonstration against the military coup in Yangon, Myanmar, February 5, 2021. REUTERS/Stringer

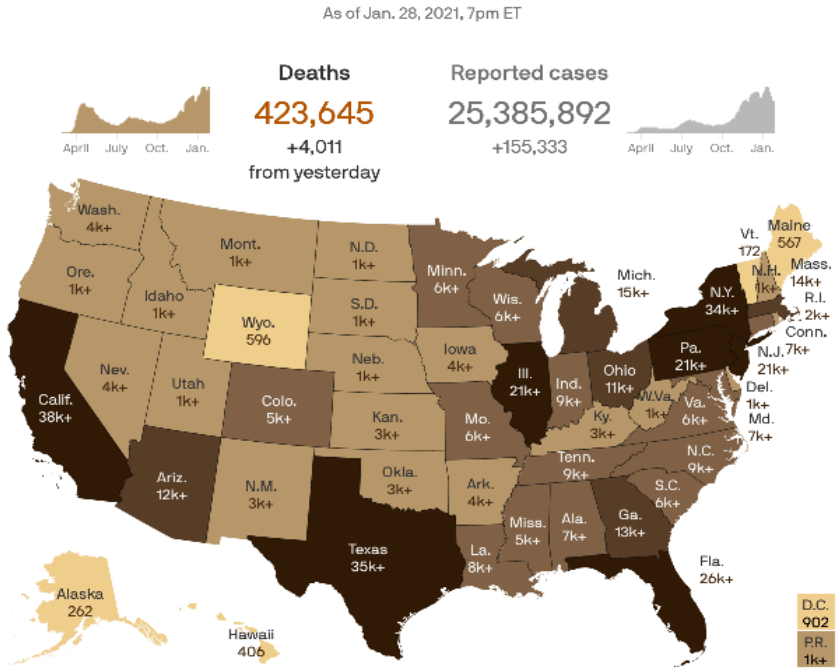


Teachers from Yangon University of Education wear red ribbons and pose with a three-finger salute as they take part in demonstration against the military coup in Yangon, Myanmar, February 5, 2021. REUTERS/Stringer



U.S. Coronavirus Updates 02/07/21

COVID-19 deaths in the U.S.



Axios Data: The COVID Tracking Project; Note: Does not include probable deaths from New York City; Map: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

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

The U.S. surpassed 8 million coronavirus cases as of last Friday, per Johns Hopkins data.

**The big picture:** Coronavirus infections jumped by almost 17% over the past week as the number of new cases across the country increased in 38 states and Washington, D.C., according to a seven-day average tracked by Axios. **By the numbers:** Over 218,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. and more than 3 million have recovered, per Johns Hopkins. Hospitalizations have jumped more than 14% from a week earlier, per the COVID Tracking Project.

**What's happening now:** Moncef Slaoui, the White House's top scientific advisor to Operation Warp Speed, knows his job may not be over by inauguration day, but tells the Axios Re:Cap podcast that hasn't yet spoken with anyone on Team Biden about vaccine development or deployment.

- Nearly 900,000 Americans applied for

first-time unemployment benefits last week, the Labor Department announced, the highest number since mid-August and the second weekly increase in a row.

- Some colleges are creating a blueprint for how to safely remain open during the coronavirus pandemic, relying heavily on regular testing and doing what they can to curb parties and other large gatherings.

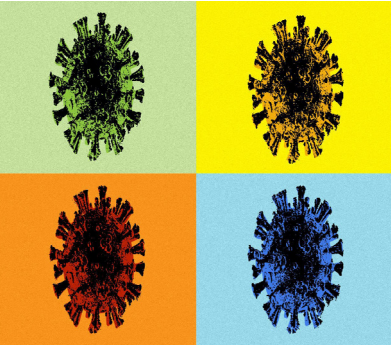


Illustration: Aida Amer/Axios

- 1. Health:** Young and middle-aged adults responsible for most COVID spread.
- 2. Vaccine:** Cities struggle to target vaccines to the hardest-hit communities — Biden administration will ship COVID vaccine directly to pharmacies — CDC: Vaccine database on race and ethnicity paints incomplete picture.
- 3. Politics:** Trump administration lobbied against states on COVID-19 vaccine funding — GOP senators release details of \$618 billion COVID relief package.
- 4. Economy:** COVID-19 prompts food stamp spending increase — The state of the U.S. economy after one year of the coronavirus.
- 5. World:** Russia's Sputnik V vaccine is highly effective, study finds.
- 6. Sports:** NBA to require higher-quality masks.

**Cases:**

- 1. Global:** Total confirmed cases as of 2 p.m. ET Wednesday: 104,142,856 — Total deaths: 2,260,683 — Total recoveries: 57,839,230 (*no longer includes U.S. recoveries as of Dec. 15*) —
- 2. U.S.:** Total confirmed cases as of 2 p.m. ET Wednesday: 26,478,930 — Total deaths: 448,337 — Total tests: 307,405,946 —

U.K. To Test Mixing COVID-19 Vaccines In World-First Trial



**British Prime Minister Boris Johnson holds a bottle of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine as he visits a COVID-19 vaccination centre in Batley, West Yorkshire, England, on Monday. (Photo/Jon Super - WPA Pool/Getty Images)**

The United Kingdom on Thursday launched a new clinical study to test the effects of mixing COVID-19 vaccines. Per a statement from Oxford University

virologist Matthew Snape, chief investigator of the world-first study: "If we do show that these vaccines can be used interchangeably in the same schedule this will greatly increase the flexibility of vaccine delivery."

- He added it "could provide clues as to how to increase the breadth of protection against new virus strains."

**How it works:** More than 800 volunteers over 50 years old will be given the Oxford University-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine followed by a dose of Pfizer-BioNTech's, or vice-versa, according to the U.K. government statement. There will be a four- or 12-week break between doses. The study will run for 13 months, but initial findings are expected to be released in the summer.

"It is also even possible that by combining vaccines, the immune response could be enhanced giving even higher antibody levels that last longer," said deputy chief medical officer Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, the senior responsible officer for the study. "Unless this is evaluated in a clinical trial we just won't know."

The FDA said last month it's following discussions, such as "mixing and matching vaccines in order to immunize more people against COVID-19." But "without appropriate data supporting such changes in vaccine administration, we run a significant risk of placing public health at risk, undermining the historic vaccination efforts to protect the population from COVID-19." (Courtesy axios.com)

**BREAKING NEWS!**

**South Carolina Detects First U.S. Cases Of Coronavirus Strain first Seen In South Africa** (CNN)South Carolina officials have announced the United States' first two confirmed cases of a more contagious coronavirus strain first spotted in South Africa. There is no known travel history or connection between the cases, both adults, according to a release Thursday from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Both cases were originally tested in early January, according to Dr. Brannon Traxler, the health department's interim public health director.



Traxler told reporters that both cases were tested by PCR "very early in the month," are no longer contagious, and are doing well.

"It does take a while for sequencing to be done," Traxler added.

One case was confirmed to the department late yesterday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the other was identified by the state's public health laboratory while testing samples over the past several days. A spokeswoman for the state health department told CNN that no other cases have been linked to either one at this point.

Traxler did not reveal detailed findings of a contact tracing investigation, offering that "we do not have concern at this time ... about there being the potential for any mass, widespread transmission."

It is unclear how widespread or rare the variant might be in South Carolina, she added, given that only two cases have been "picked up during routine surveillance sequencing." However, she noted "the predominant strain that we are still seeing in our surveillance sequencing is the standard, or normal," version of the virus. CDC said in a statement it was aware of the cases, noting "we have no evidence that infections by this variant cause more severe disease." The agency said it would continue working with labs around the country to genetically sequence samples of the virus. The variant -- also known as B.1.351 -- has raised concerns over being more transmissible than other versions of the virus, and potentially evading the immune protection offered by antibodies. Experts say they believe vaccines will still be effective against the variant. Traxler said the variant's arrival in South Carolina "is yet another reminder that the fight against this deadly virus is far from over." The variant has been detected in over 30 other countries, according to the World Health Organization. (Courtesy cnn.com)

廣告  
Daily News

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