



If you would like to share news or information with our readers, please send the unique stories, business

news organization events, and school news to us including your name and phone number in case more information is needed.

For news and information consideration, please send to News@scdaily.com or contact
John Robbins 281-965-6390
Jun Gai 281-498-4310

Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Monday, June 21 2021

Overseas Americans feel left behind in COVID-19 vaccination: media

WASHINGTON, June 8 (Xinhua) -- As the United States continues to push forward its domestic vaccination program, overseas Americans who are required to pay U.S. taxes are feeling left behind by their own government, The Washington Post reported Monday.

Citing official figures, the report said that an estimated 9 million Americans now live outside the United States, and in recent weeks, "a growing chorus has argued that they should therefore be entitled to receive U.S.-approved coronavirus vaccines."

According to the report, unlike expatriates from most other countries, American expats are required to pay U.S. taxes, but their request to "have a vaccine" has been denied by the White House.

"We have not historically provided private health care for Americans living overseas, so that remains our policy," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki was quoted as saying in the report.



COVID-19 drives exodus from metropolises in U.S.



LOS ANGELES, June 7 (Xinhua) -- Before the onslaught of COVID-19, exorbitant real estate prices in large U.S. metropolitan centers had driven some residents to look further afield for more affordable housing.

But when the pandemic struck, the majority of the country's workforce shifted to remote and work-from-home practices, and living within a reasonable commuting

distance to a central office was no longer a limiting factor. Thus, the mass exodus from the metropolises began in earnest, driving the rents and housing prices in small towns and cities higher.

Suddenly, small towns and mid-sized cities were the next "big things," even as many major U.S. metropolitan areas saw life begin to normalize this spring and more workers head back to offices.

Places like Sacramento in California, Charlotte in North Carolina, Boise in Idaho, Spokane in Washington state, Amhurst in Massachusetts and others saw their rents and housing prices go through the roof.

"Many of these markets had been heating up prior to the pandemic," said a recent report released early June from apartmentlist.com, an online marketplace with more than 4 million apartment units listed on it.

"The pandemic and remote work spurred demand for the space and affordability that these cities offered, and in response, rent prices grew even as the surrounding economy struggled," the report added.

In 2020, Sacramento was the 19th most expensive rental market in the country. According to apartmentlist.com, Sacramento in the past year leapt to the 14th place, edging out traditionally pricier places like Seattle and New York City.

Compared with a year ago, the report indicated that the prices in Fresno, California had jumped up 17 percent;

22 percent in Spokane; while those in Glendale, Reno, Mesa, and Gilbert in Nevada all spiked 16 percent, and were even 31 percent up in Boise, Idaho.

Along with proximity to jobs or responding to remote work options, pundits said that housing affordability was still a huge determining factor.

About 2,500 U.S. dollars in Los Angeles might get residents a small one-bedroom apartment in the less trendy neighborhoods, while the same amount could get them a three-bedroom house with a large, leafy yard and plenty of room for outdoor fun and BBQs in Sacramento.

It's also important to note that a dollar can be stretched much further on groceries, restaurants, utilities, etc., than it can in metropolitan areas.

Also, rents and housing prices in small towns and cities in the country grew for many other reasons.

The safety and wholesomeness of rural and suburban areas were also a big draw, the report said, and it's usually healthier and more relaxing to live in the countryside, with far less violent crime.



www.afnb.com



恆豐 銀行
American First National Bank

借記卡手機管理
24小時保護你的帳戶

mymobilemoney FDIC

Houston Area: Main Office 713-596-2888 Dallas Area: Richardson Branch 972-348-3488	Spring Branch 713-273-1838 Harry-Hines Branch 972-348-3433	Katy Branch 281-762-6688 Legacy Branch 972-348-3466	Harwin Branch 713-273-1888 Carrollton Branch 972-428-5088	First Colony Branch 713-596-2588 Arlington Branch 817-261-5585	Nevada Area: Las Vegas Branch 702-777-9988 Garland Branch 972-272-3375	Pahrump Branch 775-751-1773 Plano Branch 469-429-2422	Amargosa Valley Branch 775-372-1100 California Area: City of Industry Branch 626-667-3988 Alhambra Branch 626-863-1980
--	---	--	--	---	--	--	---

LOCAL NEWS

Feature: Chinese movie a highlight of Athens

ATHENS, June 19 (Xinhua) -- The open-air cinema in the yard of the Greek capital's Technopolis cultural center was filled to capacity -- with social distancing -- for the screening of Chinese director Wong Kar Wai's movie "In the Mood of Love."

Released 21 years ago, the film enthralled the audience. This came as no surprise to Loukas Katsikas, the artistic director of the 11th Athens Open Air Film Festival, who had already seen the movie during the Cannes Film Festival two decades ago.

Katsikas is still moved by it and he organized this special screening on Tuesday night this week to celebrate the masterpiece, he told Xinhua.

The poster of this year's festival in Athens, which opened on Monday and runs until late August, was inspired by Wong's movie.

The Athens Open Air Film Festival, organized by the Athens International Film Festival in collaboration with the City of Athens' Cultural, Sport and Youth Organization, has again transformed the Greek capital into one big cinema.

Film buffs can enjoy the unique experience of watching dozens of quality movies against the backdrop of emblematic monuments, squares, parks, pedestrian paths and beaches -- all free of charge.

The size of the audience has had to be reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic for safety reasons from 1,000 to an average 250 people at each screening, but the joy of watching a film under the stars with other people is still there, Katsikas said.

"This year's festival program, as in previous years, is for the umpteenth time an effort on our part to promote a kind of cultural tourism," he explained. One goal of the festival is to highlight the Greek capital's popular spots and overlooked corners.

"The other aspect is our love for the movies, the old, classic movies that

rarely get screened. So, we do our 'excavations' all year round and find movies we want to see on the big screen again," he said.

Katsikas and his team were planning to host the celebratory event for Wong's film last summer as part of a series of similar events held across the world for the 20th anniversary of its release but failed to do so due to COVID-19.

"We loved this movie very much. I had the pleasure to attend its premiere in Cannes in 2000. I will never forget the huge screen that was illuminated and the opening shot had letters in white against a red background. I think I have never seen a nicer red color," he told Xinhua shortly before Tuesday's screening.

"In my opinion it is Wong Kar Wai's masterpiece. He is one of the most important directors in mod-

ern film history. He gives tremendous emphasis to the image, to good taste, to elegance, to aesthetic pleasure. He pursues absolute beauty that we more or less have lost in our lives and in the arts," Katsikas said.

"His film is a love story without necessarily a happy ending, but the kind of love story that leaves indelible marks on its heroes and the viewers alike. So, for many of those who will watch the movie again tonight the memory of that first screening in Cannes in 2000 still resonates.

"This is reason enough to celebrate this film for its 20-year anniversary, but also to screen it every year in cinemas, in homes and wherever else possible," he said.



Editor's Choice



Dance captain Shair'Mae Harris, 17, leads members from "For The Love of Dance Studio" during a parade to celebrate Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in Texas two years after the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves elsewhere in the United States, in Flint, Michigan, June 19, 2021. REUTERS/Emily Elconin



A group of scavengers search for recyclable items to sell at Bantar Gebang landfill in Bekasi on the outskirts of Jakarta, Indonesia, June 5, 2021. REUTERS/Ajeng Dinar Ulfiana



A man stands on the defaced statue of Egerton Ryerson, considered an architect of Canada's residential indigenous school system, as it lies on the pavement after being toppled following a protest at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada June 6, 2021. REUTERS/Chris Helgren



A convoy of trucks arrives at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, in support of the community after the remains of 215 children, some as young as three years old, were found at the site in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, June 5, 2021.



Venice residents hold a protest to demand an end to cruise ships passing through the lagoon city, as the first cruise ship of the summer season departs from the Port of Venice, Italy, June 5, 2021. REUTERS/Manuel Silvestri



Red Bull's Max Verstappen kicks the wheel of his car after crashing out of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix at Baku City Circuit in Baku, Azerbaijan, June 6, 2021. REUTERS/Anton Vaganov

Drought Parches Crops Global Food Costs Surge To Decade High



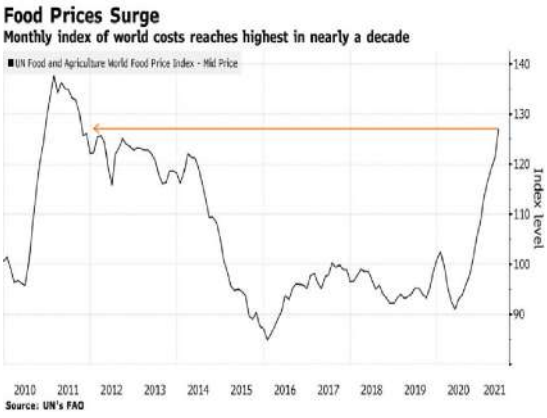
Global food prices have extended their rally to the highest in almost a decade, heightening concerns over bulging grocery bills at a time when economies are still struggling to overcome the Covid-19 crisis.

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

A United Nations gauge of world food costs climbed for a 12th straight month in May, its longest stretch in a decade. The relentless advance risks accelerating broader inflation, complicating central banks efforts to provide more stimulus.

Drought in South America has withered crops from corn and soybeans to coffee and sugar. Record purchases by China are worsening the supply crunch in grains and boosting costs for global livestock producers. Cooking oils have soared too on demand for biofuel. The surge in food costs has revived memories of 2008 and 2011, when spikes led to riots in more than 30 nations.

“We have very little room for any production shock. We have very little room for any unexpected surge in demand in any country,” Abdolreza Abbassian, senior economist at the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, said by phone. “Any of those things could push prices up further than they are now, and then we could start getting worried.”

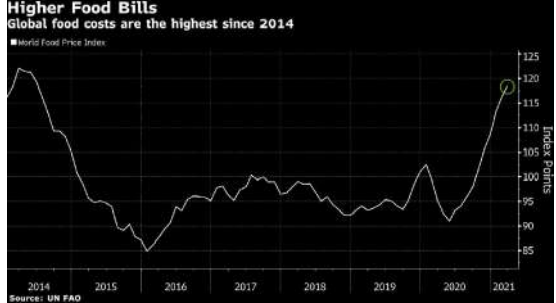


The prolonged gains across the staple commodities are trickling through to store shelves, with countries from Kenya to Mexico reporting higher costs for food items. The pain could be particularly pronounced in some of the poorest import-dependent nations, which have limited purchasing power and social safety nets, at a time when they are grappling with the ongoing pandemic

Breakdown of last month’s food costs: The FAO’s food price index rose 2.1% from February. Vegetable oil prices jumped 8% to the highest since June 2011. Meat and dairy costs rose, boosted by Asian demand. Grains and sugar prices fell. Grains prices recently climbed to multiyear highs as China imports massive amounts to feed its hog herds that are recovering from a deadly virus.

“We are not in the situation we were back in 2008-10 when inventories were really low and a lot of things were going on,” Abbassian said. “However, we are in sort of a borderline. It’s a borderline that needs to be monitored very closely over the next few weeks, because weather is either going to really make it or create really big problems.”

The UN index has reached its highest since September 2011, climbing almost 5% last month. All five components of the index rose during the month, with gains led by vegetable oils, grains and sugar. The Bloomberg Agriculture Spot Index, measuring prices from grains to sugar and coffee, is up 70% in the past year.



There were other elements that exacerbated skyrocketing food costs a decade ago. For example, oil prices neared \$150 a barrel -- double current levels -- and there was a wave of trade restrictions by major grain shippers. Meanwhile, the cost of rice, one of the world’s food staples, has remained relatively subdued this time round amidst the surge in other agricultural prices. Gains in the past year have been fueled by China’s “unpredictably huge” purchases of foreign grain, and world reserves may hold relatively flat in the coming season, Abbassian said. Summer weather across the Northern Hemisphere will be crucial in determining if U.S. and European harvests can make up for crop shortfalls elsewhere.

Across the Board

All food categories tracked by FAO climbed in the past 12 months

Price Gains in the past year

Meat	10%
Dairy	28%

Cereals	37%
Overall food index	40%
Sugar	57%
Vegetable oil	124%

(Source: UN’s FAO)
(Courtesy <https://www.bloomberg.com/>)

Related

Food Fears Are Rising

Global food prices aren’t leaving any wiggle room for the realities of today’s bad harvests or demand spikes.

The state of play: A UN index of food prices “has reached its highest since September 2011, climbing almost 5% last month,” reports Bloomberg. Another tracker of “prices from grains to sugar and coffee is up 70% in the past year.”

Why it matters: The real threat comes in countries where large portions of the population live close to the edge of hunger, Axios’ Bryan Walsh wrote.

•Even in the U.S., rising prices hit the poorest Americans, who spend more than one-third of their income on food.



A sales assistant arranges fruit in a supermarket in the Philippines. (Photo/Veejay Villafranca/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

•“The pain could be particularly pronounced in some of the poorest import-dependent nations,” Bloomberg reports.

The big picture: COVID-related labor disruptions probably aren’t helping, but climate change-related shifts in precipitation and temperatures are expected to lead to more volatile food production in the coming years, Axios’ Andrew Freedman tells me.

•That volatility can destabilize fragile countries. This already played out, studies show, with the Syrian Civil War, which began during a severe drought.

•A study found that rising temperatures in countries of origin increased the number of people seeking asylum in the EU, Axios Science editor Alison Snyder noted. (Courtesy axios.com)

(Article Continues On Page C7-2)

(Article Continues From C7-1)

Global Food Costs Surge To Decade High



Global food prices have extended their rally to the highest in almost a decade, heightening concerns over bulging grocery bills at a time when economies are still struggling to overcome the Covid-19 crisis.

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

Countries Feel Food Price Squeeze - A Closer Look

The world is racing to vaccinate its way out of the coronavirus pandemic, but another challenge has already emerged for some more vulnerable governments and economies. Global food prices are at the highest in more than six years, driven by a jump in the cost of everything from soybeans to palm oil because of the large demand from China, vulnerable supply chains and adverse weather. Some banks warn the world is heading into a commodities “supercycle.” Inflation is putting another squeeze on consumers hurting from pandemic-induced recession and—in some places—falling currencies.



Russia: History Lesson

Memories of soaring prices and empty shelves in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s collapse are still vivid for many Russians. With his popularity barely back from nadirs and protests demanding the

release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny, President Vladimir Putin is wary of the political impact of food costs.

“Russia may see some real political mobilization around food prices,” said Hendrix. “Authoritarian governments tend to be somewhat more permissive of these types of “kitchen table issue” protests than they are of more general campaigns against corruption and authoritarian rule.



In recent weeks, the world’s No. 1 wheat exporter imposed tariffs and quotas designed to curb sales abroad and drive domestic prices lower. Russia’s largest retailers were also ordered to freeze some food prices, with potatoes and carrots up by more than a third

from last year. Though, as the Arab Spring demonstrated, the former can become the latter—sometimes very quickly.” Russia and Argentina have restricted crop shipments to suppress prices at home.

Nigeria: Perfect Storm

Food prices in Africa’s biggest economy make up for more than half the country’s inflation index and rose at the fastest pace in more than 12 years in January.



An average Nigerian household spends more than 50% of its budget on food. The costs are adding to a perfect storm of food security challenges that have haunted Nigeria throughout the pandemic.

Foreign currency reserves needed to import goods dried up after a plunge in oil prices. Supply bottlenecks and attacks on farmers have also weighed on supply of agricultural goods. There were also shortages of staples such as rice after the authorities restricted imports and closed land borders for 16 months. They reopened in December, but that has done little to ease inflation.



Turkey: Angry Leader

Turkey: Angry Leader As the world’s biggest per-capita consumer of bread and its top flour exporter, Turkey is particularly exposed to a rally in commodity markets. Food prices rose 18% in January from a year earlier, with sharp jumps in staples from grains to vegetables. Turkey has grappled with a double-digit

food inflation for years, but the political implications for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are increasing as food costs hit his core support base along with the plunge in the value of the lira.



Erdogan ordered an investigation into the increase in food prices. He said oil, pulses, vegetables and fruits were the “primary concern.” The Trade Ministry may impose fines on businesses that sell food products at high prices, the president warned in January. The trouble is that government threats and financial penalties in 2019 barely moved the needle.

India: Balancing Act

Home to the most arable land after the U.S., India is the world’s biggest exporter of rice and the second-largest producer of wheat. At the same time millions of people cannot access affordable food and the country has some of the highest rates of child malnutrition.



While costs for staples rose more slowly in recent weeks, food remains at the center of political tensions that have been dominating India. Protests by farmers escalated over a move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government to liberalize the market for crops. Growers are concerned the new law will push down prices. Modi is pushing with reforms that many

believe are designed ultimately to cut India’s food subsidy bill, the biggest in the world. The government said in January it was becoming “unmanageably” large. Cuts to food and fuel subsidies have often translated into unrest and projections aren’t looking good in the next two years, according to Verisk Maplecroft.

Brazil: Populist Pressure

Populist Pressure Latin America’s biggest economy stands out among emerging markets for having the fastest increase in food prices in the past year relative to overall inflation because of a sustained decline in the currency, according to Oxford Economics Ltd. Meanwhile, President Jair Bolsonaro’s popularity is falling to near record lows and he’s trying to find new ways to mollify the electorate.

On Feb. 19, he abruptly removed the head of the state-controlled oil company after a row over fuel prices. He also has been pushing for a new round of coronavirus aid to the poor after cash handouts ended in December.



The trouble is that the money served to push up food prices, according to Maria Andreia Lameiras, a researcher at the economics research institute Ipea. Rice jumped 76% last year, while milk and beef soared by more than 20%. “The government dispensed money to the population with the highest expenditures on food,” Lameiras said.

The cost of securing vital nutrition threatens to widen inequality in a country with the biggest income gap in the region, a situation that’s only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Even if the aid returns, the monthly payment would be lower and reach fewer people, limiting its scope to mitigate extreme poverty. (Courtesy bloomberg.com)