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For news and information consideration, please send to [News@scdaily.com](mailto: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](mailto:News@scdaily.com)



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## U.S. Fed Chair Powell says pandemic continues to pose risks to economic outlook

WASHINGTON, June 21 (Xinhua) -- U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said on Monday that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose risks to the U.S. economic outlook as the pace of vaccinations has slowed.

“Progress on vaccinations has limited the spread of COVID-19 and will likely continue to reduce the effects of the public health crisis on the economy,” Powell said in written testimony released Monday afternoon on the Fed’s website, which was prepared for a Tuesday hearing before the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis.

“However, the pace of vaccinations has slowed and new strains of the virus remain a risk. Continued progress on vaccinations will support a return to more normal economic conditions,” he said.

Powell’s testimony came as public health experts warned that the highly contagious Delta variant continues threatening the United States, especially in states with the lowest vaccination numbers.

The Delta variant, which is believed to be more transmissible and cause more severe disease, could cause an upsurge in infections, but the levels will vary depending on the rates of vaccination in each area, said Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Powell also said in testimony that U.S. inflation has increased notably in recent months as the economy continues to reopen.

“This reflects, in part, the very low readings from early in the pandemic falling out of the calculation; the pass-through of past increases in oil prices to consumer energy prices; the rebound in spending as the economy continues to reopen; and the exacerbating factor of supply bottlenecks,” he explained.

“As these transitory supply effects abate, inflation is expected to drop back toward our longer-run goal,” said the Fed chair.

Core personal consumption expenditures price index, the Fed’s preferred inflation measure, is expected to rise to 3 percent by end of 2021, and then decelerate to 2.1 percent over the next two years, according to the Fed’s latest Summary of Economic Projections released last week.



## Iran's president-elect says U.S. must lift all "unjust" sanctions



Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday that the United States must lift "all unjust sanctions" on Iran and Europe abide by their commitments under the 2015 nuclear agreement.

"What I am saying to the United States is that according to the nuclear deal, you were obliged to lift all sanctions and you did not. Go back and fulfill your commitments," Raisi said when asked about his message to the United States and the European countries at his first press conference held after election.

Addressing European partners in the nuclear agreement, the Iranian president-elect said they should not succumb to the "pressures and foreign policies" of Washington but instead fulfill their commitments under the deal.

Iran, he noted, will negotiate neither its regional policies nor its national defense with foreign parties.

When asked whether he is ready to meet U.S. President Joe Biden in case all U.S. sanctions on Iran are cancelled and Iran's demands are met, Raisi just said "no."

Judiciary Chief Raisi won Iran's presidential race by securing over 60 percent of votes, the Iranian Interior Ministry announced Saturday.

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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

## CORONAVIRUS DIARY

06/21/2021



**Wea H. Lee**  
Wealee@scdaily.com

Chairman of International District Houston Texas  
Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Southern News Group Chairman / CEO  
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center  
Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas



## Remembering Father's Encouragement



Dad, you were like a light in the darkness. You laid out the strong road ahead to let us fight for our lives.

That was a dark evening when my flight arrived at Taipei Airport from San Francisco. I rushed to the hospital to try to meet my father. I took a lot of letters he wrote to me. He felt I was coming back. That was the last time I saw my father.

Today is Father's Day. I passed by my office where

hanging on the wall is the calligraphy written by him. Especially today, I felt I heard his voice and encouragement.

My parents spent their their young adult time during the war time. I still remember my dad's only hobby and good time was reading the daily newspaper at night time. When I was still a kid I always slept by him to "share" the news and ask him some questions about the local news and news of the world. Most of the time I could not understand until I fell asleep. Up until I was in college and got a job at a local radio station, every time my dad met with me, he always remembered my habit of reading the newspaper with him

My dad never really reached his goal in life and he felt very depressed in his final days.

Fortunately, we can continue his vision to build a media

business in America.

A couple of months ago our daughter Margaret and son-in-law Jack brought us a pair of Rolex watches. On today's Father's Day she brought me a summer pair of socks and we felt such joy and happiness.

We remembered when Margaret was just four or five years old when she always tried to help us to put the inserts into the newspapers. After she graduated from

Columbia University and Texas Medical School, she became a very outstanding physician. Her patients always told me that Dr. Lee is such a friendly doctor and always treats everyone like members of their family.

Today, when all of us are remembering our fathers, the voices of our loved ones who have gone from the world sometime come back to us as if in a trance. The voices and teachings of our fathers will always be in our hearts.



**Southern DAILY** Make Today Different

## Editor's Choice



A man works to retrieve belongings from a house partially submerged in mud after the area was hit by flash floods along the bank of Melamchi River in Sindhupalchok, Nepal. REUTERS/Navesh Chitrakar



A fan holds a sign as people queue to attend Foo Fighters' show, which required proof of vaccination to enter, at the Madison Square Garden, in New York City. REUTERS/Andrew Kelly



Terrence Floyd, brother of the late George Floyd who was killed by a police officer, reacts during the unveiling event of Floyd's statue, as part of Juneteenth celebrations, in Brooklyn, New York. REUTERS/Jeenah Moon



People hug each other as they participate in a reunification event named "Hugs Not Walls" on the borderline between Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and El Paso. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez



Addis Ababa police officers take part in a parade to display their new uniforms, and their readiness for the upcoming Ethiopian parliamentary and regional elections, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. REUTERS/Baz Ratner



An aerial view shows Elizabeth Lake, that has been dried up for several years, as the region experiences extreme heat and drought conditions, in Elizabeth Lake, an unincorporated community in Los Angeles County, California. REUTERS/Aude Guerrucci



Public-Health Officials Say Vaccinations Are Key To Holding Virus In Check

## Delta Covid-19 Variant Likely To Become Dominant In U.S., CDC Director Says



CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky speaks to the press after visiting the Hynes Convention Center FEMA Mass Vaccination Site on March 30, 2021 in Boston, Massachusetts. (Photo/Erin Clark-Pool/Getty Images)

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

The highly contagious Delta variant could soon become the dominant strain of coronavirus in the U.S., the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday.

“It’s more transmissible than the Alpha variant, or the U.K. variant, that we have here,” Dr. Rochelle Walensky told ABC News in an interview on “Good Morning America.” “We saw that quickly become the dominant strain in a period of one or two months, and I anticipate that is going to be what happens with the Delta strain here.”

The Delta variant, also known as B.1.617.2, is the most worrying of the lineage of the virus, wreaking havoc earlier this year in India, where it was first identified in late 2020. Since then, the variant has spread to almost 70 countries, including the U.S. The latest CDC data estimates the Delta variant makes up 9.9% of reported U.S. Covid-19 cases, while Alpha stands at 65.5%. It is difficult to

know the real prevalence of new coronavirus variations due to the relatively low amounts of genetic analysis being done on the virus. Delta is already the dominant strain in the U.K., where a rise in new Covid-19 cases linked to the variant recently prompted Prime Minister Boris Johnson to postpone a planned lifting of public-health restrictions by four weeks. The World Health Organization last month named it a “variant of concern.” Delta is more infectious and appears to be more effective at evading vaccines, though fully vaccinated individuals are believed to have significant protection against illness. Studies from the U.K. suggest Covid-19 shots developed by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, and the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca PLC, offer substantial protection against infection with Delta and even greater protection against severe illness, espe-

cially after two doses.



Still, the U.K.’s experience offers a cautionary tale on how quickly the variant can spread, even among populations with high vaccination rates. Daily cases in the country averaged more than 8,700 over the past seven days, a rate not seen since early February and more than four times the average daily caseload in early May. Delta now accounts for more than 90% of all cases in England, according to England’s public-health agency. The variant is spreading mostly in unvaccinated, younger age groups, U.K. data shows. British scientists estimate the variant is 40% to 80% more transmissible than the Alpha variant, which is itself a more transmissible strain than the original virus that emerged from China in late 2019. In recent months, the U.S. has reported a significant slowdown in all Covid-19 metrics after a winter surge that reached every corner of the country and strained healthcare systems. The seven-day average of newly reported cases is just above 12,000, according to Johns Hopkins. At the height of the pandemic, the average in mid-January was above 240,000 cases. Since the rollout of vaccines, deaths from Covid-19 have plummeted, recently reaching their lowest point since March 2020, even as the total number of confirmed deaths surpassed 600,000 earlier this week, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

At a White House Covid-19 Response Team press conference on Thursday, Jeffrey Zients, coordinator of the team, said the best protection against new variants is Covid-19 vaccines.

“The low vaccination rates in some communities is an even bigger concern now that we face the threat of a new, more dangerous variant, including specifically the Delta variant,” Mr. Zients said.



Visitors receiving results at a free Covid-19 test site in New York on Thursday as the city begins to end coronavirus restrictions. (Photo/Betancur/Corbis/Getty Images)

According to the latest CDC data, 143 million individuals, or 55% of the adult U.S. population, are fully vaccinated. The rate of vaccinations has slowed in recent weeks, and regional numbers vary widely. At the top of the list is Vermont, where 74% of the adult population is fully vaccinated. In portions of the South, those numbers are much lower. In Alabama, 40% of adults are fully vaccinated, and in Arkansas it is 42%.

“Our COVID 19 vaccine public education efforts have continued in earnest and, in fact, with even greater urgency given the spread of the Delta variant, which is significantly more transmissible, may be more dangerous than prior variants, and which serves as a stark reminder that if you are vaccinated, you are protected; if you are not, the threat of variants is real and growing,” said Vivek Murthy, surgeon general of the U.S. (Courtesy <https://www.wsj.com>)

**Related**

**Gottlieb says Delta virus variant likely to become dominant U.S. strain**

Washington — Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, said Sunday that a coronavirus strain known as the Delta variant is likely to become the dominant source of new infections in the U.S. and could lead to new outbreaks in the fall, with unvaccinated Americans being most at risk.

“Right now, in the United States, it’s about 10% of infections. It’s doubling every two weeks,” Gottlieb said on “Face the Nation.” “That doesn’t mean that we’re going to see a sharp uptick in infections, but it does mean that this is going to take over. And I think the risk is really to the fall that this could spike a new epidemic heading into the fall.” The Delta variant, also known as B.1.617.2, was first discovered in India and is one of

three related strains. It has become infamous for its ability to outpace and replicate quicker than other variants in its lineage.



Dr. Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).



Gottlieb said the COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the U.S. and overseas appear to be effective at containing the Delta variant, highlighting the importance of the public vaccination campaign.

“The mRNA vaccine seems to be highly effective, two doses of that vaccine against this variant. The viral vector vaccines from J&J and AstraZeneca also appear to be effective, about 60% effective. The mRNA vaccines are about 88% effective,” he said, referring to the vaccines developed by Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech. “So we have the tools to control this and defeat it. We just need to use those tools.” Gottlieb said the risk of new outbreaks is most pronounced in the parts of the country that have low vaccination rates.

“I think in parts of the country where you have less vaccination, particularly in parts of the South, where you have some cities where vaccination rates are low, there’s a risk that you could see outbreaks with this new variant,” he said. (Courtesy <https://www.cbsnews.com/>)

## Record Temperatures Hitting The West Are Not Your Average Heat Wave



Visitors feel the heat in California’s Death Valley earlier this week. This record-setting heat wave’s remarkable power, reach and unusually early appearance is giving meteorologists yet more cause for concern about extreme weather in an era of climate change. (Photo/Patrick T. Fallon/AFP via Getty Images)

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

It might be tempting to shrug at the scorching weather across large swaths of the West. This just in: It gets hot in the summer. But this record-setting heat wave’s remarkable power, size and unusually early appearance is giving meteorologists and climate experts yet more cause for concern about the routinization of extreme weather in an era of climate change.

These sprawling, persistent high-pressure zones popularly called “heat domes” are relatively common in later summer months. This current system is different.

“It’s not only unusual for June, but it is pretty extreme even in absolute terms,” says Daniel Swain, climate scientist at the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. “It would be a pretty extreme event for August,” Swain says, when these typically occur.

**setting record temps**

This heat dome’s reach is remarkable, too: It has set record highs stretching from the Great Plains to coastal California. And these aren’t just records for that specific date or month, but in a few spots, they are records for the singularly hottest day in the entire period of record, sometimes stretching back 100 to 150 years. “That’s a pretty big deal,” Swain says.

“It’s unusual in that it’s more intense in terms of the maximum temperature,” says Alison Bridger, a professor in the Meteorology and Climate Science department at San Jose State University. “And how widespread the impact is.”

For example, Palm Springs, Calif., recently hit 123 degrees, equaling its highest recorded temperature.

Las Vegas set a daily record of 114 degrees. Phoenix reached a record 118 degrees, the earliest the city has hit that high a mark. It broke the previous record of 114 set in 2015.

Sacramento, Calif., set a new daily record of 109 degrees. The National Weather Service just extended its excessive heat warning through Sunday night in the Central Valley



From the Great Plains to the coast, cities are

## COMMUNITY

and parts of northern California.



Denver this week hit 100 for three straight days, the earliest date of such a streak on record, tweeted meteorologist Bob Henson. He noted that all of the 100-degree streaks in Denver’s 150 years of climate record keeping have occurred in the last three decades.

And in the Plains, several cities including Omaha, Neb., set records, including a daily record high of 105 degrees. That breaks an Omaha daily record set in 1918.

Just last year, several cities in the West also hit record highs. This current heat dome “fits with climate change ideas, global warming, meaning that it’s just a little bit warmer than it would have been last year,” Bridger says. “And if we have this next year, it’ll be just a little bit warmer again.”

**The “heat dome” is making droughts even worse**

It’s also coinciding with and worsening record drought across big parts of the West. These two things, Daniel Swain says, are now making each other worse.

“The drought is leading to extremely low soil moisture, which is making it easier for these high pressure systems to generate extreme heat waves because more of the sun’s energy is going into heating the atmosphere rather than evaporating nonexistent water in the soil.” And that is only making things hotter and drier.

“That’s sort of the vicious cycle of drought and extreme heat in a warming climate,” he says.

**It’s more evidence of human-caused climate change**

The excessive heat and widening drought continues to elevate wildfire risk across much of the West. New federal data show that the number of new wildfires in the U.S. so far this year is at a 10-year high, signaling a long, potentially dangerous summer and fall for wildfires.



Experts say this current heat dome is yet more evidence of the impact of human-caused climate change. Bridger at San Jose State says while that is most likely the case, “it takes a lot of work to figure that out. A lot of hard scientific work in order to be statistically sure that it’s associated with climate change,” she says.

Others are more certain.

“It’s just so clear at this point,” says climate scientist Swain, “when it comes to record-breaking heat events, the study has been run for event after event after event in region after region after region in year after year.”

And the answer is almost always the same, he says: “There’s a crystal clear human fingerprint on extreme heat and extreme heat events ... climate change is making these sorts of things worse.”

And what was historically rare is now becoming almost commonplace: Forecasters say there’s a chance of yet another heat wave of similar magnitude in the West about 10 days from now.



“That sounds crazy, except that last summer we saw like three to five of these, you know, ‘unprecedented events’ in different regions of the West,” Swain points out. (Courtesy npr.org)

**Related**

**As Temperatures Soar, California And Texas Urge Power Conservation**

June 16 (Reuters) - Searing heat across the U.S. Southwest and soaring electricity demand for air conditioners this week are prompting grid operators in Texas and California to warn consumers about energy conservation to avoid outages. Peak temperatures are forecast to reach 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46°C) in interior California through the week, according to the state’s electric grid operator, which warned the biggest supply deficit could occur on Thursday after the sun goes down and solar power is no longer available. Similarly, temperatures in other states, including Arizona and Utah, were in line for several more days of sweltering heat even before the start of summer, which officially starts on Sunday.

Grid operators in Texas and California both dealt with rotating outages over the last year to

avoid widespread collapses of their power systems - California due to the heat in August 2020 and Texas in February 2021 after a deep freeze that left millions without heat - some for days.



The California Independent System Operator (ISO), which operates most of the state’s electric system, projected demand plus reserves required in case something goes wrong with a generating plant or transmission line, would exceed power supplies for several days this week. The ISO forecast peak demand in California would rise from 40,858 megawatts (MW) on Wednesday to 43,323 MW on Thursday, compared with the all-time peak of 50,270 MW in July 2006. One hundred megawatts typically powers around 20,000 homes on a summer day. On Wednesday, solar power was providing about 30% of California ISO’s supply, and the grid warned that it would be unlikely to be able to rely on additional supplies from other states due to the extreme heat hitting much of the Western United States. The ISO was currently getting 13% of its power from other states. The ISO has said it expects to have about 50,734 MW of supply available this summer, but some of that comes from solar. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), which operates most of the state’s power system, projected electric demand would break the June record set on Monday in coming days.



ERCOT said demand reached 69,943 MW on Monday and is expected to reach 70,391 MW on June 17. The state’s grid is separate from the rest of the country, so it can draw only small amounts of power from other grids to offset greater-than-normal demand.

In Houston, the biggest city in Texas, the mercury is expected to reach the upper 90s on Wednesday and Thursday, about five degrees higher than usual, according to AccuWeather. (Courtesy <https://news.trust.org/>)