

Tens of millions face losing jobs in escalating coronavirus crisis

GENEVA/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Global job losses from the coronavirus crisis could far exceed the 25 million estimated just days ago, U.N. officials said on Thursday, as U.S. jobless claims surged to record levels, starkly showing the scale of the economic disaster.

The International Labour Organization, a U.N. agency, had estimated a week ago that, based on different scenarios for the impact of the pandemic on growth, the global ranks of the jobless would rise by between 5.3 million and 24.7 million.

However Sangheon Lee, director of the ILO's employment policy department, told Reuters in Geneva on Thursday that the scale of temporary unemployment, lay-offs and the number of unemployment benefit claims were far higher than first expected.

"We are trying to factor the temporary massive shock into our estimate modelling. The magnitude of fluctuation is much bigger than expected," he said.

"The projection will be much bigger, far higher than the 25 million we estimated."

By comparison, the 2008/9 global financial crisis increased global unemployment by 22 million.

In the United States, where, as in many parts of the world, measures to contain the pandemic have brought the country to a sudden halt, the number of Americans filing claims for unemployment benefits surged to more than 3 million last week.

That shattered the previous record of 695,000 set in 1982. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims would rise to 1 million, though estimates were as high as 4 million.

The data added to an alarming scenario spelled out by



A National Park Service gardener mows the lawn as Trump prepared to join G20 leaders on a conference call about the global coronavirus response at White House in Washington

James Bullard, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, who warned that up to 46 million people in the country - nearly a third of U.S. workers - could lose their jobs in the short term.

INDIAN LOCKDOWN
Countries across the world are feeling the intense human and economic pain wrought by the coronavirus, which has infected more than 470,000 people, killed more than 21,000, and is expected to trigger a global recession.

In India, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day nationwide lockdown this week to stem the spread of the disease, industry groups warned job losses could run into the tens of millions. Garish Oberoi, treasurer of the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality, told Reuters that the trade group estimates that about 38 million jobs could be lost in the tourism and hospitality sector alone.

Among those hardest hit will be India's estimated 120 million migrant labourers, for whom the lockdown means wages are disappearing. Many cannot afford rent or food in the cities and, with transport systems shut down, many have now begun to walk hundreds of miles to return to their villages.

Stay healthy!

BUSINESS

Work safe!

(Houston, TX) – On Tuesday, March 24, 2020, Congressman Al Green traveled to Washington, D.C., to introduce three coronavirus relief bills. After introducing the legislation, Congressman Green had an exclusive interview detailing his travel with ABC News. (The full article is shown below and can be accessed via <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/inside-lawmakers-risky-trip-dc-amid-coronavirus-pandemic/story?id=69775618>.) With more than a dozen members of Congress in self-quarantine and two other representatives recovering after positive tests for the novel coronavirus, Rep. Al Green flew back to the nation's capital late Monday evening to introduce three bills he hopes will become part of the congressional response to the crisis. His trip comes amid growing apprehension among the rank and file about traveling back to Washington to vote on sweeping legislation to respond to the pandemic. For Green, an eight-term Democrat from Houston who has represented the 9th congressional district of Texas since 2005, this trip was unlike any other.



U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C.
"If I told you the whole story, you wouldn't believe it," Green told ABC News in an exclusive interview on Tuesday afternoon, explaining that with his hometown under a stay-home/work-safe order, he decided to make the 24-hour trip

to Washington to file his legislation personally, rather than call on an aide to do it and risk exposing them to the virus.

"The risk I would take, I do not impose on my staff," he said. "There's consternation of going to the Capitol. Staffers and members are currently quarantined and some are receiving medical attention. There's a lot of consternation. I have staffers here but I would not require them to come in. That's my responsibility." Soon, members might have to return to D.C. to cast votes on the House floor, although lawmakers are exploring options such as proxy voting, in order to avoid forcing every member of Congress to travel back from 435 corners of the country. Green, 72, described an "eerie" experience, detailing his trip from William P. Hobby Airport to Washington-Reagan National Airport on Monday evening. "I walked in and I was the only person that I saw that was going to go through security at that point," Green recalled, adding that he spotted

Congressman Shares His Experiences In The "Eye Of The Coronavirus Storm"

Congressman Al Green Travels To Washington, D.C., To Introduce Three Bills For Next Coronavirus Response Package



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

"maybe five or six people," on the walk from security to Gate 25.



Washington-Reagan National Airport
His flight on Southwest Airlines soon boarded, sending just nine passengers to Washington. "I had eight other people on the flight," Green reported, insisting the passengers kept a safe distance from each other and they were able to spread out enough to comply with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on social distancing. "Everybody had not only an entire row, but also at least five or more seats between us," he said. "It was almost as though I had my own private 737. A huge jet plane, with just a few friends on board." When Green arrived at the D.C. airport, he realized he had the wrong set of keys, so he could not drive his own car or immediately access his congressional office or condominium. Because he couldn't drive himself, he hailed a

cab and worked the phones to gain access to his office so he could retrieve another set of keys. As he arrived at the Capitol, Green said

the scene was practically a ghost town, with janitorial staff scaled back by at least 75% with Congress out of session.



The lawmaker said he filed three measures, including a bill to address enforcement of fair housing laws to prevent and detect discrimination in mortgage lending. Another bill will lift the \$250,000 cap of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's insurance of private bank accounts and a third bill would enable Minority Depository Institutions to borrow at 0% interest rates. "These three bills were just that important to me and my constituents," Green said. "In general, it was an experience unlike any I've had before in traveling from Houston to Washington ... You don't go to airport where you're the only person at security." He added, "You're rarely on plane with

only nine passengers and you don't arrive at the Capitol that seems to be in lock down." It was after midnight when he was able to resolve his problems with the help of a couple U.S. Capitol Police officers and the superintendent's office. Across the Capitol at that hour, White House officials and Senate leaders wrapped up a long session of negotiations. "The people who work at the Capitol never get enough credit for the duties that they perform. They do go above and beyond the call of duty," he said of the unheralded employees who helped him through his quest. "I'm grateful." (Courtesy Office of Congressman Al Green, Ninth Congressional District)



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Editor's Choice



A general view shows an intensive care unit bed with a special artificial respiration device where patients with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) could be treated in Hanau



A worker from the municipality sanitizes Syrian refugee camp, as Lebanon extends a lockdown by two weeks to combat the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Marjayoun



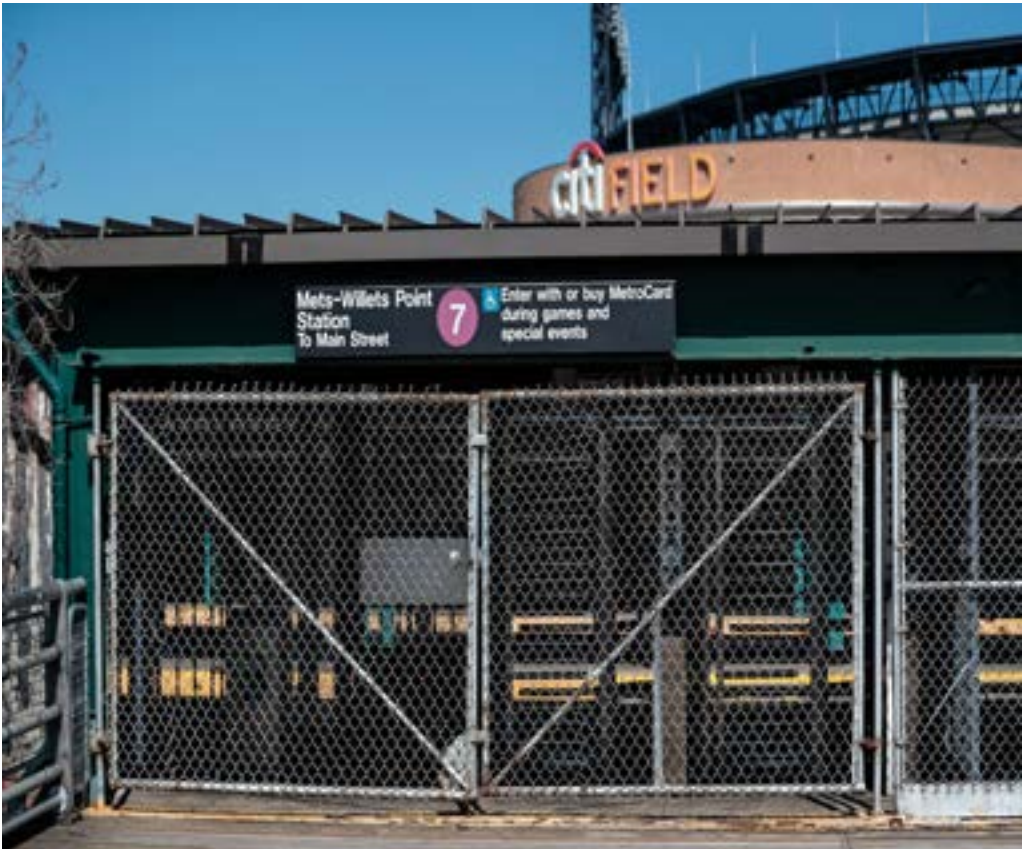
A view shows a guinea pig with a protective mask, widely used as a measure to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and a toy shopping cart during a demonstration in the office of a public organization, which recently launched the production of face masks for their further distribution among seniors and low-income citizens, in Kharkiv, Ukraine March 26,



A woman wearing a protective mask near a board informing of a nationwide vote on constitutional changes in Stavropol



A member of the armed forces disinfects a train car during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, at the Brazil's Central station in Rio de Janeiro



Rick Hatfield, 73, walks with his mother, Marie Rossi, 93, in face masks to protect themselves from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) out of La Hacienda Recreation Center, as voters cast their ballots in the Democratic primary in The Villages, Florida, U.S., March 17, 2020. REUTERS/Yana



Medical staff assess for COVID-19 at public Victoria Health Unit, BC



Tesla Inc. Gigafactory 2, which is also known as RiverBend, is pictured during the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Buffalo, New York

Tech Companies Partner
With Public Sector To Take
On The Coronavirus



(Photo/Boyle/Getty Images)

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

The past couple of weeks have seen a wave of partnerships between government and private tech companies (or individuals) to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

Why it matters: The federal and state governments need private-sector help to navigate the crisis but can offer key resources and information that private actors otherwise couldn't access.

Driving the news:

•**Yext**, a company that sells tools to businesses to help them manage their online profiles and field customer queries, helped the New Jersey government build a website in just a few days to serve as an online hub for coronavirus information.

•**IBM**, along with other tech giants — including Google, Amazon and Microsoft — is working with the White House, a number of universities and several national labs to make supercomputing resources available to help explore potential treatments or cures for coronavirus.

•A group of techies, many with experience in the Obama White House,

are offering their skills to government agencies in need of their expertise. The volunteer effort, dubbed U.S. Digital Response, includes Code for America founder Jennifer Pahlka, former deputy U.S. CTO Ryan Panchadsaram (now at Kleiner Perkins), and Cori Zarek, another former deputy U.S. CTO, who is now at Georgetown University.



What they're saying:

•**Yext:** "Our whole mission is to fight misinformation," Yext CEO Howard Lerman told Axios. "We're seeing tens of thousands of questions per hour come through," he said just hours after it went live, adding that the website was put together in just 24 hours and the company wants to do this for any government that needs it.

•**IBM:** IBM Research director Dario Gil said in a blog post that its Summit

supercomputer at Oak Ridge National Laboratory has already allowed researchers to "to screen 8,000 compounds" to identify those most likely to bind to a key protein of the virus and block its ability to infect cells. From that, Gil said, 77 promising small-molecule drug compounds were identified for real-world experimentation. "Now we must scale," Gil said.

•**U.S. Digital Response:** Pahlka told Axios the group has more than 1,100 volunteers already, but needs more state, local and federal agencies to know of their services. The need, she notes, is huge as governments see not only surging demand for directly virus-related information, but also for services like unemployment assistance and food aid. "We know they are overwhelmed, and we have great people to help them," Pahlka said.

Related

Tech firms crunch coronavirus data to track disease spread
Illustration/Underscore Technologies



Tech companies are using artificial intelligence and other tools to comb through coronavirus data to track cases and find transmission hotspots.

Why it matters: Finding patterns in otherwise discrete data points could help make sense of where and how the virus is spreading in the U.S., and could aid in allocating the country's limited testing and treatment capabilities.

Driving the news: IBM, through its Weather Company subsidiary, is planning to launch an incident map as soon as Wednesday that tracks confirmed coronavirus cases and deaths at the county level.

•The company is reviewing various forms of coronavirus information on county and state websites using AI,

including its Watson natural language processing that turns text into machine-friendly data.

•The project checks the sites for updates every 15 minutes and aggregates them into its map, which can be found on the Weather Channel mobile app or the weather.com website. (IBM owns the digital assets affiliated with the Weather Channel and supplies the network with its weather data.)

•"We've spent 30 years keeping people safe — that's been our mission through severe weather," Sheri Bachstein, global head of IBM's The Weather Company, told Axios. "And so we feel like we are really uniquely positioned to do this during this type of a crisis. We have the capabilities to provide data at a more local level."



The big picture: The map ties in with a tech industry push, much of it relying on AI, to marshal data to assess where the coronavirus may already be and where it might be headed.

IBM is separately using the data that powers its map alongside other information to create an interactive dashboard for researchers. It will also provide a trends chart showing whether the number of cases is accelerating, flattening or declining.

•And the company is leading the industry side of a public-private partnership the Trump administration announced Sunday aimed at giving COVID-19 researchers access to supercomputing resources to aid their work. Other companies involved in the project include Google, Amazon and Microsoft.

Google subsidiary Kaggle, an online community of data scientists, opened a competition last week to use data to forecast the number of cases and fatalities that will be confirmed between March 25 and April 22 in a number

of regions around the world, with one subset dedicated to California.

•The primary goal is to identify factors that appear to affect the transmission rate of COVID-19, Kaggle CEO Anthony Goldbloom told Axios.

•"Does controlling for temperature or humidity improve forecasts? What is the impact of policy actions like school closures, cancelling large gatherings, self isolation policies?" Goldbloom said in an email. "Our hope is that the community can find helpful relationships that are used as an input to healthcare and policy decisions."

•Separately, Kaggle is hosting an effort coordinated by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to make academic literature on COVID-19 and related pathogens available in a machine-readable format, and called on AI experts to use the data to help answer key questions about the virus.



SparkBeyond, a startup that provides AI-driven data analysis tools to businesses, gathered publicly available data on infections and patient routes in Italy to create a heat map predicting the risk of contracting the virus in certain locations, CEO Sagie Davidovich told Axios.

•The company, which is working on a U.S. map, used AI to draw insights from the data — like proximity to a gas station correlating with viral spread.

Kinsa Health has long made data from its internet-connected thermometers available online, which is proving useful in tracking the coronavirus in real time.

Yes, but: Even with sophisticated analytical tools at the ready, there remain big holes in the data that's available in the U.S., as testing remains very limited and the amount of information that's available to the public varies by state. (Courtesy axios.com)

童年的快乐时光



童年是一首悠扬的歌，歌声清脆，圆润甜美；童年是一首清新的诗，韵律优美，让人回味。童年是一段遥远的记忆，也是我一生最难忘的快乐时光。

童年时的我有父亲疼母亲爱，有兄弟姐妹陪伴着，每天在一起开心地玩耍着。那时的我身穿花布衫、头扎羊角辫，脚穿粗棉布布鞋，口袋里虽然没有半毛钱，但走起路来连蹦带跳的，小小的心里装满了无穷的快乐……

“总是要等到睡觉前才知道功课只做了一点点，总是等到考试后才知道该念的书都没有念……一天又一天，一年又一年，迷迷糊糊的童年……”小时候最喜欢听罗大佑唱的《童年》这首歌，这正是我自己童年生活的写照。

童年的我纯朴无邪、天真烂漫、无忧无虑，就像男孩子一样好动。看见美丽的蝴蝶飞过来，我就会蹦跳着跑过去追逐，好想长出两只翅膀和它一起自由飞翔；听到知了声声叫，我就会爬到树上把它捉下来，仔细观察研究一番，漂亮的翅膀为啥能变化出多种色彩？特别好奇它的叫声为啥这么的响亮？

初夏时节，风吹麦浪，翻涌奔腾，犹如金色的海洋。远处布谷声声，捎来了夏日收获的消息。很快一场“人麦大战”便开始了，这场“战斗”持续的时间很长，田野里大人们汗流浹背，忙得不可开交，我却没心没肺地趁着妈妈没空管我，和小伙伴一起到场地麦垛里翻跟头，玩捉迷藏的游戏，嚼麦仁当泡泡吹，玩得不亦乐乎。

夏季的夜晚，忙碌了一天的村庄恢复了宁静，没有了鸡鸣狗叫，只有虫儿和青蛙在鸣唱，一唱一和的，像小夜曲般悦耳动听。哥哥姐姐早早地清扫好了院子把席子铺好，晚饭过后一家人躺在席子上，开心地聊着天，你一言我一语，有说不尽的话儿。母亲最爱讲她在北大荒的经历，讲那

儿的黑土地多么肥沃，一年一季的豆子、玉米成熟了，打下来的粮食都堆成了小山；讲我的父亲用他的脚去丈量黑土地，面积那个大呀，一跑就是一整天；讲那儿冬天河里的鱼有的冻死在河滩上，人们用盆子去捡拾，吃也吃不完。母亲说得活灵活现，每次我都听得津津有味的，仿佛我就站在了黑土地上亲眼看着父母生活过的地方。

那时我是一个特别爱做梦的小女孩，有时候听着故事思绪就开始飘飞了。头枕着大地，眼望着天空，我的心儿便长了翅膀，仿佛飞到了太空中，和星星一起玩耍，和月亮做游戏，睡梦里还做着五彩缤纷的梦……

那时候文化生活极其单调，逢年过节或村里有喜事才会看上一场电影。盼星星盼月亮，终于盼来了一场电影，影片名叫《柳堡的故事》，正演到高潮处突然天空不作美下起雨来，有不少大人领着孩子都离开了，而我被里面精彩的剧情给吸引住了，眼睛一眨不眨地看着荧幕，直到结束才往家走去。虽然被淋成了落汤鸡，可我依然特别开心，梦里不停地浮现着电影中的画面。

那时幸福对我来说很简单，就是能和小伙伴们一起快乐地玩耍，饭可以一顿不吃但不能不玩。村里的孩子们时常三五成群玩各式各样的游戏，常常玩得忘记了时间，忘记了回家。那时没有钱

买洋玩具，我就自制土玩具自得其乐，还会用妈妈做活的毛线圈成一个圆，拿出去和小伙伴玩开交的游戏。一个人把线按一定的规则缠在指头上，另一个人则想办法把它变成花样。

每天放学回家，我会把书包往炕上一丢，欢快地跑出去和小伙伴跳皮筋，皮筋是妈妈用来做裤子的松紧带，是妈妈的宝贝。我偷偷地用剪刀裁下一截，把两头接在一起，就成了玩耍的工具。我们像一只只活泼可爱的小燕子轻轻地飞来飞去，皮筋在我们的脚下会翻出许多花样来。皮筋跨在两个伙伴的身上，高度在不断地上升，从脚脖到腿肚再到腿弯，直到脖子上，败了的充当皮筋桩子。人手凑不够时，就会想方

设法地把皮筋绑到树上，每跳赢了一局，再往上升一格，那种自豪感甭提了。每天总要疯到很晚，抬头看月亮不知何时悄悄地挂上了树梢，此时才依依不舍地告别小伙伴回家，小心翼翼地迈进家门，唯恐挨母亲的骂。

五月麦儿黄，也是杏子成熟的季节。黄澄澄的杏子果肉鲜美，对馋猫的我有着无穷的吸引力。看到推着车拉着箩筐来换杏子的小贩，我撒欢地跑回家找出一双穿破的鞋子去换回一捧杏子，和妹妹迫不及待地把杏肉吃掉，杏核舍不得丢掉，在石磨上打磨，磨去了它的棱角，让它变得光滑圆润，然后代替石子在地上玩起“抓子”游戏。七个杏核一台戏，两人一组，对面而坐，先把杏

核撒开，右手拿起其中的一个向上抛出后迅速去抓其它杏核。杏核像耍武术般上下翻飞着，一会儿在手里聚拢来，一会儿又飞了上去。“抓子”成了我们女孩子最喜欢的一项游戏，它为我单调的童年生活增添了无穷的乐趣。

那时我喜欢穿姐姐的大衣服，穿妈妈的大鞋子，像唱歌的小丑一般，我就盼望着自己快快长大，可觉得时间过得好慢，像蜗牛一点一点地在爬行。

岁月如歌，童年时光渐行渐远。那些往事一件件一桩桩，历历在目，记忆犹新，恍如发生在昨天似的，时常像电影一样在脑海里浮现着……