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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

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Cold, lack of water overwhelm Texas hospitals more than COVID-19 did



(Reuters) - Texas doctor Natasha Kathuria has practiced medicine in 11 countries, worked through the 2014 "Snowmageddon" storm that ground Atlanta to a halt, and survived the past year's COVID-19 pandemic crush. A volunteer directs traffic as hundreds of cars line up to receive free cases of water after the city of Houston implemented a boil water advisory following an unprecedented winter storm, at Delmar Stadium in Houston, Texas, U.S., February 19, 2021. REUTERS/Callaghan O'Hare

But Kathuria and some other doctors in Texas are saying they have never seen a more harrowing week than this one.

Record-setting cold weather has cut water and grid energy supplies to hospitals across a wide swath of Texas. Electricity and water services were resuming, but many homes and some hospitals still did not have either on Friday. Half the state's population was under a "must-boil" order to ensure water is safe.

"We're overwhelmed, way more than we've been with COVID," said Kathuria, who works in several Austin-area emergency rooms. "This system failure has completely rocked us in our ERs - and in our own homes."

Many hospital staffers have stayed in the medical facilities all week - knowing there was no heat or water at home. At least hospitals have generators for basic



electricity. Some had water hauled in to fill tanks or hired water tankers. Others had running but not potable water.

Doctors in Austin, Houston and the Dallas area called the lack of water their biggest problem. Dialysis machines do not work without water, surgery equipment cannot be sterilized, and hands cannot be washed.

Dr. Neil Gandhi, an emergency room physician and the regional medical director for the ER departments at Houston Methodist's seven hospitals in the area, said those facilities were at 90% operating capacity by Friday afternoon. Earlier in the week, two were able to take only emergency patients, Gandhi added.

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"On top of the COVID pandemic, this has been a dual trauma event for both our patients and our providers," Gandhi said.

Ambulances struggled to reach people on roads that were not cleared because Texas cities have few snow plows and not nearly enough salt on hand. Doctors in stand-alone emergency care locations who routinely call the 911 emergency number for ambulances to transfer patients to hospitals had to wait more than nine hours for any to arrive - if they were available at all.

Gandhi said that in Houston this week there were times when entire neighborhoods simply did not have any emergency medical services

Hospitals set up portable toilets. Inside, patient's toilets were flushed by tossing in a bucket of water. Less critical dialysis patients delayed treatment, while others limited their time on machines.

Rural hospitals across Texas were not only trying to treat patients under tough conditions, but also serving as de facto "warming centers" for the healthy, said John Henderson, president of the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals.

Even with warmer weather forecast for next week there could still be a sea of broken water pipes and other damage.

Tom N Tom Galleria and Dak & Bop 18th

韓式小吃與美餐碰撞會激起怎樣的火花呢？

本期節目，我們的體驗員們來到了剛剛新開張的

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Google fires second AI ethics leader as dispute over research, diversity grows

(Reuters) - Alphabet Inc's Google fired staff scientist Margaret Mitchell on Friday, they both said, a move that fanned company divisions on academic freedom and diversity that were on display since its December dismissal of AI ethics researcher Timnit Gebru.

FILE PHOTO: The Google sign is shown on one of the company's office buildings in Irvine, California, U.S., October 20, 2020. REUTERS/Mike Blake/File Photo

Google said in a statement Mitchell violated the company's code of conduct and security policies by moving electronic files outside the company. Mitchell, who announced her firing on Twitter, did not respond to a request for comment.

Google's ethics in artificial intelligence work has been under scrutiny since the firing of Gebru, a scientist who gained prominence for exposing bias in facial analysis systems. The dismissal prompted thousands of Google workers to protest. She and Mitchell had called for greater diversity and inclusion among Google's research staff and expressed concern that the company was starting to censor papers critical of its products.

Gebru said Google fired her after she questioned an order not to publish a study saying AI that mimics language could hurt marginalized populations. Mitchell, a co-author of the paper, publicly criticized the company for firing Gebru and undermining the credibility of her work.

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The pair for about two years had co-lead the ethical AI team, started by Mitchell.

Google AI research director Zoubin Ghahramani and a company lawyer informed Mitchell's team of her firing on Friday in a meeting called at short notice, according to a person familiar with the matter. The person said little explanation was given for the dismissal. Google declined to comment.

The company said Mitchell's firing followed disciplinary recommendations by investigators and a review committee. It said her violations "included the exfiltration of confidential business-sensitive documents and private data of other employees". The investigation began Jan. 19.

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Google employee Alex Hanna said on Twitter the company was running a "smear campaign" against Mitchell and Gebru, with whom she worked closely. Google declined to comment on Hanna's remarks.

Google has recruited top scientists with promises of research freedom, but the limits are tested as researchers increasingly write about the negative effects of technology and offer unflattering perspectives on their employer's

products.

Reuters reported exclusively in December that Google introduced a new "sensitive topics" review last year to ensure that papers on topics such as the oil industry and content recommendation systems would not get the company into legal or regulatory trouble. Mitchell publicly expressed concern that the policy could lead to censorship.

Google reiterated to researchers in a memo and meeting on Friday that it was working to improve pre-publication review of papers. It also announced new policies on Friday to handle sensitive departures and evaluate executives based on team diversity and inclusion.

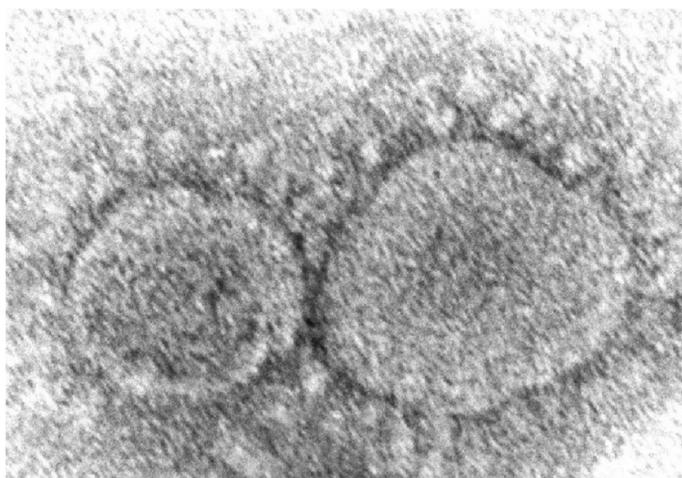


Stay Home!

BUSINESS

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New COVID-19 Variants Raise Concerns About Virus Reinfections



A 2020 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows SARS-CoV-2 virus particles which cause COVID-19. According to research released in 2021, evidence is mounting that having COVID-19 may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants. People also can get second infections with earlier versions of the coronavirus if they mounted a weak defense the first time. (Hannah A. Bullock, Azaibi Tamin/CDC via AP)

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

Evidence is mounting that having COVID-19 may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants. People also can get second infections with earlier versions of the coronavirus if they mounted a weak defense the first time, new research suggests.

How long immunity lasts from natural infection is one of the big questions in the pandemic. Scientists still think reinfections are fairly rare and usually less serious than initial ones, but recent developments around the world have raised concerns.

In South Africa, a vaccine study found new infections with a variant in 2% of people who previously had an earlier version of the virus. In Brazil, several similar cases were documented with a new variant there. Researchers are exploring whether reinfections help explain a recent surge in the city of Manaus, where three-fourths of residents were thought to have been previously infected. In the United States, a study found that 10% of Marine recruits who had evidence of prior infection and repeatedly tested negative before starting basic training were later infected again. That work was done before the new variants began to spread, said one study leader, Dr. Stuart Sealfon of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.

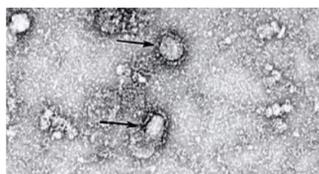


“Previous infection does not give you a

free pass,” he said. “A substantial risk of reinfection remains.”

Reinfections pose a public health concern, not just a personal one. Even in cases where reinfection causes no symptoms or just mild ones, people might still spread the virus. That's why health officials are urging vaccination as a longer-term solution and encouraging people to wear masks, keep physical distance and wash their hands frequently.

“It's an incentive to do what we have been saying all along: to vaccinate as many people as we can and to do so as quickly as we can,” said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious disease expert. “My looking at the data suggests ... and I want to underline suggests ... the protection induced by a vaccine may even be a little better” than natural infection, Fauci said.



Doctors in South Africa began to worry when they saw a surge of cases late last year in areas where blood tests suggested many people had already had the virus. Until recently, all indications were “that previous infection confers protection for at least nine months,” so a second wave should have been “relatively subdued,” said Dr. Shabir Madhi of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Scientists discovered a new version of the virus that's more contagious and less susceptible to certain treatments. It now causes more than 90% of new cases in South Africa and has spread to 40 countries including the United States. Madhi led a study testing Novavax's vaccine and found it less effective against the new variant. The study also revealed that infections with the new variant were just as common among people who had COVID-19 as those who had not.

“What this basically tells us, unfortunately, is that past infection with early variants of the virus in South Africa

does not protect” against the new one, he said. In Brazil, a spike in hospitalizations in Manaus in January caused similar worry and revealed a new variant that's also more contagious and less vulnerable to some treatments.



“Reinfection could be one of the drivers of these cases,” said Dr. Ester Sabino of the University of Sao Paulo. She wrote an article in the journal Lancet on possible explanations. “We have not yet been able to define how frequently this is happening,” she said. California scientists also are investigating whether a recently identified variant may be causing reinfections or a surge of cases there.

“We're looking at that now,” seeking blood samples from past cases, said Jasmine Plummer, a researcher at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Dr. Howard Bauchner, editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association, said it soon would report on what he called “the Los Angeles variant.”

A study by the Naval Medical Research Center involved several thousand Marine recruits who tested negative for the virus three times during a two-week supervised military quarantine before starting basic training. Among the 189 whose blood tests indicated they had been infected in the past, 19 tested positive again during the six weeks of training. That's far less than those without previous infection — “almost half of them became infected at the basic training site,” Sealfon said.



Evidence is mounting that having

COVID-19 before may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants emerging around the world. (Feb. 8)

The amount and quality of antibodies that previously infected Marines had upon arrival was tied to their risk of getting the virus again. No reinfections caused serious illness, but that does not mean the recruits were not at risk of spreading infection to others, Sealfon said.

“It does look like reinfection is possible. I don't think we fully understand why that is and why immunity has not developed” in those cases, said an immunology expert with no role in the study, E. John Wherry of the University of Pennsylvania.

“Natural infections can leave you with a range of immunity” while vaccines consistently induce high levels of antibodies, Wherry said. “I am optimistic that our vaccines are doing a little bit better.” (Courtesy apnews.com)



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Editor's Choice



Asylum seekers sit at the infirmary inside a migrant encampment in Matamoros, Mexico February 18, 2021. REUTERS/Daniel Becerril



Children carry empty water containers inside a migrant encampment in Matamoros, Mexico February 18, 2021. REUTERS/Daniel Becerril



A Cuban flag waves inside a migrant encampment in Matamoros, Mexico February 18, 2021. REUTERS/Daniel Becerril



A migrant from Central America, asylum seeker under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, and her son are seen at the El Buen Pastor shelter in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico February 19, 2021. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez



A migrant from Central America, asylum seeker under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, is seen at the El Buen Pastor shelter in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico February 19, 2021. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez



Migrants from Central America, under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, try to register from a mobile phone to request asylum in the U.S., at Pan de Vida shelter in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico February 19, 2021. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez

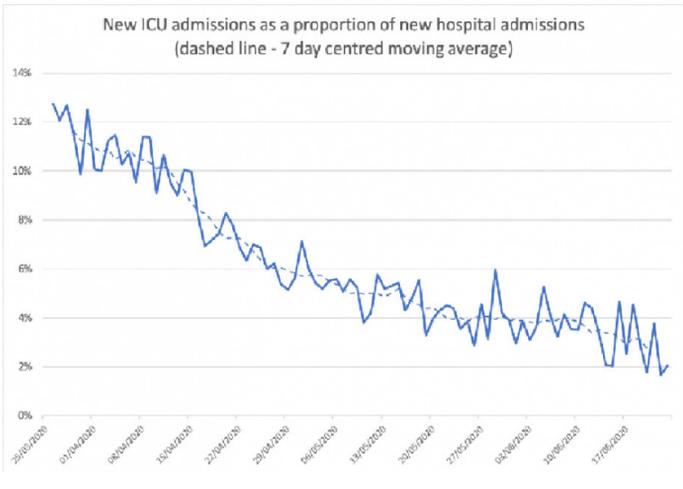


A migrant from Cuba, under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, tries to register from a laptop to request asylum in the U.S., at El Buen Pastor shelter in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico February 19, 2021. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez



Asylum seekers stand inside a migrant encampment in Matamoros, Mexico February 18, 2021. REUTERS/Daniel Becerril

Texas New COVID-19 Hospital Cases Declining



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

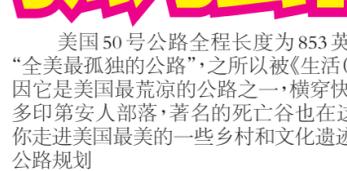
DALLAS - The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 in Texas fell again Sunday after dipping below 10,000 for the first time since December on Saturday.

There were 9,652 people in Texas hospitals with confirmed cases of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus Sunday, according to the Department of State Health Services.

State health officials reported 5,278 new, confirmed cases of the virus Sunday, 1,499 probable cases and 167 more fatalities.

Texas has reported 38,643 COVID-19 deaths and more than 2.16 million cases since the pandemic began.

The actual number of cases is believed to be far higher because many people haven't been tested and some who get sick don't show symptoms.



This scanning electron microscope im-

age shows SARS-CoV-2 (orange) — also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Over the past week, more than 16% of COVID-19 tests in Texas have come back positive, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms that clear up within weeks. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, the virus can cause severe illness and be fatal.

Related Biden Administration to Ship Covid Vaccine to Community Health Centers

The Biden administration will boost the number of Covid-19 vaccines distributed to states next week to 11 million doses and begin allocating a portion of the weekly shipments directly to community health centers, officials said Tuesday.

The move is meant to help state and local governments more equitably distribute the coronavirus vaccine to underserved or rural communities, said White House Covid-19 response coordinator Jeff Zients.

At least one federally qualified community health center in each state will begin receiving allocations of the vaccine next week, and the goal for the initial phase of the project is to distribute 1 million vaccines to 250 centers, said Marcella Nunez-Smith, the head of the administration's Health Equity Task Force.



The centers serve about 30 million people across the country and about two-thirds of their patients live at or below the federal poverty line.

"This effort that focuses on direct allocation to the community health centers really is about connecting with those hard-to-reach populations across the country," said Nunez-Smith, noting that center patients include homeless individuals, public housing residents, and migrant workers.

The White House has sought to increase the number of vaccines shipped to states each week, from 8.6 million doses during President Biden's first week in office to 11 million doses next week.

In addition to setting aside allotments of vaccine for community health centers, the federal government will also set aside 1 million doses of vaccine for pharmacies participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program—a previously announced public-private partnership with 21 national pharmacy chains.

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美国生活 Daily News

美国50号公路：全世界最孤独的公路

美国50号公路全程长度为853英里；即1373公里。被称为“全美最孤独的公路”，之所以被《生活(Life)》杂志最早冠以此称，因它是美国最荒凉的公路之一，横跨快马送区，人烟稀少，有许多印第安部落，著名的死亡谷也在这条路当中，同时也可以带你走进美国最美的一些乡村和文化遗迹。

公路规划 50号快速公路虽然是“全美最孤独的公路”，但西端是被称为“The Biggest Little City In The World(世界上最大的小城市)”的里诺(Reno)，附近的太浩湖是世界顶级的度假天堂，电影《教父》外景地。1861年，一个名叫撒母耳·霍恩·克莱门斯(Samuellanghorne Clemens)的年轻人在太浩湖边住了一段时间，被美丽清澈的湖水及参天的松树所触动，“注视再久，我的眼睛也不会觉得疲惫。”后来，他成为《企业报》的编辑，并使用了马克·吐温(Mark Twain)这个笔名。他的著作《苦行记》描写的正是在内华达的冒险经历。太浩湖是北美地区最具胜名的滑雪胜地。到了夏季，内华达又成为山地自行车、攀岩、徒步旅行、骑马及高尔夫等运动的乐园。

雷诺汽车国家博物馆里面珍藏了上千辆老爷车，第一辆奔驰车的原形就在那里。每年8月在雷诺有全美老爷车大展，大街上摆著全世界各式各样的老爷车，如果喜欢老爷车这个时间去最好。

离雷诺不远的还有曾经全世界最富有的城市维吉尼亚城(Virginia City)，如今变成好莱坞外景地，可以在街头体验当年美国西部牛仔的风情。1859年在维吉尼亚城发现了金矿时，矿工们找到了世界上最大的银矿。1992年，内华达州的金产量是全世界总产量的60%。游客们可以参观那些保存下来的金、银矿，了解采矿的艰难。沿途风景 从西部向东，50号快速公路先后穿过法伦(Fallon)和勒亨坦山

谷(Lahontan Valley)。

昔日被称为“40里沙漠”的区域中，这里是首先获得水的地段，成为土壤肥沃、产量丰富的农牧场。每年9月举办Cantaloupe Festival，5月举行Fallon Air Show，以及7月All-Indian Stampede和Pioneer Days等活动。法伦海军航空基地(Fallon Naval Air Station)更是超级海军战斗机作战学校的所在地，也是Top Gun射击比赛的新基地。

Grimes Point考古遗址位于法伦以东，山上有许多绘有图画的大圆石，这种“岩画”艺术是8000多年前当地居民的文化遗物。再向东走，首先会到达奥斯汀(Austin)等矿城，它是由以前的快马送员发现的。然后是1870年代盛极一时的矿城尤瑞卡(Eureka)，如今则成为保留良好的历史小镇。

到尤瑞卡后可在杰克逊旅馆(Jackson house)住一宿。原建于1877年，之后又经重建的杰克逊旅馆提供经济的两卧两卫套房，还有阳台可望街景。重建于1991年的尤瑞卡歌剧院(Eureka Opera House)的宴会厅是团体表演的最佳场地。



再向东就到了伊莱(Ely)，这个昔日的铜矿城内有两座铁路历史博物馆，还有一座博物馆展示采矿和早期垦荒者的生活方式，可以搭乘燃煤蒸汽火车。火车迷还可以在这条长达14里的上下山途中，过足火车工程师的瘾。此外，在维吉尼亚城也保留著旧时的火车供游客乘坐。远东与西方的邂逅在19世纪中期由中国劳工所建造的铁路将许多金、银矿与加工厂连接起来，跨越北内华达州的横贯大陆的铁路带来了更多的新移民。伊莱也是进入游客稀少的大盆地国家公园内的李曼洞(Lehman Caves)的必经之地，你可以尽情探寻特殊石块造型的奇景。盘根错节的古老Bristlecone松树，年代溯自旧约圣经所记创世纪年代后的第700年。精心设计的健行山径不仅可以引你到达清凉的湖水，还会带你到惠勒峰(Wheeler Peak)常年积雪的山顶。

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伊莱也是进入游客稀少的大盆地国家公园内的李曼洞(Lehman Caves)的必经之地，你可以尽情探寻特殊石块造型的奇景。盘根错节的古老Bristlecone松树，年代溯自旧约圣经所记创世纪年代后的第700年。精心设计的健行山径不仅可以引你到达清凉的湖水，还会带你到惠勒峰(Wheeler Peak)常年积雪的山顶。

美国舞会派对文化

1. Masquerade/masked ball 化妆舞会

化妆舞会绝对是反映美国校园生活不可缺少的部分。从《绯闻少女》到《吸血鬼日记》，编剧们无不例外的抓住机会大做文章。神秘浪漫的舞会气氛不仅为剧情升温，同时更给了剧中男女主角大展魅力的平台。

2. Prom(美国高中的)正式舞会

In the United States and Canada, a prom, short for promenade, is a formal (black tie) dance, or gathering of high school students. It is typically held near the end of the senior year. At prom, a Prom Queen and Prom King may be revealed. These are honorary titles awarded to students chosen in a school-wide vote prior to the prom.

在美国和加拿大，prom(promenade的简写)指为中学生举办的正式舞会或聚会。通常在高中学年即将结束时举行(故常译作“毕业舞会”)。在毕业舞会上，还会揭晓Prom Queen和Prom King的获得者。这两个荣誉称号的获得者是毕业舞会之前在全校范围内投票选出。

3. Pajama Party 睡衣派对

(4)尊重他人。尽量记住别人的名字、如果别人穿的睡衣和打扮贴合主题的话，不要忘记赞美一声。

- 4.banquet晚宴
5.house-warming party 乔迁派对
6.cocktailparty 鸡尾酒会
7.luncheon 午餐会
8.commemorativeparty 纪念宴会
9.wedding reception 结婚宴会
10.birthday party 生日舞会
11.farewellparty 送别宴会
12.invitation card 邀请函
13.to be dressed up 整装打扮
14.hoedown 方形舞会

