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Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Traffic in Suez Canal resumes after stranded ship refloated

ISMAILIA, Egypt (Reuters) - Shipping was on the move again late on Monday in Egypt's Suez Canal after a giant container ship which had been blocking the busy waterway for almost a week was refloated, with more than 400 ships waiting to pass through.

A marine source told Reuters that vessels were travelling southwards towards the Red Sea after the 400-metre (430-yard) long vessel Ever Given was freed undamaged earlier on Monday.

Egypt's Leth Agencies said 43 vessels had resumed transit from the Great Bitter Lake, which separates two sections of the canal.

"The ship came out intact and it has no problems. We've just searched the bottom and soil of the Suez Canal and thankfully it is sound and has no issues, and ships will pass through it today," the Suez Canal Authority's (SCA) chairman Osama Rabie earlier told Nile TV.

The Ever Given had become jammed diagonally across a southern section of the canal in high winds early last Tuesday, halting traffic on the shortest shipping route between Europe and Asia.

Early on Monday rescue workers from the SCA working with a team from Dutch firm Smit Salvage partially refloated the ship and straightened it in the canal. After several hours it shifted briefly back across the canal before being manoeuvred free by tugs as the tide changed, a canal source said.

"The time pressure to complete this operation was evident and unprecedented," said Peter Berdowski, CEO of Smit Salvage owner Boskalis, after the Ever Given was refloated.

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Ship backlogs from Suez chaos could take months to clear, container lines say
Global reinsurers stare at massive losses from Suez Canal blockage, Fitch says
The company said approximately 30,000 cubic metres of sand had to be dredged to refloat the 224,000-ton



container ship and a total of 11 tugs and two powerful sea tugs

or cargo damage.



were used to pull the ship free.

Evergreen Line, which is leasing the Ever Given, confirmed the ship had been successfully refloated and said it would be repositioned in a lake that sits between two sections of the canal and inspected for seaworthiness.

Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement (BSM), the technical managers of the container ship, said there were no reports of pollution

QUEUE
At least 400 vessels are waiting to transit the canal, including dozens of container ships, bulk carriers, oil tankers and liquefied natural gas (LNG) or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) vessels,

Nile TV reported.

The authority said earlier it would be able to accelerate convoys through the canal once the Ever Given was freed. "We will not waste one second," Rabie told Egyptian state TV.

He said it could take up to three days to clear the backlog, and a canal source said more than 100 ships would be able to enter the channel daily. Shipping group Maersk said the knock-on disruptions to global shipping could take weeks or months to

unravel.

Graphic: Ever Given contained vessel refloated, but massive ship jam remains at Suez Canal:

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who had not publicly commented on the blockage, said Egypt had ended the crisis and assured resumption of trade through the canal.

Oil prices were more than 1 percent lower at \$63.85 a barrel after the ship was refloated. Shares of Taiwan-listed Evergreen Marine Corp had closed 1.75% higher.

About 15% of world shipping traffic transits the Suez Canal, which is an important source of foreign currency revenue for Egypt. The stoppage was costing the canal \$14-15 million a day.

Shipping rates for oil product tankers nearly doubled after the ship became stranded, and the blockage has disrupted global supply chains, threatening costly delays for companies already dealing with COVID-19 restrictions.

Maersk was among shippers rerouting cargoes around the Cape of Good Hope, adding up to two weeks to journeys and extra fuel costs.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

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Welcome Spring And New Hope

We are here to formally welcome the springtime. Last month because of the snow storm our favorite kumquat tree and azaleas are almost gone. Only the plum tree is still alive in my garden. My gardener told me that they might come back some day. We really hope they will bloom again in the near future.

For the whole of last year we were really suffering. In every corner of our nation more than ten percent of our people were confirmed with the

coronavirus and more than one-half million citizens lost their lives. They were our friends, parents, brothers and sisters. It is such a shame when we claim to be the richest country in the world that this virus just got out of control. Many families were left with empty seats at the dinner table because they lost their love ones. Many people lost their jobs and lost their lifestyles. Such a tragedy has brought our nation into the dark.



On January 20 we finally changed the leadership in the White House. President Biden kept his promise to get 100 million people vaccinated within fifty days. Most of our citizens will get vaccinated before May 1 of this year.

very unsafe. My dear brothers and sisters, most of us came to this land with new hope and we spent our whole lives and talent to help build this great nation. This is our home.



Finally, we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, but now another wave of anti-Asian discrimination cases have spread all over our country and that has made our community feeling

All of us need to hold our hands together and be united. We are looking for a brighter future. One day our Azaleas and Kumquats will blossom again.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Visitors ride a boat next to blooming cherry blossoms at Chidorigafuchi Park in Tokyo, Japan. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon



Kathy Poss (R) salvages items from Ragan Chapel United Methodist Church the day after a string of tornadoes caused several fatalities in Ohatchee, Alabama. REUTERS/Elijah Nouvelage



U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visits a classroom at the West Haven Child Development Center, in West Haven, Connecticut. REUTERS/Carlos Barria



People wearing protective masks attend a concert of "Love of Lesbian" at the Palau Sant Jordi, the first massive concert since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in Barcelona, Spain.



The George Floyd Square is seen the day before open statements in the trial of former police Derek Chauvin, who is facing murder charges in the death of George Floyd.



A pro-democracy protester flashes the three-finger salute while she is detained by police officers in front of the Government House during a rally demanding the release of arrested protest leaders and the abolition of 112 lese majeste law.

Biden: U.S. Will Have Vaccine For All Adults By The End Of May



President Joe Biden

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

President Biden on Tuesday said that the United States will have enough vaccine supply to vaccinate all American adults for the coronavirus by the end of May, crediting a “stepped-up process” under his administration. Biden made the announcement while outlining a partnership between Merck and Johnson & Johnson to produce the latter’s single-dose coronavirus vaccine.

“We’re now on track to have enough vaccine supply for every adult in America by the end of May,” Biden said in remarks Tuesday afternoon at the White House. “When we came into office, the prior administration had contracted for not nearly enough vaccine to cover adults in America. We rectified that.”

The new timeline is more condensed than Biden’s previous prediction that the U.S. would have enough vaccines for all American adults — 600 million doses — by the end of July. Biden stressed that Tuesday’s developments marked a significant milestone in the fight against the virus, but he cautioned that more work needs to be done in order to distribute the vaccine and inoculate much of the U.S. population. He highlighted his administration’s efforts to boost the number of vaccinators and locations where Americans can receive doses.

“That is progress, important progress,” Biden said. “But it’s not enough to have the vaccine supply.”



It could take much longer for the country to vaccinate the adult population, given the logistical hurdles of distributing and administering vaccines. Americans in states and cities, including Washington, D.C., have encountered challenges in signing up for appointments online. The Biden administration is also trying to address vaccine hesitancy by communicating that the vaccines are safe and effective in order to ensure that as much of the population as possible gets vaccinated. He also reiterated calls for Congress to swiftly pass his \$1.9 trillion relief proposal. To increase the number of vaccinations in circulation, Biden detailed Merck’s collaboration to expand production of the Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration over the weekend. Biden said he has invoked the Defense Production Act to equip Merck facilities to safely manufacture the vaccine, and Johnson & Johnson

plans to operate its facilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to increase supply.



The announcement Tuesday of the new timeline is a bright spot in the country’s yearlong fight against the virus. While cases and deaths remain high, they have come down from their peaks following the 2020 holiday season. Last week, Biden marked the milestone of the 50 millionth dose of coronavirus vaccine being administered. The White House said earlier Tuesday that the weekly supply of doses to states would increase to 18 million this week. Still, new variants of the coronavirus remain a cause for concern, and more than 500,000 people in the U.S. have died from the virus.

“Things may get worse again as new variants spread and as we face setbacks like recent winter storms in the Midwest and South. But our administration will never take this public health threat lightly,” Biden said. “Now is not the time to let our guard down. People’s lives are at stake.” Asked at the conclusion of the event when the U.S. would get back to normal, Biden told reporters he had been cautioned not to give an answer due to uncertainty but said he hoped it would be within a year.

“My hope is by this time next year we are going to be back to normal or before that,” Biden said. (Courtesy thehill.com)

Related

Team Biden Surprises With Positive Vaccine News

President Biden dramatically changed expectations on the supply of vaccines and the trajectory of the country’s comeback from the coronavirus pandemic on Tuesday in announcing there will be enough coronavirus vaccines for all American adults by the end of May. On Wednesday, government officials described a process that seemed to surprise

them for how swiftly it came together. The previous target for producing that much vaccine had been July. They said it wasn’t a decision that was taken lightly but said it was guided by facts and fast-moving events.

“We are not in a habit of overpromising, and therefore even as of several weeks ago, before such time as the approval of Johnson & Johnson, the president was talking about moving up the date until the end of July,” White House senior adviser on COVID-19 response Andy Slavitt told reporters.

The breakthrough came after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted emergency use authorization for Johnson & Johnson’s single-dose COVID-19 vaccine, marking the third approved coronavirus vaccine in the U.S.



Vaccine manufacturer Merck, a competitor of Johnson & Johnson, then agreed to help manufacture the newly approved vaccine to double its U.S. capacity, a move brokered by the Biden White House. When Biden took over on Jan. 20, Johnson & Johnson was running behind and the administration didn’t think there would be enough of the vaccine available for all American adults until July or later. Using the Defense Production Act, the Biden administration allocated \$100 million to expand drug manufacturing and to convert a Merck facility into a manufacturing plant. The Department of Defense took on a logistical support role, and Biden brought on new teams of experts and manufacturers to ramp up production.

Everything clicked into place on Saturday, when the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was approved by the FDA. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed the approval on Sunday, when the vaccines were first packed and shipped from Johnson & Johnson facilities. On Monday, the vaccines arrived at U.S. Postal Service and FedEx hubs for delivery on Tuesday, when the first Johnson & Johnson vaccines were administered to Americans.

With three vaccines approved and deliveries ramping up, the Biden administration felt confident enough to have the president move the timeline up dramatically, setting the marker for May. (Courtesy thehill.com)



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Shots In Little Arms: COVID-19 Vaccine Testing Turns To Kids



In this image from video provided by Duke Health, Alejandra Gerardo, 9, looks up to her mom, Dr. Susanna Naggie, as she gets the first of two Pfizer COVID-19 vaccinations during a clinical trial for children at Duke Health in Durham, N.C. In the U.S. and abroad, researchers are beginning to test younger and younger kids, to make sure the shots are safe and work for each age. (Shawn Rocco/Duke Health via AP)

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

The 9-year-old twins didn’t flinch as each received test doses of Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine — and then a sparkly bandage to cover the spot. “Sparkles make everything better,” declared Marisol Gerardo as she hopped off an exam table at Duke University to make way for her sister Alejandra.

Researchers in the U.S. and abroad are beginning to test younger and younger kids to make sure COVID-19 vaccines are safe and work for each age. The first shots are going to adults who are most at risk from the coronavirus, but ending the pandemic will require vaccinating children too. “Kids should get the shot,” Marisol told The Associated Press this week after the sisters participated in Pfizer’s new study of children under age 12. “So that everything might be a bit more normal.” She’s looking forward to when she can have sleepovers with friends again.

So far in the U.S., teen testing is furthest along: Pfizer and Moderna expect to release results soon showing how two doses of their vaccines performed in the 12 and older crowd. Pfizer is currently authorized for use starting at age 16; Moderna is for people 18 and older. But younger children may need different doses

than teens and adults. Moderna recently began a study similar to Pfizer’s new trial, as both companies hunt the right dosage of each shot for each age group as they work toward eventually vaccinating babies as young as 6 months.



Pfizer has started to test its Covid-19 vaccine in children ages six months to 11 years old. In this video, some of the first recipients — twin sisters from North Carolina — receive their vaccinations. (Photo: Shawn Rocco/Duke Health)

Last month in Britain, AstraZeneca began a study of its vaccine among 6- to 17-year-olds. Johnson & Johnson is planning its own pediatric studies. And in China, Sinovac recently announced it has submitted preliminary data to Chinese regulators showing its vaccine is

safe in children as young as 3. Getting this data, for all the vaccines being rolled out, is critical because countries must vaccinate children to achieve herd immunity, noted Duke pediatric and vaccine specialist Dr. Emmanuel “Chip” Walter, who is helping to lead the Pfizer study. Most COVID-19 vaccines being used around the world were first studied in tens of thousands of adults. Studies in children won’t need to be nearly as large: Researchers have safety information from those studies and subsequent vaccinations of millions of adults.

And because children’s infection rates are so low — they make up about 13% of COVID-19 cases documented in the U.S. — the main focus of pediatric studies isn’t counting numbers of illnesses. Instead researchers are measuring whether the vaccines rev up youngsters’ immune systems much like they do adults — suggesting they’ll offer similar protection.

Proving that is important because while children are far less likely than adults to get seriously ill, at least 268 have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. alone and more than 13,500 have been hospitalized, according to a tally by the American Academy of Pediatrics. That’s more than die from the flu in an average year. Additionally, a small number have developed a serious inflammatory condition linked to the coronavirus. Apart from their own health risks, there still are questions about how easily children can spread the virus, something that has complicated efforts to reopen schools.

Earlier this month, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, told Congress he expected that high school students likely would begin getting vaccinated in the fall. The elementary students, he said, may not be eligible until early 2022.



In North Carolina, Marisol and Alejandra made their own choice to volunteer after their parents explained the opportunity, said their mother, Dr. Susanna Naggie, an infectious disease special-

ist at Duke. Long before the pandemic, she and her husband, emergency physician Dr. Charles Gerardo, regularly discussed their own research projects with the girls.

In the first phase of the Pfizer study, a small number of children receive different doses of vaccine as scientists winnow out the best dosage to test in several thousand kids in the next phase.

“We really trust the research process and understand that they may get a dose that doesn’t work at all but may have side effects,” said Naggie, describing the decision-making that parents face in signing up their children.

But 9-year-olds have some understanding of the pandemic’s devastation and “it’s nice to participate in something where it’s not just about yourself but it’s about learning,” Naggie added. “They do worry about others and I think this is something that really, you know, struck home for them.” For Marisol, the only part that was “a bit nerve-wracking and scary” was having to give a blood sample first.

The vaccination itself was “really easy. If you just sit still during the shot, it’s just going to be simple,” she said. (Courtesy apnews.com)

Related

Covid-19 Shots for Children Hold Key to Herd Immunity

Vaccinating children will likely be necessary to reach herd immunity, experts say, but vaccines aren’t authorized for kids yet

Countries are racing to immunize adults against Covid-19 and move toward a more normal future. To achieve the vaccination rates that health authorities are aiming for, the shots must eventually reach the arms of children and teenagers, too.

Children aren’t going to be vaccinated for several months at least, however, because drug-makers are still testing shots in younger ages. That means health authorities can’t be confident of securing community protection against the virus, known as herd immunity, until later this year at the earliest, because children under 18 make up a significant proportion of many countries’ populations.

“We definitely need to get kids vaccinated if we want to be as close to normal as we can,” said Octavio Ramilo, chief of infectious diseases at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, in Ohio. Children and adolescents make up 22% of the

U.S. population, according to the Census Bureau’s latest projections, and 18% of the population of the European Union.



Children and adolescents make up 22% of the U.S. population, according to the Census Bureau’s latest projections. (PHOTO: CINCINNATI CHILDREN’S)

Drugmakers first tested Covid-19 vaccines in older ages. As a result, the shots have been authorized only for the oldest teenagers and adults so far.

The shot from Pfizer Inc. and partner BioNTech SE is cleared in the U.S. for people 16 years and older, while vaccines from Moderna Inc. and Johnson & Johnson for 18 years and up. A vaccine from AstraZeneca PLC and the University of Oxford is in use in the U.K. and EU for ages 18 and over.

Pfizer has enrolled more than 2,000 children from ages 12 to 15 years in one study and expects to submit the data from that study to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in weeks. The FDA could authorize use by the fall, Pfizer Chief Executive Albert Bourla said at The Wall Street Journal’s Health Forum on Tuesday. (Courtesyswsj.com)

