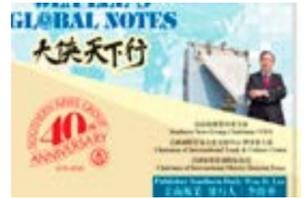




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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Wednesday, May 12 2021

U.S. should focus on boosting own competitiveness, not obstructing others' development: spokesperson

NEW DELHI, May 10 (Xinhua) -- India's COVID-19 tally rose to 22,662,575 on Monday, as 366,161 new cases were registered across the country in the past 24 hours, said the health ministry.

Besides, as many as 3,754 deaths have taken place in the country since Sunday morning, taking the total death toll to 246,116, added the ministry.

This is the first time after four consecutive days when the number of cases fell below 400,000 in 24 hours, and first time after two consecutive days when the number of deaths in a day fell below the 4,000-mark.

There are still 3,745,237 active cases in the country, with an increase of 8,589 active cases through Sunday. A total of 18,671,222 people have been cured and discharged from hospitals so far across the country.

The COVID-19 figures continue to peak in the country, as the federal government has ruled out a complete lockdown to contain the worsening situation though some states have imposed night curfews or partial lockdowns.

Delhi has been put under a third successive lockdown till May 17. Some school exams have been cancelled or postponed in the wake of COVID-19 situation.

The number of daily active cases has been on the rise over the past few weeks. In January the number of daily cases in the country had come down to below-10,000.

Over 170 million vaccination doses (170,176,603) have been administered across the country since India kicked off a nationwide vaccination drive on Jan. 16.

Online registration began last Wednesday for vaccinating people aged above 18. This is the third phase of COVID-19 vaccination, which began on May 1.

Meanwhile, the Indian government has ramped up COVID-19 testing facilities across the country, as over 303 million tests have been conducted so far.

As many as 303,750,077 tests have been conducted till Sunday, out of which 1,474,606 tests were conducted on Sunday alone, said the latest data issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Monday.



B9 summit calls for strengthening of NATO defense architecture

The virtual Summit of the Bucharest Nine (B9) format closed late Monday with a joint declaration, expressing the expectation and support of the participating countries for the upcoming NATO Summit to take substantive and forward-looking decisions to strengthen the alliance's deterrence and defense architecture.

"We endorse the recently adopted strategic military concepts for strengthening deterrence and defense of our Alliance and commit to their full implementation," the participants of the summit stated in the joint declaration, adding that allies should commit to modernizing the NATO Force Structure.

According to the declaration, the heads of state of the nine countries reiterated their commitment to NATO's Open Door policy, stressing that NATO's door should remain open to all willing and able to join the community.

The summit was hosted by Romanian President Klaus Iohannis and his visiting Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda in Bucharest. Leaders of the other seven member states as well as U.S. President Joe Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg joined the event via video link.

The B9 is an initiative launched by the presidents of Romania and Poland, joining a group of European countries on the eastern edge of NATO -- Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The first B9 summit was held in Bucharest in 2015

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE TO PROPOSERS

The Houston Independent School District located in the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center at 4400 West 18th Street Houston, Texas 77092 will accept proposals, until the stated date and time deadlines, in the Board Services Office, Level C1

- Project 21-04-07 – RFP/ Select Clinic Services – with a deadline of 2:00 p.m. CST on June 8, 2021. The Pre-Proposal Conference for this project will be held virtually on Monday May 17, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. CST. Email constance.wright@houstonisd.org by 2:00 p.m. CST on Friday May 14, 2021 to request a meeting link.

The solicitation for bids is available on the HISD web-site at www.houstonisd.org. To access, go to **Directory, Purchasing Services, Solicitation of Bids**. The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or, to accept the proposal that is most advantageous to the District.

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- Project 21-04-10 – RFP / Worn Cameras, Tasers and Law Enforcement Software – with a deadline of 10:00 a.m. on June 8, 2021. The Pre-Proposal Conference for this project will be in virtual at the above stated address on May 18, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

The solicitation for bids is available on the HISD web-site at www.houstonisd.org. To access, go to **Directory, Purchasing Services, Solicitation of Bids**. The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or, to accept the proposal that is most advantageous to the District.

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

05/11/2021

We Strongly Support The "Justice Alert Alliance"



come to the rescue. The APP will be available on order in the near future.

them.

This is a critical time. All of us need to be united to fight crime. When you look at our community, especially a lot of the elderly, they are afraid to go outside. The whole community is under a threat. We need to come to rescue

We all wish that the pandemic will get better soon. But we still need to urge all community leaders and politicians to support this great mission.

We need to get back to peace and peace of mind.



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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



More than a year ago when the coronavirus attacked the world, many of us suffered and life was changed.

about our daily life.

When former President Trump said the words, "China Virus," the whole country was influenced by these verbal attacks. And now, just in the last year, we have had thousands of hate crime cases that have been reported in our major cities.

We are so glad that many of our community leaders, including Mr. Howard Sun who is leading a group to form an organization called, "Justice Alert Alliance," has sprung into action.

Our community now just feels very unsafe and worried

This alliance will create a new APP that will let victims when faced with an attack to not only report immediately to the police and 911, but also will let their loved ones and family members be notified and



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



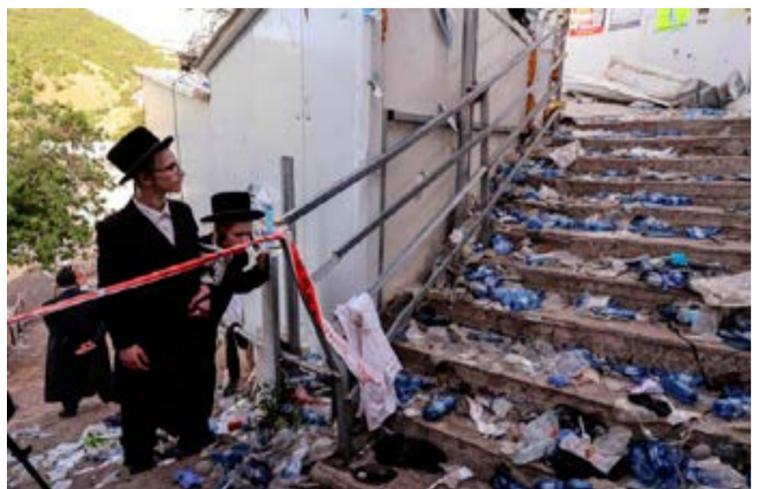
Flames and smoke rise during Israeli air strikes amid a flare-up of Israel-Palestinian violence, in the southern Gaza Strip. REUTERS/Ibraheem Abu Mustafa



An Israeli police officer holds his weapon as he stands in front of an injured Israeli driver moments after witnesses said his car crashed into a Palestinian during stone-throwing clashes near Lion's Gate just outside Jerusalem's Old City. REUTERS/Ilan Rosenberg



Asylum-seeking migrants from Venezuela cross the Rio Grande river into the United States from Mexico, in Del Rio, Texas. REUTERS/James Breedon



Ultra Orthodox Jews look at discarded items on a flight of stairs after 45 people were killed in a stampede at a Jewish religious festival in Mount Meron, northern Israel, April 30, 2021. REUTERS/ Ronen Zvulun



Turkish riot police officers scuffle with demonstrators as they attempt to defy a ban and march on Taksim Square to celebrate May Day, during a nationwide coronavirus "full closure" in Istanbul, Turkey May 1, 2021. Over 200 demonstrators were detained. REUTERS/Kemal Aslan



Flowers left on a three-metre minke whale calf lie after it has been put down on the banks of the River Thames in London. REUTERS/Tom Nicholson

Takino recalls. "Now, I think about half of people are okay with us and half still can't accept us." REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon

34% Of America's Small Businesses Are Still Closed Due To COVID-19 And It Still Matters

The State Of Small Business COVID-19 Recovery In America



Small businesses have been one of the hardest-hit sectors amid the pandemic (Photo/REUTERS/Eric Gaillard)

Key Points

- 99.9% of all businesses in the U.S. qualify as small businesses, collectively employing 47.3% of the nation's private workforce.
- They've been one of the hardest-hit sectors amid the pandemic.
- Compared to January 2020, 34% of small businesses are closed.
- San Francisco is one of the most affected metro areas, with a 48% closure rate of small businesses. It's likely that this could exacerbate a 'K shaped' recovery.

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

In the business news cycle, headlines are often dominated by large corporations, macroeconomic news, or government action. While mom and pop might not always be in focus, collectively small businesses are a powerful and influential piece of the economy. In fact, 99.9% of all businesses in the U.S. qualify as small businesses, collectively employing almost half (47.3%) of the nation's private workforce. Unfortunately, they've also been one of the hardest-hit sectors of the economy amid the

pandemic. From the CARES Act to the new budget proposal, billions of dollars have been allocated towards helping small businesses to get back on their feet. **Small Business Recovery in 50 Metro Areas** During the pandemic, many small businesses have either swiftly pivoted to survive, or struggled to stay afloat. This map pulls data from Opportunity Insights to examine the small business recovery rate in 50 metro areas across America.

So, has the situation improved since the last time we examined this data? The short answer is no—on a national scale, 34% of small businesses are closed compared to January 2020. San Francisco is one of the most affected metro areas, with a 48% closure rate of small businesses. New York City has spiraled the most since the end of September 2020.

U.S. Metro Area	% Change in # of Small Businesses Open (As of Sep 25, 2020)	% Change in # of Small Businesses Open (As of Apr 23, 2021)	7-month change (p.p.)
Albuquerque	-23%	-34%	-11%
Atlanta	-26%	-35%	-9%
Austin	-32%	-38%	-6%
Bakersfield	-31%	-35%	-4%
Baltimore	-28%	-35%	-7%
Boston	-33%	-47%	-14%
Charlotte	-18%	-28%	-10%
Chicago	-27%	-38%	-11%
Cleveland	-26%	-34%	-8%
Colorado Springs	-23%	-28%	-5%

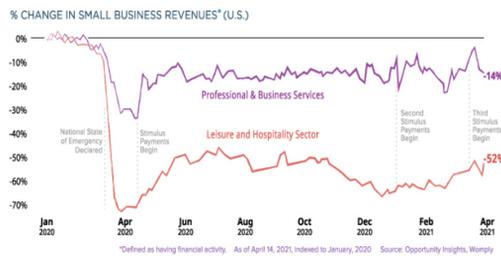
Data as of Apr 23, 2021 and indexed to Jan 4-31, 2020. (More entries at: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapped-the-state-of-small-business-recovery-in-america>.)

On the flip side, Honolulu has seen the most improvement. As travel and tourism numbers into Hawaii have steadily risen up with lifted nationwide restrictions, there has been a 16 p.p. increase in open businesses compared to September 2020.

Road to a K-Shaped Recovery

As of April 25, 2021, nearly 42% of the U.S. population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. However, even with this rapid vaccine rollout, various segments of the economy aren't recovering at the same pace.

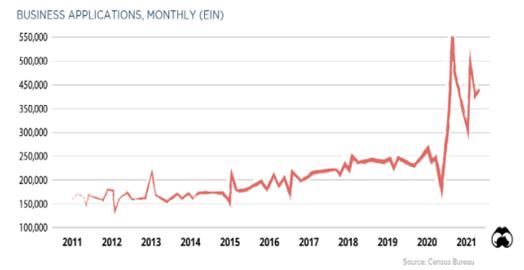
Take for instance the stark difference between professional services and the leisure and hospitality sector. Though small business revenues in both segments have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, the latter has much more catching up to do:



This uneven phenomena is known as a K-shaped recovery, where some industries see more improvement compared to others that stagnate in the aftermath of a recession.

The Entrepreneurial Spirit Endures

Despite these continued hardships, it appears that many Americans have not been deterred from starting their own businesses. Many small businesses require an Employer Identification Number (EIN) which makes EIN applications a good proxy for business formation activity. Despite an initial dip in the early months of the pandemic, there has been a dramatic spike in EIN business applications.



Even in the face of a global pandemic, the perseverance of such metrics prove that the innovative American spirit is unwavering, and spells better days to come for small business recovery. (Courtesy <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/>)



Llama Antibodies Might Bring Us Closer To Neutralizing COVID-19

Llama Antibodies May Be Useful For Treating COVID-19, Study From UT Austin Finds



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

Antibodies found in llamas could prove to be useful in the treatment of COVID-19, an international team of scientists has said. According to a peer-reviewed study, due to be published in Cell on May 5, llama blood might hold the key to unlocking new treatments for COVID-19 -- and lessen the stress the coronavirus pandemic has placed on the world. The researchers have engineered a new antibody, a type of protein produced by animal immune systems that defends against foreign invaders, which binds tightly to a key protein on the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, according to a study accepted for publication in the journal Cell. The team, led by Jason McLellan from the Department of Molecular Biosciences at The University of Texas at Austin (UTA,) created the novel antibody by linking together two copies of a special kind of antibody found in llamas. Coronaviruses are covered in distinctive

"spikes," special proteins that enable the virus to break into host cells. In initial laboratory experiments, the scientists found that the novel antibody was effective in stopping a "pseudotyped" version of the SARS-CoV-2 virus from infecting cells in a culture. This pseudotyped virus is a virus particle that has been engineered to display copies of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein on its surface.



Winter is four years old and still

living on a farm in the Belgian countryside.

The study details how special antibodies within llama blood can be joined together to create a new antibody with the capacity to bind the spike protein the coronavirus uses to infect cells. By binding onto the spike protein, the antibody can prevent the coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2, from infecting other cells in culture.

"This is one of the first antibodies known to neutralize SARS-CoV-2," McLellan said in a statement.

The inspiration for the latest study came from tests conducted on a 4-year-old llama named "Winter" that is currently living on a farm in the Belgian countryside.

This was discovered, in part, thanks to the efforts of a 4-year-old Belgian llama named Winter. In 2016, Winter helped scientists to study the coronaviruses which cause SARS and MERS by receiving injections of active spike proteins over the course of weeks.

In 2016, before the pandemic began, the researchers were conducting research into two other coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-1 and MERS-CoV, which cause the diseases severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) respectively. During this research, the team injected Winter with pseudotyped versions of both SARS-CoV-1 and MERS-CoV over a period of six weeks, inducing an immune response in the llama's body.



Llamas may play a key role in neutralizing the Coronavirus.

Llamas and other camelids, such as alpacas, produce a special kind of antibody known collectively as "single-domain" antibodies. After taking blood samples from Winter, the team, found that one of these single-domain antibodies, known as VHH-72, bound tightly to the spike proteins on SARS-CoV-1 and prevented it from infecting cells in a culture.

As a result, the scientists joined together two copies of the antibody, in an attempt to help it bind more effectively to the SARS-CoV-2 spikes. According to the team, the newly engineered antibody is the first known to neutralize both SARS-CoV-1 and SARS-CoV-2.

"That was exciting to me because I'd been working on this

for years," Daniel Wrapp, a co-first-author of the paper from UTA, said in the statement. "But there wasn't a big need for a coronavirus treatment then. This was just basic research. Now, this can potentially have some translational implications, too." After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team wondered whether VHH-72 would also be effective against SARS-CoV-2. Initial tests revealed that it did bind to the spike proteins of the virus, however, only weakly.

Regardless of the study's early successes -- and Winter the llama's positive demeanor -- this doesn't mean the antibodies are immediately viable as a preventative or cure.

The team from the University of Texas in Austin are now setting their sights on preclinical studies in animals such as hamsters or nonhuman primates, with an eventual goal of developing a treatment for humans.



The next step, the researchers say, is to conduct studies in animals in order to further assess the impact of these antibodies on SARS-CoV-2. Eventually, they hope to be able to develop a treatment based on these antibodies that could be administered soon after infection.

"With antibody therapies, you're directly giving somebody the protective antibodies and so, immediately after treatment, they should be protected. The antibodies could also be used to treat somebody who is already sick to lessen the severity of the disease," McLellan said.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that this approach is still at a very early stage of development and must be tested extensively in animals and humans before it can be established whether or not it will be effective in the treatment of COVID-19.

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The team from the University of Texas in Austin are now setting their sights on preclinical studies in animals such as hamsters or nonhuman primates, with an eventual goal of developing a treatment for humans. (Courtesy <https://www.msn.com/> and <https://www.cnet.com/>)