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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Thursday, May 20 2021

New York reopens further by lifting capacity restrictions, adopting new mask guidance

NEW YORK, May 19 (Xinhua) -- New York State entered a new period of reopening on Wednesday with multiple capacity restrictions lifted and new guidance on masks and social distancing taking effect.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said that "New York is coming back" and fully vaccinated individuals no longer need to use a face covering in most public places starting from Wednesday.

Businesses are only required to maintain six feet of social distancing starting from Wednesday with capacity limit removed. Meanwhile, indoor social gathering limit increases to 250 in the state.

As for outdoor residential gathering, the limit is removed and the limit for indoor residential gathering rises to 50 on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the capacity for large-scale indoor venues and large-scale outdoor venues increased to 30 percent and 33 percent, respectively.

New York State also starts to adopt the new mask guidelines by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Wednesday with some exceptions.

In addition, Cuomo unveiled an updated guidance for health and safety measures at child care, day camp, and overnight camp programs, effective on Wednesday.

However, Cuomo warned that the latest developments don't mean that COVID-19 has been officially relegated to the history books and people need to stay vigilant, follow safety guidelines and help every eligible New Yorker get vaccinated.

Statistics issued on Wednesday showed that the daily positivity rate of COVID-19 test fell to 1 percent in the state and more than 10 million New Yorkers, or over 50 percent of total population in the state, have gotten at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.



Israeli army shells southern Lebanese town in response to rockets fire

BEIRUT, May 19 (Xinhua) -- The Israeli army on Wednesday fired shells toward the southern Lebanese town of Zibqine, in response to four rockets fired from southern Lebanon into northern Israel, al-Manar TV channel reported.

No casualties were reported yet.

The tension on the border between Lebanon and Israel increased over the past few days as pro-Gaza Palestinian refugees in Lebanon attempted to fire rockets toward Israel and break through the border fence into Israel.

Israel and Gaza's ruler Hamas have been fighting fiercely against each other for 10 days.



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CORONAVIRUS DIARY

05/19/2021



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We Praise The Anti-Asian Hate Crime Bill

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to aggressively investigate hate crimes, especially in the Asian community that have increased during the coronavirus pandemic.

The vote was 364 to 62. All the votes against the bill were from the Republican Party.

The bill was sponsored by Congresswoman Grace Meng and Hawaii Senator Marie Hiro. At a news conference Ms. Meng said, "The Asian

American community is exhausted from being forced to endure this rise in bigotry and racist attacks. We are tired of living in fear."

This bill would establish a position at the Justice Department to expedite the agency's review of hate crimes and expand the channels to report them. It would also encourage the creation of state-run hate crime hotlines, provide grant money to law enforcement agencies and train their officers to identify hate crimes,



and introduce a series of public education campaigns around bias against people of Asian descent.

President Biden said this bill puts our nation one step closer to achieving justice and equality.

We are so glad and really appreciate this action. It is the first time the U.S. Congress has passed a bill to address this problem in our community.

This bill also recognizes that this is a country of immigrants.

Many Asian immigrants came to this land looking for opportunity. They devoted their whole lives to being good citizens. Asian-Americans are some of the top contributors in many fields.

Today all of us need to be united to overcome the challenges that face our nation.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



U.S. President Joe Biden tests the new Ford F-150 lightning truck as he visits VDAB at Ford Dearborn Development Center in Dearborn, Michigan. REUTERS/Leah Millis



An Israeli security force member holds a protester during a demonstration held by Palestinians to show their solidarity amid Israel-Gaza fighting, at Damascus Gate just outside Jerusalem's Old City. REUTERS/Ammar Awad



Asylum-seeking migrants from Central America hold their children while sitting along a dirt road as they await transport by the U.S. Border Patrol after crossing the Rio Grande river into the United States from Mexico in La Joya, Texas. REUTERS/Adrees Latif



A damaged vehicle is seen under a fallen tree on a road after heavy winds caused by Cyclone Tauktae, in Mumbai, India. REUTERS/Hemanshi Kamani



Victoria Zaca, 12, receives a coronavirus vaccine at a clinic run by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health in partnership with the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium to encourage all eligible teenagers to get vaccinated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. REUTERS/Hannah Beier



Palestinian children, who fled their homes due to Israeli air and artillery strikes, look through a window fence at a United Nations-run school where they take refuge, in Gaza City. REUTERS/Suhaib Salem

The COVID-19 Global Health Crisis On May 20, 2021



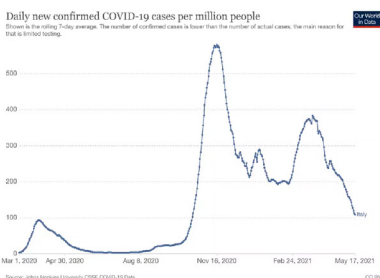
Top Stories

WHO chief calls on COVID-19 vaccine makers to advance doses for COVAX; Italy eases restrictions; Confirmed COVID-19 cases in India pass 25 million.

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

How COVID-19 is affecting the globe

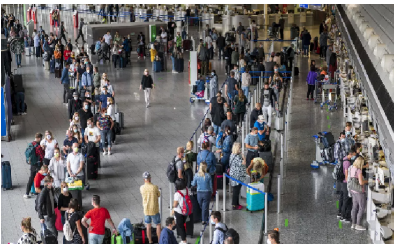
Confirmed cases of COVID-19 have passed 163.6 million globally, according to Johns Hopkins University. The number of confirmed deaths stands at more than 3.39 million. More than 1.47 billion vaccination doses have been administered globally, according to Our World in Data. Japan's economy has shrunk more than expected in the first quarter, with the pandemic hitting spending. Confirmed total COVID-19 cases in India have passed 25 million, becoming the second nation after the United States to do so. It comes as India reported a further decline in new daily confirmed cases - down to 281,386. But the World Health Organization's Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan has warned that the positive test rate remained 'very high'.



New York state has announced it will drop mask requirements in most places this week for people vaccinated against COVID-19, in line with new U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance. California has announced it would keep its mask order in place for another month. It comes as weekly deaths from COVID-19 in the United States fell to their lowest in nearly 14

months. 4,165 deaths were reported in total for the week ending 16 May. Brazil is set to receive ingredients from China to produce up to 25 million doses of the AstraZeneca and Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines in the coming days. Germany will stop prioritizing more vulnerable groups for COVID-19 vaccines from 7 June, opening up their programme to all adults. **WHO chief calls on COVID-19 vaccine makers to advance doses for COVAX** The World Health Organization's Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has repeated calls from Unicef outlining the shortage in supplies facing COVAX, the vaccine-sharing facility.

European Union To Open Borders To Vaccinated Travelers



Tourists wait to check in for a flight to Mallorca at Frankfurt Airport on June 15, 2020 in Frankfurt, Germany. (Photo/Thomas Lohnes/Getty Images)

The European Union on Wednesday said it would allow vaccinated people to travel into its countries, easing restrictions that were placed to stem the spread of the coronavirus, the Washington Post reports. **Details:** Travelers would need to have taken vaccines approved for use in the EU, which would include all available in the U.S. and exclude those made in Russia and China. "The surge in cases has compromised global vaccine supply and there is already a shortfall of 190 million doses to COVAX by the end of June," he told yesterday's media briefing. He called on manufacturers and high-income countries to advance commitments to deliver doses to COVAX and to share supplies.

"Only by working through COVAX can we quickly get vaccines to those health workers that have been on the frontlines of this pandemic for more than a year," he said. It comes as US President Joe Biden announced plans to send at least 20 million more COVID-19 vaccines abroad by the end of next months.



Italy to ease restrictions

Italy has pushed back a nightly curfew from 10pm to 11pm, while also easing other restrictions in areas where infections are low. Italy has the second-highest COVID-19 death toll in Europe after the UK, but has seen cases and deaths decline in recent weeks. "The figures of the last few months have imposed difficult, sometimes painful choices, but today they give us reason for relief," said Health Minister Roberto Speranza. A four-tier colour-coded system decided curbs in the country's 20 regions. For example, bars and restaurants can serve clients outside in low-risk yellow and white areas. (Courtesy weforum.org)

Related

Dr. Fauci Says People Are "Misinterpreting" The New CDC Mask Guidance

Dr. Anthony Fauci said that many Americans are "misinterpreting" the CDC's new mask guidance, which lets vaccinated individuals forego masks indoors. **What he's saying:** "I think people are misinterpreting, thinking that this is a removal of a mask mandate for everyone. It's not," Fauci told me. "It's an assurance to those who are vaccinated that they can feel safe, be they outdoors or indoors." **"It's not their fault,"** Fauci added. "People either read them quickly, or listen and hear half of it. They are feeling that we're say-

ing: 'You don't need the mask anymore.' That's not what the CDC said. They said: If you are vaccinated, you can feel safe — that you will not get infected either outdoors or indoors. It did not explicitly say that unvaccinated people should abandon their masks."



Dr. Anthony Fauci

The big picture: The guidance was met with celebration and consternation. Some public-health experts worry that confusion could endanger unvaccinated people, Axios health care editor Tina Reed writes. **•Fauci said** Americans will likely need a COVID vaccine booster: "I think we will almost certainly require a booster sometime within a year or so, after getting the primary [shot], because the durability of protection against coronaviruses is generally not lifelong." **•He also said** we should expect to keep wearing masks on airplanes for some time — but hopefully months, not years. (Courtesy Axios.com)

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House Sends Anti-Asian Hate Bill To Biden's Desk

Bill To Combat Anti-Asian Hate OK'ed By House In Rare Moment Of Unity



Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, accompanied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks during a news conference in Washington on April 13, after the Senate passed the Asian hate bill. The bill has now passed in the House and is headed to President Biden for his signature. (Photo/Jose Luis Magana/AP)

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

In a big bipartisan vote, House lawmakers last Tuesday passed legislation aimed at combating the sharp rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans that have occurred since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The bill now goes to President Biden, who is expected to sign it into law as soon as Thursday, in the middle of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The bill passed in a 364-62 vote, with all no votes coming from Republicans. The Senate last month approved the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act on a 94-1 vote, with Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) the lone "no" vote. "After a year of the Asian American community crying out for help, today Congress is taking historic action to pass long overdue hate crimes legislation and send the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act to President Biden's desk," Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, told reporters before the vote.

The broad bipartisan vote demonstrates just how much these "daily tragedies of anti-Asian violence have shocked our nation into action," Chu said.



Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus

"It is a momentous day," added Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who represents a San Francisco district where multiple anti-Asian hate incidents have occurred, including the death last year of an elderly Thai American man and the stabbing of two Asian American women just this month. The legislation, authored by Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Rep. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), would create a position at the Justice Department to expedite a review of COVID-19-related hate crimes; provide grants for states to create hotlines for reporting hate crimes and for law enforcement training on how to prevent and identify hate crimes; and direct federal agencies to work with community organizations to help raise awareness about hate crimes during the pandemic. The legislation makes no mention of Donald Trump, though many Democrats have warned that rhetoric from the former president and his allies, including the terms "China virus" and "kung flu," have provoked many of the verbal and violent attacks against the Asian American community. Since the start of the pandemic, in March 2020, there have been more than 6,600 hate incidents against Asian Americans, according to the group Stop AAPI Hate. Nearly two-thirds of those incidents targeted women.



Passage of the bill comes less than two months after a gunman killed eight people in three Asian-owned spas in greater Atlanta; six of the victims were women of Asian descent. And on Wednesday, the House plans to pass a separate resolution condemning the March 16 massacre in Georgia. Authorities said the 21-year-old man charged in the killings had been a customer of at least two of the spas, though other attacks have been at random. New York police officials have said many of those perpetrating these crimes in the city have a history of mental illness.

Meng, who represents a large Asian American community in Queens, said the legislation will help the federal government better track such hate incidents, including the mental health state of the perpetrators. Other Democrats emphasized that how elected leaders speak about the deadly coronavirus has a direct impact on how members of the Asian American community are treated. "Leadership at the top level makes a difference," said Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), who has explicitly blamed Trump's rhetoric for the spike in incidents. "We need better data, but ... it's common sense that if you have a destabilizing leader or destabilizing leaders or big influencers, they can also destabilize those who are vulnerable in terms of their mental stability to act out."



Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.)

Some of Trump's top allies in Congress panned the legislation. Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, complained that the bill could infringe on free speech by establishing hotlines where citizens could report anything they find "offensive." It also creates confusion, he said, by having hate incidents reported to a new state office rather than through normal law enforcement channels. "The Democrats have attempted to blame President Trump for this rise in violence against Asian Americans, but the facts tell an entirely different story," Jordan said on the House floor. "This violence by and large is happening in Democrat-controlled cities, many of which, interestingly enough, have defunded their police departments." Biden has taken a much different approach than Trump in responding to anti-Asian hate. Just days after being sworn in as president,

Biden in January signed a memo denouncing racism and xenophobia against Asian Americans; and ensuring that all government statements and documents do not contribute to discrimination against Asian Americans. In March, the Biden administration rolled out new funding and initiatives to curb anti-Asian hate, including a cross-agency initiative at the Justice Department to respond to Asian violence. That month, Biden and Vice President Harris also met with Asian American leaders in Georgia after the mass shooting.



And last month, Biden tapped Erika Moritsugu as a senior adviser after complaints from lawmakers that Biden had not named any Asian Americans to Cabinet secretary posts or senior White House roles; Moritsugu will serve as Biden's top liaison to the Asian-American community. "President Biden has done more for Asian Americans than I've seen in a long time," Chu said. His actions to combat Asian hate incidents were a "huge step after a year of being totally ignored by President Trump, who actually doubled down on his usage of the terms 'China virus' and 'Wuhan virus.'" The Hirono-Meng legislation overcame last-minute opposition from dozens of progressive Asian American and LGBTQ groups who expressed concerns the bill fails to address the root causes of anti-Asian hate, namely inequality. The groups, including 18 Million Rising and the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance, want more funding and resources for things like housing, health care and social services rather than law enforcement. "This legislation allocates no new funding to law enforcement," Meng said, addressing the concerns. "This legislation does assume that law enforcement is currently underreporting these kinds of incidents, and it makes it easy to ignore hate crimes altogether. That's why we believe that this response is necessary." (Courtesy thehill.com)