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Southern DAILY Make Today Different

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California firefighters use break in weather to attack wildfires

QUINCY, Calif., Aug 6 (Reuters) - California firefighting crews sought to take advantage of cooler, moister air and diminished winds on Friday to make headway against a massive wildfire that has already destroyed a historic gold-rush town.

The so-called Dixie Fire, which broke out on July 14 in the Sierra Nevada mountains some 160 miles (257.5 km) north of Sacramento, had burned across 432,813 acres (175,153 hectares) as of Friday afternoon, becoming one of the largest wildfires in state history.

The flames roared through the historic mining town of Greenville in on Wednesday, leaving its main street in smoldering ruins.

Greenville, with a population 800, was founded more than 150 years ago when nearby gold mines attracted settlers and merchants to the picturesque town in the Indian Valley.

"My defiantly quirky, beautiful adopted hometown turned into a ghost town last night," wrote Meg Upton, a reporter for the Plumas News, in an online article.

Firefighter David Molter monitors the progress of flames that were burning along a roadway at the Dixie Fire, a wildfire near the town of Greenville, California, U.S. August 5, 2021. REUTERS/Fred Greaves

California, which typically experiences peak fire season later in the year, was on pace to suffer more burnt acreage this year than last, the worst fire season on record. Roughly 16,000 people were evacuated this week from blazes burning across five counties in the northern part of the state.

California's five largest wildfires in history have all occurred in the last three seasons, burning more than 2.5 million acres and destroying 3,700 structures.

Firefighters, aided by a thick inver-



sion layer blowing inland from the Pacific Ocean, were working to stop the advance of the flames as they moved toward the community of Quincy in Plumas County.

The Dixie Fire is the largest of more than a dozen major conflagrations burning across California this week, spurred by high temperatures and brush left bone dry by years of drought.

The River Fire -- which started on Wednesday and has charred 2,600 acres (1,050 hectares) in Nevada and Placer Counties, destroyed 88 homes or other structures -- was 30 percent contained on Friday morning, said Captain Robert Foxworthy of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

He said three people had been injured, including two civilians and one firefighter.

Firefighter David Molter monitors the progress of flames that were burning along a roadway at the Dixie Fire, a wildfire near the town of Greenville, California, U.S. August 5, 2021. REUTERS/Fred Greaves



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LOCAL NEWS

‘Weapon of war’: the U.S. rifle loved by drug cartels and feared by Mexican police

MEXICO CITY, Aug 6 (Reuters) - The flow of high-caliber arms smuggled across the porous U.S. border has alarmed Mexican officials and few weapons are as powerful as the U.S.-made M82 semi-automatic rifle increasingly favored by the powerful drug cartels.

The M82 can easily penetrate bulletproof vests, concrete walls and even tanks, says its manufacturer Barrett Firearms. It is also one of the weapons of choice for drug cartels, according to the Mexican government, which this week filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts against the company and 10 other gun manufacturers.

Weapons such as the M82 are part of a “torrent” of illegal arms flowing south, Mexico alleges, partly due to the manufacturers’ negligent business practices that had encouraged illegal arms trafficking. [read more](#)

None of the manufacturers, including Barrett, responded to Reuters’ requests for comment.

First manufactured in the 1980s, the M82 rose to prominence during the first Gulf War when it was adopted by the U.S. military. Now it’s used by more than 70 security agencies across the world, according to Barrett.

In Mexico, the weapon has disrupted the balance of power between criminal groups and poorly equipped police forces, according to Romain Le Cour Grandmaison, Program Director at the Mexico and Central America Office of Noria, a think tank.

“If you have a Barrett, it means that any non-special forces such as the local police and the municipal police cannot fight you,” Grandmaison said.

“That leaves the military as the only ones able to battle the cartels.”

The M82 guns, often fitted with a scope to act as sniper’s weapon, can fire 70 rounds per minute with a maximum range of 2,500 meters.

Between 2009 and 2020, authorities seized 358 M82 rifles, according to official figures cited by the Milenio newspaper. In 2019, a record 68 such weapons were captured.



The raw power of the rifle, which weighs about 14 kilograms (31 lb) and is 1.5 meters long, was on show in mid-2020 during a military-style assassination attempt on Mexico City’s police chief that was captured by surveillance cameras.

Gunmen who left behind at least one M82 rifle were seen spraying the armor-plated car of police chief Omar Garcia Harfuch with high-velocity rounds. He was badly wounded, while two bodyguards and an innocent bystander were killed.

In 2016, members of the “Knights Templar” cartel in Michoacan state allegedly downed a helicopter with an M82 rifle, the Mexican lawsuit said. The Barrett M82 was a “serious problem” for security forces because its armor-piercing bullets can knock out

the motors of reconnaissance vehicles and endanger helicopters, said a Mexican official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The gun should not be in the hands of civilians, the official said.

“It’s a weapon of war,” added the official.

For the cartels, the M82 has also become a status symbol.

Criminal gangs that wish to project power often post photos on social media of their members toting M82 guns and latest military gadgets, mimicking the style of special forces units.



Allyson Felix of the United States celebrates after winning gold during the women’s 4 X 400m relay. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson

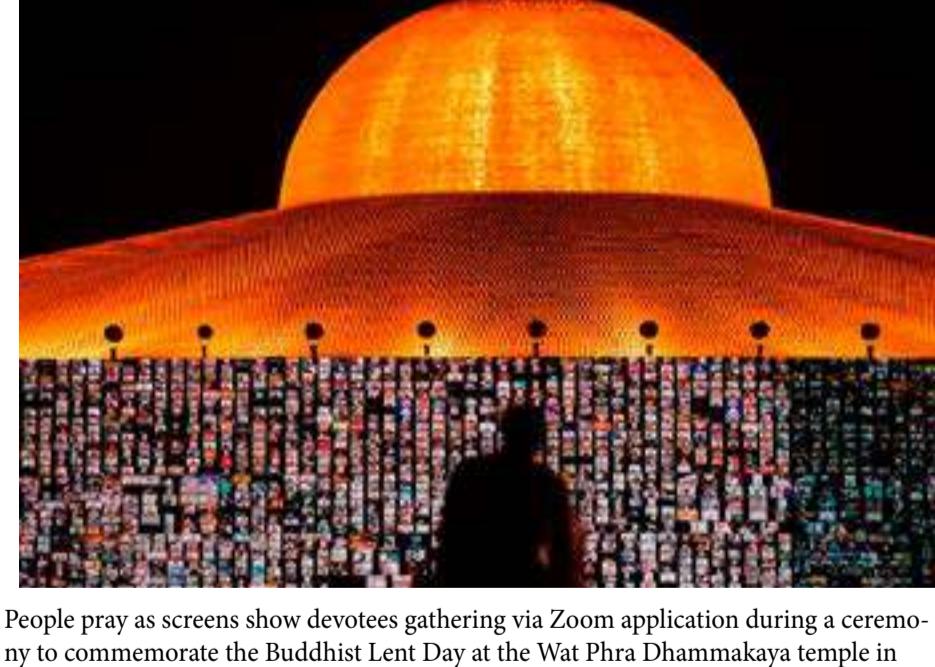
Editor’s Choice



Team Japan in action with clubs and hoops during the group all-around qualification. REUTERS/Mike Blake



A man on crutches moves away from tear gas thrown by police during a protest to demand the impeachment of Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro and against his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, at Consolacao street in Sao Paulo, Brazil. REUTERS/Amanda Perobelli



People pray as screens show devotees gathering via Zoom application during a ceremony to commemorate the Buddhist Lent Day at the Wat Phra Dhammakaya temple in Pathum Thani province, Thailand. REUTERS/Chalinee Thirasupa



Relatives and the mother of Palestinian Mohammed Al-Tamimi, who was killed by Israeli forces during clash on Friday, according to officials, mourn during his funeral in Deir Nidham in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. REUTERS/Mohamad Torokman



People form the foundation of a human tower during the first performance of Colla Joves Xiquets de Valls and Colla Vella Dels Xiquets de Valls after the coronavirus pandemic halt, at Blat square in Valls, Spain. REUTERS/ Albert Gea

The Warning Signs Of A Longer Pandemic



Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

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

All the things that could prolong the COVID-19 pandemic — that could make this virus a part of our lives longer than anyone wants — are playing out right in front of our eyes.

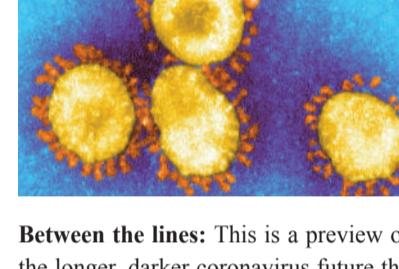
The big picture: Right now, the U.S. is still making fantastic progress on vaccinations. But as variants of the virus cause new outbreaks and infect more children, the U.S. is also getting a preview of what the future could hold if our vaccination push loses steam — as experts fear it soon might.

Driving the news: The British variant is driving another surge in cases in Michigan, and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has resisted reimposing any of the lockdown measures she embraced earlier in the pandemic.

• Variants are beginning to infect more kids, even as schools are on the fast track back to reopening, making the pandemic “a brand new ball game,” as University of Minnesota epidemiologist Michael Osterholm recently put it.

• New research confirms that our existing

vaccines don’t work as well against the South African variant.



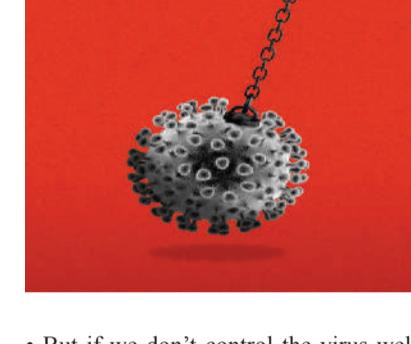
Between the lines: This is a preview of the longer, darker coronavirus future the U.S. may face without sufficient vaccinations — one that many experts see as pretty likely.

• Although the pace of vaccinations is still strong, there’s a growing fear that it’s about to slow down. In some parts of the country, particularly the South, demand for shots has already slowed down enough to create a surplus of available doses.

How it works: The more widely a virus can spread, the more opportunities it

has to mutate. If the U.S. and ultimately the world don’t vaccinate a sufficient percentage of the population, we’ll be setting ourselves up to let the virus keep spreading, and keep mutating, continuing to give us new variants that will continue to pose new threats.

The concern isn’t necessarily that the facts on the ground today could end up being disastrous. The vaccines work against the British variant; the South African variant is not, at this point, a dominant strain within the U.S.; and we will eventually be able to vaccinate at least some children, helping the U.S.’s progress toward herd immunity.



• But if we don’t control the virus well enough, then even years into the future, we could be living through more new variants — some of which might be more deadly, some of which might be more resistant to vaccines, some of which might be more dangerous for certain specific populations.

• That would translate into an ongoing risk of illness or potentially death for unvaccinated people and new races to reformulate vaccines as new variants keep emerging.

• And it would lead to a world in which today’s vaccine-eager population would have to stay on top of those emerging risks, get booster shots when they’re available, and perhaps revive some of the pandemic’s social-distancing measures, in order to stay safe.

The bottom line: This darker future is preventable, and our abundant supply of highly effective vaccines is the way to prevent it. The more people get vaccinated now, the smaller the role COVID-19 is likely to play in the rest of our lives.

Related

Former FDA Chief Offers Reality Check On Vaccine Passports



Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

There’s a clear use case for some sort of trusted, digital proof of vaccination, but it probably wouldn’t be an all-encompassing “passport,” necessary for any number of everyday activities, former FDA commissioner Scott Gottlieb argues in a WSJ op-ed.

What they’re saying: “Some have panned this as a way of denying Americans access to restaurants or other businesses,” he writes. “It’s more likely to allow Americans to visit places they otherwise can’t, such as nursing homes or hospitals that aren’t allowing family members.”

Why it matters: Vaccination data isn’t easily accessible — some of it belongs to insurers, some to state databases, and those systems don’t always communicate well with each other.

Making matters worse, the inevitable forgeries of paper vaccine cards are now a widespread reality. Scores of fraudulent vaccine cards are available for sale on Etsy, eBay, Facebook and Twitter, the New York Times reports:



oculated.”

Related

Fauci: Federal government won’t require COVID vaccine passports

The federal government will not mandate the use of vaccine passports for travelers or businesses post-pandemic, President Biden’s chief medical adviser, Dr. Anthony Fauci, told the Politico Dispatch podcast Monday.

Why it matters: Passports showing proof of vaccination could speed up international travel re-openings, but the idea of requiring immunization credentials has become a point of contention, particularly among Republican officials.

- Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) banned the use of vaccine passports in his state on Friday.

What they’re saying: “I doubt that the federal government will be the main mover of a vaccine passport concept,” said Fauci.



Anthony Fauci. Photo: Susan Walsh/AP/Bloomberg via Getty Images

- “They may be involved in making sure things are done fairly and equitably, but I doubt if the federal government is going to be the leading element of that.”

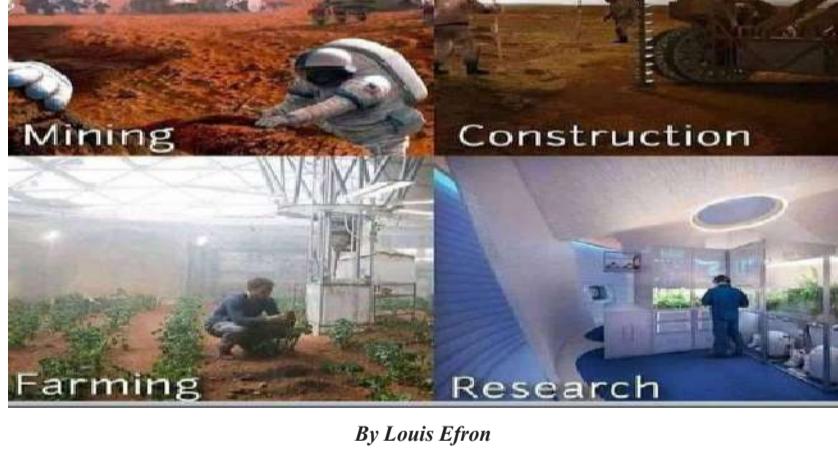
Fauci noted that he believes that businesses or schools could require vaccine passports to enter their buildings.

- “I’m not saying that they should or that they would, but I’m saying you could foresee how an independent entity might say, ‘well, we can’t be dealing with you unless we know you’re vaccinated,’ but it’s not going to be mandated from the federal government.”

The big picture: The E.U. unveiled its proposal for vaccine passports in March, which would allow citizens who can certify that they have been vaccinated or recently tested negative for COVID-19 to cross borders without quarantine requirements. (Courtesy axios.com)

Future Work: Will Your Career Of Tomorrow Be On Mars?

Jobs that you can do on Mars in Future



By Louis Efron

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

Look around the space where you are sitting. How many of the things you see were not available to you as a child? Perhaps you note a laptop, smart phone or Wi-Fi connection? Now imagine these things vanished. What would your life be like? Think back to when you were a child. Could you have imagined the items you now can’t live without? This same dynamic may soon be on the horizon for jobs on Mars—we may one day wonder how we ever confined our human activities to Earth. Advancing technology continues to create more unique and interesting jobs—for now, all of them based on planet Earth. But change may be upon us.

If the human race is to continue for another million years, we will have to boldly go where no one has gone before,” the late Stephen Hawking argued.

As Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, NASA scientists and others continue to bring the possibility of living on another planet into the foreseeable future, the reality of an interplanetary economy and job market could be just around the corner.

By 2024, Musk’s SpaceX aims to send the first astronauts to Mars. President Trump’s 2020 budget includes funding for a manned Mars mission to launch as soon as 2026, with a goal of bringing back samples of the Red Planet. Such studies of rock, soil and atmosphere samples could bring new insights into the sphere’s geology and water presence, and may even locate evidence of

past or current life.

In fact, multiplanet settlements maybe crucial for the long-term survival of humans. Amazon’s founder and CEO Jeff Bezos believes that expanding our living options in our solar system “is not something that we may choose to do; this is something we must do.” Environmental destruction, natural resource constraints, rapid population growth and potentially deadly asteroids or other natural disasters could leave Mother Earth with a limited capacity to sustain our continued growth. Colonizing another planet could lift the barriers Earth may present to the continued expansion of humanity.



Why Mars?

While planets in our solar system are subject to extreme temperatures and the dangerous elements of space, Mars has some similarities to Earth. It is also in what is called the Habitable Zone, an area where conditions might potentially support life. While its air is too thin to breathe and its surface temperature too cold for unsheltered

COMMUNITY

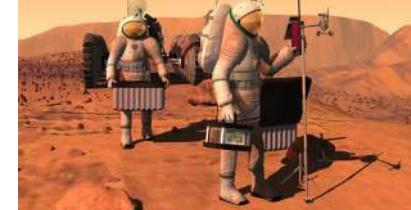
life, Mars—unlike other planets in our solar system—has the benefit of a 24-hour day, four seasons, canyons, volcanoes, polar ice caps, river beds, dried lakes and even some liquid water. Based on our current exploration and understanding of our solar system, there is no planet better suited to interplanetary migration than Mars.

What Jobs Will Be Available On Mars?

Initially, a strong background in science and mathematics will be most desirable. However, as a yearning to see more of Mars accelerates, films, television programs, and reality shows marketed on Earth will attract talent of all kinds to the Red Planet. The opportunity to be highly innovative on Mars will be another aspect of work on the planet and a strong additional talent attractor. An early Mars colony could generate a lot of income by being an inventors colony. Isolated from the distractions of Earth and challenged to come up with solutions to problems on the planet, Mars will be a pressure cooker for innovation with inhabitants being free to innovate without the bureaucracy on Earth,” explains Dr. Robert Zubrin, founder of the Mars Society and author of the new book *The Case for Space*.

How Do I Apply For Interplanetary Work?

Interplanetary job seekers can apply for desired opportunities on the career web pages of organizations such as SpaceX, Bezos’s Blue Origin and NASA. Also helpful will be specialized industry job sites like Space Individuals and Space Careers. NASA has even released posts advertising jobs on Mars for surveyors, farmers, teachers and technicians. While most jobs working in space are currently based on Earth, space exploration companies require people in every career discipline. Opportunities in engineering, design, software development, manufacturing, human resources, finance, IT, legal, marketing, sales and many other jobs that exist on our planet will be available.



How Will I Get To My New Job?

To make Mars a viable option for a new economy, affordable, safe, reliable and frequent transportation must be available to the general public. Reusable rocket technology like Musk’s will be essential to creating the equivalent of an airline industry in space. Initial passenger rockets could potentially carry up to 100

people or more and 450 tons of cargo.

Will It Be Safe To Live And Work On Mars?

If terraforming, or any other transformative process,

is used in an attempt to alter the environment to make Mars habitable, there is no guarantee of a positive outcome.

Warming the planet could awaken previous or current Martian life forms, with unknown consequences.

A lower gravitational pull could weaken our bones

and muscles, and increased radiation may heighten our chances of cancer. In all cases, safety is a concern and the loss of life is a distinct possibility for early settlers.

Initial isolation from larger groups of people or a sustained dramatic change to social, living and dietary conditions, along with sleep disorders due to slightly longer days, could present a challenge to the mental and emotional well-being of those living and working on Mars.

How Will I Communicate With Those On Earth?

Eventually, near-real-time teleportation capable of virtually placing people in the same room, even if they are on different planets, will make communicating with family, friends and co-workers on Earth a natural and seamless experience.

As image and personal bot technologies advance, your physical location may not matter all that much.



Are Earth Visits An Option?

With the doubling of technological advancement about every 12 to 18 months, return visits to Earth will certainly be in the cards someday.

Until then, hologram rooms and other technologies could provide virtual reality visits that come fairly close to feeling like

you are back on Earth. If you decide to break up your travels and live on the moon first, as Bezos advises, the chances of an Earth holiday are pretty good.

Where Will I Live, Eat and Shop?

Initially, all living, eating and shopping spaces will be indoors to insulate humans from unbreatheable air and cold temperatures. If the planet behaves favorably in our attempts to inhabit it, future communities could mirror those on Earth, and familiar activities could even include grabbing lunch at McDonalds.

But considering the likely cost of raising cattle on Mars or developing and producing lab-grown meat, you should expect to pay a lot more for your Big Mac. Vegetables will most likely be the first crops grown on Mars, so a salad may be the best choice for your budget.

As for shopping, Amazon could still be your desired option:

Bezos is already planning deliveries to the moon.

Healthcare On Mars?

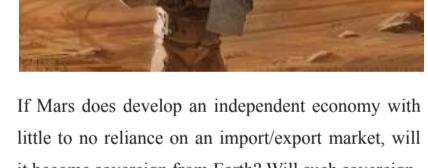
Recruitment decisions will need to be thoughtful and measured, and contingencies must be in place for redeploying skills and talents to other meaningful work when a person no longer fulfills his or her job responsibilities or the position isn’t needed. This will also lead to considerations of disability and retirement.

To ensure a high quality of life for all Mars citizens, programs must be in place to house and care for those who can no longer do these things for themselves, and a universal health care and universal basic income model could guarantee health care and a minimum livable income to everyone, regardless of circumstance.

However, the social-economic dynamic on the Red Planet could change as a space airline industry develops, as noted earlier.

Will I Feel Like I Belong On Mars?

Once a homogenous Martian population evolves, will those from Earth be welcome on Mars? Will an independent Mars economy evolve, or will Earth be fiscally strengthened and positioned as the central economic hub of our solar system?



If Mars does develop an independent economy with little to no reliance on an import/export market, will it become sovereign from Earth? Will such sovereignty create political and power struggles, divided ideals and, ultimately, lead to a scenario like that in H.G.

Wells’ War of the Worlds? Education and understanding will be key as humans seek to inhabit other planets in our solar system and, perhaps someday, beyond.

Organizations like the National Space Society, a non-profit group dedicated to the creation of a spacefaring civilization, has been leading the charge in this area since 1974 and is a good source for research, articles, publications and general information about how those

on Earth can leverage “the vast resources of space for the dramatic betterment of humanity.” The Mars Society, founded in 1998, is another helpful source of information specifically related to human settlement on the Red Planet.

On Mars, humans will discover unique ways to contribute meaningfully to our cosmos and perhaps even sustain the human race. (Courtesy forbes.com)

About the Author

Louis Efron (LouisEfron.com) is a globally recognized thought leader, speaker, writer and Fortune 200 HR Executive.