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John Robbins 281-965-6390  
Jun Gai 281-498-4310

Publisher: Wea H. Lee  
President: Catherine Lee  
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd.,  
Houston, TX 77072  
E-mail: News@scdaily.com



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## In climate pledge, Xi says China will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 21 (Reuters) - Chinese leader Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China would not build new coal-fired power projects abroad, using his address at the United Nations General Assembly to add to pledges to deal with climate change.

Xi provided no details, but depending on how the policy is implemented, the move could significantly limit the financing of coal plants in the developing world.

China has been under heavy diplomatic pressure to put an end to its coal financing overseas because it could make it easier for the world to stay on course to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement to reduce carbon emissions.

Xi's announcement followed similar moves by South Korea and Japan earlier this year, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and U.S. climate envoy John Kerry have urged China to follow the lead of its Asian counterparts.

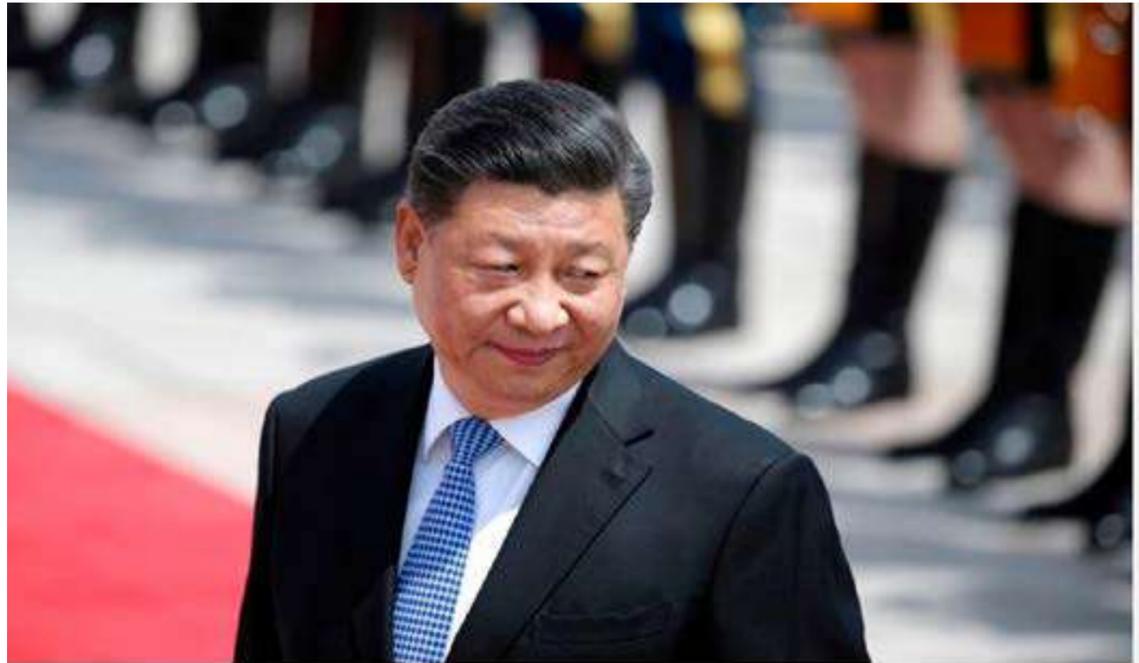
"China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy, and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad," Xi said in his pre-recorded video address at the annual U.N. gathering, in which he stressed China's peaceful intentions in international relations.

Xi spoke after U.S. President Joe Biden gave his first United Nations address. Biden mapped out a new era of vigorous competition without a new Cold War despite China's ascendance.

In a measured speech, Xi made no direct mention of China's often bitter rivalry with the United States, where the Biden administration has made policies on climate change mitigation a top priority and sought to cooperate with Beijing.

Xi repeated pledges from last year that China would achieve a peak in carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060. Some experts have criticized those targets as not ambitious enough, though it allowed Beijing to claim moral high ground on the issue after then-U.S. President Donald Trump, who had called climate change a "hoax", had withdrawn from the Paris climate agreement.

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas



emitter, is still heavily reliant on coal for its domestic energy needs.

One of Biden's first moves after assuming office in January was to reassert U.S. leadership on climate change and return the United States to the Paris agreement.

"China was the last man standing. If there's no public finance of coal from China, there's little to no global coal expansion," Justin Guay, director of global climate strategy at the Sunrise Project, a group advocating for a global transition from coal and fossil fuels, said of Xi's promise.

Guterres welcomed both Xi's move on coal and Biden's pledge to work with the U.S. Congress to double funds by 2024 to \$11.4 billion per year to help developing nations deal with climate change.

"Accelerating the global phase out of coal is the single most important step to keep the 1.5-degree goal of the Paris Agreement within reach, he said in a statement.

There was no immediate response from the White House or Kerry's office.

'BREATHE FREE'

Hours earlier, without mentioning China by name, Biden said democracy would not be defeated by authoritarianism.

"The future will belong to those who give their people the ability to breathe free, not those who seek to suffocate their people with an iron hand," Biden said.

"We all must call out and condemn the targeting and oppression of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, whether it occurs in Xinjiang or northern Ethiopia, or anywhere in the world," he said, referring to the western Chinese region where authorities have created a network of internment camps for Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. China denies allegations of abuses in Xinjiang.

Ties between the world's two biggest economies have been languishing at their lowest point in decades over issues ranging from human rights to transparency over the origins of COVID-19.

Xi said there was a need to "reject the practice of forming small circles or zero-sum games," a possible reference to the U.S.-led Quad forum of Australia, India, Japan and the United States seen as a means of pushing

back against China's rise, which is due to meet at leader level in Washington on Friday.

China last week warned of an intensified arms race in the region after the United States, Britain and Australia announced a new Indo-Pacific security alliance, dubbed AUKUS, which will provide Australia with the technology and capability to deploy nuclear-powered submarines.

Biden's image has taken a battering over the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, but he has said the end to America's longest war will allow the United States to refocus resources and attention to the Indo-Pacific.

"Military intervention from the outside and so-called democratic transformation entail nothing but harm," Xi said, in an apparent swipe at the United States.

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# Exclusive: Taliban names Afghan U.N. envoy, asks to speak to world leaders

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 21 (Reuters) - The Taliban have asked to address world leaders at the United Nations in New York this week and nominated their Doha-based spokesman Suhail Shaheen as Afghanistan's U.N. ambassador, according to a letter seen by Reuters on Tuesday.

Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi made the request in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday. Muttaqi asked to speak during the annual high-level meeting of the General Assembly, which finishes on Monday.

Guterres' spokesperson, Farhan Haq, confirmed Muttaqi's letter. The move sets up a showdown with Ghulam Isaczi, the U.N. ambassador in New York representing Afghanistan's government ousted last month by the Taliban.

Haq said the rival requests for Afghanistan's U.N. seat had been sent to a nine-member credentials committee, whose members include the United States, China and Russia. The committee is unlikely to meet on the issue before Monday, so it is doubtful that the Taliban foreign minister will address the world body.

Eventual U.N. acceptance of the ambassador of the Taliban would be an important step in the hardline Islamist group's bid for international recognition, which could help unlock badly needed funds for the cash-strapped Afghan economy.

Guterres has said that the Taliban's desire for international recognition is the only leverage other countries have to press for inclusive government and respect for rights, particularly for women, in Afghanistan.

The Taliban letter said Isaczi's mission "is considered over and that he no longer represents Afghanistan," said Haq.

Until a decision is made by the credentials committee Isaczi will remain in the seat, according to the General Assembly rules. He is currently scheduled to address the final day of the meeting on Sept. 27, but it was not immediately clear if any countries might object in the wake of the Taliban letter.



Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen leaves after a news conference in Moscow, Russia July 9, 2021. REUTERS/Tatyana Makeyeva

The committee traditionally meets in October or November to assess the credentials of all U.N. members before submitting a report for General Assembly approval before the end of the year. The committee and General Assembly usually operate by consensus on credentials, diplomats said.

Others members of the committee are the Bahamas, Bhutan, Chile, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Sweden.

When the Taliban last ruled between 1996 and 2001 the ambassador of the Afghan

government they toppled remained the U.N. representative after the credentials committee deferred its decision on rival claims to the seat.

The decision was postponed "on the understanding that the current representatives of Afghanistan accredited to the United Nations would continue to participate in the work of the General Assembly" according to the committee report.

## Editor's Choice



Gondoliers help tourists to board gondolas, as the region of Veneto becomes a "white zone", following a relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions with only masks and social distancing required, in Venice, Italy. . REUTERS/Yara Nardi



Abdullah Alzureiqi and his daughter Hala say a prayer at the fatal crime scene where a man driving a pickup truck jumped the curb and ran over a Muslim family, killing four and injuring a boy, in what police say was a deliberately targeted anti-Islamic hate crime, in London,



An aerial view shows wooden pontoons equipped to dredge the seabed for deposits of tin ore off the coast of Toboali, on the southern shores of the island of Bangka, Indonesia, 2021. REUTERS/Willy Kurniawan



Police detain protesters after they chained themselves to Enbridge equipment during a protest against the Line 3 pipeline at a pumping station in Hubbard County, Minnesota, 2021. REUTERS/Nicholas Pfosi



Nobel Peace Prize laureate and member of the Indigenous Women's Platform Rigoberta Menchu and Vice President Kamala Harris participate in a roundtable with members of the Guatemalan community and civil society leaders at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, during Harris' first international trip as vice president to Guatemala and Mexico, in Guatemala City, Guatemala June 7, 2021. REUTERS/Carlos Barria



Indigenous activists and supporters dump the head from a statue of Egerton Ryerson, considered one of the architect's of Canada's residential school system, into Lake Ontario, Ontario, Canada June 7, 2021. The Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc indigenous nation in British Columbia announced last week it had found the remains of 215 children, some as young as three, buried at the site of the

# Biden To Require COVID-19 Vaccines, Tests For Millions Of Private Workers



President Biden will announced a new rule Thursday to require all private employers with 100 or more employees to mandate vaccines or weekly testing.

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

A senior administration official said the rule will be issued from the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration "in the coming weeks," and the implementation timeline will likely mirror the roughly 90 day window other private sector employers, like Tyson Foods and United Airlines, have required. The requirement could impact nearly 80 million workers, the administration official said, and if a business fails to comply with the rule they could face fines up to \$14,000 per violation. The administration will also require those same companies to give employees paid time off to get vaccinated. The new rule for employers is one in a series of new aggressive steps that Biden will announce in a speech Thursday evening to boost vaccination rates in the coming weeks and rapidly scale up the country's COVID-19 testing capacity, according to senior administration officials familiar with the plans. The new national strategy, dubbed "Path Out of the Pandemic," represents a redoubling of the administration's efforts to combat the threat of the delta variant of the coronavirus. The administration has muddled through a summer marked by rising infections and fierce resistance to public health measures from many Republican



governors. The speech comes as Biden faces pressure to act more forcefully on the pandemic. After receding earlier this summer, the delta variant has fueled a new spike, with about 150,000 new cases daily and over 1,000 deaths per day. Biden is also dramatically expanding vaccination requirements for health workers. Last month, the administration said it would require all staff at about 15,000 nursing homes to be vaccinated to receive Medicare and Medicaid funding, a move that would affect about 1.3 million employees. The rule is expected to be issued later this month. Under the new plan, workers in most other health care settings that receive Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement, including major hospitals, will need to be vaccinated. The rules would affect 50,000 providers and about 17 million

workers, but officials did not have an immediate effective date. The administration will also impose sweeping new vaccination requirements on federal employees and contractors.



A senior administration official told reporters that under a new executive order to be announced by the president, federal employees will have 75 days to be fully vaccinated, with limited exemptions for religious or medical reasons. There will be no testing option. The order will cover about 100 million workers. "It's simple; if you want to work for the federal government, you must be vaccinated. If you want to do business with the government, you must vaccinate your workforce," the official said. Vaccines will also be mandatory for all teachers and staff at Head Start and Early Head Start programs, as well as schools and youth programs operated by the Department of Defense and the Bureau of Indian Education. The embrace of mandates represents a major escalation for the administration, which was previously reluctant to impose them. But significant questions about implementing the new requirements remain, and the administration is sure to face opposition, and not just from GOP governors like Texas's Greg Abbott and Florida's Ron DeSantis. The American Federation of Government Employees, the largest union of federal workers, immediately pushed back on the stronger mandate. The union said that while it has been urging members to get vaccinated, changes in policy need to be bargained.



"Put simply, workers deserve a voice in their working conditions," AFGE President Everett Kelly said. President Biden will also call on gover-

nors to get all teachers and school staff vaccinated, and will urge schools to set up regular COVID-19 testing, consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Public health experts think regular screening of children and staff will help stop infections from spreading.

The federal government in the spring set aside \$10 billion in funding for COVID-19 screening tests for teachers, staff and students, but few took advantage as cases dropped. (Courtesy thehill.com)

**Related**

**GOP Governors Who Resist Vaccine Mandates Will Be 'Run Over' By The Administration, Advisor Says**

White House senior adviser Cedric Richmond said President Joe Biden is willing to "run over" any Republican governors who attempt to fight back against federal vaccine mandates.

After Biden unveiled a plan to impose either vaccination or frequent testing on over 80 million workers who are employed at companies that have 100 employees or more, Richmond told CNN that the White House is ready for GOP opposition.

"The one thing I admire about this president is the fact that we are always going to put people above politics. And we're going to fight for those who really need our help," Richmond, a former Democrat congressman from Louisiana, said in response to a question about governors resisting the mandate.

"And those governors that stand in the way, I think, it was very clear from the president's tone today that he will run over them," he said.



Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-La.) speaks during a House Judiciary Committee markup of the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, on Capitol Hill, in Washington, on Dec. 11, 2019. (Jose Luis Magana-Pool/Getty Images)

"And it is important. It's not for political purposes. It's to save the lives of

American people. And so, we won't let one or two individuals stand in the way. We will always err on the side of protecting the American people."

Richmond's comment, however, raises questions about how the federal government plans to "run over" states, as the United States government is federalist and combines the central government with state and local governments. A number of Republican governors on Thursday, following Biden's speech, said they would resist the vaccine mandate. Should the federal government direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to impose testing or vaccine mandates on private employees, Biden will face an avalanche of lawsuits. "My legal team is standing by ready to file our lawsuit the minute Joe Biden files his unconstitutional rule," South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, wrote in a Twitter post. "This gross example of federal intrusion will not stand."



**Kay Ellen Ivey is the 54th and current governor of the state of Alabama .**

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, also a Republican, wrote that his administration will "pursue every legal option available" in order to halt what he called a "blatantly unlawful overreach."

And Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona said his state will "push back" against federal mandates, saying "Biden-Harris administration is hammering down on private businesses and individual freedoms in an unprecedented and dangerous way. This will never stand up in court." He wrote: "This dictatorial approach is wrong, un-American and will do far more harm than good. How many workers will be displaced? How many kids are kept out of classrooms? How many businesses fined? The vaccine is and should be a choice."

Other than an order targeting private businesses, Biden also said he would mandate that all federal workers and contractors get the shot, mandate Medicare and Medicaid hospital staff to get vaccinated, and other mandates. (Courtesy ntd.com)

# These States Are Seeing A Huge Rise In Delta Hospitalizations



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

COVID-19 hospitalizations have hit 100,000 for the first time since January. Doctors are staging walkouts. Nurses are exhausted. Look past the headlines and you will see more and more Americans dying or hospitalized due to severe disease caused by the Delta variant of the coronavirus. If you felt invincible last year, please reconsider. "I think most of us thought once we got through the winter or people started getting vaccinated, we said, Okay, the worst is behind us. We're not going to deal with this again," virus expert Ashish Jha told Good Morning America. That didn't happen because "we never expected that a third of Americans would opt not to get vaccinated." As a result, the following 5 states have hospitals overflowing; one is even begging tourists not to come.

**1. Oregon**



"Every day we see just the body boxes roll out one after the other and then

as soon as we clean the room we get somebody back in there... It's the worst we've ever seen." That's what ICU nurse Clarissa Carson told CBS News' Janet Shamlian Wednesday at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in Medford, Oregon, where COVID-19 patients have filled the hospital," reports CBS News. "Shamlian reported constant turnover in the hospital's intensive care unit, but not because patients are getting better." "We have patients waiting to get onto life support," ICU Dr. Somnath Ghosh said. "The turnaround is so rapid, it's pretty sad."

**2. Illinois**



"Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker has reinstated a mask mandate for the state, requiring masks indoors for residents as he says the state is 'running out of time as our hospitals run out of beds,'" reports 5 Chicago. "The new indoor mask mandate, similar to mandates already handed down in Cook County and Chicago,

will begin Monday and require facial coverings in indoor settings, regardless of COVID vaccination status." "Illinois will join several other states that have reinstated statewide indoor mask requirements, regardless of vaccination status, effective on Monday," Pritzker said. "Masks work. Period."

**3. Florida**



Florida has the most people hospitalized at more than 17,000. "South Florida COVID patients are filling ICU beds at rates not seen before. A new dashboard released by Palm Beach County Thursday reveals that only 4% of ICU beds in its 17 hospitals are available. In Broward County, only 3% of ICU beds at its 16 hospitals are available, its dashboard shows," reports the Sun Sentinel. "Across the state, the situation is just as bleak. With COVID patients getting sicker and many on ventilators, only 5% of intensive care beds are open to new patients, according to the U.S. Health and Human Services data."

**4. Texas**



Texas has 14,000-plus people hospitalized with COVID. "As the highly contagious delta variant of COVID-19 spreads and sends unvaccinated Tex-

ans to the hospital with serious illness, hospitals are under enormous pressure to make room for growing numbers of patients," reports the Texas Tribune. "Hospital staff has never been in shorter supply, which deepens the strain on all departments, including emergency rooms, respiratory therapy and even labor and delivery. Without the capacity to



take on new patients — and equally thin resources elsewhere to transfer them to — doctors fear they'll have to start making heartbreaking decisions about care in order to save the most lives possible."

**5. New Mexico**



"New Mexico's Democratic Governor Michelle Grisham has announced a temporary indoor mask mandate following a 90 percent increase in statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations over the

last two weeks," reports Newsweek. "In addition to the mandate, Grisham announced mandatory vaccinations for all personnel working in care settings and schools." "We can't continue our economic recovery and our positive economic journey if we have out of control COVID cases in the state of New Mexico," Grisham said. "We're gonna use masks and vaccines to blunt the spread of COVID and see if we can't rebalance where we are as a state, particularly given the Delta variant."

**Stay Safe Out There!**



No matter where you live, follow the public health fundamentals and help end this pandemic, no matter where you live—get vaccinated ASAP; if you live in an area with low vaccination rates, wear an N95 face mask, don't travel, social distance, avoid large crowds, don't go indoors with people you're not shel-



tering (especially in bars), practice good hand hygiene, and protect your life and the lives of others. COVID. (Courtesy eatthis.com)