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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



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Southern DAILY

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Russia assaults Sievierodonetsk wasteland, extends gas cuts to Europe

KYIV, May 31 (Reuters) - Ukrainian forces were holding out in the eastern industrial city of Sievierodonetsk on Tuesday, resisting Russia's all-out assault to capture a bombed-out wasteland that Moscow has made the principal objective of its invasion.

Both sides said Russian forces now controlled between a third and half of the city. Russia's separatist proxies acknowledged that capturing the city was taking longer than hoped, despite one of the biggest ground assaults of the war.

Russia, responding to Western sanctions after its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, widened its gas cuts to Europe on Tuesday with Gazprom (GAZP.MM) saying it would cut supplies to several "unfriendly" countries which have refused to accept Moscow's roubles-for-gas payment scheme. EU leaders agreed overnight to cut imports of Russian oil by 90% by year-end, the bloc's toughest yet response. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy welcomed the move but criticised what he called an "unacceptable" delay.



"When over 50 days have passed between the fifth and sixth sanction packages, the situation is not acceptable for us," Zelenskiy said, speaking alongside Slovakian President Zuzana Caputova in Kyiv.

Western military analysts say Moscow has drained manpower and firepower from across other parts of the front to concentrate on Sievierodonetsk, hoping a massive offensive will achieve one of its stated aims, to secure surrounding Luhansk province for separatist proxies.

"We can say already that a third of Sievierodonetsk is already under our control," Russia's TASS state news agency quoted Leonid Pasechnik, the leader of the pro-Moscow Luhansk People's Republic, as saying.

Fighting was raging in the city, but Russian forces were not advancing as rapidly as might have been hoped, he said, claiming that pro-Moscow forces wanted to "maintain the city's infrastructure" and moved slowly because of caution around chemical factories.

A Russian air strike hit a nitric acid tank, Luhansk governor Serhiy Gaidai said on Tuesday. In a post on the Telegram app, he urged local residents not to leave bomb shelters because of the risk posed by toxic fumes. read more

In its evening briefing note on Facebook, Ukraine's military command said that Russian

forces were "attempting to take full control of Sievierodonetsk" and surround Ukrainian units fighting there.

"Unfortunately ... the city has been split in half. But at the same time the city still defends itself. It is still Ukrainian," the head of the city administration, Oleksandr Stryuk, said, advising those still trapped inside to stay in cellars.

Ukraine says Russia has destroyed all of the city's critical infrastructure with unrelenting bombardment, followed by wave after wave of mass ground assaults involving huge numbers of casualties.

Thousands of residents remain trapped. Russian forces were advancing towards the city centre, but slowly, regional governor Gaidai said.

A rescuer works to extinguish a fire at a meat production facility in the aftermath of an attack, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, at a location given as Mykolaiv. Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Donetsk region. A police officer checks an area during an evacuation of local residents between shelling in the village of Novomykhailivka.

A local resident walks next to a building destroyed by a Russian military strike, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in the town of Bakhmut, in Donetsk Region, Ukraine May 29, 2022. REUTERS/Serhii Nuzhnenko

Gaidai said there did not appear to be a risk of Ukrainian forces being encircled, though they could

ultimately be forced to retreat across the Siverskiy Donets river to Lysychansk, the twin city on the opposite bank.

Stryuk, head of the city administration, said evacuating civilians was no longer possible.

Jan Egeland, secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council aid agency which had long operated out of Sievierodonetsk, said he was "horrified" by its destruction.

"We fear that up to 12,000 civilians remain caught in crossfire in the city, without sufficient access to water, food, medicine or electricity," he said. "The near-constant bombardment is forcing civilians to seek refuge in bomb shelters and basements, with only few precious opportunities for those trying to escape."

Elsewhere on the battlefield, there were few reports of major shifts. In the east, Ukraine says Moscow is trying to assault other areas along the main front, regrouping to press towards the city of Sloviansk. In the south, Ukraine claimed in recent days to have pushed back Russian forces to the border of Russian-held Kherson province.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

05/30/2022

Can We Still Protect Our Kids?

In Uvalde, Texas, this last week, at least 19 children and two teachers are dead from a senseless act of violence. These staggering numbers will not change one single thing and the national news no longer cares. The news people have forgotten this tragedy and many other mass shootings including 60 deaths in Las Vegas, 49 deaths in Orlando, 13 deaths in Columbine and 10 deaths in Buffalo, all of which included innocent victims who were school children, grocery shoppers,

teachers and concertgoers. All of these tragic acts have happened over a short period of time and all we can do is hope the next bullets will not hit our kids and neighbors, but the shooting will happen again.

In Houston, the Texas National Rifle Association is hosting convention politicians all of whom have accepted donations for condemning violence with one voice, but they believe that these evil murderers had mental



problems or were scum. They believe that what they did should not affect the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Everyone has the right and freedom to have a gun to protect their own safety.

Today, we are the nation that claims to be the leader of civilization in the world with freedom and democracy as our national cornerstones,

while in the meantime, in our own backyard, senseless, wanton massacres are killing our innocent people and are being carried out by deranged murderers across the country. Even our own kids' lives can't be protected. What are we talking about freedom and civil rights?

Millions of immigrants came to this land seeking opportunity and we devote our

whole lives to make America our home. We all hope our next generation will be able to live very peaceful lives, but the environment today is just getting worse.

We are urging all the politicians and community leaders to face this serious challenge and find the best solution for all of us.



Wea H. Lee
Wealee@scdaily.com

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



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Pope Francis attends the funeral of former Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican May 31, 2022. REUTERS/Guglielmo Mangiapane



A worker dismantles barriers at a residential area, as the city prepares to end the lockdown in Shanghai, China. REUTERS/Aly Song



Soccer Football - CAF Champions League - Final - Al-Ahly v Wydad Casablanca - Mohammed V Stadium, Casablanca, Morocco - May 30, 2022 Wydad Casablanca's Ahmed Tagnaouti celebrates with a flare after winning the CAF Champions League REUTERS/Juan Medina



Tourists walk in front of a structure made of salt, at the Uyuni Salt Flat in Bolivia. REUTERS/Claudia Morales



Men stand on the debris of a house which collapsed during a landslide caused by heavy rains at Jardim Monte Verde, in Iburá neighborhood, in Recife, Brazil. REUTERS/Diego Nigro



A man walks on salt at the Uyuni Salt Flat, Bolivia. Picture taken with a drone. REUTERS/Claudia Morales

“Amazingly High” Immune Response Discovered In Fully Jabbed People Who Also Caught The Disease

Study: How To Get ‘Super Immunity’ To Covid



(Photo:/Malte Mueller/Getty Images)

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

Fully vaccinated people who catch Covid, as well as those who had the disease prior to the jabs, get rewarded with the best immune responses, a new study has found. Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) researchers took samples from 104 people, double-jabbed with the Pfizer vaccine. Forty-two of them had never tested positive for Covid, 31 were vaccinated after an infection, and 31 had “breakthrough” infections following the vaccination. After the scientists exposed the volunteers’ blood samples to the Alpha, Beta, and Delta variants of Covid-19, they discovered that the combination of vaccine and natural immunity creates antibodies “at least 10 times more potent – than immunity generated by vaccination alone.” As a result, the scientists concluded that “additional antigen exposure from natural infection substantially boosts the quantity, quality, and breadth” of immune response to the disease, “regardless of whether it occurs before or after vaccination.” “In either case, you will get a really, really robust immune response – amazingly high,” co-senior author Fikadu Tafesse, who is an assistant professor of molecular microbiology and immunology in the OHSU School of Medicine, said. Moreover, the study, published on Tuesday in Science Immunology magazine, claims that “while age negatively correlates with antibody response after vaccination alone, no cor-

relation with age was found in breakthrough or hybrid immune groups.” Tafesse noted that the likelihood of getting infected after vaccination is still high due to the wide spread of the virus, but with the jabs “we’ll get a milder case and end up with this super immunity.” The new findings suggest that “each new breakthrough infection potentially brings the pandemic closer to the end.” (Courtesy rt.com)

Related

Natural Covid Delta Immunity More Effective Than Vaccination – CDC study Despite contradicting previous advice from health officials, the study still insists that vaccination is the “safest strategy” against the coronavirus. The study, published on Wednesday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), found that as the Delta variant became the dominant coronavirus strain during the second half of 2021, people who were vaccinated were six times less likely to catch Covid-19 than those who hadn’t been jabbed. However, those who had been infected with an earlier variant of the coronavirus, but hadn’t been vaccinated, were between 15 and 29 times less likely to catch the virus. A similar difference was noticed in hospitalization rates, with prior immunity conferring better protection against hospitalization than vaccination.



Despite its disadvantage compared to natural immunity, the CDC stressed that “vaccination remains the safest strategy” for preventing Covid-19 infections. This is because “having Covid the first time carries with it significant risks,” study co-author Dr. Eli Rosenberg told CNN. Likewise Dr. Erica Pan, state epidemiologist for the California Department of Public Health, recommended that even those with prior infection get vaccinated to ensure they get a layer of “additional protection.”

The study’s conclusion contradicts earlier claims from top US health officials. At the beginning of the Delta outbreak last May, White House Chief Medical Advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci insisted that vaccines “are better than the traditional response you get from natural infection.” Fauci has also been accused by Republican lawmakers of ignoring studies touting the benefits of natural immunity, “because it foils his plans to get everybody possible vaccinated.” As it was conducted during the surge of Delta infections, the study offers no insight into the efficacy of vaccines against the now-dominant Omicron variant.

WHO Says, ‘No Evidence’

For Boosting Children And Teens *The World Health Organization says Covid-19 boosters should be a priority for the highest-risk populations instead*



A teenager gets a Pfizer Covid-19 booster at a vaccine clinic in Bellows Falls, Vermont, January 14, 2022. (Photo/The Brattleboro Reformer / Kristopher Radder/©AP) There is currently no evidence that Covid-19 booster shots should be administered to healthy children and adolescents, the WHO’s top scientists said. The organization is still trying to work out the appropriate booster schedule. “The aim is to protect the most vulnerable, to protect those at highest risk of severe disease and dying, those are our elderly population, immunocompromised with underlying con-

ditions and also health care workers,” WHO chief scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan said at a news briefing on Tuesday, adding that “there’s no evidence right now” for administering them to otherwise healthy children and teens. The WHO’s Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization will meet later this week to consider how governments should think about boosters, Swaminathan said. Dr. Michael Ryan, the WHO’s executive director for health emergencies, said the organization hasn’t figured out yet how many doses people may ultimately need.



“I think people do have a certain fear out there that this booster thing is going to be like every two or three months and everyone’s going to have to go and get a booster. And I don’t think we have the answer to that yet,” Ryan said. SAGE may eventually redefine how many doses will make up the “primary series” of shots, Ryan added, explaining that most healthy people may need just two, but the elderly or immunocompromised could require three or four.

Last week, the WHO’s Technical Advisory Group on Covid-19 Vaccine Composition (TAG-Co-VAC) said that a vaccination strategy “based on repeated booster doses of the original vaccine composition is unlikely to be appropriate or sustainable,” urging member countries to prioritize primary vaccinations for high-risk groups over universal boosting. TAG-Co-VAC experts also said that current vaccines focus on reducing severe disease and protecting healthcare systems, while there is an ongoing need for vaccines that prevent infection and transmission of the virus.

WHO Experts Criticize ‘Repeated Booster’ Strategy *The World Health Organization’s vaccine advisory body has voiced concerns about using current Covid-19 vaccines as boosters*



(Photo:/Morsa Images/© Getty Images/)

Using the original vaccines against Covid-19 as boosters against emerging variants is the wrong approach, said a WHO expert group, adding that the world needs new vaccines that protect against infection and transmission. “A vaccination strategy based on repeated booster doses of the original vaccine composition is unlikely to be appropriate or sustainable,” the Technical Advisory Group on Covid-19 Vaccine Composition (TAG-Co-VAC) said on Tuesday. While some countries may recommend boosters, “the immediate priority for the world is accelerating access to the primary vaccination, particularly for groups at greater risk of developing severe disease,” the group added, pointing out the “need for equity in access to vaccines across countries to achieve global public health goals.” While the currently available vaccines focus on “reducing severe disease and death, as well as protecting health systems,” there is a need for vaccines “that have high impact on prevention of infection and transmission.” Until such jabs are developed, the existing vaccines may need to be updated to better target emerging virus variants such as Omicron, the group said.



Developers should work to create vaccines that “elicit immune responses that are broad, strong, and long-lasting in order to reduce the need for successive booster doses,” the TAG-Co-VAC urged. On Tuesday, the EU drug regulator EMA’s head of Biological Health Threats and Vaccines Strategy said they don’t yet have enough data to recommend a second booster – the fourth jab so far – even as some countries urged such a move. Marco Cavaleri said they were “rather concerned about a strategy that entangles repeat vaccination within a short term,” adding that “we cannot really continuously give a booster dose every three-four months.” The WHO said that Omicron could infect more than half of the EU population over the next two months and urged the bloc’s authorities not to treat the virus as endemic. (Courtesy rt.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. 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. (Courtesy <https://www.msn.com/> and <https://www.cnet.com/>)