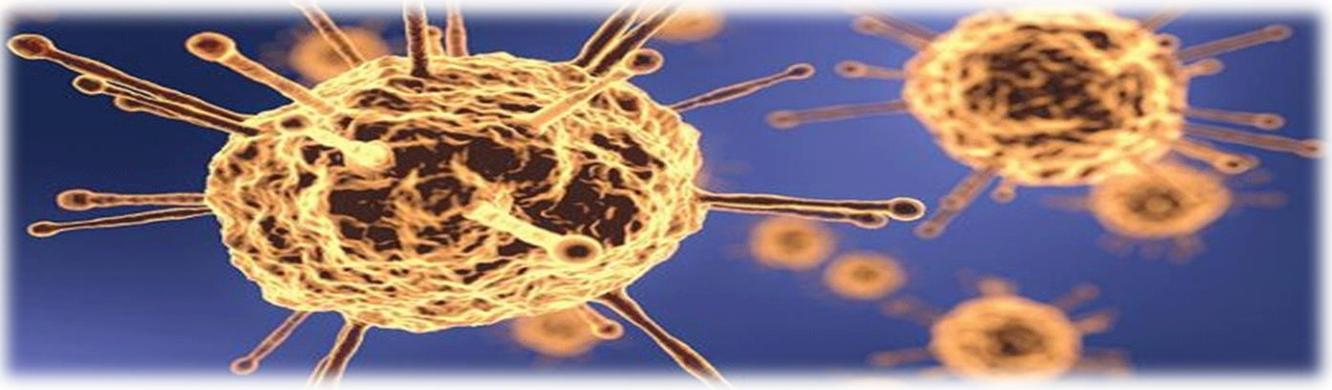


CORONAVIRUS NEWS BRIEF



Compiled Periodically from various sources By:
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Issue# 21 * June 19, 2021- Saturday.



Calling for “global unity, leadership and solidarity”, Prime Minister Narendra Modi last Saturday emphasized the “special responsibility of democratic and transparent societies to prevent future pandemics”.

(Report on Page# 6)

June is 'national month of action' for COVID-19 vaccinations.

Biden issues a Covid warning to less vaccinated communities.

President Joe Biden marked a milestone on Friday of 300 million vaccine doses administered in the U.S. under his administration.



But he also issued a warning, saying that Covid cases will rise in some areas with lower vaccination rates and that the highly contagious delta variant will make unvaccinated people even more susceptible to the virus. "People getting seriously ill and being hospitalized due to Covid-19 are those who have not been fully vaccinated," Biden said Friday. "[The Delta variant] is a variant that is more easily transmissible, potentially deadlier, and particularly dangerous for young people."

Biden warned that with the delta variant, people could be more likely to die from the virus in areas with lower levels of vaccination. Biden said he didn't expect the variant to force another lockdown, but said that some places "will be very hurt" by it.

So far, vaccinations have proven effective against the variant, which is spreading overseas and becoming more common at home. Rochelle Walensky, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the delta variant made up nearly 10 percent of U.S. cases this month, compared to 2.7 percent of all cases in May.

Walensky said Friday on Good Morning America that the likely more harmful delta variant will "probably" become the dominant strain in the U.S. in the coming months. Data has shown the variant, which first appeared in India, to be 40 to 80 percent more transmissible and about twice as likely to cause hospitalization as the alpha variant.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pushed back the end of a lockdown in England amid the delta variant's spread.

Biden's comments about the vulnerabilities of unvaccinated communities echoed similar concerns made earlier in the day by his chief of staff, Ron Klain. In a tweet Friday morning, Klain warned that areas with low vaccination rates "will see cases climb again." As of Friday's CDC data, 65.1 percent of American adults had received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine. But some states have lagged behind, especially in the South. Data has shown a partisan gap in vaccinations, with Republican districts far less likely to have hit 60 percent of residents vaccinated.

Biden's vaccine push has also struggled to win over Black Americans, though the Biden administration noted in a fact sheet that 54 percent of vaccinations in the past month have been among people of color.

With vaccination rates rising, Covid cases have plummeted around the country, dropping from a seven-day national average of 67,673 cases daily as of April 18 to 11,717 as of Wednesday, according to CDC data. The seven-day case average peaked at over 250,000 in January, when thousands of Americans were dying from the virus daily.

Biden had set a goal of vaccinating at least 70 percent of U.S. adults with at least one dose by July 4, though the U.S. is not expected to reach that goal. Earlier this month, Biden launched a "month of action" to reach that goal, but vaccinations have slowed overall after high early demand for the shots. Governments and companies have offered a host of incentives for vaccination, from free beer to baseball tickets to lotteries. On Independence Day, Biden is set to proclaim "a summer of freedom" from the virus that has killed more than 600,000 Americans. Biden plans to host more than 1,000 guests for a cookout on the White House's South Lawn on July 4, with invitees including members of the military, first responders and essential workers.

Can adult medical daycare centers reopen? What are the safety guidelines?

The State of New Jersey: COVID-19 Updates:



As of June 14, 2021, Adult Medical Daycare Centers can reopen, while following Department of Health safety protocols.

These facilities will need to attest to satisfying the guidance requirements to ensure the centers can be opened safely, including:

When all participants and staff are fully vaccinated, physical distancing and group size requirements do not need to be maintained.

If ALL participants and staff present during the group activity are fully vaccinated (such as communal dining), participants may choose to have close contact with others without wearing a mask during the activity. Staff, regardless of vaccination status, shall continue to wear face masks while at work.

All facilities still must screen staff and participants for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry to the facility each day.

During activities where not all staff and participants are vaccinated, individuals should adhere to six feet physical distancing whenever possible; when it is difficult for individuals to remain six feet apart, physical barriers, such as plexiglass, should be considered.

Unless they are fully vaccinated, participants should be encouraged to wear masks when feasible.

The facility should also ensure proper ventilation (i.e. opening windows or doors when doing so does not pose a safety or health risk); facilities should make sure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air in facilities and vehicles.

Complete guidance for facilities is available on the NJ Department of Health's website.

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Juneteenth become a US holiday.



An African American band at an Emancipation Day celebration in Austin in 1900.

Juneteenth officially became a federal holiday in the United States on June 17, 2021—joining days such as Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday and the 4th of July as national holidays. Before it was an official holiday in the United States, many states passed legislation recognizing Juneteenth in some form. It took more than 100 years to become a paid holiday in any of the U.S. states, and when it did, Texas led the way.

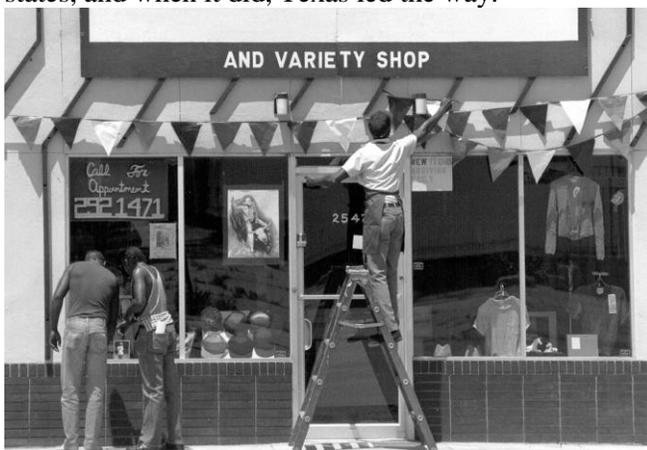
Sabine bottom right after freedom, ’cause they catch ’em swimmin’ ’cross Sabine River and shoot ’em,” former slave Susan Merritt recalled in Litwack’s book. Those who persevered celebrated, and one year after slaves in Texas were declared free by Granger’s military order, the first Juneteenth celebration was held. As the years passed and Black people migrated in and out of Texas, the tradition spread. In 1979, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official statewide holiday.

Juneteenth is one of America’s oldest holidays and is observed each year on June 19 to mark the official end of slavery in the US.

The day, which gets its name from combining June and 19, has long been celebrated by black Americans as a symbol of their long-awaited emancipation — but the story behind the holiday, and how Juneteenth got its meaning, starts more than 150 years ago in Galveston, Texas.

What is the meaning and history behind Juneteenth? On June 19, 1865, Union troops led by Gen. Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to break the news to the last remaining Confederate sympathizers that they’d lost the Civil War and all slaves must be freed.

“The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United



A business owner puts up Juneteenth decorations in 1989.

After full emancipation in 1865, some slave owners didn’t give up easily. Many slaves who acted on Granger’s announcement ended up paying with their lives. “You could see lots of n— hangin’ to trees in

States, all slaves are free,” the Union general read aloud to the residents of Galveston, according to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

“This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the During the summer of 2020, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam announced plans to give every executive branch employee a paid day off in celebration of Juneteenth and by October of that year, the legislature passed a law making it a permanent connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer.”

Newly freed slaves celebrated emancipation with “prayer, feasting, song, and dance” and the following year, the first official Juneteenth celebration was born, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.



The Juneteenth parade in Philadelphia, 2019

“The importance of [Juneteenth] is that it’s kind of rooted in this long history of struggle to get freedom and then the efforts to maintain that freedom in the face of enormous repression that was going to come shortly after,” explained Columbia University Professor David Rosner, PhD.

“It signified the true end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction, a time that was supposed to be very happy and hopeful but became a very miserable time as part of the redemption of the South to move African Americans to indentured servitude.”

While President Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in his Jan. 1, 1863, Emancipation Proclamation, rebellious Confederate strongholds dotted across the South delayed the widespread implementation.

“The idea that people in that part of Texas had no idea that the war was over is farcical, quite frankly,” Rooks told *The Post*, chuckling at the thought.

“There were wire services, there were newspapers ... the larger plantation owners were very wealthy and wealthy people have access to information,” the professor went on.

“They were brutal people but they were the ruling class in the United States. They were elite, many were

wealthy, they were not illiterate or backwards. They were brutal and inhuman, but not ignorant.”

At the time, Galveston had its own newspaper, the *Galveston Daily News*, and a dispatch from New Orleans detailing the end of the war and the return of Confederate prisoners was published on June 3, 1865, more than two weeks before Granger arrived, according to archives accessible through *Newspapers.com*.

Nevertheless, Juneteenth has been “passed down” through black communities ever since, Rooks said, and following the police killing of George Floyd in 2020 and the modern-day civil rights movement that came after, the holiday has seen a renewed interest.

When did Juneteenth become a holiday and how many states and companies recognize it as a holiday?

Congress passed a law making Juneteenth a federal holiday in June 2021 but 48 states and the District of Columbia had already passed legislation recognizing it as a holiday or observance.



The first official Juneteenth celebration came the year after the liberation of slaves in Galveston, but it would take more than a hundred years for Texas to consider it a state holiday. In 1980, Texas became the first state in the US to declare Juneteenth a state holiday.

The only two states yet to recognize Juneteenth as either a state or ceremonial holiday are Hawaii and South Dakota. Hawaii has passed legislation that would make Juneteenth a holiday but the bill is still set to be signed by the state’s governor.

While the majority of states observe the day, only a handful of states — outside of Texas — recognize it as a paid state holiday.

State holiday.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo made a similar announcement that summer when he signed an executive order recognizing June 19 as a paid holiday for state employees and later signed legislation that made the move permanent, as did the state of Washington.

After Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 brought a renewed focus to the plight of black Americans, private companies have also started to commemorate Juneteenth and some have designated it as a paid company holiday as well.

ADDRESSING G-7, INDIA'S PM MODI CALLS FOR OPEN VACCINE CHAINS



Addressing the G-7 outreach session via video conference, Modi also expressed India's commitment to support collective endeavors to improve global health governance.

This is an oblique reference to the lack of transparency displayed by China in dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak and WHO's poor leadership as the crisis engulfed the world.

Modi said there should be "one earth, one health" approach, which, sources said, was supported by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Sources said India's emphasis on keeping "open supply chains for vaccine raw materials and components to help enhance vaccine production received widespread support".

This came days after French President Emanuel Macron supported India's demand for lifting restrictions on export of raw materials needed to manufacture vaccines.

The session, titled 'Building Back Stronger – Health', focused on global recovery from the pandemic and strengthening resilience against future pandemics. Modi sought the G-7's support for a proposal moved by "India and South Africa at the WTO for a TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) waiver on Covid-related technologies". Sources said

Australian PM Scott Morrison and others came out strongly in support of this.

The Prime Minister highlighted India's "whole of society" approach to fight the pandemic, synergizing the efforts of all levels of government, industry and civil society. He also explained India's successful use of open source digital tools for contact tracing and vaccine management, and conveyed the country's willingness to share its experience and expertise with other developing countries. Modi expressed appreciation for the support extended by the G-7 and other guest countries during the recent wave of Covid infections in India. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had invited Modi to attend the outreach component of the G-7 Summit, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa.

Addressing another G7 session on 'open societies and open economies' on Sunday, Modi said India is a natural ally for the G7 countries in defending the shared values from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism and violent extremism, disinformation and economic coercion. In that session, the prime minister highlighted India's civilizational commitment to democracy, freedom of thought and liberty, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

A 33-YEAR-OLD NURSE GOT LONG COVID DESPITE BEING FULLY VACCINATED. DOCTORS THINK WE MAY SEE MORE OF THESE RARE CASES.



Anna Kern got her second vaccine dose five months ago, but it wasn't a ticket to normality. Kern, a 33-year-old nurse practitioner, tested positive for COVID-19 in April and has been struggling with long COVID ever since. The post-viral illness is characterized by symptoms that last a minimum of three weeks but can often drag on for months. Kern said her symptoms had gotten steadily worse. At first, she had chills and felt rundown, so she cut back her work hours - Kern had been doing COVID-19 tests in the Detroit area. Then she started experiencing extreme fatigue after minor activities like a walk or a jog.

In May, Kern recorded her heart rate while going about her morning routine - eating breakfast, brushing her teeth, washing the dishes. She was at 130 beats a minute, a rate she'd normally hit only through exercise. Symptoms like racing heart and fatigue are **commonly reported among people with long COVID**, who are also known as long-haulers.

By Memorial Day, Kern could barely move after working a shift. "I remember waking up and knowing that I needed to drink some water and maybe eat some food, but being so tired that I was trying to figure out if I could actually do that," she said. "I ended up crawling from my bed to my refrigerator."

She considered asking for more time off, even though she was working remotely. But at about the same time, she learned that her nursing position - her main source of income - had been cut.

With her life upended, Kern turned to a long-haul support group. She found a few people who'd also gotten breakthrough infections - cases of COVID-19 diagnosed at least two weeks after someone is fully vaccinated - and still hadn't recovered. But not many.

For now, there's no good data to assess how common long-haul cases are after vaccination, but the chances of getting any breakthrough infection are rare. A May report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that just one in 10,000 vaccinated

Americans got sick after their shots. And UK researchers estimated last year that long-haul cases could occur in about 10% of people found to have had COVID-19.

So getting long COVID after being fully vaccinated is "a low probability times a low probability," Bob Wachter, the chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of California at San Francisco.

Still, he said: "I'm at the stage now where I'm quite confident it can happen. I really doubt it's going to turn out to be one in a million."

'You feel lots of guilt - like, what did I do wrong?'

Kern's job put her at high risk of a coronavirus infection before her vaccine, so she donned full protective equipment during her shifts. "Before I went into my apartment, I would like take off my clothes and put my scrubs in a bag and take bleach water and rubbing alcohol and wipe down everything that I was bringing inside," Kern said. "I wasn't even taking a coat in April of last year, even though it was kind of chilly, because I didn't want to have to deal with it afterwards."

Then she got her first Pfizer-BioNTech shot in December. "It felt like relief flooding through my body - like, OK, I've survived," Kern said.

But four months later, an unvaccinated coworker got sick. The woman wasn't diligent about wearing her mask, Kern said.

Less than a week later, Kern started feeling fatigued. She thinks the vaccine helped prevent a more severe outcome, but she still wonders whether she slipped up somehow.

"You feel lots of guilt - like, what did I do wrong? How could I have been more cautious?" she said.

Of course, no coronavirus vaccine is 100% effective - and even the shots from Moderna and Pfizer appear to be slightly less effective in the face of new variants.

"The chances of a breakthrough infection are real," Wachter said.

He added that even people who got relatively mild cases postvaccination could feel crummy for months - "and maybe for years, we just don't know."

Kern said she's having a hard time trusting that it's safe to return to normal activities. She worries she won't be feeling up for work anytime soon.

"I have been pretty much working nonstop since COVID started," she said. "This wouldn't have been the way that I would have elected to take some time for me to breathe, but it is the way that it's happening."

- (*Business Insider*).

Child Tax Credit:

Here's who will get up to \$1,800 per child in cash



Colorado forced companies to disclose salaries on job listings - and now some...

A 33-year-old nurse got long COVID despite being fully vaccinated. Doctors think...

About 36 million American families on July 15 will start receiving monthly checks from the IRS, as part of the expanded Child Tax Credit. Eligible families will receive up to \$1,800 in cash through December — however, the tax credit has a complication that may prompt some families to opt out.

The enhanced Child Tax Credit (CTC) was signed into law by President Joe Biden as part of the American Rescue Plan. The effort expands the benefit from a \$2,000 credit, taken annually when you file your taxes, to up to \$3,600 per child, with half the amount divided into six payments to be paid out in cash, on a monthly basis, from July through December. The rest is claimed on your 2021 tax return.

The effort has some similarities to the three rounds of stimulus checks that have been distributed by the IRS to help people weather the pandemic. For one, the enhanced CTC and the stimulus checks are only available to eligible lower- and middle-class families, with upper-income households essentially shut out of the benefit. And secondly, the IRS will deposit the payments directly into bank accounts.

But there is one major difference between the stimulus checks and the enhanced CTC in how the IRS treats overpayment. With the stimulus checks, recipients didn't have to repay the IRS if they received more than they were entitled. That's not the case with the enhanced Child Tax Credit.

"If you are getting money and don't qualify, you need to opt out of it," said Mark Steber, Jackson Hewitt's chief tax information officer. "You will have to pay that money back."

In contrast, the stimulus payments' treatment of overpayment amounted to "a big 'Get out of jail' card," he said.

The IRS on Monday flagged the overpayment issue. "If you receive a total amount of advance Child Tax Credit payments that exceeds the amount of Child Tax Credit that you can properly claim on your 2021 tax year, you may need to repay to the IRS some or all of that excess payment," it said on its website.

Who qualifies for cash payments?

Under the American Rescue Plan, the CTC was expanded to \$3,600 for each child under 6 years of age and \$3,000 for each child between 6 to 17 years old. Previously, the credit had excluded children who had turned 17 and was limited to \$2,000 per child.

Aside from having children who are 17 or younger as of December 31, 2021, families will only qualify for the expanded credit if they fall below certain income thresholds:

\$75,000 or less for single taxpayers

\$112,500 or less for heads of household

\$150,000 or less for married couples filing a joint return and qualified widows and widowers

What if I have kids but my income is above that?

Families may still receive some of the enhanced tax credit if they earn above those thresholds — up to a point. Families will receive \$50 less for every \$1,000 over an income threshold, until the enhanced payments are phased out for people who earn roughly \$20,000 more than those salary thresholds.

In other words, single filers who earn up to \$95,000 and married couples with combined incomes up to \$170,000 would receive smaller payments, but above that they would be phased out entirely from the enhanced Child Tax Credit.

However, families who earn above those phase-out caps may still qualify for the regular Child Tax Credit. The regular CTC of \$2,000, taken annually on your tax return, is available to single parents who earn up to \$200,000 and married couples who earn up to \$400,000. Higher-income families who earn above those higher income thresholds don't qualify for either the regular or enhanced CTC.

How much will I get for each child?

For parents, the payments will amount to:

\$300 per month for each child under 6

\$250 per month for each child between the ages of 6 and 17

That means that a qualifying family with two parents who file a joint tax return and have two children under 6 will receive \$600 in monthly payments for six months, starting July 15 and ending December 15. Over the course of the period, they'll receive \$3,600 in cash from the IRS for their two children.

What should I do to get the money?

Typically, nothing, said Steber of Jackson Hewitt.

"They have to do nothing if their situation was the same as their 2020 tax return — if their address is the same, their bank account is the same, same number of dependents," Steber said.

The IRS already sent letters to 36 million families who are eligible based on either their 2019 or 2020 federal income tax return, or if they provided information using the "non-filers tool" on the IRS.gov website last year to register for a stimulus payment and qualified based on that data.

The IRS said it will soon send a second letter that will estimate eligible families' monthly payment, which will begin hitting bank accounts on July 15.

What if I'm a non-filer?

Because the IRS relies on tax returns to determine the enhanced CTC, some people may fall through the cracks, such as low-income households that aren't required to file tax returns.

In that case, the IRS has opened a portal for those families to register for the tax credit. That portal can be found [here](#).

The IRS says that non-filers will need to provide personal information such as their date of birth, as well as Social Security numbers for themselves and their children. If they have a bank account, they can also enter the bank routing number and account number to receive deposits.

What should I do to opt out?

Because the IRS is relying on tax returns to determine payments, it sometimes doesn't have the most up-to-date information about taxpayers, such as their income or number of children.

That could result in some taxpayers either receiving the cash payments when they aren't actually eligible, or some people receiving less than they are entitled to — such as if they had a child in 2021, which the IRS wouldn't be aware of since it's looking at either 2020 or 2019 tax returns for eligibility.

The problem with overpayment is taxpayers will be required to repay any money received. That could happen if, for example, your 2020 income qualified you for the enhanced CTC, but your 2021 income was higher and would disqualify you. In that case, you could be looking at a future bill from the IRS.

The IRS said people will be able to opt out via an online tool, which isn't yet available but should be on the IRS' website by the end of June. Called the Child Tax Credit Update Portal, the tool will allow people to un-enroll from the tax credit before the first payment is made on July 15.

Can the Child Tax Credit payments be garnished?

Yes, according to the IRS.

The payments can be garnished by a number of creditors, including state and local governments and private creditors. However, some states and financial institutions have decided to shield their constituents and customers' CTC from garnishment, the IRS said.

For instance, California's attorney general recently said it is illegal for creditors to garnish CTC payments made to the state's residents.

Will the CTC payments be reduced for federal back taxes?

No, the IRS said.

The IRS won't chip away at your monthly payments to cover federal taxes that you may still owe. However, the IRS warned that if you get a refund when you file your 2021 taxes, any remainder amount from the CTC that is included in the refund could be used to offset tax debts.

*(Editor's note: Please use your common sense to donate to the right organization. If possible, give priority to your own family, neighbors and your village/Town or area healthcare systems directly. There are fraudulent organizations be aware of them. Cheque the need and response to those priorities. Get some advice from your Doctors or helping organizations. Many time Cash Donations are more effective than kind. I would recommend donating to Red Cross of India, UNICEF, Oxfam India, and Care India. **In my personal opinion, do not send any contributions to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PM Care Fund as its not transparent and has no accountability. -Kaushik Amin.)***

CORONAVIRUS: NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

***Affordable Care Act**

The US Supreme Court has dismissed a challenge to the Affordable Care Act brought on by Republican-led states. The justices decided that the opponents in this case, who urged justices to dismiss the entire 2010 law, weren't actually harmed by ACA provisions because Congress has reduced the penalty for failing to buy health insurance to zero. This was the third major challenge to the landmark healthcare reform law, and while the decision has preserved the ACA for now, there will undoubtedly be more Republican challenges. One such lawsuit is currently brewing in Texas, in which a group of individuals and businesses are arguing that an ACA provision requiring insurers to offer certain free preventative services is unlawful. About 31 million Americans have health coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

*** Coronavirus:**

The Biden administration of the USA has announced it will invest more than \$3 billion for the discovery, development and manufacturing of Covid-19 antiviral medicines, like a pill someone could easily take at home early in an illness. Meanwhile, the US is still trying to reach a goal, set by President Biden, of at least partially vaccinating 70% of the adult population by July 4. Experts continue to sound the warning of possibly dangerous consequences if the US doesn't meet such thresholds. In Indonesia, hundreds of health workers have been sickened with Covid-19 even though they received the Sinovac vaccine, raising even more questions about the efficacy of some vaccines against more infectious variants.

*** China:**

A coronavirus outbreak in a powerful shipping region in China could end up snarling holiday shopping, even though the holidays are half a year away. Last month, authorities in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong -- home to some of the world's busiest container ports -- canceled flights, locked down communities and suspended trade along its coastline to bring a rapid spike in Covid-19 cases under control. Things have improved, but the shipping damage is already done. The shutdown created a huge backlog of shipping containers and vessels waiting to dock. This congestion has led major shipping companies to warn clients of delays, changes to vessel routes and

destinations and spikes in fees. The whole situation could take months to clear.

***The need for clarity on indemnity negotiations:**

The Indian government could provide indemnity to Serum Institute of India (SII) besides Pfizer as the government is in favor of giving similar treatment to domestic and foreign vaccine makers.

SII's previous requests for protection from lawsuits in case of adverse events were rejected by the government. Bharat Biotech has not made such a request, the report says.

Pfizer, according to multiple reports, has made indemnity a condition for it to provide its mRNA vaccine to India. The US-based company has received legal protection against lawsuits in other countries it has provided its vaccines, including the US.

Yet a lack of clarity on the negotiations or the nature of protection being discussed is worrying, for not all indemnity clauses are the same. In most countries, indemnity ensures that the government and not the vaccine makers will be liable to pay compensation if a successful claim is made for an adverse reaction.

But Pfizer has come under fire for forcing indemnity conditions beyond this in South America.

In Brazil and Argentina, for instance, Pfizer had wanted protection against claims for its own acts of negligence, fraud or malice. Similar indemnity clauses were also forced onto other Latin American and Caribbean nations.

"It is utterly unreasonable that a country could be required to hold private companies harmless for the company's own design, development, manufacture, clinical testing, and packaging," Professor Lawrence Gostin, director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center on National & Global Health Law. In the US, for instance, indemnity protection does not include "willful misconduct" by vaccine makers. The Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act of 2005 that was invoked protects companies, until 2024, from being challenged in court for damages, yet does not provide blanket protection, Frontline notes.

*** More on vaccine side effects.**

Throughout the pandemic, health experts have been answering the question whether people who experience more severe side effects from vaccination go on to acquire stronger immunity against the virus, or vice

versa. There is no scientific proof of that. Another question is that when a person does not experience side effects from the vaccine, does it mean that the person may not have experienced symptoms, or at least severe ones, from Covid?

There have not been any definitive answers to this question. One expert suggested it was possible, at least in theory, for a loose correlation to exist.

Instead, the lack of side effects from the vaccine could potentially mean a greater propensity for developing severe Covid.

(That does not mean a person who does not have a reaction from the vaccine failed to have an immune response and is therefore more likely to contract the disease or become severely ill from it.)Based on observations of the millions of people who have received the vaccine, scientists have seen that some people who are older seem to have fewer side effects from the vaccine, William Schaffner, medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases tells The Washington Post. Some people who are older also seem to be more apt to get severe disease.

"So we think that there is a rough correlation between the local reactions and the likelihood of developing more severe illness," he explained. "It's a nice thing to talk about if you're looking at thousands of people, but we can't say that's likely in an individual person. The correlation is not that tight.

*AstraZeneca antibody cocktail fails to prevent Covid-19:



Anglo-Swedish pharma major AstraZeneca said on Tuesday that its monoclonal antibody treatment for Covid-19 failed in preventing the infection.

Report card: The cocktail, known as AZD7442, which was being developed with support from the US government, was administered to 1,121 adult volunteers who were unvaccinated and had come into contact with a Covid-19 positive person in the last eight days. According to the company, "this trial did not meet the primary endpoint against symptomatic illness" as the risk of symptomatic Covid-19 was reduced by just 33% as compared to a placebo, which was considered statistically insignificant.

Called Storm Chaser, it's one of the six advanced stage studies being conducted by the company to check if the medicine can prevent infection. The study, carried out in the US and UK, found that 23 volunteers who were administered the medicine became symptomatic following exposure to Covid-19, as against just 17 in the placebo group.

There was however a silver lining, as the company said that volunteers who caught the infection a week after being administered the drug were 51% less likely to develop symptoms — a figure that went up to 92% if the volunteer got infected more than a week after getting the drug.

* India reopens big cities as Covid numbers plunge.



After weeks-long lockdowns, major Indian cities have reopened for business, with long queues for buses in the financial hub of Mumbai while traffic returned to the roads of New Delhi after a devastating second wave of coronavirus that killed thousands.

The graph of new infections has been going down steadily. India reported 67,208 new COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours Thursday, data from the health ministry showed. The country's total case load now stands at 29.70 million, while total fatalities are at 381,903, the data showed.

"We have to save ourselves from infection but also bring the economy back on track," Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Twitter.

He ordered half the capital's shops to open on odd- and even-numbered days of the month respectively, in a bid to limit crowds, but allowed offices and the Delhi metro rail network to run at 50 percent of capacity.

But some curbs were retained, such as the ban on dining in restaurants and the use of theatres and gyms in a city still slowly recovering from a surge in the months of April and May that overwhelmed hospitals. These ran short of beds and medical oxygen, and people died in hospital parking lots and homes, while

crematoriums and morgues struggled to cope with an incessant flow of corpses.

Maharashtra allowed businesses to run until late afternoon, staffed with half their employees, and opened gyms, salons and spas, though cinemas and malls are to stay shut. India's richest state eased restrictions based on infection rates and hospital bed occupancy.

*** Can common cold protect you from Covid infection?**

Exposure to the virus that causes the common cold can provide protection against infection by the SARS-CoV-2 virus behind Covid-19, according to a study. The research, published this week in the Journal of Experimental Medicine, found that rhinovirus, the common respiratory virus, jump-starts the activity of interferon-stimulated genes.

These genes trigger early-response molecules in the immune system which can stop reproduction of the SARS-CoV-2 within airway tissues infected with the cold, the researchers said.

Triggering these defenses early in the course of Covid-19 infection holds promise to prevent or treat the infection, said senior study author Ellen Foxman, assistant professor at the Yale School of Medicine in the US. One way to do this, Foxman said, is by treating patients with interferon's, an immune system protein which is also available as a drug. "But it all depends upon the timing," she said.

Previous work showed that at the later stages of Covid-19, high interferon levels are associated with worse disease outcomes and may fuel overactive immune responses. However, recent genetic studies show that interferon-stimulated genes can also be protective in cases of Covid-19 infection.

To study whether rhinoviruses would have beneficial impact against the SARS-CoV-2, the researchers infected lab-grown human airway tissue with the virus and found that for the first three days, viral load in the tissue doubled about every six hours. However, the researchers found that reproduction of the Covid-19 virus was completely stopped in tissue which had been exposed to rhinovirus.

These findings may help explain why at times of year when colds are common, rates of infections with other viruses such as influenza tend to be lower, Foxman added.

*** India's DRDO's expensive anti-Covid drug shows more promise.**

A new study published online on a preprint server bioRxiv says that the anti-Covid-19 drug developed by the Defense Research Development Organization (DRDO), known as 2-Deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG), has been found to be effective against all variants of the novel coronavirus and "reduces the virus multiplication and alleviates the cells from infection-induced cytopathic effect (CPE) and cell death".

While the study has not yet been peer-reviewed, the drug, which is jointly developed with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), has already received emergency use authorisation last month for treatment of moderate to severe cases of Covid-19. During clinical trials of the drug, it was found that it not only enabled faster recovery of hospitalized patients — by reducing hospital stay by an average of two and a half days — but also reduced the need for supplemental oxygen, by about 40%.

However, despite being developed indigenously, by the DRDO-affiliated Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), the drug, which is being marketed by DRL, retails for Rs 990 per sachet. The drug is available in the form of powder which can be dissolved in water to be consumed orally.

***The firm behind the fake Kumbh tests:**



A private agency, which was awarded the contract for Covid testing in key areas of the Kumbh mela in Haridwar and is now under scanner for conducting 1 lakh fake tests, had submitted dubious office addresses to the Uttarakhand health department and listed phone numbers that are not in service.

In one of the documents submitted by the agency, the firm's address is listed as being in Ansal Chambers, Bhikaji Cama Place, East Delhi. (There is no Bhikaji Cama Place in East Delhi.)

On their website, the corporate address is mentioned in a building in Sector 63, Noida, which TOI found was a

tin shed. None of the phone numbers listed on the website were in service.

Further, the company's proposal of interest to conduct testing during Kumbh was initially rejected by the Haridwar health department, as they did not have approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). But the mela administration gave the green light as it had an MoU with two ICMR-approved private labs.

Questions then: How can a company get the contract based on a simple expression of interest? Was there a tender to award the contracts? Who vetted the company? What about the track record of working with the state government?

Nine private agencies and the state government had conducted 4 lakh tests during the gathering after the Uttarakhand HC had directed the state to conduct 50,000 daily tests in Kumbh. The agency under scanner had been tasked with conducting tests in key mela areas. A total of 2.7 lakh antigen tests and 44,278 RT PCR tests were conducted in the mela area, of which 1 lakh have now turned out to be fake.

***India: Was doubling of vax dose gap a 'scientific decision'?**

The Centre doubled the gap between two doses of Covishield vaccine without the agreement of the scientific group that it said recommended the increase, three members of the advisory body told Reuters.

The ministry of health changed the gap from 6-8 weeks to 12-16 weeks on May 13, at a time when the country was short of vaccines and Covid-19 cases were surging.

The government had then said that the extended gap was recommended by the National Technical Advisory Group of Immunization (NTAGI), based on real-life evidence mainly from the United Kingdom.

Yet the NTAGI scientists, classified by the government as three of the 14 "core members", told the news agency that the body did not have enough data to make such a recommendation.

Government health officials told a news conference on May 15 the gap was not increased to address a vaccine shortage but was a "scientific decision".

Covishield accounts for nearly 90% of the vaccine doses administered in India till now.

More recent studies have revealed that the protection is not as much as it was estimated earlier. Hence, countries are reverting back to the 8-12 week gap between the two doses of Covishield.

Dr NK Arora, who chairs the working group of NTAGI, said there was no dissent within the national

technical group on immunization regarding the decision. "The Covid Working Group took that decision, with no dissenting voice. This issue was then discussed threadbare at an NTAGI meeting, again with no dissenting notes," he said.

*** The Flying Sikh flies off...into eternity:**



Perhaps the most enduring imagery and memory about Milkha Singh are the events that unfolded in less than a minute on a balmy Tuesday afternoon in Rome on September 6, 1960, when the temperature was a pleasant 25.5 degrees Celsius and humidity 54%. At 3:45 pm local time, as Singh took guard, he would scarcely have known how, in a little over 45 seconds, his life would be irreversibly changed.

What exactly happened in those 45.6 seconds — which wasn't just Singh's personal best time for 400 m and better than the then existing Olympic record, set in 1952 Helsinki Olympics, of 45.9 seconds but also a national record for India for 38 years — will be known only to Singh, who was leading the six-men pack till the 250 m mark.

While there are varied accounts of what happened — from Singh looking over his shoulder at the runners behind him to thinking that he was running too fast and hence should slow down — what's not in dispute is that Singh, who passed away late on Friday night at the age of 91 due to post-Covid complications, lost out on a podium finish by 0.1 second. His death follows just five days after his wife Nirmal Kaur passed away due to Covid-19.

But Singh's triumphs didn't just lay on the cinder tracks that he scorched with his blistering pace — his victory over life's adversities was no less than a triumph. Born in Pakistan's Muzaffargarh district, in Kot Addu tehsil, which is about 100km from Multan in Pakistan's Punjab, Singh's life was impacted by the horrors of partition when his parents were killed in front of him.

Escaping to Delhi, where a railway platform served as his home for a month, Singh's achievements included four Asian Games gold medals — two in the 1958 Tokyo Games in the 200 m and 400 m with another two in 1962 Jakarta Games for 400 m and 4x400 m — as well as a Commonwealth Games gold medal in 1958, Cardiff, in the 440 yard dash.

Perhaps the best tribute to Singh's athletic feats came from Pakistan — a country of which he had no pleasant memories — when then Pakistan President General Ayub Khan said to him after Singh beat Pakistani sprinter Abdul Khaliq in 1960: "You didn't run today, you flew". The moniker 'Flying Sikh' stuck from then on.

***EU recommends removing travel restrictions for Americans:**

The European Union on Friday added the United States to a list of countries for which COVID-19 travel restrictions should be gradually lifted, setting the stage for transatlantic travel. All Americans, regardless of their vaccination status, would be free to venture to EU member states for nonessential reasons, like tourism. The EU's recommendation is ultimately just a framework, however, and each member state will still have the final say over their individual policies. "It's up to every country to decide how and when to open the borders," French Embassy spokesman Pascal Confavreux said.

*** United Nations:**



Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** was appointed for a second-five year-term on Friday by the 193-member General Assembly. His second term will begin Jan. 1, 2022.

***CDC, WHO warn delta variant becoming dominant strain:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky warned Friday that the so-called delta coronavirus variant, first detected in India, will likely soon become the dominant strain in the United States. Meanwhile, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the World Health Organization's chief scientist, said it is also becoming the dominant strain globally. The delta variant is more transmissible than other variants and there are fears that it can cause more severe COVID-19 infections, as well, though data so far suggest vaccines are effective against it.

***Delta variant - set to become the US's dominant strain - is 'particularly dangerous for young people'**

***President Biden warned Friday that the Delta variant is "particularly dangerous for young people." *Delta appears to be more transmissible than any other coronavirus strain. *Young people who are unvaccinated and socially active may be more susceptible than others.**

President Joe Biden warned Friday that Delta, a coronavirus variant first discovered in India, poses an increased threat to unvaccinated Americans.

"It is a variant that is more easily transmissible, potentially deadlier, and particularly dangerous for young people," Biden said at a White House news conference.

His remarks came just hours after Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told "Good Morning America" that Delta would likely become the dominant strain in the US in the coming months. (Some experts have even suggested that might even happen within weeks.)

Delta represents just 10% of US COVID-19 cases so far, but it already makes up around 90% of cases in the UK, according to a study from Imperial College London that's still awaiting peer review. The researchers also found that COVID-19 cases in the UK are doubling every 11 days, most likely as a result of the fast-spreading variant.

Research from Public Health England suggests that Delta is associated with a 60% increased risk of household coronavirus transmission compared to Alpha - the variant discovered in the UK. Alpha is already around 50% more transmissible than the original coronavirus strain, according to the CDC.

Young people may be particularly susceptible to a Delta infection for two reasons: They're more likely to be socially active and less likely to be vaccinated than older adults.

COVID19: Weekly Update.

The numbers below are from
Saturday 06-19-2021 * 12pm US East coast Time...

Compiled Periodically By:

Kaushik Amin, USA.

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Details are compiled from various sources.

*There are likely false data & variations in data most of the time, so,
please use the data wisely.*

Marked "" are not reliable data.*

World:

178,736,849. Cases. / 3,869,663. Deaths.

Recovered till today:

163,277,279..

01. U.S. A.:

34,393,372. Cases. /616,924. Deaths.

02. India**(???)

29,853,870. Cases. / 385,815. Deaths.

03. Brazil:

17,802,176. Cases. /498,621. Deaths.

07. UK:

4,820,968. Cases. /127,970. Deaths.

22. Canada.

1,407,269.Cases./26,023.Deaths.

00 (India): Gujarat* : (???)

819,871.(???) Cases. /10,028. (???) Deaths.

USA States:

01. California:

3,807,850. Cases./ 63,292. Deaths

02. Texas*:

2,984,496. Cases. /52,321. Deaths.

03. Florida:

2,356,248. Cases / 37,555. Deaths.

04. New York:*

2,166,360. Cases / 53,917. Deaths.

05. Illinois:

1,388,688. Cases. / 25,566 Deaths.

06. Pennsylvania:

1,214,662. Cases. / 27,673. Deaths.

07: Georgia:

1,130,468. Cases / 21,292. Deaths.

08. Ohio

1,108,528. Cases / 20,166. Deaths.

09. New Jersey*.::

1,020,830. Cases. / 26,368. Deaths.

15. Massachusetts:

709,263. Cases. / 17,960. Deaths.

30. Connecticut:

348,665. Cases /8,270. Deaths.



COVID19: DOS AND DON'TS.

***More than 3** Covid19 vaccines are available now nationwide in the US. Find out how to get yours.

* Finally Vaccine is available all time in the US; India and many parts of world, many of us got both the doses, or single dose in case of Jhonson & Jhonson's vaccine. Yet post vaccination results/effects are not known to the research/medico community fully. We are still in a Pandemic Period, of Phase 2 and 3, also possible invasion of new 4 or more strains of UK, Brazil, South Africa, and now India Coronavirus.

* Entering the Spring, and soon the summer, the number of cases are still on a higher side, yet to achieve the flat curve, world over most of us are just ignoring the pandemic do's & don'ts, particularly when we are with festivity mode in final days of 2020, so please take Extreme Care, Stay Safe & Stay Home. Yet not an easy time for every one!

* Corona is still around, & may remain lifelong! It's not as simple as viral flu. It's as dangerous as like a contest of survival of the fittest.

* Vaccine is available now, first to the frontline medico fraternity, patients in need, & nursing home/long term care facilities residents on a priority, but average person will have no easy access soon, so be careful & protect yourself & your loved ones for good. Mask, frequent hand wash with soap & social distancing only is the option for now

* **Now Mask is not needed in the USA, if you are vaccinated.** But it is advised one must use Mask, even if you have taken Covid shots, Vaccine is just

protection, it's not a cure! Also wear Gloves, Sunglasses & the most important: keep safe distance, keep washing your hands frequently with soap or use reliable sanitizer either one at least for 30 seconds.

* In India nasal steam (Naas) is recommended by the Government authorities, Ayurvedic practitioners, & also is a traditional remedy, but the US CDC and other Western Health Authorities doesn't recommend it due to a probable risk to the brain.

* If you can, use Mouth Rinse, twice a day, will help to boost your oral health.

* If you have young kids/minors attending the school or college, it's advised to put on the mask for everyone inside the home.

* We are passing through a tough time of Life & Death. Follow Social Distancing, but stay in for Social Contacts.

If you know any one suffering with Corona, your nearer or dearer, call and talk to them frequently, we don't know whether they will return safely with us. Call other relatives/friends, at least ten persons a week. We are social & want to take care of those who are cut off due to Corona self-imposed lockdowns. Also keep busy yourself & family members with plenty of daily activities like yog, exercise & Stay Physically Fit, Pursue Your Hobby, Get Adequate, at least 6 to 8 hrs. Of Sleep, & Eat Healthy Balance Diet.

* **Yet it's a long march to finish, no one knows when we will...!!!!**

Take care, & Stay Safe.