

Pfizer and BioNTech are developing a vaccine that targets Delta Variant

Pfizer and BioNTech announced Thursday that they are developing a version of the coronavirus vaccine that targets Delta, a highly contagious variant that has spread to 98 countries. The companies expect to launch clinical trials of the vaccine in August.

The Delta variant, first identified in India, is believed to be about 60 percent more contagious than Alpha, the version of the virus that was through Britain and much of Europe earlier this year, and perhaps twice as contagious as the

transmissible and lethal variant is spreading rapidly in communities with low vaccination rates.

This week, the Delta variant is estimated to be the most prevalent variant in the United States, representing over 50 percent of sequenced samples across the country, up from 35 percent from the week ending June 19, and in some parts of the country, the percentage is even higher. For example, in parts of the Midwest and upper mountain states, C.D.C.'s early response data suggest the

you remain susceptible, especially from the transmissible Delta variant, and are particularly at risk for severe illness. "If you are an elderly person or if you have a person with an underlying disease, you might want to get the extra credit of protection of wearing a mask if you were indoors in an environment with a high degree of infection in the community and a low level of vaccination."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the more transmissible and lethal variant is

commensurate. The Delta variant is now driving outbreaks among unvaccinated populations in countries like Malaysia, Portugal, Indonesia and Australia.

Delta also now has the dominant variant in the United States, infection in the country had plateaued at that level since late last year in the pandemic. Though the numbers may be rising, still, hospitalizations and deaths related to the virus have continued a steep plunge. That partly because of relative high vaccination rates—45 per-



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Delta also now has the dominant variant in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported this week. Until recently, infections in the United States had plateaued at that level since late last year in the pandemic. Hospitalizations and deaths related to the virus have continued a steep plunge. That partly because of relative high vaccination rates—45 per-

cent of Americans are fully vaccinated, and 59 percent have received at least one dose.

But the new study found that Delta was barely sensitive to one dose of vaccine, confirming previous research that suggested the variant can partly evade the immune system even though it has a lower degree than Beta, the variant first identified in South Africa.

French researchers tested how well antibodies produced by natural infection and by coronavirus vaccines neutralize the Alpha, Beta and Delta variants, as well as a reference variant similar to the original version of the virus.

The researchers looked at blood samples from 103 people who had been infected with the coronavirus. Delta was much less sensitive than Alpha to samples from unvaccinated people in this group, the study found.

One dose of vaccine significantly boosted the antibody response, but people who have recovered from Covid-19 will need to be vaccinated to fend off some variants.

The team also analyzed samples from 70 people who they had received the first and second doses of the AstraZeneca or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines.

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cept, with half of the 100 teachers in his association now in Iraq, Dubai and Oman.

Salaries starting at 1.5 million worth less than \$90 at the start of the crisis when they used to be \$1,000.

Forced to leave home, he said, life was in August 2020, at 50 years old. Day after day, the hospital where he had worked and his clinic were damaged along with countries of Beirut when chemicals exploded at the port — the first

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Fire in food factory in Dhaka kills at least 49 people

At least 49 people have died in a fire that broke out at a food and beverage factory outside Bangladesh's capital, fire officials said Friday.

A fire service official, Rasel Shikder, confirmed that the fire began Thursday night at the first-story factory food and beverage unit, factory in Barapada, just outside Dhaka.

Dhaka's Bhaddan, deputy director of the Fire Service and Civil Defense, said 49 bodies have been recovered from inside the factory and rescue operations continue. He said the top two floors of the factory, which processes juice, will be demolished and other floors, including food from inside, he said.

Details of the cause of the fire, how many people were inside the factory and how many were injured were not immediately available.

Bangladesh has a history of deadly factory fires. They are often attributed to safety issues that still plague the South Asian country despite its rapid economic growth.

Continuing corruption and lax enforcement have resulted in many deaths over the years, including Bangladesh, which employs tens of thousands of low-paid workers in garment factories.

The International Labor Organization said in a 2017 report that Bangladesh's regulatory framework and inspectors "had not been able to keep pace with the development of the industry."

cramped with apartments, shops and warehouses in the oldest part of Dhaka and killed at least 97 people. Another fire in Old Dhaka in a home illegally storing chemicals killed at least 123 people in 2010.

Authorities imposed tougher safety rules after more than 1,100 people died when a garment factory complex collapsed near Dhaka in 2013. The country's garment industry has since become largely compliant under domestic and global standards, but many other industrial facilities fail to maintain safety compliance.

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Education in doldrums as highly-qualified Lebanese teachers flee amid fiscal crisis

Sarhanah al-Hadi, a 40-year-old teacher, spent nearly two decades teaching history and geography at Lebanon's elite French schools, although her department is now empty. She is a substitute teacher in Paris, part of an exodus from the education system on its knees.

Fayad walked her home, he said, life was in August 2020, at 50 years old. Day after day, the hospital where he had worked and his clinic were damaged along with countries of Beirut when chemicals exploded at the port — the first

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WB approves \$100m additional financing to strengthen Nepal's school and health sectors

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors today approved two separate additional financing of \$100 million to support the implementation of the government's flagship School Sector Development Program, and improve efficiency in the public resource management systems of Nepal's health sector.

Strengthening Nepal's school sector and building resilient health and development, particularly for poor and vulnerable populations, is a key priority for the government, said World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Thirumala S. Srinivasan. "Through this support to the Government of Nepal, we aim to improve learning outcomes and ensure that health services are accessible and more efficient, and that the health sector is better equipped to deliver quality and accessible health care services to contribute to Nepal's COVID-19 recovery."

The additional financing to the School Sector Development Program will help reduce dependency on donor support by supporting pro-poor targeted scholarships, and catch-up programs. It will help the Government of Nepal's school sector successor program achieve its goal of improving the government's flagship program.

It will also support the implementation of the health sector's flagship program, the Health Sector Development Program, which aims to improve efficiency of spending and ensure that health services are accessible and more efficient, and that the health sector is better equipped to deliver quality and accessible health care services to contribute to Nepal's COVID-19 recovery."

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