

The Latest

Lenses' Monthly Magazine - April 2022



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A Message From Lenses

Lenses is a 100% teen-organized news platform that provides teenagers with the chance to share their thoughts and beliefs about the headlines that we see on a daily basis. Our community aims to get teenagers' ideas on 'adult issues' and provide accessible and simplified news to our readers, who may not always have the chance to stay up to date with the daily news.

Lenses intends to highlight the fact that though we all have different perspectives and 'lenses' when it comes to various issues, each of our beliefs matter and are worth sharing with the community. Through a combination of long and short-form articles, as well as short descriptions of important daily news on our social media, we intend to help all teenagers stay informed about the world around them and learn about what other Gen-Z members think when it comes to each of these issues.



Many Airlines No Longer Require Masks to Travel

Prunima Vasistha

On Monday, April 18th, a Florida judge ruled that masks are no longer required to travel on most airplanes, subway trains, or buses. Ironically, this decision came during a spike in COVID-19 cases, largely due to the BA.2 Omicron subvariant. According to NBC, daily cases have been steadily rising (up by 42%) over the last two weeks. Due to the ever-rising popularity of at-home tests, this number is likely an undercount.

The Biden administration appealed this decision two days after. The mask requirement was initially meant to expire on May 3rd, and there was talk of potentially extending it to be longer. However, many major cities (excluding New York City) have lifted mask mandates when traveling on public transits, and this ruling is not very surprising to the majority.

After two years of the pandemic, many people have become accustomed to wearing masks when in public, especially when traveling. Others have grown tired of the extra precautions. The real question this ruling poses is which measures constitute as precautionary and which are simply unnecessary.

According to some experts, traveling alongside maskless people should not pose a significant threat if you are both vaccinated (and boosted) and keep your mask on when commuting. Joseph Lewnard, assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of California Berkeley's School of Public Health, says that "One-way masking is actually a very effective way of preventing acquisition of SARS-CoV-2." The CDC's studies agree. A study in February of 2021 shows that wearing a cloth, surgical, or N95 mask lowered a person's odds of testing positive for Covid by 56%, 66%, and 83%, respectively.

Regardless, it is clear that irrespective of whether you are vaccinated or not, your best chance at staying safe from Covid is to wear a mask. An infectious disease specialist at New York University Langone Health says that although the lifted mask mandates make travelers' risk of getting Covid higher than before, "you're always going to be less likely to acquire Covid with a mask on." He continues on to say that "people should wear the best quality masks that they can get, and N95 would certainly be the most reliable."

Coachella and Revolve

Nirja Divekar

Without a doubt, Coachella is one of America's largest and most highly anticipated music festivals. Not only is the audience open to the general public but a select group of celebrities are invited to attend and promote brands. While Coachella is fairly well known, a festival known as Revolve happens to fall in the same week and hosts many of the same celebrities. The Revolve Festival has remained an invite-only event and hosts celebrities and other social media influencers, which is increasingly common as the use of various forms of social media surface.

This year, however, there was some chaos involving celebrities and their transportation to the Revolve Festival event. Influencers were guaranteed a "VIP experience", but were instead faced with spending hours in the blaring heat, waiting desperately for their complimentary shuttle buses. This was documented by many social media influencers on apps like TikTok.

The Daily Mail reported that TikTok influencer Maddie White no longer supports the company and won't ever work for them again. Revolve responded that the shuttle company was only following safety requirements and the events were unexpected. With such high media coverage and thousands of well-known celebrities attending, it was riskier than ever to host an event that was as chaotic as it played out to be. Although Revolve has gained some fame and press for these events, they've been shining a negative light on the festival itself, making Coachella in comparison seem more desirable.

Flickering Through

April Lenses Articles You Need to Read

- [Elon Musk Buys Twitter](#) - Akshay Vellore
- [Disney Say Gay](#) - Emily Dissanayake
- [Economic Impact of Ukraine Conflict](#) - Ila Chynoweth
- [Evolution of Feminism](#) - Aarya Niraula
- [Labor Shortage](#) - Soha Mahapatra
- [Being Black and Non-Binary](#) - Grace Balepo
- [Climate Change and Sickness](#) - Seleen Salour
- [March Madness](#) - Akshay Vellore



Deep Cuts

Key topics of the month

Recent IPCC Reports Reveal the Dire Consequences Earth Face

Siddharth Kondam

On April 22nd, celebrated as Earth Day, millions of people across the globe come together to honor the Earth. Through events like community clean-ups and raising educational awareness, many begin to understand the significance of preserving Earth's beauty and nature.

Sadly, the Earth is near its breaking point. According to the recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report, the effects of climate change are near irreversible. As maintained by the panel, Greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 and be halved by 2030 to allow Earth to limit future heating to 1.5 celsius above pre-industrial levels. But with carbon emissions increasing nearly every year and rising to 36.3 billion tonnes in 2021, an all-time high, it is highly unlikely that we can drastically reduce carbon output without causing unprecedented damage to our world economy, being that nearly 84 percent of our world energy is supplied by fossil fuels.

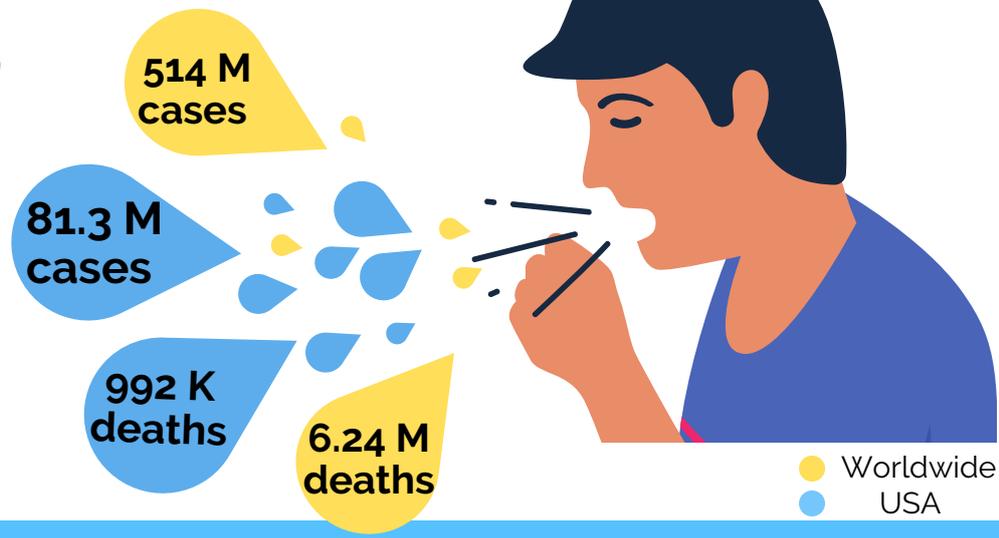
However, there are several steps we can take to mitigate the effects of climate change. Switching to more sustainable energy sources like wind and solar power on a global scale would be a good start in curbing pollution levels. Enacting policies that cut down on deforesting and emphasizing agricultural policies that limit greenhouse gas emissions internationally would also decrease carbon emission levels. On an individual level, alternating between a bicycle and a car while traveling or even switching to a diet that involves less meat is an effective start to reducing one's carbon footprint.

While many countries and large corporations have taken efforts to minimize the effects of climate change, the recent report illustrates that it hasn't been enough. In the coming years, it is upon us as a species to decide what Planet Earth will look like for future generations.

COVID-19 Updates

As of Thursday, March 31st 2022

Sources: CDC, AP



U.S Vaccination Status

728 M

Total
Doses
Delivered

66.2 %

of Population
Fully Vaccinated

576 M

Total
Doses
Administered

77.6 %

of Population
with At Least
One Dose

100 M

Booster
Doses
Administered

45.8%

of Fully Vaccinated
Population Boosted

Updates

At airports and planes around the world, masks are becoming optional, after a mask mandate proposed by the CDC was rejected by a federal judge.

The CDC recently announced a second booster dose administered about 4-5 months after the first booster dose for those with weakened immune systems

Selective High School Allowed to Continue with Controversial Admissions Process

Lucas Ribeiro

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) is a selective, STEM high school in Northern Virginia. TJHSST will be allowed to continue with its new admissions process for the class of 2026, after the Supreme Court decided not to hear an emergency appeal from a group opposing the reform.

The new admissions process came as an attempt to bring more low-income students to the school. It eliminated an ACT-style admissions test from the process, leaving timed essays (including a problem-solving essay) and GPA as the primary factors for admission. Experience factors, such as income and special needs, are also considered under the new process. Additionally, the new system guarantees admission for the top 1.5% of students from each public middle school in participating jurisdictions, regardless of how they compare with other applicants.

While the process is not overtly discriminatory (i.e. race is not a factor), a group of parents has made the case that it was motivated by discriminatory feelings, based on the decrease in Asian representation and texts between school board members stating that there was "an Anti-asian feel underlying the process". With this, the group, known as the Coalition for TJ, sued the school board.

A picture of
TJHSST from
Washington Post



Once the case reached federal court, Federal Judge Claude Hilton sided with the group, ruling the new admissions policies had to be changed. However, the case was appealed by the defendant, Fairfax County Public Schools, who argued it was too late to change the admissions process for the class of 2026, which was already well underway. A Federal Circuit Court granted FCPS a stay, allowing the new process to remain for this year. The Coalition for TJ then appealed this stay, asking the Supreme Court for emergency intervention in the 2026 admissions process - it was this request that was denied.

However, even though a stay was granted, allowing the new admissions process to remain for this year, the case itself is in deliberation in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. Whatever the outcome, it could be appealed once again and return to the Supreme Court.

Diversity Data for TJHSST Class of 24 and 25 - Fairfax County Public Schools

Ethnic	Class of 2024 (Old Process)	Class of 2025 (New Process)
Asian	73.0	54.36%
Black	N/A	7.09%
Hispanic	3.3	11.27%
White	17.7	22.36%
Multiracial/Other*	6.0	4.91%
Total		

The April 2022 IMF World Economic Outlook – How Conflict and the Pandemic is impacting Global Economic Recovery

Achraf Azzaoui

The IMF World Economic Outlook is a forecast of global economic conditions such as inflation, GDP growth, and debt released bi-annually by the International Monetary Fund, an international financial institution consisting of 190 different countries. This report uses a bottom-up approach, in which country teams within the IMF calculate projections for individual countries based on global assumptions on interest rates, exchange rates, and commodity prices. These reports are then aggregated and used as feedback for individual country forecasts, which then converge to the projections reported in the WEO. Due to an array of factors including volatile markets due to conflict, the combination of tight labor markets and rapid price increases, and pandemic lockdowns, the latest report from the IMF casts a dim outlook on the world's economic future in 2022.

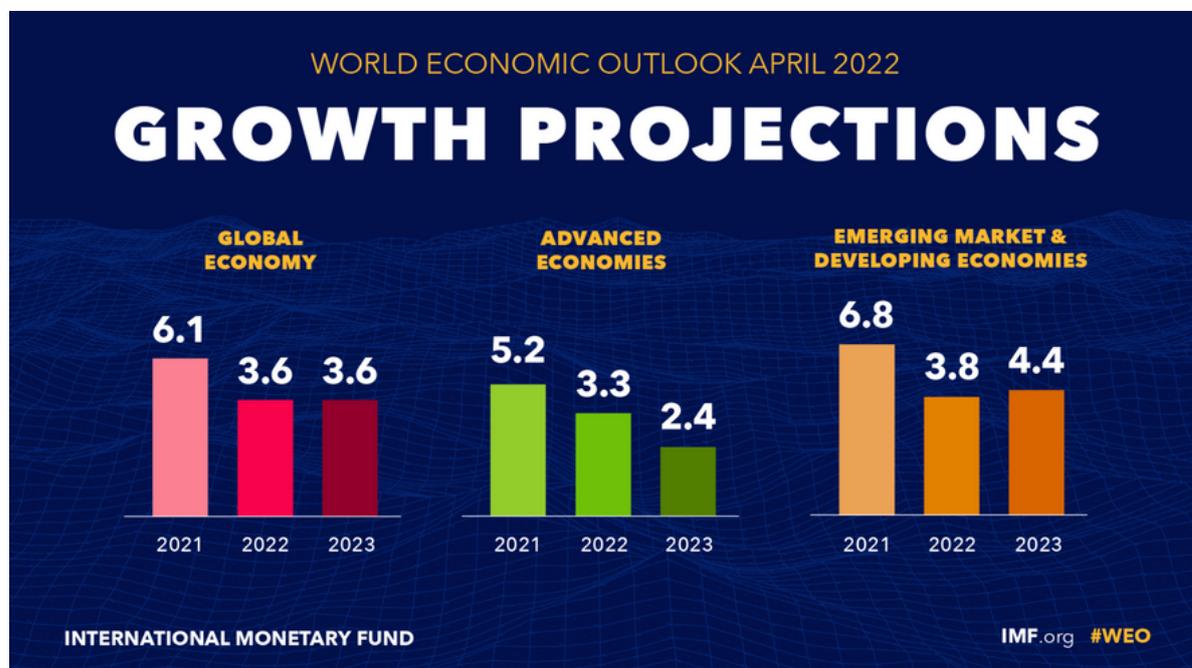
Findings and Predictions

Some of the report's most significant findings and predictions lie in its estimated world output growth – in 2022, the report projects a 3.6% increase in productive output, which is significantly lower than the 6.1% increase observed in 2021. Furthermore, the recent trend of inflationary expectations is expected to continue in the short term, as the report predicts a 5.7% increase in the market price level in advanced economies, compared to a staggering 8.7% increase in emerging and developing economies in 2022. Inflationary outliers are expected to include crucial fuel resources, with oil prices expected to rise 12% and natural gas price levels expected to rise 58% in 2022. However, it is crucial to note these increases in fuel prices would be considerably lower than the fluctuations observed in 2021.

Rationale

Much of the rationale behind predicting slower economic growth for 2022 lies in the volatility of markets in the wake of the violent Russia-Ukraine conflict. Apart from the immediate humanitarian devastation, aggressive sanctions imposed on Russia have disrupted global supply chains of crucial exports such as petroleum and wheat. The IMF has also claimed that the war has increased the risk of a permanently fragmented world economy based on geopolitical blocks, which would entail distinct technology standards, cross-border payment systems, and reserve currencies. This assertion is assumingly a result of the European Commission deciding to disconnect seven Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), an international payments system that expedites the process of borrowing and investing money across national borders.

Other factors hindering growth, which are unrelated to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, include frequent and widespread lockdowns in key Chinese manufacturing hubs such as Beijing and Shanghai. These lockdowns have been economically debilitating, with unemployment hitting a 21-month high in March 2022, and leading several major corporations such as Toyota and Volkswagen to partially halt production and operations. The global supply chain has not gone unharmed as a result, with freight prices increasing rapidly – as of now, it costs at least \$16,353 to ship a container of items from Asia to the West Coast. Furthermore, uncertainty lies in whether more deadly and transmissible variants compared to Omicron could disrupt an already weakened global supply chain.



An Infographic
from the April
2022 IMF World
Economic
Outlook

Upcoming Events



Eid

Eid al-Fitr means 'festival of breaking the fast' and marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Since the month of Ramadan is decided by the Islamic Calendar, this year Eid is on May 1st, 2022. On Eid, Muslims traditionally have a light breakfast and then head to the mosque for a special prayer and a sermon. After praying, Muslim families gather and exchange gifts. Traditional dishes and sweets are also made and exchanged.

AAPI Heritage Month

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Heritage month recognizes the contributions and influence of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States each May. The month of May was chosen because it commemorates the immigration of the first Japanese people to the United States in May 1843.



Cinco De Mayo

Cinco de Mayo is a yearly celebration held on May 5, which commemorates the anniversary of Mexico's victory over the French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo is usually marked with parades and celebrations of Mexican culture, culminating with the consumption of lots of Mexican food, drinks, and games.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States for mourning the U.S. military personnel who have died while serving in the United States armed forces. It is observed on the last Monday of May, and in 2022, it will be observed on May 30th, 2022. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Unofficially, it marks the beginning of the summer season



Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed in May in the United States since 1949. The month is observed with media, local events, and film screenings. Mental Health Awareness Month began in the United States in 1949 and was started by the Mental Health America organization.



Listen to [Lenses' podcast](#) posted on 4/26/22 about Teen Organizations, featuring Hosts, Lucas Ribiero and Purnima Vasistha, and Guest, Olivia Zhang, founder of nonprofit, Cancer Kids First. Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Anchor, Overcast, Castbox, and Beaker.

The Latest Staff

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