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Life in the age of coronavirus



Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. secures 300 million doses of potential AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine

BENGALURU/LONDON (Reuters) - The United States has secured almost a third of the first one billion doses planned for AstraZeneca's experimental COVID-19 vaccine by pledging up to \$1.2 billion, as world powers scramble for medicines to get their economies back to work.

While not proven to be effective against the coronavirus, vaccines are seen by world leaders as the only real way to restart their stalled economies, and even to get an edge over global competitors.

After President Donald Trump demanded a vaccine, the U.S. Department of Health agreed to provide up to \$1.2 billion to accelerate AstraZeneca's vaccine development and secure 300 million doses for the United States.

"This contract with AstraZeneca is a major milestone in Operation Warp Speed's work toward a safe, effective, widely available vaccine by 2021," U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar said.

The vaccine, previously known as ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 and now as AZD1222, was developed by the University of Oxford and licensed to British drugmaker AstraZeneca. Immunity to the new coronavirus is uncertain and so the use of vaccines unclear.

The U.S. deal allows a late-stage - Phase III - clinical trial of the vaccine with 30,000 people in the United States.

AstraZeneca, based in Cambridge, England, said it had concluded agreements for at least 400 million doses of the vaccine and secured manufacturing capacity for one billion doses, with first deliveries due to begin in September.

Now the most valuable company on Britain's blue-chip FTSE 100 Index, it has already agreed to deliver 100 million doses to people in Britain, with 30 million as soon as September. Ministers have promised that Britain will get first access to the vaccine.

VACCINE SCRAMBLE

With leaders across the world surveying some of the worst economic destruction since at least World War Two, and the deaths of more than 325,000, many are scrambling for a vaccine.

The U.S. government has already struck deals to support vaccine development with Johnson



& Johnson (J&J), Moderna and Sanofi, sparking fears the richest countries will be able to protect their citizens first.

The head of Sanofi angered the French government earlier this month when he said vaccine doses produced in the United States could go to U.S. patients first, given the country had supported the research financially.

AstraZeneca said it was in talks with governments and partners around the world - such as the Serum Institute of India - to increase access and production, and is speaking to various organisations on the fair allocation and distribution of the vaccine.

"We would like to thank the US and UK governments for their substantial support to accelerate the development and production of the vaccine," AstraZeneca Chief Executive Pascal Soriot said.

The Serum Institute of India, the world's largest maker of vaccines by volume, has dedicated one of its facilities with a capacity to produce up to 400 million doses annually to producing the Oxford vaccine.

"We are scaling up on a conservative basis of about 4 to 5 million doses a month to begin with," Chief Executive Adar Poonawalla told Reuters, adding the company was in discussions with AstraZeneca.

FILE PHOTO: The company logo for pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca is displayed on a screen on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York, U.S., April 8, 2019. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

FILE PHOTO: Small bottles labeled with a "VacciCOVID-19" sticker and a medical syringe are seen in this illustration taken April 10, 2020. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration/File Photo

COVID-19 PROTECTION?
A Phase I/II clinical trial of AZD1222 began last month to assess safety, immunogenicity and efficacy in over 1,000 healthy volunteers aged 18 to 55 years across several trial centres in southern England. Data from the trial is expected shortly.

There are currently no approved treatments or vaccines for COVID-19.

Governments, drugmakers and researchers are working on around 100 programmes, and experts are predicting a safe and effective means of preventing the disease could take 12 to 18 months to develop.

Only a handful of the vaccines in development have advanced to human trials, an indicator of safety and efficacy, and the stage at which most fail.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

5/22/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Sadness Of Memorial Day

As we commemorate our soldiers who have lost their lives on the upcoming national Memorial Day, we are still battling another enemy, the invisible coronavirus pandemic war.

When President Trump visited the Ford Motor Company plant in Michigan yesterday, he didn't wear a mask at the

plant. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said the President is incredibly disrespectful to the citizens of Michigan and we no longer welcome him to come to our state. She said that we hope that we will have a new president soon enough who does respect people more than this president does.



The presidential election is starting across the nation today. According to the newest poll, President Trump is behind Joe Biden. Both parties are struggling to gain votes in key states such as Michigan and Ohio. Because of political reasons, the candidates will use every possible way to win.

We are so disappointed in our country where men and women are still suffering the devastation of the pandemic and fighting every day for their lives. We need real leaders to lead the country out of the woods of despair.

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Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee. Image of the publisher standing next to a large roll of fabric.

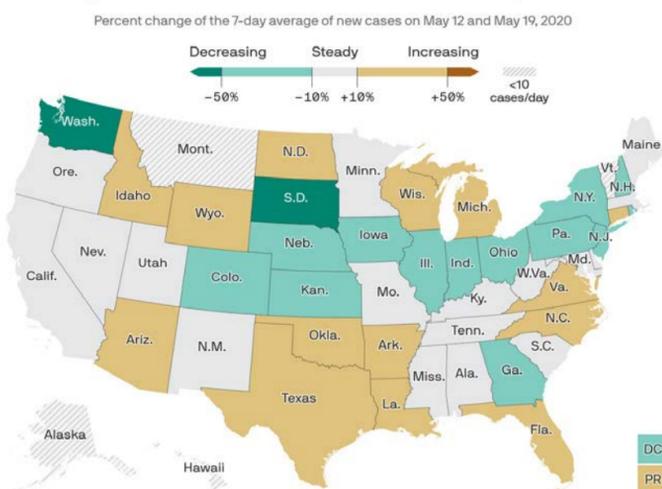
Stay Safe!

BUSINESS

Wash Your Hands!

Coronavirus Cases Are On The Rise Across The South

Change in new COVID-19 cases in the past week



Data: The COVID Tracking Project; Map: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

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

Several Southern states are seeing a rise in new coronavirus cases, moving them further away from an important target for safely reopening parts of their economies. Why it matters: The Trump administration's reopening guidelines call for a consistent decline in new cases before proceeding with the process — and some states are proceeding even without clearing that threshold. Between the lines: The total number of cases is an important piece of the puzzle — but it's only one piece. The number of new cases will rise as a state performs more testing, so looking at this metric in isolation can give the false impression of a worsening outbreak. Yes, but: Some of the states whose new cases are increasing in this analysis — including Arkansas, North Carolina and North Dakota — also fare poorly in a more holistic analysis that also accounts for other metrics. Where it stands: South Dakota has made the most progress over the past week, cutting its new cases by over half. North Carolina and North Dakota bring up the rear, with spikes in new cases of around 40%.



This analysis uses a seven-day average, to minimize the distortions of reporting delays or similar technical issues, and compares that average to the average from the week before. The bottom line: No one measurement tells the whole story, and there are signs that most of the country is moving in the right direction. But there's a big difference between moving in the right direction and being out of the woods, and there will be no victory over the coronavirus without a sustained, documented decline in the number of new cases. Related: Models Project Sharp Rise in Deaths as States Reopen A Trump administration projection and a

public model predict rising death tolls

As President Trump presses for states to reopen their economies, his administration is privately projecting a steady rise in the number of coronavirus cases and deaths over the next several weeks. The daily death toll will reach about 3,000 on June 1, according to an internal document obtained by The New York Times, a 70 percent increase from the current number of about 1,750. The internal Trump administration report expects about 200,000 daily cases by June. The White House bars coronavirus task force officials from testifying to Congress without approval.

The projections, based on government modeling pulled together by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, forecast about 200,000 new cases each day by the end of the month, up from about 25,000 cases a day currently.



The numbers underscore a sobering reality: The United States has been hunkered down for the past seven weeks to try slowing the spread of the virus, but reopening the economy will make matters worse.

"There remains a large number of counties whose burden continues to grow," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned.

As the administration privately predicted a sharp increase in deaths, a public model that has been frequently cited by the White House revised its own estimates, doubling its projected death toll.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington is now estimating that there will be nearly 135,000 deaths in the United States through the beginning of August — more than double what it forecast on April 17, when it estimated 60,308 deaths by Aug. 4. (The country has already had more than 68,000 deaths.)

The institute wrote that the revisions reflected "rising mobility in most U.S. states as well as the easing of social distancing measures expected in 31 states by May 11, indicating that growing contacts among people will promote

transmission of the coronavirus."

The projections confirm the primary fear of public health experts: that a reopening of the economy will put the nation back where it was in mid-March, when cases were rising so rapidly in some parts of the country that patients were dying on gurneys in hospital hallways.



DOCUMENTS

On Sunday, Mr. Trump said deaths in the United States could reach 100,000, twice as many as he had forecast two weeks ago. But that new number still underestimates what his own administration is now predicting to be the total death toll by the end of May — much less in the months to come. It follows a pattern for Mr. Trump, who has frequently understated the impact of the disease.

"We're going to lose anywhere from 75, 80 to 100,000 people," he said in a virtual town hall on Fox News on Sunday. "That's a horrible thing. We shouldn't lose one person over this." The White House responded that the new federal government projections had not been vetted. "This data is not reflective of any of the modeling done by the task force or data that the task force has analyzed," said Judd Deere, a White House spokesman.

More states are allowing certain businesses to open, even as cases grow.

After a wave of new state orders easing restrictions over the weekend, at least half a dozen more states began allowing certain businesses to reopen on Monday, some even as cases continued to rise. Indiana, Kansas and Nebraska were among the states that allowed the reopening of some businesses on Monday even though they were seeing increasing cases, according to a New York Times database. Other states that have partly reopened while cases have continued to rise include Iowa, Minnesota, Tennessee and Texas, according to the data. About half of all states have now begun reopening their economies in some significant way, which public health experts have warned could lead to a new wave of cases and deaths.



"The vast majority of Americans have not been exposed to the virus, there is not immunity, and the initial conditions that allowed this virus to spread really quickly across America haven't really changed," said Dr. Larry Chang, an infectious-diseases specialist at Johns Hopkins University.

While the country has stabilized, it has not really improved, as shown by data collected by The Times. Case and death numbers remain on a numbing, tragic plateau that is tilting only slightly downward. At least 1,000 people with the virus, and sometimes more than 2,000, have died every day for the last month. On a near daily basis, at least 25,000 new cases of the virus are being identified across the country. And even as New York City, New Orleans and Detroit have shown improvement, other urban centers, including Chicago and Los Angeles, are reporting steady growth in the number of cases.

The situation has devolved most significantly in parts of rural America that were largely spared in the early stages of the pandemic. As food processing facilities and prisons have emerged as some of the country's largest case clusters, the counties that include Logansport, Ind.; South Sioux City, Neb.; and Marion, Ohio, have surpassed New York City in cases per capita. In New Mexico, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham invoked the state's Riot Control Act to lock down the entire city of Gallup, on the edge of the Navajo Nation. As of Sunday, the Gallup area had the third-highest rate of infection of any metropolitan area in the United States. Many other states are already entering their next chapters. Restaurants, stores, museums and libraries in Florida are allowed to reopen with fewer customers, except in the most populous counties, which have seen a majority of the state's cases. In Clearwater, some beachgoers used seaweed to mark a six-foot barrier around them. (Courtesy nytimes.com)

Editor's Choice



A woman wearing a mask and gloves plays a slot machine at the recently reopened Lucky Star Casino in El Reno, Oklahoma. REUTERS/Nick Oxford



Students wearing protective face masks respect social distancing as they walk past condemned lockers at the College Rosa Parks school during its reopening in Nantes, France. REUTERS/Stephane Mahe



Margot Bloch stands beside a line of mock body bags while holding flowers during a funeral procession demonstration for the coronavirus victims outside of the White House in Washington. REUTERS/Tom Brenner



South Korean residents 89-year-old Jeong Nam-poong and 80-year-old Jang Yoon-hui, wearing protective masks, dance at park after their daytime discotheque 'colatec' has been closed amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Seoul, South Korea. MORE



An employee wearing protective clothing disinfects a crucifix at Funeral Gayosso in Mexico City. REUTERS/Edgard Garrido



Voters queue at a polling station during the presidential, legislative and communal council elections, under the simmering political violence and the growing threat of the coronavirus, in Ngozi, Burundi. REUTERS/Clovis Guy Siboniyo



Voters queue at a polling station during the presidential, legislative and communal council elections, under the simmering political violence and the growing threat of the coronavirus, in Ngozi, Burundi. REUTERS/Clovis Guy Siboniyo



Women, one wearing a face mask due to the global outbreak of the coronavirus, mourn during the funeral of teenager Joao Pedro Pinto, 14, who according to residents was shot dead during a police operation against drug dealers, in Salgueiro slum in Sao Paulo.

