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Biden announces new policy efforts aimed at black voters



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. charges ousted Hollywood executive with defrauding pandemic loan program, BlackRock fund

NEW YORK (Reuters) - U.S. prosecutors have charged the recently ousted owner of a Hollywood movie distributor with defrauding a federal coronavirus emergency relief program and a BlackRock Inc (BLK.N) investment fund, including to pay for a Beverly Hills mansion and other luxuries.

Prosecutors said William Sadleir, 66, diverted much of the \$1.7 million of loans he received on May 1 from the Paycheck Protection Program for personal expenses. He allegedly did this after falsely telling JPMorgan Chase & Co (JPM.N) and the Small Business Administration the funds were meant for his former company Aviron Group, which had terminated him in December and where he has no current role.

The PPP was meant "to help small businesses stay afloat during the financial crisis, and we will act swiftly against those who abuse the program for their own personal gain," U.S. Attorney Nick Hanna in Los Angeles said in a statement. Sadleir was also accused of having previously induced the closed-end BlackRock Multi-Sector Income Trust Fund (BIT.N) to invest \$75 million in Aviron to support its films.

Prosecutors said he then created a sham company to conceal his use of the money, and assumed the fake identity "Amanda Stevens" to communicate by email with the BlackRock fund about its investment.

In a related civil case, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission said Sadleir's "lavish lifestyle" also included a \$127,000 Tesla.

A lawyer for Sadleir could not immediately be identified. A BlackRock spokesman declined to comment.



FILE PHOTO: A sign for BlackRock Inc hangs above their building in New York U.S., July 16, 2018. REUTERS/Lucas Jackson

U.S. plans massive coronavirus vaccine testing effort to meet year-end deadline

CHICAGO (Reuters) - The United States plans a massive testing effort involving more than 100,000 volunteers and a half dozen or so of the most promising vaccine candidates in an effort to deliver a safe and effective one by the end of 2020, scientists leading the program told Reuters.

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

The project will compress what is typically 10 years of vaccine development and testing into a matter of months, testimony to the urgency to halt a pandemic that has infected more than 5 million people, killed

over 335,000 and battered economies worldwide.

To get there, leading vaccine makers have agreed to share data and lend the use of their clinical trial networks to competitors should their own candidate fail, the scientists said.

Candidates that demonstrate safety in small early studies will be tested in huge trials of 20,000 to 30,000 subjects for each vaccine, slated to start in July.

Between 100,000 and 150,000 people may be enrolled in the studies, said Dr. Larry Corey, a vaccine expert at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, who is helping design the trials. "If you don't see a safety

problem, you just keep going," Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), told Reuters. The vaccine effort is part of a public-private partnership called Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV) announced last month.

The effort fits into the research and development arm of "Operation Warp Speed," the White House program announced last week to accelerate coronavirus vaccine development. Vaccines, which are intended for use in healthy people, are typically tested in successive steps, starting with trials in animals.

Human testing begins with a small safety trial in healthy volunteers,

followed by a larger study to find the right dose and get an early read on efficacy. The final stage consists of large-scale testing in thousands of people. Only then would a vaccine developer commit to manufacturing millions of doses. In the era of coronavirus, many of those steps will overlap, particularly the mid-stage and late-stage trials, Collins and Corey said.

The approach has its risks, as certain safety issues may only appear in large-scale trials. Americans are concerned about the speed of the vaccine effort, a Reuters/Ipsos poll showed. A highly effective vaccine could be tested in as little as six months if there is a big difference in benefit between the vaccine and placebo groups, Corey said. For a modestly effective vaccine, trials could take

nine to 12 months.

The U.S. government has committed billions of dollars to help manufacturers produce doses of vaccines that may never prove successful.

THE SHORTLIST

To get the quickest answer, vaccines will be tested in healthcare workers and communities where the virus is still spreading to show whether they reduced new cases of COVID-19. Washington, D.C., which has not reached the peak of its outbreak, is one likely test site. Trials may be conducted abroad, including in Africa, where the virus has just started to spread, Collins said.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

5/23/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Summer Season Is Here

Millions of high school and college students conducted their graduation ceremonies through the internet last week. But the timing was different because we are facing the coronavirus pandemic.

Memorial Day is here. This is the day when we commemorate our military heroes who have lost their lives in so many wars. We also need to pay tribute to those fighting in the front lines of the coronavirus. These people are our heroes too!

Today the world is in turmoil. In the Mideast, Asia and the South China Sea – each could result into major military confrontation. In the economic war, countries are now using political power to pressure private industries to serve their political ambitions.

We are so sad to learn that the world's largest car rental company Hertz has filed for bankruptcy. Rental cars now sit in parks the size of football stadiums; airlines just have only a few customers and the price of oil has dropped to the bottom. In just three months, our



economy has turned upside down.

We urge the federal and local governments to call an emergency economic recovery meeting and invite private businesses to find more effective ways to recover our economy.

We are the country that has all the natural resources and all the energy and self-sufficiency with the most talented people that is needed.

We have full confidence we will overcome and will win the battle.



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Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Safe!

BUSINESS

Wash Your Hands

Health Officials Say They Are Being Forced To Suspend Their Mass Immunization Efforts Amid The Surging Coronavirus Pandemic

The World Health Organization Suspends Polio Immunization Efforts Due To COVID-19 Crisis



Child receives oral polio immunization.

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

LONDON -- Health officials attempting to eradicate polio say they are being forced to suspend their mass immunization efforts amid the surging coronavirus pandemic. The World Health Organization and partners decided that for the next six months, all polio activities including national vaccination campaigns and house-to-house surveillance "should be suspended to avoid placing communities and frontline workers at unnecessary risk." The announcement came after a meeting last week of the Polio Oversight Board, an expert body coordinated by WHO and partners. The experts noted that while halting efforts to stop polio is necessary given the speed at which COVID-19 is infecting people globally, it will undoubtedly result in the increased spread of the paralytic disease and the numbers of children paralyzed by the virus. The mass vaccination campaigns — which occur as frequently as every month — are critical to stopping polio, as eradication requires that more than 95% of children under 5 be immunized.



The polio epidemic of the 1950's.

The global effort to wipe out polio began in 1988 and was intended to eliminate the disease by 2000. But the initiative has been hobbled by numerous problems including resistance to the vaccines, outbreaks in some instances caused by the vaccines themselves and little access to conflict areas in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. It will be up to individual countries to decide whether to suspend their vaccination campaigns, according to a note released after the polio meeting. Officials warned that stopping polio efforts will require scaled-up work once immunization activities can resume. Polio is endemic in Afghanistan and Pakistan and continues to be a problem in about 10 other countries worldwide. (Courtesy <https://abcnews.go.com/>)

Related

Polio, Measles And Other Diseases Set To Surge As COVID-19 Forces Suspension Of Vaccination Campaigns

"A devil's choice." That's how Seth Berkley, head of GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, describes the dilemma facing global health organizations in the past few weeks. They could either continue to support mass vaccination campaigns in poor countries and risk inadvertently helping to spread COVID-19—or recommend their suspension, inevitably triggering an upsurge of many other infectious diseases. In the end, they chose the latter. As Science reported last week, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative on 24 March recommended suspending polio vaccination campaigns until the second half of the year.



Door-to-door campaigns against polio, such as this one in Kenya in 2018, could help spread COVID-19.

Two days later, the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) issued a broader call, recommending that all preventive mass vaccination campaigns for other diseases be postponed. "Any mass campaigns would go against the idea of social distancing," says Alejandro Cravioto of the National Autonomous University of Mexico's faculty of medicine, who chairs SAGE.

Related

But experts say the fallout from the wrenching decision will be huge and may last long after the pandemic subsides. It comes on top of the damage COVID-19 will do to the fragile health systems in many countries. Mass vaccination campaigns against a host of diseases are already grinding to a halt in many countries. For many children, these campaigns are the only chance to get vaccines. Some 13.5 million have already missed out on vaccinations for polio, measles, human papillomavirus, yellow fever, cholera, and meningitis since the suspensions began, Berkley says. "I tell you those

numbers will be much larger than what we see today."

In the case of polio, more children will be paralyzed in countries where polio is still circulating, and the virus will likely spread to countries that are now polio-free. The decision couldn't come at a worse time. The polio eradication effort is already reeling from setbacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the wild virus is surging, and in Africa, where outbreaks caused by the live polio vaccine itself are spiraling out of control. The program will reassess the decision every 2 weeks.



Twenty-three countries have already suspended their measles campaigns, and as a result, 78 million children will miss out on the vaccine, says Robb Linkins, a measles expert in the Global Immunization Division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sixteen other countries are still deciding. Linkins foresees "tragic" consequences. In poor countries, the virus can kill 3% to 6% of those it infects, WHO says, with malnourished children especially at risk. Measles infected an estimated 10 million and killed 140,000 in 2018, the last year for which numbers are complete. And because measles is incredibly contagious, case numbers could quickly surge following the suspensions.

Unlike the polio initiative, SAGE stopped short of recommending that countries halt campaigns to quell ongoing measles outbreaks, but it said they should carefully weigh the risk of an immediate response against that of a delayed one. For now, campaigns are continuing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the world's biggest outbreak has so far killed an estimated 6500 children—far more than the ongoing Ebola outbreak in that country—and sickened more than 340,000.

WHO, GAVI, and other health organizations stress that routine immunization of individual children at clinics must continue as much

as possible during the coronavirus pandemic. But health systems in many countries were already stretched thin, and protective gear is often lacking. Berkley fears severe disruptions of routine immunization if health workers are diverted to COVID-19 or become sick or die, or if parents are afraid to bring their children to a clinic. Vaccines may run out as well. Some countries are already experiencing shortages as flights are grounded and borders close, Berkley says.



Other essential health services will also be disrupted, says Augustin Augier, executive director of the Alliance for International Medical Action. Every year, ALIMA trains about 500,000 African mothers to diagnose acute, potentially fatal malnutrition in their children; those programs have been suspended. The knock-on consequences of the pandemic "will be much stronger and more lethal for the world's most vulnerable populations," Augier says.

Across all these programs, the goal is to regain lost ground quickly once the pandemic is over. In the meantime, WHO says, countries should continue surveillance for vaccine-preventable diseases to figure out where pathogens are circulating and which children are most at risk. But that, too, is a challenge amid the fear and disruption from COVID-19.

Berkley sees some hope in the experience in West Africa after the 2014-15 Ebola outbreak. "There was an unprecedented flow of finance and goodwill," he says. "We did campaigns once Ebola was over and strengthened routine immunization. We not only recovered coverage levels, but exceeded them." But that epidemic was largely confined to three countries with a combined population of fewer than 25 million people. This time, the entire world is affected. (Courtesy <https://www.sciencemag.org/>)

Editor's Choice



Migrant workers cover themselves with a scarf, to protect from heat as they wait to get registered before boarding a train to their home state of eastern Bihar, during an extended lockdown in New Delhi, India. REUTERS/Danish Siddiqui



A man sits with a pelican in St James's Park, London, Britain. REUTERS/John Sibley



Victoriano Vera, 49, a certified public accountant, is sprayed with a chlorine solution, which has become a standard procedure for every person and boat arriving at the town pier during the coronavirus outbreak, in Puerto Roma



A man throws water on a girl playing in a pool, during a hot weather, in Sidon, southern Lebanon. REUTERS/Ali Hashisho



A man with a child ride on motorbike in the street blocked by trees that were uprooted by Cyclone Amphan in Satkhira, Bangladesh. REUTERS/Km Asad



Healthcare workers gather in a street during coronavirus testing in Sadr city, district of Baghdad, Iraq. REUTERS/Thaier Al-Sudani



A man carries his son who holds a balloon outside a shopping mall ahead of Eid al-Fitr holiday in Sanaa, Yemen. REUTERS/Khaled Abdullah



Israelis play at the shore of the Mediterranean Sea in Tel Aviv as coronavirus restrictions ease in Israel. REUTERS/Amir Cohen

Another Coronavirus Vaccine Candidate From UK Company —AstraZeneca--Could Make Delivery Of Doses By September

Fauci Voices Cautious Optimism About Moderna Vaccine, Calling The Trial 'Quite Promising'



Dr. Anthony Fauci (r) standing next to President Trump, speaks during a coronavirus task force briefing at the White House on April 22. (Photo/AFP via Getty Images)

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

Dr. Anthony Fauci expressed "cautious optimism" about the initial results from a coronavirus vaccine trial — results that were widely celebrated this week — and says it remains "conceivable" that a vaccine for the deadly pathogen could be available by the end of the year. Amid a global arms race for a vaccine, the nation's leading infectious disease expert said Friday in an interview with NPR that he was encouraged by findings from the Phase 1 trial of a vaccine under development by researchers at the Massachusetts-based biotech company Moderna. On Monday, the company said the vaccine appears both safe and capable of stimulating in test subjects the type of immune response needed to ward off an infection. But the company, which is developing the vaccine in collaboration with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which Fauci leads, has

yet to publish detailed results from the trial, fueling concerns among researchers about how much the announcement can be trusted. Addressing those concerns, Fauci said full details from the trial are now being compiled by his team at the NIAID, but said, "Having looked at the data myself, it is really quite promising. The vaccine induced what we call neutralizing antibodies, as opposed to just binding antibodies, and neutralizing antibodies are antibodies that actually can block the virus," said Fauci. The results were "even better than we thought," he said, "and they did it at a moderate dose of the vaccine." Fauci said full results would be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal, most likely within a few weeks. If all goes according to plan, Fauci said it is possible that a vaccine could be available within a matter of months — a timeline that would shatter the years-long process

typically required to produce a vaccine.



COVID-19 vaccine researchers. "I think it is conceivable if we don't run into things that are, as they say, unanticipated setbacks, that we could have a vaccine that we could be beginning to deploy at the end of this calendar year, December 2020 or into January 2021," Fauci said. But "that's never a promise," he cautioned, "because when you're dealing with vaccines, there could be so many things that get in the way." Moderna's vaccine is just one of hundreds under development by companies and universities worldwide racing to stamp out a virus that in the United States alone has infected more than 1.5 million people and claimed the lives of nearly 95,000. With all 50 states now in the beginning stages of reopening their economies after weeks of lockdown, the search for a vaccine is taking on new urgency. Any vaccine will be met by massive global demand requiring billions of doses and a total shift in approach to how vaccines are typically developed. Fauci said that has meant moving forward with production before testing can be completed. He explained that accelerating efforts to develop the coronavirus vaccine in this way is "not compromising in any way the safety or the scientific integrity." "What we're doing right now, and this is something that I think is going to be characteristic of multiple of the candidates that are being tested for a coronavirus vaccine, is that you even start investing and even making doses of the vaccine before you are completely sure that it works. So the risk is not to

the patients, because the safety and the scientific integrity is intact," he said. "The risk is to the investment."



Until a vaccine is ready, public health experts agree that social distancing and other mitigation measures will remain central to keeping the outbreak at bay, particularly as states begin to reopen. Fauci himself has warned of a second wave of cases, and said on Friday that "the one thing I'm sure of is that there will be infections around in the fall and in the winter, because it's not going to disappear from the planet." Fauci said the test for government leaders will be how well prepared they are to keep "blips of cases" from growing into outbreaks, and from there, "real rebounds of infection." Doing so will require "identification, isolation and contact tracing," he said. "It isn't inevitable that we're going to have a massive rebound," said Fauci. "What is inevitable is that we will see cases. It's how we deal with it that's going to be the end game." Fauci was also asked about an analysis released this week by researchers at Columbia University which found that approximately 36,000 deaths could have been avoided in the United States had broad social distancing measures been put in place just one week earlier in March. The U.S. could have also seen roughly 700,000 fewer infections if actions that began on March 15 had instead started on March 8, according to the study. "We always could have done better, particularly when you look in the rearview mirror and do a retrospectroscope and say, 'Wow, you know, we could have saved a lot of disease if we had done it much earlier.' And that's true," Fauci said. "You have to have a certain degree

of realism and humility about it." (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org/>)

Related
First Deliveries Possible By This September U.S. Secures 300 Million Doses, Almost One-Third, Of AstraZeneca's Potential COVID-19 Vaccine Output

Vaccines are seen by world leaders as the only real way to restart their stalled economies. 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. 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 drug maker 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. (Courtesy <https://www.business-standard.com/>)



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大幅縮減外資准入負面清單 出台跨境服貿負面清單

面對新冠疫情衝擊下日趨嚴峻複雜的國際形勢，中國政府承諾將繼續“堅定不移擴大對外開放”。國務院總理李克強在政府工作報告中表示，今年中國推進更高水平對外開放，大幅縮減外資准入負面清單，出台跨境服務貿易負面清單，營造內外資企業一視同仁、公平競爭的市場環境，穩住外貿外資基本盤。

■香港文匯報記者 海巖 兩會報道



■政府工作報告中表示，今年中國大幅縮減外資准入負面清單，出台跨境服務貿易負面清單。圖為早前上海臨港的上海南港碼頭，新出廠的汽車等待裝船轉運。 資料圖片

今年受全球疫情衝擊，世界經濟嚴重衰退，產業鏈供應循環受阻，國際貿易投資萎縮，大宗商品市場動盪，外貿首當其衝受到衝擊。

支持外貿企業增訂單保就業

李克強在政府工作報告中表示，要促進外貿基本穩定，通過加大信貸投放、擴大出口信用保險覆蓋面、降低進出口合規成本、支持出口產品轉內銷等方式，支持外貿企業增訂單、穩崗位、保就業。此外，加快跨境電商等新業態發展，提升國際貨運能力；推進新一輪服務貿易創新發展試點。今年還要籌辦好第三屆進博會，積極擴大進口，發展更高水平面向世界的大市場。

賦自貿區更大改革開放自主權

在利用外資方面，李克強表示，大幅縮減外資准入負面清單，出台跨境服務貿易負面清單。

賦予自貿試驗區更大改革開放自主權，加快海南自由貿易港建設，在中西部地區增設自貿試驗區、綜合保稅區，增加服務業擴大開放綜合試點。

政府工作報告還強調，高質量共建“一帶一路”，堅持共商共建共享，遵循市場原則和國際通行規則，發揮企業主體作用，開展互惠互利合作。

此外，“中國將推動貿易和投資自由化便利化，堅定維護多邊貿易體制，積極參與世貿組織改革。推動簽署區域全面經濟夥伴關係協定，推進中日韓等自貿談判。共同落實中美第一階段經貿協議。”李克強重申，中國致力於加強與各國經貿合作，實現互利共贏。

將公佈海南自貿港建設方案

國家發改委在提交全國人大審議的計劃報告

草案則進一步細化外資外貿工作的任務目標。發改委提出，今年要保持進出口基本穩定，大力開拓多元化市場，引導企業出口轉內銷，支持跨境電商貿易、市場採購貿易等外貿新業態新模式加快發展。在風險可控前提下，支持擴大短期出口信用保險業務並降低費率，設立中長期政策性出口信用保險專項安排。

在利用外資方面，國家發改委提出，今年全面實施外商投資法及配套法規，大幅縮減外資准入負面清單，深化服務業、金融業、製造業、農業對外開放。做好招商、安商、穩商工作，擴大鼓勵外商投資產業目錄範圍，繼續推動一批重大外資項目落地，確保內外資企業同等享受助企紓困政策。另外，今年將發佈實施海南自由貿易港建設總體方案，出海南自由貿易港跨境服務貿易負面清單，在中西部地區增設自貿試驗區、綜合保稅區。

今年為企業減負新增2.5萬億

香港文匯報訊（記者 海巖 兩會報道）為穩企業保就業，今年政府工作報告提出，疫情初期出台的多項階段性稅費優惠政策，從原來的6月前到期延長至今年底；加上繼續執行降低增值稅稅率及養老保險費率等政策，預計今年為企業新增減負超過2.5萬億元（人民幣，下同）。

李克強在政府工作報告中表示，2019年減稅降費2.36萬億元，超過原定的近2萬億元規模，其中製造業和小微企業受益最多。今年“要堅決把減稅降費政策落到企業，留得青山，贏得未來。”

新增減稅降費5000億

政府工作報告提出，今年繼續執行下調增值稅稅率及企業養老保險費率等制度，新增減稅降費約5,000億元。前期出台六月前到期的減稅降費政策，包括免徵中小微企業養老、失業和工傷保險單位繳費，減免小規模納稅人增值稅，免徵公共交通運輸、餐飲住宿、旅遊娛樂、文化體育等服務增值稅，減免民航發展基金、港口建設費，執行期限全部延長到今年年底。小微企業、個體工商戶所得稅繳納一律延緩到明年。

對於地方財政，財政部部長劉昆在首場“部長通道”採訪中表示，今年地方財政減收增支的規模在8,000億到9,000億元，一些地方保基本民生、保工資、保運轉面臨較大的壓力。加強對地方財力的保障，是今年預算安排的重點。李克強總理在政府工作報告中提出，今年增加赤字率所增加的財政資金全部安排給地方，中央財政發行抗疫特別國債的收入，也全部用於地方基礎設施建設和抗疫相關支出，這是對地方財力和地方財政運行的強大支撐。在今年的預算安排上，中央財政對地方的轉移支付增加了12.8%，這在近年來是最高的。中央財政還專門設立了特殊轉移支付，用於支持地方基層運轉，保障基本民生，落實“六保”任務。中央財政對均衡性轉移支付、縣級基本財力獎補資金增長安排了10%。