

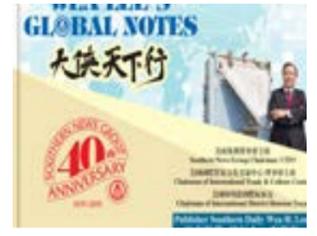


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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Aspiring TikTok buyers pursue four options in effort to revive talks



FILE PHOTO: Logos of ByteDance, the China-based company which owns the short video app TikTok, or Douyin, are seen on a strap of an employee card, in Beijing, China August 13, 2020. REUTERS/Tingshu Wang - RC2YC19P4067/File Photo

(Reuters) - TikTok's prospective buyers are discussing four ways to structure an acquisition from its Chinese owner ByteDance, which include buying its U.S. operations without key software, after Beijing stalled a deal which could be worth \$30 billion, sources said.

Other options being considered include asking for Chinese approval to pass TikTok's algorithm on to the acquirer of the short video app's U.S. assets, licensing the algorithm from ByteDance, or seeking a transition period from a U.S. national security panel overseeing the deal, three sources said.

ByteDance had been looking to pick a buyer for TikTok assets by this week so it can finalize a deal by mid-September and comply with President Donald Trump's order to divest them, after U.S. officials raised concerns over the safety of the personal data of U.S. citizens handled by TikTok.

"TikTok is loved by 100 million Americans because it's a home for entertainment, self-expression, and connection. We're committed to continuing to bring joy to families and meaningful careers to those who create on our platform for many years to come," a TikTok spokeswoman said in a statement.

Beijing last week updated its export control rules to restrict the sale of technology such as the one used by TikTok to recommend videos to users, raising questions over whether

it would veto a deal and giving prospective buyers Microsoft and Oracle pause for thought.

ByteDance and the bidders for the TikTok assets are now discussing four ways to structure the deal, the sources, who requested anonymity, told Reuters.

It is not clear which, if any, of the options will be pursued. As days pass, the odds of a deal lengthen as TikTok faces a U.S. ban on Sept. 20 if no sale agreement has been reached. It has challenged this ban in court.

One possibility being discussed is to sell TikTok without the algorithm it uses to make recommendations to users. While this would circumvent China's export control rules, it would present a significant gamble for Microsoft and Oracle, which would have to quickly come up with a substitute.

Another option is to negotiate a transition period of up to a year with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which is overseeing the deal talks, the sources said. It is not clear, however, whether China's new rules would allow this in the time frame required.

A third option is seeking approval from China to pass on TikTok's algorithm to the buyer of its U.S. assets, the sources said. This would amplify the geopolitical risk, given worsening relations between the world's two largest economies over trade, cyber security and the spread of the coronavirus.

The fourth scenario involves ByteDance licensing the algorithm to the buyer of the TikTok assets, the sources said. However, this could worry CFIUS, which wants ByteDance to forego any relationship it has with TikTok in the United States.

ByteDance, Microsoft and Oracle declined to comment. The White House, CFIUS and China's Commerce Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

TikTok is functionally and technically similar to ByteDance-owned Douyin, which is available only in China, and shares technical resources with it and other ByteDance-owned properties, sources have previously said.

While the code for the app, which determines the look and feel of TikTok, has been separated from Douyin, algorithms for moderating and recommending content and the management of user profiles are shared.

DANCE TRACKED?

While TikTok is best known for videos of people dancing going viral among teenagers, U.S. officials have expressed concern that user information could be passed to Beijing.

TikTok has said it would not comply with any request to share user data with the Chinese authorities.

ByteDance has been in talks to sell TikTok's North American, Australian and New Zealand operations since last month. And in a sign of founder and CEO Zhang Yiming's concern, TikTok engineers were told last week to make contingencies should it need to shut down its U.S. operations.

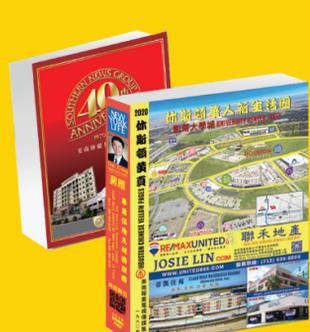
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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

09/02/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Now Is The Time To Act

A letter was sent it to an Irving, Texas, resident in which the writer threatens to "shoot mercilessly" immigrants of Chinese and Indians who work in the IT technology field because, "they steal our jobs." This person is openly threatening to shoot up a swimming pool area, a playground and a business.

The Irving police department is asking anyone who has received such a letter to "not to open it if possible," so as to preserve any forensic evidence.

This disturbing letter is threatening violence and has police on alert. People in the Asian community are directly being targeted and are under threat.

As the election time is getting closer, all the politicians are starting to come into our community to ask for donations and votes, including many Asians. For the decent candidates running for public office, this is the time we need to express our opinions to these politicians and tell them what we need in our community. Actually, the truth is, many of them will never come back to us when the campaign is over.

More than half of the Asian population came to this country in the last forty years. They came here as refugees and students or because their relatives were already here. They are very hard



workers who have created small businesses and raised their next generation to become very outstanding professionals. This is a great contribution to America.

Today in America we are facing a very unstable society with so much social unrest and riots together with the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. The Asian community especially is

facing the biggest difficulty because some people are blaming Asian immigrants for the problems.

The presidential and congressional elections are coming soon. We as Asian voters need to make the right decision to pick our leader.

Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
Chairman of International District Houston Texas
Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Herd Immunity To Coronavirus May Have Been Reached In New York And California, Scientist Claims



Herd immunity to the virus may now be a reality for some Americans, per scientist in Israel.

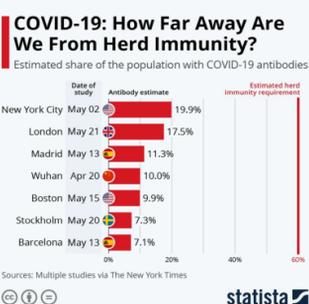
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

NEW YORK — While the wait for a coronavirus vaccine continues across the globe, one scientist believes that herd immunity to the virus is now a reality for some Americans. Data scientist Mark Last, a professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, says that New York and California may have hit this potentially all-important mark. Last also suggests that Israel is quite close to reaching herd immunity as well, if it hasn't already.

Herd immunity, or the idea that if enough people become infected with COVID-19 it will lead to immunity on a wide scale, is seen as a possible solution to the pandemic. Scientists and doctors rely on what's known as the "reproduction number" or "R" to determine herd immunity. This refers to how many people an infected person is likely to transmit the virus to. When that number falls below one, herd immunity is achieved.

Herd immunity by the numbers It's believed that 60% of a population must have been infected to reach herd immu-

nity. One recent study shows that number may actually be even lower at just 43%. Professor Last is using what's known as the SIR Model of Infection Dynamics for his analysis of the coronavirus. The model labels segments of the population as either "S" for susceptible, "I" for infectious, or "R" for recovered. He says that New York wasn't far off from herd immunity in June when there was 400,000 confirmed cases. Antibody tests, however, suggested that there may have been six times that many infections (2.4 million).



If his numbers hold up, the state's reproduction rate at the time would be 1.14. Since then, the state continues to report a consistent decrease in coronavirus cases. Last believes it may be enough of a drop for herd immunity. He calculates similar results for California as well as Israel.

"In California, it appears that herd immunity was reached around July 15 with slightly more than 10% of their population (4.05 million) being infected," he says in a media release. "This means that their basic reproduction number R0 under current restrictions is only 1.1.

Coronavirus peak over in Israel? "In Israel, a further lockdown is not necessary if the current restrictions are maintained and there are no unusual spreading events," Last adds. "If we maintain the current restrictions, then my model predicts that we are at the end of this peak, which should tail off at the end of August or the beginning of September. Moreover, according to my calculations, we need 1.16 million people with antibodies in order to achieve herd immunity and we are very close to that number."

It's important to recognize, of course, that these findings are simply estimates from Last's model. It's impossible to know the true accuracy without actual test results.

"We cannot know the actual number of cases of infection unless we test the entire population every day. Initial serological tests conducted in Israel indicate the ratio of confirmed cases to actual cases is about 1:10. Using those numbers, we now have slightly above one million people with antibodies in Israel and we need at least 1.2 million," he says.



Still, Last doesn't want officials to ease up yet on restrictions, including social distancing and mask mandates.

"We are heading in the right direction, but it is important not to relax our restrictions or get overconfident," he warns. Last's study was presented virtually at the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Medicine (AIME) on August 26.

Related
High Blood Pressure Meds May Create 'Much Lower Risk' Of COVID-19 Complications

NORWICH, United Kingdom — The coronavirus pandemic is causing extra concern for many people with high blood pressure and heart disease. Though these patients are at higher risk, a new study reveals their medications may be doing more good than realized. British researchers find patients taking antihypertensives are at "significantly lower risk" of ending up on a ventilator or dying from COVID-19. The University of East Anglia says Angiotensin-Converting En-

zyme inhibitors (ACEi) and Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB) both reduce the chances of a severe COVID-19 illness in patients with high blood pressure. The findings look at 28,000 patients taking antihypertensives in the largest, coronavirus-related study to date.

"We know that patients with cardiovascular diseases are at particular risk of severe Covid-19 infection. But at the start of the pandemic, there was concern that specific medications for high blood pressure could be linked with worse outcomes for Covid-19 patients," Dr. Vassilios Vassiliou says in a university release.

"On the contrary, we found that there was a significantly lower risk of death and critical outcomes, so they might in fact have a protective role — particularly in patients with hypertension."

Good news for high blood pressure patients during pandemic

The study compares COVID-19 patients taking ACEi and ARB medications to those not taking them. Researchers focus on those taken to intensive care units, placed on ventilators, and fatalities during the pandemic.

Vassiliou reveals that a third of coronavirus patients with high blood pressure and a quarter of all patients are on ACEi or ARBs. These patients suffer from a number of conditions including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes. Their risk of COVID-19 infection is high.

"The really important thing that we showed was that there is no evidence that these medications might increase the severity of COVID-19 or risk of death," the lead researcher explains. "COVID-19 patients with high blood pressure who were taking ACEi/ARB medications were 0.67 times less likely to have a critical or fatal outcome than those not taking these medications."

Study authors say this is a major revelation that could provide good news for high blood pressure patients if there is a second wave in the pandemic.

"Our research provides substantial evidence to recommend continued use of these medications if the patients were taking them already," Vassiliou adds. "However, we are not able to address whether starting such tablets acutely in patients with Covid-19 might improve their prognosis, as the mechanism of action might be different." (Courtesy <https://www.studyfinds.org/>) The study was also published in the journal, Current Atherosclerosis Reports.



Editor's Choice



U.S. Army paratroopers jump with parachutes from a Hercules C-130 military transport plane during Noble Partner 2020 multinational exercise, which involves servicemen from Georgia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland and France, at Vaziani



U.S. President Donald Trump talks with local business people while examining property damage to a Kenosha business in the aftermath of recent protests against police brutality and racial injustice and ensuing violence after the shooting of Jacob Blake by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin. REUTERS/Leah Millis



Actor Cate Blanchett waves while covering her face as she arrives the day before the start of the 77th Venice International Film Festival, the first major international film festival held since the coronavirus outbreak, in Venice, Italy. REUTERS/Yara..



Law enforcement personnel wearing riot gear stand guard behind a barricade as demonstrators protest against the shooting of Dijon Kizzee by Los Angeles sheriff's deputies, outside the Los Angeles County Sheriff's department station in Los Angeles



An Extinction Rebellion climate activist waves a large flag during a "peaceful disruption" of British Parliament as lawmakers return from the summer recess, in London, Britain. REUTERS/Henry Nicholls



A woman takes a walk as it rains amid the coronavirus pandemic at a Han River park in Seoul, South Korea. REUTERS/Kim Hong-Ji



A health worker collects a sample using a swab from a person at a local health center to conduct tests for the coronavirus in New Delhi, India. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi



Dr. Jill Biden, wife of U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, speaks next to a playground during a 'back to school' tour of Shortlidge Academy in Wilmington, Delaware. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

CDC Flooded With Large Number Of Calls About Coronavirus Conspiracy Theory



Photo Illustration by The Daily Beast/Getty

KEY POINTS
CRANK CALLERS

Promoted by the Trump campaign and the increasingly off-centered QAnon conspiracy cult, a bogus COVID-19 statistic briefly took root—and tied up largely CDC officials.

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

Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been deluged with a flood of media requests about a conspiracy theory promulgated by QAnon—an increasingly violent far-right group praised by President Donald Trump that is widely known for spreading disinformation.

As the agency attempted to manage the fallout of a controversial Health and Human Services announcement that it had revised testing guidelines to exclude individuals who do not exhibit symptoms, officials were sidetracked by a barrage of inquiries about whether the CDC had lied about the number of Americans who died as a result of the coronavirus.

Over the weekend QAnon, a movement whose believers often push out falsities on a myriad of subjects, promoted a bogus theory that only 6 percent of people listed as having died from the coronavirus had “actually died” from COVID-19.

Officials at the CDC said they spent the

last several days fielding questions or requests for comment from dozens of local and national outlets asking to clarify whether the agency had falsified its data. The wave of emails and calls about the conspiracy theory caught officials off-guard.



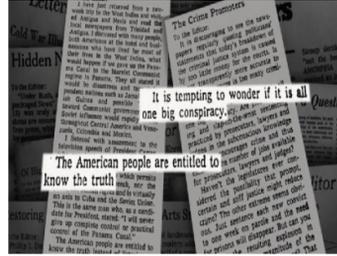
Fauci: “I Was Under Anesthesia When COVID Guidelines Changed.”

“The amount of requests we had to deal with on this issue was insane,” one senior official said. “And these were from legitimate outlets. This is all easily debunked by just searching our website for the

actual statistics.”

The CDC effort to combat accusations from QAnon, a relatively new, increasingly unhinged movement that’s making inroads into online health communities, shows the power that conspiracy theorists can have during the pandemic—especially when boosted by the president. It also shows just how permeable the barrier between conspiracy cranks and established media outlets can be.

“In all my time working in the government I’ve never had to deal with something this crazy. The level of disinformation spread by this group has grown in recent months and now we’re having to actively debunk it through the press.”



The “six percent” claim was embraced by conservatives, who have been eager for ways to downplay the virus’ American death toll and have claimed for months that the CDC and hospitals were overcounting COVID-19 deaths. To QAnon supporters, the claim purports to show that COVID-19 has killed only 9,000 people, with the vast majority of the roughly 183,000 COVID-19 casualties actually killed by another ailment.

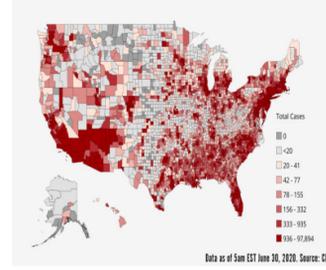
But they were wrong. In one section of an older data set, which relied on information collected from death certificates—one of the two main ways the CDC analyzes mortality in the U.S.—6 percent of people were listed as dying from COVID-19 alone. The death certificate algorithm scans for words such as “COVID-19” and “novel coronavirus” when analyzing mortality. In 94 percent of deaths with COVID-19, other conditions were listed in addition to COVID-19, such as diabetes or hypertension. Those conditions are often listed in the part of the death certificate that includes events that lead to an individual’s death.

“Despite the QAnon calculation errors, the claim has been boosted

by President Trump and his campaign.”

Despite the QAnon calculation errors, the claim has been boosted by President Trump and his campaign. Trump himself retweeted a post promoting the false statistic before Twitter deleted it for violating company rules, while Trump campaign senior legal adviser Jenna Ellis posted a link to an article on fringe website The Gateway Pundit trumpeting the 6 percent figure.

United States COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by County



The claim has also been promoted by high-profile QAnon conspiracy theorists, who believe that Trump is secretly engaged in a shadowy war against a global cabal of cannibal-pedophiles. The tweet Trump reposted, for example, came from a Twitter user and QAnon believer named “Mel Q,” a reference to the QAnon.

This isn’t the first time during the pandemic that QAnon believers have played a key role in promoting coronavirus disinformation. Social media networks of QAnon supporters have become powerful ways to disseminate bogus stories about COVID-19, with QAnon believers promoting the viral disinformation video “Plandemic,” among others. The debacle over QAnon’s inaccurate read of the mortality statistics is just the latest example of how the CDC has in recent months tried to combat efforts by Trump and his supporters to downplay the death count.

Earlier this summer, Trump and members of his coronavirus task force pushed for the CDC to change the way it counted COVID-19 deaths. As The Daily Beast previously reported, The White House pressed the agency to work with states to change how they count coronavirus deaths and report them back to the federal government.



Dr. Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the U.S. coronavirus task force.

Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the task force, urged CDC officials to exclude from coronavirus death-count reporting some of those individuals who either do not have confirmed lab results and are presumed positive or who have the virus and may not have died as a direct result of it. Officials inside the CDC pushed back, claiming the move would skew mortality statistics. Since then, the team inside the CDC in charge of counting deaths has worked overtime to ensure the data it publishes on the agency’s website is accurate and as up-to-date as possible.

The running narrative within the team is that the U.S. has underestimated, not overcounted, the number of people who have died from the coronavirus. As of Sept. 1, the CDC has reported that 183,050 Americans have died since the start of the pandemic. (Courtesy <https://www.thedailybeast.com/>)



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