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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Jack Ma, Trump and Xi: How Chinese billionaire flew close to the sun

HONG KONG, Nov 5 (Reuters) - This was supposed to be Jack Ma's finest hour: a year ago to the day, his Ant Group was meant to go public in a \$37 billion blaze of glory. Instead Beijing reined in his empire, abruptly clipping the wings of corporate China's biggest star.

Now, to the cautious cheer of investors, the billionaire Alibaba (9988.HK) e-commerce tycoon is taking his first tentative steps back on to the global stage with a low-key trip to Europe where he's cultivating hobbies like horticulture.

It's a far cry from the height of Ma's statesman-like powers in 2017 when he travelled to New York to meet President-elect Donald Trump for one-on-one talks in Trump Tower days before inauguration and promised to create a million American jobs.

That high-profile outing had roiled the Chinese government, which first learned of the meeting and jobs pledge along with the rest of the world when Ma held an informal televised Q&A session with reporters in the lobby of the skyscraper, according to four people close to Alibaba with knowledge of the matter and one Beijing government source.

Alibaba's government relations team was subsequently told by Chinese officials that Beijing was unhappy about Ma meeting Trump without its prior approval, two of the people close to the company said.

Ma's charitable foundation, which handles his media queries, did not respond to a request for comment. The State Council Information Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not respond to requests for comment. All the sources declined to be named due to sensitivity of the matter.

The meeting on Jan. 9 came at a time of taut tensions between the two countries after Trump was critical of China during his election campaign, blaming it for the loss of American jobs.

A spokesperson for Trump did not respond to a request for comment.

The four people close to Alibaba said they believed the meeting was a negative turning point in the relationship between Ma and Beijing. They did not elaborate on their thinking.

Investors are hungry for clues about Ma's



situation: the mere sighting of the businessman on the Spanish island of Mallorca last month, his first trip abroad in over a year, immediately saw Alibaba gain as much as \$42 billion in value.

The story of his fall from official favour helps illustrate how rapidly China has transformed under Xi Jinping, as he nears what could be a precedent-breaking third term as leader of the economic powerhouse and exerts greater control over some of its most innovative companies.

### 'A NATURAL FIRST TARGET'

Authorities cracked down on Ma's business empire after he gave a speech in Shanghai in October last year accusing financial watchdogs of stifling innovation. Regulators suspended the \$37 billion listing of his fintech firm Ant Group two days before the planned debut on Nov. 5, ordered that Ant be restructured and launched antitrust investigations into Ma's businesses, eventually leading to a record \$2.75 billion fine for Alibaba in April.

The clampdown has spread across the private sector, with officials tightening oversight of companies in technology, real estate, gaming, education, cryptocurrencies and finance.

"Given that Jack appeared too provocative, out of step with the new approach to governance espoused by Xi, he was a natural first target to signal that a major change had begun," said Duncan Clark, chairman of Beijing-based investment advisory firm BDA China and author of a book on Alibaba and Ma.

"Jack was rubbing shoulders regularly with foreign presidents, prime ministers, royalty, celebrities at places like Davos or on his own visits overseas. There was a constant stream of VIP visitors to see him in Hangzhou too."

Ma's global outreach did not end after the Trump meeting, though.

Between 2018 and 2020 he held talks with a host of high-profile figures, including U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, Queen Rania of Jordan, Malaysia's veteran politician Mahathir Mohamad and then Belgian premier Charles Michel, according to Alibaba's news portal Alizila and media reports.

At Alibaba's Hangzhou headquarters, it has a building housing the company's museum where Ma and

his business partner Joe Tsai would take foreign visitors and show them around, according to another person close to Ma.

Tsai did not respond to a request for comment via Alibaba.

Ma had viewed meetings with foreign politicians as "unofficial diplomacy" for China, which he enjoyed doing, the person added.

Alibaba told Reuters it had a guest reception facility widely known as Pavilion 9 that offered a visual tour of its history and an overview of its businesses. It has hosted a wide variety of guests at the exhibition hall in its headquarters, it added.

The company did not respond to other queries for this story.

### 'JUST LIKE YOU AND ME'

In a sign of how life has changed for one of China's most successful and influential businessmen, Ma requested an audience with at least two people in Xi's inner circle in the weeks following the blocking of Ant's listing, but his requests were turned down by both, said two separate sources briefed by those people.



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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

## CORONAVIRUS DIARY 11/06/2021



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# Challenges For The Biden Administration



When President Biden came back home from Europe he received a lot of bad news. The Republican's Glenn Youngkin won the seat of Governor of Virginia. In New Jersey, democratic governor Murphy won the seat very narrowly and defeated Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli.

President Biden said that, "People wanted us to get things done and that is why I am continuing to push very hard for the Democratic Party

to move along and pass my infrastructure bill and my Build Back Better bill."

Biden has for months been working for his legislative agenda as his party has failed to pass a \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure plan and a \$1.75 trillion social

safety net expansion bill.

Today most people are facing difficulties related to the rising prices of food, gas and general goods.

Overseas we are still having so many issues with China and many other countries including the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

If the current administration

cannot solve the problems here and overseas, this is going to be very serious for the Democratic Party in the mid-term elections next year.

When President Biden reached a full year into his presidency, he already has felt a new sense of urgency to pass his agenda and provide direction for the Democratic Party.



## Southern DAILY Make Today Different

## Editor's Choice



A Taliban fighter walks past a ride as he takes a day off to visit an amusement park on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan, October 29. REUTERS/Zohra Bensemra



A drone sprays disinfectant over volunteers disinfecting a school following local cases of the coronavirus in Lanzhou, Gansu province, China. Picture taken October 27. China Daily via REUTERS



Migrants transport their children on shopping cart as they take part in a caravan heading to Mexico City, in Hermenegildo Galeana, Mexico, November 1. REUTERS/Daniel Becerril



Ex-conjoined Cameroonian twins Elizabeth and Mary Akwe pose with their parents Carolina and Richard during a press conference after their successful separation surgery at Acibadem Altunizade Hospital in Istanbul, Turkey November 2. REUTERS/Umit Bektas



Revelers take part in the NYC Halloween Parade as the event returns to the streets of Lower Manhattan for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak in New York City, October 31. REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz



Climate activists dressed as world leaders take part in a "Squid Game" inspired protest during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, November 2. REUTERS/Dylan Martinez

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

It's Time For Kids To Roll Up Their Sleeves For The COVID-19 Shots



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

Hugs with friends. Birthday parties indoors. Pillow fights. Schoolchildren who got their first COVID-19 shots Wednesday said these are the pleasures they look forward to as the U.S. enters a major new phase in fighting the pandemic.

Health officials hailed shots for kids ages 5 to 11 as a major breakthrough after more than 18 months of illness, hospitalizations, deaths and disrupted education.

Kid-sized doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine cleared two final hurdles Tuesday — a recommendation from CDC advisers, followed by a green light from Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At a Decatur, Georgia, pediatrician's office, 10-year-old Mackenzie Olson took off her black leather jacket and rolled up her sleeve as her mother looked on.

"I see my friends but not the way I want to. I want to hug them, play games with them that we don't normally get to," and have a pillow fight with her best friend, Mackenzie said after getting her shot at the Children's Medical Group site.

With the federal government promising enough vaccine to protect the nation's 28 million kids in this age group, pediatricians' offices and hospitals began inoculating children. Schools, pharmacies and other locations plan to follow suit in the days ahead.

The atmosphere surrounding the launch of shots for elementary-age students was festive in many locations. California vaccine sites welcomed children with inflatable animals and handed out coloring books and prizes. Vehicles lined up before dawn at an Atlanta site.

Many pediatricians' offices expected strong interest in the shots at least initially, but health officials are worried about demand tapering off. Almost two-thirds of parents recently polled by the Kaiser Family Foundation said they would wait or not seek out vaccines for their kids.

Cate Zeigler-Amon, 10, was first in line Wednesday for a drive-through vaccination at Viral Solutions in Atlanta. The girl enthusiastically bounced around the car before the shot, which she broadcast live on her computer during morning announcements at her elementary school.

Afterward, Cate said she was looking forward to hugging her friends and celebrating her birthday indoors next month "instead of having a freezing cold outside birthday party."

Hartford Hospital in Connecticut vaccinated seven youngsters Tuesday night, minutes after the CDC's director gave the OK, and three more early Wednesday. As they got their shots, one girl squeezed her eyes shut and a boy barely flinched, and other waiting kids applauded. The vaccine — one-third the dose given to older children and adults and administered with kid-sized needles — requires two doses three weeks apart, plus two more weeks for full protection. That means children who get vaccinated before Thanksgiving will be covered by Christmas.

"The timing before winter holidays is very fortunate," said Dr. Jennifer Shu, whose Children's Medical Group office in Decatur, Georgia, began vaccinating first thing Wednesday. "This age group will be able to spend holidays with friends and family more safely than they have been able to since the start of the pandemic."

Thousands of pediatricians pre-ordered doses, and Pfizer began shipments soon after the Food and Drug Administration's decision Friday to authorize emergency use. Pfizer said it expects to make 19,000 shipments totaling about 11 million doses in the coming days, and millions more will be available to order on a weekly basis. Authorities said they expect a smooth rollout, unlike the chaos that plagued the national one for adults nearly a year ago.

More than 6,000 vaccination clinics are being planned at schools around the country before the winter holiday break, he said. Walgreens planned to start kids' vaccinations Saturday and said parents could sign up online or by calling

1-800-Walgreens. CVS was also accepting appointments online and by phone at select pharmacies starting Sunday. Despite the initial enthusiasm, not everyone is rushing out to get shots.

Hannah Hause, a Colorado mother of four children ages 2, 5, 7 and 8, is herself vaccinated, but wants to see how the child vaccines play out and are studied in the larger childhood population. "It's not studied long-term. It just makes me nervous," she said. "As long as I can wait, I will wait."

At a White House briefing Wednesday, Walensky said authorities thoroughly reviewed all available data on the vaccine's safety, efficacy and the immune response it generates before recommending shots for kids.

Dr. Ada Stewart, a Black family physician in Columbia, South Carolina, and past president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, said she's seen the toll the virus has taken on younger children — not just in family illness and death but with school disruptions, slipping grades and mental strain. School closures throughout the pandemic have disproportionately burdened children of color, widening academic gaps and worsening mental health, according to data presented Tuesday to CDC advisers. It showed more than 2,000 COVID-related school closures in just the first two months of the current school year.

A Pfizer study of 2,268 children found the vaccine was almost 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infections. The FDA examined 3,100 vaccinated kids in concluding the shots are safe. Some skeptics have questioned the need for kids to get vaccinated since they are less likely than adults to develop severe COVID-19. But with the delta variant, they get infected and transmit "just as readily as adults do," Dr. Anthony Fauci said at a recent White House briefing.

Infected kids have also contributed to the U.S. toll — almost 46 million infections and more than 740,000 deaths. Since the pandemic began, at least 94 children ages 5 to 11 have died from COVID-19, more than 8,300 have been hospitalized and over 5,000 have developed a serious inflammatory condition linked to the coronavirus. Black and Latino youngsters and those with chronic conditions are among the hardest hit. (Courtesypapnews.com.)

**Related**  
**Some Parents Want To Wait To Vaccinate Their Kids, Doctors Say Do It Now.**

stands by in Pasadena, Calif., in May. As of this week, kids aged 5 to 11 can also get vaccinated against COVID-19. (Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP)

COVID-19 shots for kids are on their way, but Dr. Ibukunoluwa Kalu, a pediatrician and infectious disease specialist at Duke University, says that some parents she has talked with aren't sure how they feel about that. "Now that this option is becoming a reality, parents are now weighing that decision of vaccinate or not as we're reaching a point in the pandemic where it seems that case rates have either plateaued or declined quite significantly in a lot of areas," she says. "Which is a good thing, but it puts us in an interesting quandary."

Polls show that many parents are on the fence about whether and when to vaccinate their younger kids. We've talked to pediatricians and looked at the data to provide answers to common questions on parents' minds.

**I've heard COVID is mild for most kids. Do they really need to be vaccinated?**  
It's true that most children infected with the virus have only mild symptoms and that children rarely die from the disease. But scientists and health officials recommending the shot emphasize that vaccination could prevent many infections, as well as disruptions to schooling, hospitalizations and rare but severe complications of the disease.

**Can't I just wait a bit to see how vaccinations go before I vaccinate my kid?**  
Many pediatricians urge parents not to wait — first of all because their children will still be at risk for getting sick from COVID-19. "You can't wait until millions and millions of doses are given before you decide, because this virus is going to take every opportunity it can to infect someone," says Dr. Tina Tan, pediatrician and infectious disease specialist at Northwestern and Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

**A 10-year-old child receives the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 Vaccine for 5- to 11-year-old kids at Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut on November 2, 2021. (Photo/Joseph Presioso/AFP via Getty Images)**

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"Because the delta variant is that much more transmissible, kids can get delta and can get quite sick from it," says Tan. "You cannot predict — in a normal healthy child — who's going to get very sick and who's not. [Vaccinating] is the best way to protect your child against getting severe COVID illness."

Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock made a similar point when she was asked about parents who wanted to wait to vaccinate their kids in a press conference Friday. "As a parent, if I had young children in this age group, I would get them vaccinated now," she said. (Courtesy npr.org)

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Being affected by polio at such a young age has meant Lillard hasn't been able to have all the experiences others have had. She attended school from home for much of her childhood and couldn't participate in most extracurricular activities — she still remembers longing to go camping with her siblings. She was not able to have children or hold a steady job because of her physical limitations.

Although some of her life experiences were limited, Lillard thanks a childhood friend named Karen Rapp for teaching her to appreciate small things. Together, they observed ants and built little villages of grass huts.

"There's much more to see if you really look for it," she says. And she's grateful for the iron lung. "It's what sustains me. It's what heals me. It's what allows me to breathe the next day," Lillard says. "I look at it as a friend, as a very dear friend." (Courtesy npr.org)

**Related**  
**Jonas Salk Creator Of The Salk Vaccine**

Jonas Edward Salk (Born Jonas Salk; October 28, 1914 – June 23, 1995) was an American virologist and medical researcher who developed one of the first successful polio vaccines. He was born in New York City and attended the City College of New York and New York University School of Medicine.

**Dr. Jonas Salk**  
In 1947, Salk accepted a professorship in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. It was there that he undertook a project to determine the number of different types of poliovirus, starting in 1948. For the next seven years, Salk devoted himself towards developing a vaccine against polio.

Salk was immediately hailed as a "miracle worker" when the vaccine's success was first made public in April 1955, and chose to not patent the vaccine or seek any profit from it in order to maximize its global distribution. The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the University of Pittsburgh looked into patenting the vaccine but, since Salk's techniques were not novel, their patent attorney said, "if there were any patentable novelty to be found in this phase it would lie within an extremely narrow scope and would be of doubtful value."

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

Decades After Polio, An Iron Lung Is Still Relied On To Breathe By Patient

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



Martha Lillard needed a large respirator called an iron lung to recover from polio, which she caught in 1953. She still uses a form of the device at nights. (Photo courtesy of Martha Lillard)

On June 8, 1953, Martha Lillard celebrated her fifth birthday with a party at an amusement park in Oklahoma. A little over a week later, she woke up with a sore throat and a pain in her neck. Her family took her to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with polio.

She spent six months in the hospital, where she was put in a giant metal tank — a ventilator informally called an iron lung — to help her breathe. To this day, Lillard is one of the last people in the U.S. who still depends on an iron lung to survive.

Polio is a potentially life-threatening disease, once among the world's most feared. In the late 1940s, polio disabled an average of 35,000 people in the U.S. every year.

A polio vaccine became widely available in 1955, and millions of Americans got vaccinated. Since 1979, no cases of polio have originated in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The disease has been nearly eradicated — the World Health Organization documented only 175 cases of wild polio in 2019. It remains endemic in only Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Although most people who contract polio will not have visible symptoms, a severe case can infect the brain and spinal cord and cause paralysis. Lillard's breathing muscles were weakened by the disease, and she survived thanks to the iron lung.



Iron lung respirators are prepared in an emergency polio ward at a Boston hospital in August 1955. (Photo/AP)

The machines are giant ventilators about 7 feet long. Patients lie inside with just their heads resting outside; a seal around the patient's neck creates a vacuum. Bellows at the base of the device do the work of a human diaphragm — they create negative pressure so the user's lungs fill with air, and positive pressure allowing the person to exhale.

Sixty-eight years later, an iron lung is still keeping Lillard alive — she sleeps in it every night. While many people who had polio or post-polio syndrome either weaned themselves off the machines or switched to another form of ventilator, Lillard never did.

"I've tried all the forms of ventilation, and the iron lung is the most efficient and the best and the most comfortable way," she told Radio Diaries.

The antiquated machines are now more likely to be found in a museum than in someone's home. In the 1990s, when her iron lung was breaking down, she called hospitals and museums that might have had old ones in storage. But they'd either thrown them away or didn't want to part with their collection. She eventually bought one from a man in Utah — the machine she still uses today.

The machines were once serviced by Philips Respercon, but Lillard says the assistance she received from the company was minimal. Once, she says a technician was sent to service her machine and prepared to leave before putting the machine back together.

Lillard has gotten stuck in the iron lung. She lost power when an ice storm came through Oklahoma and her emergency generator didn't kick on, leaving her trapped in the device without heat.

"It's like being buried alive almost, you know — it's so scary," Lillard says. She tried to call 911, but the cell towers weren't working. "I was having trouble breathing. And I remember saying out loud to myself, 'I'm not going to die.'" Lillard was eventually able to get a signal, but she remembers the emergency responders had no idea what an iron lung was. Luckily, they were able to get the generator going for her.

**Martha Lillard says she worries about running out of replacement parts to make her iron lung respirator function properly. (Photo courtesy of Martha Lillard)**

Wear on parts is her main issue now. The belts need to be replaced every few weeks, the cot inside every six months, the motor every 12 years or so. Her most immediate need is collars. The collars create the critical airtight seal around the neck. Each one lasts only for a few months. And she has bought all the back stock of collars from places that don't produce them anymore. "That's the main thing I'm having a hard time with, because I try to stretch out, make these collars last longer," Lillard says. "And when they start deteriorating, it gets harder and harder to breathe as they leak more."

She has only a handful of collars left. "I really am desperate," she says. "That's the most scary thing in my life right now — is not finding anybody that can make those collars."

Today, Lillard spends much of her time alone. She paints, watches old Hollywood movies and takes care of her beagles. She has been mostly isolating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing her sister, Cindy, and her brother-in-law, Daryl, in the evenings.



Dr. Jonas Salk administers vaccine to young patient.

Being affected by polio at such a young age has meant Lillard hasn't been able to have all the experiences others have had. She attended school from home for much of her childhood and couldn't participate in most extracurricular activities — she still remembers longing to go camping with her siblings. She was not able to have children or hold a steady job because of her physical limitations.

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of doing." Black, Native American and Hispanic children were three times more likely to be hospitalized than white children, according to the CDC.

In addition, more than 5,200 children and teens have developed MIS-C, or multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, a condition linked to COVID-19 that often leads to ICU admission. The median age of kids getting MIS-C is 9 years old.

The most common side effects documented in the study were similar to those other age groups have had with COVID-19 vaccines. The most common were pain at the injection site, fatigue and headache and muscle aches. Kids who get the vaccine feel "ultimately fine in two or three days," Kalu says.

It's hard to predict which kids who get COVID-19 will be struck with severe COVID-19 or MIS-C. In one CDC analysis of hospitalization records, roughly 30% of kids hospitalized with COVID-19 had no underlying health conditions that would have put them at increased risk.

**A 10-year-old child high fives Pharmacist Colleen Teevan after he received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for kids at**



Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut on November 2, 2021. (Joseph Presioso/AFP via Getty Images)

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Being affected by polio at such a young age has meant Lillard hasn't been able to have all the experiences others have had. She attended school from home for much of her childhood and couldn't participate in most extracurricular activities — she still remembers longing to go camping with her siblings. She was not able to have children or hold a steady job because of her physical limitations.

Although some of her life experiences were limited, Lillard thanks a childhood friend named Karen Rapp for teaching her to appreciate small things. Together, they observed ants and built little villages of grass huts.

"There's much more to see if you really look for it," she says. And she's grateful for the iron lung. "It's what sustains me. It's what heals me. It's what allows me to breathe the next day," Lillard says. "I look at it as a friend, as a very dear friend." (Courtesy npr.org)

**Related**  
**Jonas Salk Creator Of The Salk Vaccine**

Jonas Edward Salk (Born Jonas Salk; October 28, 1914 – June 23, 1995) was an American virologist and medical researcher who developed one of the first successful polio vaccines. He was born in New York City and attended the City College of New York and New York University School of Medicine.

**Dr. Jonas Salk**  
In 1947, Salk accepted a professorship in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. It was there that he undertook a project to determine the number of different types of poliovirus, starting in 1948. For the next seven years, Salk devoted himself towards developing a vaccine against polio.

Salk was immediately hailed as a "miracle worker" when the vaccine's success was first made public in April 1955, and chose to not patent the vaccine or seek any profit from it in order to maximize its global distribution. The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the University of Pittsburgh looked into patenting the vaccine but, since Salk's techniques were not novel, their patent attorney said, "if there were any patentable novelty to be found in this phase it would lie within an extremely narrow scope and would be of doubtful value."

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