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Oil in the age of coronavirus: a U.S. shale bust like no other



Inside C2

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

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More Americans return to work; concerns grow of a second virus



DETROIT (Reuters) - Factory workers began returning to assembly lines in Michigan on Monday, paving the way for the reopening of the U.S. auto sector but stoking fears of a second wave of coronavirus infections as strict lockdowns are eased across the country.

With millions of Americans thrown out of work and economic activity cratering, a growing number of states are ending the tough restrictions that were put in place in March and April to slow the spread of the outbreak.

Some auto suppliers in Michigan, a Midwest industrial powerhouse hard hit by the pandemic and its economic fallout, reopened plants on Monday with skeleton crews to get ready for the planned May 18 restart of auto production.

"We're starting up our foundry this week in anticipation of the orders coming in next week," Joe Perkins, chief executive of Busche Performance Group, an engineering, casting and machining firm, said in a telephone interview. Busche had been making parts for non-auto customers deemed essential, such as Deere & Co (DE.N) and Emerson Electric Co (EMR.N), but is now firing up its furnaces for auto customers and training employees on how to be safe during the pandemic.

Detroit's Big Three automakers – General Motors Co (GM.N), Ford Motor Co (F.N) and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV (FCHA.MI)(FCAU.N) - have said they plan to restart vehicle production at their North American plants on May 18.

The auto sector accounts for 6% of U.S. economic output and employs more than 835,000 Americans. The government of Mexico, another important link in North America's automobile production chain, is expected to make an announcement this week regarding its plans for the industry.

Overall, more than 80,000 Americans have died in the pandemic out of more than 1.34 million known U.S. infections tallied since Jan. 20, according to a Reuters tally. Michigan has counted more than 4,500 deaths related to COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus, ranking fourth among the 50 U.S. states.

In Ohio, another highly industrial state, the vast majority of retail shops can start serving customers on Tuesday. Even New York, the epicenter of the U.S. crisis, was set to relax social distancing measures by week's end in some parts of the state outside Greater New York City.

NEW YORK PHASE-IN

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said he expected several

parts of the state to begin a phased-in reopening as soon as this weekend after his stay-at-home order expires on May 15.

Certain low-risk businesses and activities like landscaping, tennis courts and drive-in theaters will open, Cuomo told a news conference. "We took the worst situation in the nation and changed the trajectory," he said.

Rural parts of New York will begin to emerge from the statewide lockdown first. But New York City and its suburbs still must clear some formidable hurdles, including forging a safety plan for its regional subway and commuter rail system.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said restrictions for non-essential businesses may relax next month.

Nearly all of the 50 states have begun loosening restrictions on daily business and social life under growing economic pressure. The pandemic has put more Americans out of work than any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s and prompted the U.S. Congress to pass trillions of dollars in emergency aid for workers and businesses.

Republican President Donald Trump, criticized by Democrats for his playing down and mishandling the outbreak, has been pushing for the reopening of the economy, which is seen as key to his chances of re-election in the Nov. 3 election.

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Trump, an eye on re-election, accuses Democrats of reopening U.S. states too slowly

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump accused Democrats on Monday of moving to reopen U.S. states from coronavirus lockdown measures too slowly for political advantage, without providing evidence to support his claim.

FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump meets with senior military leadership and the National Security Team in the Cabinet room at the White House in Washington, U.S., May 9, 2020. REUTERS/Yuri Gripas
The Republican president, who is running for re-election in November, is working to reopen the crippled economy quickly against recommendations from health experts to move more cautiously to avoid a resurgence of the virus that has so far killed more than 80,000 people in the United States.

Trump has encouraged states to ease restrictions designed to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. On Monday, he targeted the election battleground state of Pennsylvania, which has a Democratic governor, Tom Wolf.

"The great people of Pennsylvania want their freedom now, and they are fully aware of what that entails. The Democrats are moving slowly, all over the USA, for political purposes. They would wait until November 3rd if it were up to them. Don't play politics. Be safe, move quickly!" Trump said in a Twitter post.

Some of the states hardest-hit by the novel coronavirus outbreak that has infected more than 1.3 million nationwide are led by Democratic governors, including New York and Michigan - both important prizes in the Nov. 3 election between Trump and presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

Trump has encouraged reopenings with tweets calling on people to "liberate" their states, providing fuel to protests across the country including large gatherings in the Michigan capital of Lansing.



FILE PHOTO:

U.S. President

Donald Trump meets with senior military leadership and the National Security Team in the Cabinet room at the White House in Washington, U.S., May 9, 2020. REUTERS/Yuri Gripas

ters/Ipsos national opinion polls.

Despite mounting economic damage that saw 20.5 million Americans lose jobs in April, most Americans have consistently said in polls they want to maintain social distancing to protect themselves from the virus.

The politicization of the health crisis is playing out at local levels as well, as Democrats and Republicans clash over reopening plans.

In Pennsylvania, some counties over the weekend asked Wolf to move their regions into the group he has targeted for earlier reopenings, according to media reports.

Officials in Lancaster County sent Wolf a letter on Saturday notifying him that they intend to move forward with reopening on May 15, ahead of his schedule for the area.

"Lancaster County has demonstrated time and time again that our leaders are able to find local solutions to local problems through collaboration. This approach is far different than that of the Governor," state Senator Ryan P. Aument, a Republican, said in a Twitter post on Monday.

Trump's overall popularity has been mostly flat throughout the pandemic, with the number of adults who approve of him wavering between 40% and 45% from March to May, according to Reu-

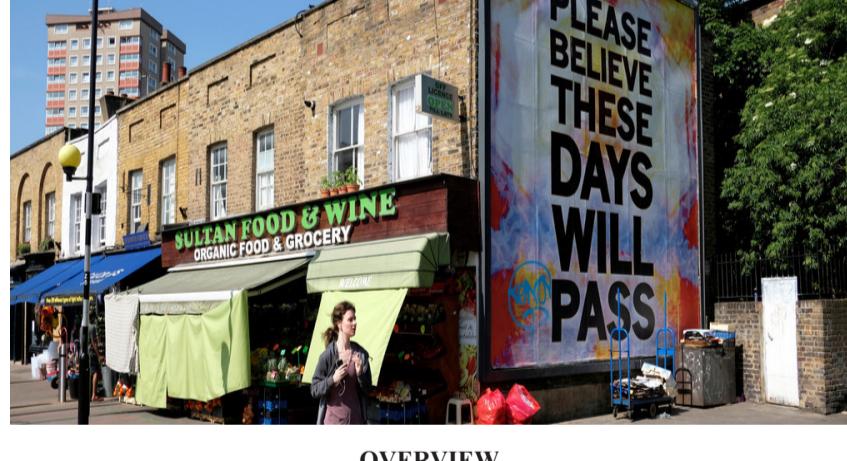
Stay Safe!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Senior White House Officials Continue To Encourage States To Forfeit Lockdowns And Restart Commerce

U.S. Coronavirus Deaths Near 80,000 As States Reopen "Normal Activities"



OVERVIEW

Brix: We're working with CDC to edit reopening guidelines
Rollout of antibody tests met with confusion, little oversight
How Washington state kept coronavirus deaths under 1,000
Frontline workers' mental health at risk due to pandemic
Trump administration rejects CDC reopening guidelines

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

A leading model has increased its US coronavirus death toll projection again as governors continue lifting measures toward a reopening.

The model from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington now forecasts more than 137,000 Americans will die by early August, up from its previous forecast of 134,000 deaths.

That rise is largely due to Americans moving around more, IHME Director Dr. Christopher Murray said in a news release, adding that in some places the upward trend in movement began before statewide measures were relaxed. Researchers tracked that movement through anonymous cell phone data, according to the release.

"Unless and until we see accelerated testing, contact tracing, isolating people who test positive, and widespread use

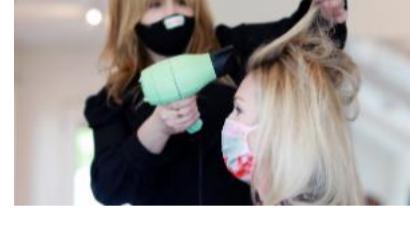
of masks in public, there is a significant likelihood of new infections," Murray said in the release.

Every seat was full on this 737 that flew over the weekend.

States began setting reopening plans in late April -- with governors in South Carolina and Georgia leading the way with some of the most aggressive plans -- and by this week, nearly every state has begun relaxing restrictions.

Despite not meeting guidelines put forth by the federal government, states laid out phased reopenings they said were

guided by data and the advice of medical experts. But other public health officials gave dire warnings about the thousands of lives that could be lost with a premature relaxing of measures.



Why state reopenings have sent projected coronavirus death rates back up

And the public remains torn as well: A Pew Research Center poll showed nearly two-thirds of Americans said they were concerned about their state opening too early. But thousands of people across the country protested in recent weeks for their right to go back to work.

What might come after the reopenings won't be apparent for weeks. One expert told CNN it will be at least two to three weeks before states may begin seeing increased infections.

So far, more than 1,329,700 Americans have been infected and at least 79,528 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The strange illness that could be linked to the virus

In New York, health officials are now looking at a mysterious illness that's showing up in children they believe may be linked to the virus.

The condition, which doctors refer to as "pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome," left dozens of New York children hospitalized, many of whom tested positive for the virus or had its antibodies, according to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo.



On Sunday, the governor said state offi-

cials were investigating 85 cases, mostly toddlers and elementary school-aged children.

Many of the children had fever and symptoms similar to toxic shock syndrome and Kawasaki disease, which causes inflammation in the walls of blood vessels, including those that supply blood to the heart. In rare cases, it can lead to deadly limitations in blood flow.

Similar cases have been reported internationally, including in the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy.

Though the coronavirus most severely affects elderly people with pre-existing conditions, the children's cases suggest that no age group is immune and raises new questions about how to safely reopen schools in the fall.

A battle over coronavirus checkpoints

In South Dakota, a Native American community set up checkpoints along state and US highways in efforts to track the virus and stop it from spreading. South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem sent letters Friday to leaders of the Oglala Sioux and the Cheyenne River Sioux tribes demanding the checkpoints be taken down.

In a Sunday update, Noem's office warned if the checkpoints "don't come down, the state will take the matter to federal court."

But the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is refusing to take them down, and the tribe's chairman, Harold Frazier, told CNN the community wants to ensure people coming from highly infected areas go around the tribal lands.

"With the lack of resources we have medically, this is our best tool we have right now to try to prevent (the spread of Covid-19)," Frazier told CNN.

The 12,000 people who live on the reser-

vation, Frazier said, rely on an eight-bed facility and have no intensive care unit (ICU). About 198 Native Americans in South Dakota have been infected with the virus, according to state data.

White House Covid cases contradict Trump's re-opening message

Meanwhile, top health and federal government officials have come in contact with people infected with the virus -- and some have announced they'll be going into quarantine.



Dr. Anthony Fauci, a key member of the White House coronavirus task force, told CNN he would be going in a "modified quarantine" after coming in contact with a White House staffer who tested positive for the virus.

CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield and Dr. Stephen Hahn, the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, will also go into quarantine after coming into contact with a person who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Officials will not identify the person to whom Hahn or Redfield were exposed.

The White House confirmed Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary Katie Miller tested positive on Friday. She was often in White House coronavirus task force meetings.

But Pence is not planning to self-quarantine, his office said Sunday, adding that he plans to be back at the White House on Monday. He has tested negative for the virus every day, Pence spokesperson Devin O'Malley said.

And last week, President Donald Trump also learned one of his Oval Office valets tested positive for the virus. (Courtesy https://www.cnn.com/)

GUY LAWRENCE/REUTERS

AP

Editor's Choice



Protesters opposed to lockdown measures implemented to curb the spread of the coronavirus clash with police outside Parliament House in Melbourne, Australia. AAP Image/Scott Barbour via REUTERS



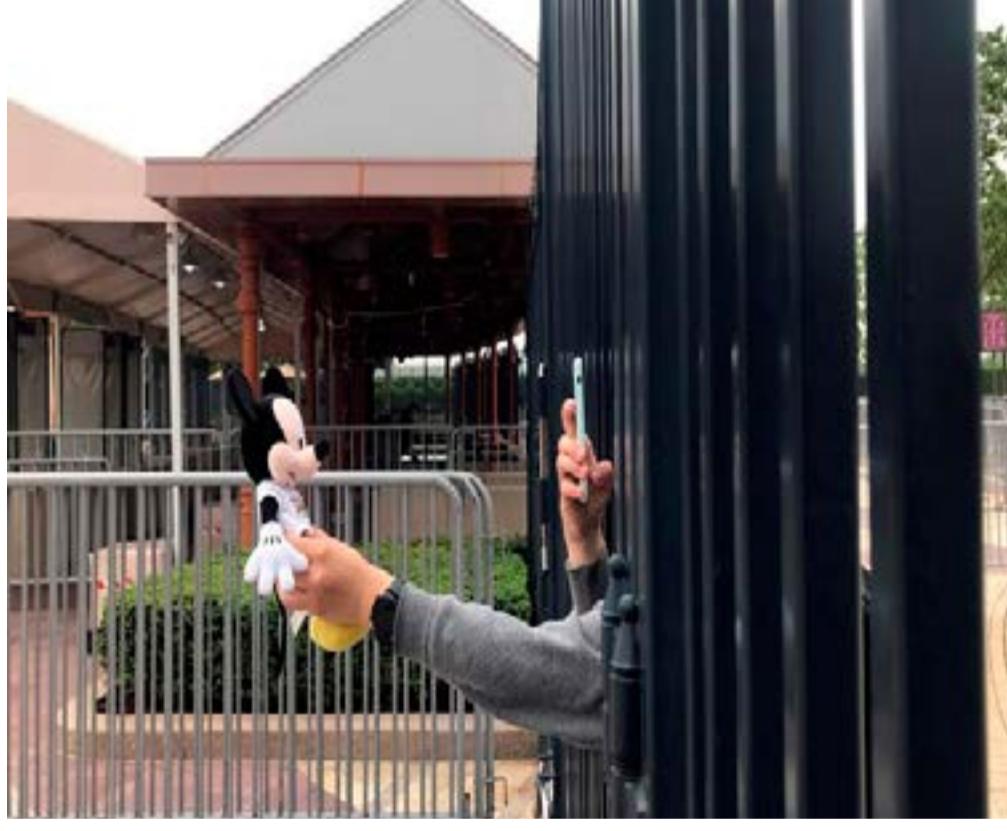
People stand on signs to respect social distancing on a platform for the tramway in Nice as France begun a gradual end to a nationwide lockdown, May 11. REUTERS/Eric Gaillard



A police officer wears 'Thermal Corona Combat Headgear' to monitor the temperature of commuters at a police checkpoint in New Delhi, India. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi



Riot police raise their pepper spray projectile inside a shopping mall as they disperse anti-government protesters during a rally, in Hong Kong. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu



Riot police raise their pepper spray projectile inside a shopping mall as they disperse anti-government protesters during a rally, in Hong Kong. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu



A man disinfects the Santa Maria in Trastevere Basilica in Rome, Italy. REUTERS/Remo Casilli



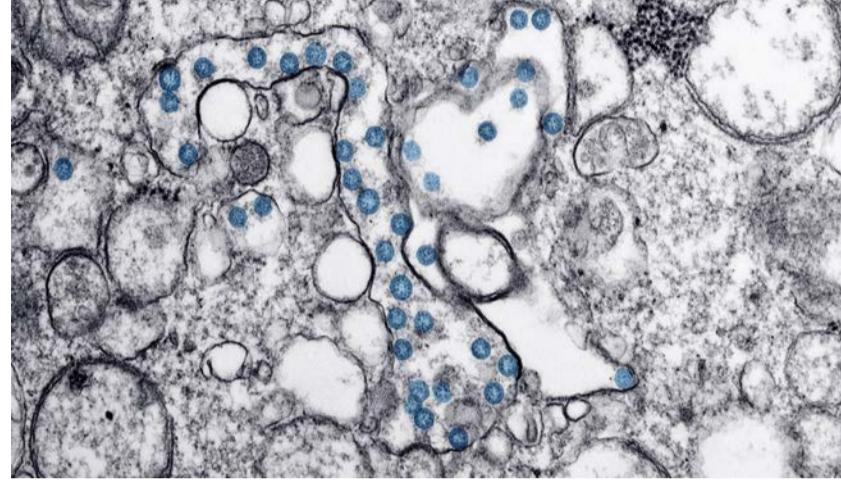
A dog named Izzy licks its chops as Craig Morland of Crofton, Maryland, buys a bucket of Thrashers famous fries on the first day of eased coronavirus restrictions for the beach and boardwalk in Ocean City, Maryland. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque...MORE



Silvia Romano, an Italian aid worker who was kidnapped by gunmen in Kenya 18 months ago, is kissed by her mother, Francesca Fumagalli, at Ciampino military airport in Rome, Italy. Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs/via REUTERS

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

FDA Grants Emergency Use Authorization For Abbott Coronavirus Antibody Test



Microscopic image of an isolate from the first U.S. case of COVID-19. Photo: Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images

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

The FDA granted Monday an emergency use authorization for a new coronavirus antibody test by Abbott Laboratories.

Why it matters: Companies are pushing to create antibody tests, which indicate whether a person had the coronavirus in the past, including those who were asymptomatic.

• The company wants to ship nearly 30 million tests in May and 60 million by June, per a press release.

• Abbott says the test can give results of 99.6% specificity and 100% sensitivity for patients tested 14 days after symptoms began.

The big picture: The Trump administration has recommended that these tests be offered as states begin to reopen some businesses so Americans can feel confident about returning to work.

• Abbott's antibody test is its fourth coronavirus-linked emergency use authorization from the FDA.

• Its rapid test for coronavirus infections, which produces results in just minutes, is used at the White House.

We don't actually know whether antibodies are necessarily indicative of immunity — or how strong that immunity might be.

- The best value here is in understanding the virus' true spread and helping the highest-risk workplaces operate more safely — not as any kind of universal, nationwide get-back-to-normal permit. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related

WHO Readies Coronavirus App For Checking Symptoms, Possibly Contact Tracing



World Health Organization (WHO) logo. (Photo/REUTERS)
OAKLAND, California (Reuters) – The

World Health Organization (WHO) plans to launch an app this month to enable people in under-resourced countries to assess whether they may have the novel coronavirus, and is considering a Bluetooth-based contact tracing feature too, an official told Reuters on Friday. The app will ask people about their symptoms and offer guidance on whether they may have COVID-19, the potentially lethal illness caused by the coronavirus, said Bernardo Mariano, chief information officer for the WHO. Other information, such as how to get tested, will be personalized according to the user's country.

Though the WHO will release a version on app stores globally, any government will be able to take the app's underlying technology, add features and release its own version on app stores, Mariano said in a phone interview.

India, Australia and the United Kingdom already have released official virus apps using their own technology, with common features including telling people whether to get tested based on their symptoms and logging people's movements to enable more efficient contact tracing.



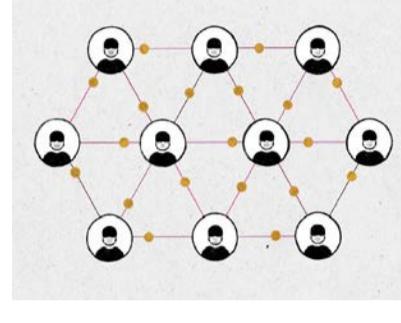
Several countries are ramping up contact tracing, or the process of finding, testing and isolating individuals who crossed paths with an infectious individual. It is seen as vital to safely opening economies, and apps that automate parts of the process could accelerate efforts. The WHO expects its app to draw interest in other countries, including some in South America and Africa where case numbers are rising. They may lack the technology and engineers to develop apps or be struggling to offer testing and education.

"The value is really for countries that do not have anything," Mariano said. "We

would be leaving behind the ones that are not able to (provide an app), that have fragile health systems."

Engineers and designers, including some who previously worked at Alphabet Inc's Google and Microsoft Corp, have been volunteering for weeks to develop the new app with about five of them overseeing the process. They are designing it open-source on the hosting service GitHub, meaning code is open to public input.

Several team members declined to comment.



Mariano said he wants to include additional tools beyond the symptom checker, including a self-help guide for mental health care.

The team also is considering what the WHO refers to as proximity tracing. Engineers have done preliminary work and talked to smartphone operating system makers Apple Inc and Google about possibly adopting technology the companies plan to release jointly this month to make tracing easier.

The technology relies on virtual "handshakes" between phones that come within a few feet of each other for at least five minutes. Phones keep anonymized logs of such encounters, allowing someone who later tests positive to anonymously send notifications to recent contacts about their possible exposure to the virus.

But Mariano said legal and privacy considerations have prevented the WHO from committing to such a feature yet. He expressed concern about the many businesses pitching proximity tools turning around and using any personal data they gather to generate revenue

later.

"We want to make sure we ring-fence all the risks around it," he said.

Apple and Google have said their system will not use any data for other purposes and will be stopped when the pandemic ends.

The WHO plans to release guidance as soon as next week on issues countries should consider as they weigh their own proximity tracing apps.

To reach people with limited internet access, the WHO is working to deliver information via text messages. In March, it launched an account on Facebook Inc's WhatsApp to provide users with information about the coronavirus, and it partnered with the company's Free Basics program to make some information available without users incurring data charges.

The WHO also plans to release an app next week to inform health workers globally about best practices for donning protective gear, washing hands and treating the virus. The organization already has a general app, WHO Info, that largely mirrors its website. (Courtesy <https://www.oann.com/>)



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面對業績下滑，加上前景不明朗，8日國泰內部不斷瘋傳會進行結構重組，當中包括合併旗下的國泰港龍航空及香港快運，棄用“國泰港龍”品牌，並重新命名為“Cathay Express”。惟國泰航空發言人表示，不會就傳聞作出回應。

■香港文匯報記者 殷考玲

國泰航空發言人又強調，新型冠狀病毒疫情為航空公司帶來史無前例的嚴峻挑戰，預期商務及休閒旅行需求在一段時間內將繼續嚴重受壓，鑑於目前形勢瞬息萬變，不會排除任何措施，以確保業務能度過危機，及加強競爭力。

傳多個版本 機師將減薪3成

有關國泰重組業務的傳言，8日於港股收市後廣傳，除傳出合併旗下的國泰港龍航空及香港快運之外，又傳出國泰航空、國泰港龍、香港快運3個品牌將會合併，短線或將以“Cathay Express”名義營運，長線就繼續以國泰航空(Cathay Pacific)營運。又指會收縮機隊規模，並裁減部分機師及船務員，而機師將減薪3成。

國泰公佈股東會延至6月底開

惟截至8日晚8時半，仍未見國泰在港交所發出重組相關的通告，僅公佈原訂5月13日的股東周年大會延期，會押後至6月30日或之前舉行。國泰解釋，鑑於香港改變與舉行股東周年大會相關的社交距離規定，董事局認為按原有日期舉行，實屬不宜。

自從1月底爆發新冠肺炎疫情，加上去年社會運動影響，已經屢次傳出國泰裁員和重組消息，令到公司內部人心惶惶。有關港龍重組消息也由3月起已不時傳出，又指港龍與香港快運合併，集團並會推出自願或強制離職方案。港龍航空公司空勤人員協會主席黃璇婷表示，擔心公司會有裁員行動。

資料顯示，國泰2006年9月就完成收購港龍航空，涉及資金123億元。國泰當年收購港龍航空後，隨即進行架構重組，裁減191名員工，佔員工總數的5%。港龍航空公司成立於1985年，主要經營從香港至內地18個城市的航線，包括繁忙的香港至上海航線。國泰藉收購港龍以拓展在內地航線。而國泰收購港龍10年後才將港龍航空更換成國泰港龍，令營運更為一致。

至於廉航香港快運，國泰於去年7月中完成收購，涉資49.3億元(港元，下同)，並繼續以獨立的廉航模式營運。不過，國泰去年全年業績披露，香港快運去年收益18.93億元，虧損2.46億元。香港快運成立於2004年，前身為港聯航空，大股東賭王何鴻燊。

料港龍快運合併 將命名“Cathay Express”

國泰重組瘋傳 工會憂裁員



■太古地產三個商場首季的零售銷售額均急跌，其中，太古廣場跌幅最劇達48.3%。

太古廣場首季銷售額插近半

香港文匯報訊 (記者 岑健樂) 新冠肺炎疫情持續，打擊香港零售市道。太古地產8日公佈今年首季營運數據，零售物業方面，香港太古廣場購物商場與太古城中心的租用率達100%，東薈城名店倉達99%。不過，三個商場的零售銷售額均錄得按年大幅下跌。其中，太古廣場購物商場的跌幅最大，達48.3%；東薈城名店倉跌33.6%；太古城中心跌20.5%。

另外，直至3月底，公司旗下香港整體辦公樓租用率為98%，按年下降1個百分點，至於辦公樓的租金增幅，則介乎7%至12%。其中，太古坊(包括電訊盈科中心)的增幅是12%；港島東中心及太古坊一座的增幅是11%；太古廣場的增幅是7%。

太地：已採措施支援租戶

太古地產發言人表示，新冠疫情對各行各業帶來廣泛影響，本港零售市道於首季繼續下滑，集團因應情況，繼續向租戶提供租金支援措施，幫助他們維持業務營運，共渡難關，直至市況回穩。

至於辦公樓方面，太古坊租用率維持高企，租金調幅正面。證監會今夏將由中環遷至太古坊，成為港島東中心的主要租戶，租用九層共19.5萬方呎辦公樓樓面。此外，英國怡安保險公司，將於今年稍後由銅鑼灣遷至太古坊，租用港島東中心兩層辦公樓。英國怡安保險公司進駐後，保險行業在太古坊共佔逾72萬方呎辦公樓樓面。

太古坊二座料2022年完工

太古坊重建計劃繼續穩步推進，隨着太古坊一座成功開幕，集團正專注發展太古坊二座，可提供100萬方呎樓面的甲級辦公樓，預計於2022年完工。集團亦正擴展於金鐘的業務版圖，將位於太古廣場三座對面的用地重建為約21.8萬方呎樓面的甲級辦公樓，預計於2023年完成。