NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020

Today, morning showers, cloudy, cooler, high 48. **Tonight,** overcast, low 38. Tomorrow, clouds then some sunshine, milder afternoon, high 54.

Weather map appears on Page B10.

\$3.00

## Why President Let Go of Goal Of Easter Reset

#### Numbers Cast Cloud on Reopening Nation

By PETER BAKER and MAGGIE HABERMAN

WASHINGTON - The numbers the health officials showed President Trump were overwhelming. With the peak of the coronavirus pandemic still weeks away, he was told, hundreds of thousands of Americans could face death if the country reopened

But there was another set of numbers that also helped persuade Mr. Trump to shift gears on Sunday and abandon his goal of restoring normal life by Easter. Political advisers described for him polling that showed that voters overwhelmingly preferred to keep containment measures in place over sending people back to work prematurely.

Those two realities — the dire threat to the country and the caution of the American public proved decisive at a critical juncture in the response to the pandemic, his advisers said.

The first of those two realities, the deadly arc of the virus, has been known for weeks even if disregarded by the president when he set his Easter target. But the second of the two upended Mr. Trump's assumptions about the politics of the situation and restrained, for a moment at least, his eagerness to get back to business as usual.

The president's reversal may prove to be an important pivot point in the effort to curb the pandemic, one that in the view of public health officials averted a greater catastrophe. Mr. Trump's abrupt change of heart reflected a volatile president who has veered from one message to another, at points equating the virus to ordinary flu that will "miraculously" go away and at others declaring it an all-out war endangering the country.

His move came as additional governors took action to stop the spread of the virus. With new orders on Monday from the governors of Arizona, Maryland and Virginia, as well as the mayor of the District of Columbia, more than half of the 50 states and three out of four Americans are or will soon be under the directive to re-

main at nome They took that action as the number of cases in New York climbed past 66,500 and the number of deaths surpassed 1,200, by far the most of any state. Layoffs continued apace, with Macy's announcing it would furlough a "majority" of its 125,000 workers. Gap said it would do the same for 80,000 store employees in the United States and Canada.

In the past two days, Mr. Trump has dispensed with the assertion Continued on Page A10

TRACKING AN OUTBREAK

**MORE HELP** Lawmakers are eveing a fourth package to bolster the U.S. economy. PAGE A12

**DETROIT** Poverty and a weakened public health system are driving up cases in the city. PAGE A9

**EARLY RELEASE** To curb the spread behind bars, thousands of inmates have been freed. PAGE A9



RELIEF ARRIVES The hospital ship U.S.N.S. Comfort coming into New York on Monday. Page A13.

# Nowhere to Turn but the Subway, and Its Risks In Georgia, They Came to Mourn

**By CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM** and LINDSEY ROGERS COOK

As the coronavirus pandemic has all but shut down New York City, its subway - an emblem of urban overcrowding — has become almost unrecognizable, with overall ridership down 87 percent.

But even as officials crack down on gatherings in New York, reving hoops from basketball courts and sending the police to system that has long been the

Many Have No Option to Shelter at Home

break up parties, subway stations in poorer neighborhoods are still bustling, as if almost nothing has changed.

great equalizer, a space where hourly workers jostled alongside financial executives. Now the subway has become more of a symbol of the city's inequality, amplifying the divide between those with the means to safely shelter at home and those who must continue braving public transit to preserve meager livelihoods.

"This virus is very dangerous. I don't want to get sick, I don't want Continued on Page A16



**COMMUNITY CARE** The owner of a restaurant in North London accepting a tip Sunday while on a delivery round. The restaurant has been providing free meals for residents over the age of 70.

# PANDEMIC TEMPTS LEADERS TO SEIZE **SWEEPING POWERS**

#### Fears That Measures Necessary in a Crisis Will Become Everyday Oppression

By SELAM GEBREKIDAN

prime minister can now rule by decree. In Britain, ministers have what a critic called "eye-watering" power to detain people and close borders. Israel's prime minister has shut down courts and begun an intrusive surveillance of citizens. Chile has sent the military to public squares once occupied by protesters. Bolivia has postponed elections.

As the coronavirus pandemic brings the world to a juddering halt and anxious citizens demand action, leaders across the globe are invoking executive powers and seizing virtually dictatorial authority with scant resistance.

Governments and groups agree that these extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. States need new powers to shut their borders, enforce quarantines and track infected people. Many of these actions are protected under international rules, constitutional lawyers say.

But critics say some governments are using the public health crisis as cover to seize new powers that have little to do with the outbreak, with few safeguards to ensure that their new authority will not be abused.

The laws are taking swift hold across a broad range of political systems — in authoritarian states like Jordan, faltering democracies like Hungary, and traditional democracies like Britain. And there

LONDON — In Hungary, the are few sunset provisions to ensure that the powers will be rescinded once the threat passes.

'We could have a parallel epidemic of authoritarian and repressive measures following close if not on the heels of a health epidemic," said Fionnuala Ni Aolain, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on counterterrorism and



A checkpoint in Chile. The nation's military is on city streets.

human rights.

As the new laws broaden state surveillance, allow governments to detain people indefinitely and infringe on freedoms of assembly and expression, they could also shape civic life, politics and economies for decades to come.

The pandemic is already redefining norms. Invasive surveillance systems in South Korea and

Continued on Page A6

# And Soon Found Themselves Ill

By ELLEN BARRY

It was an old-fashioned Southern funeral.

There was a repast table crammed with casseroles, Brunswick stew, fried chicken and key lime cake. Andrew Jerome Mitchell, a retired janitor, was one of 10 siblings. They told stories, debated for the umpteenth time how he got the nickname Door-

People wiped tears away, and embraced, and blew their noses, and belted out hymns. They laughed, remembering. It was a big gathering, with upward of 200 mourners overflowing the memorial chapel, so people had to stand

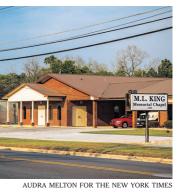
Dorothy Johnson has gone over the scene in her mind over the last month, asking herself who it was who brought the virus to her brother's funeral.

"We don't know who the person was," she said. "It would help me

During the weeks that followed, illnesses linked to the coronavirus have torn through her hometown, Albany, Ga., with about two dozen relatives falling ill, including six of her siblings. Ms. Johnson herself was released from an isolation ward to the news that her daughter, Tonya, was in grave condition,

her heart rate dropping. Like the Biogen conference in

Boston and a 40th birthday party in Westport, Conn., the funeral of Andrew Jerome Mitchell on Feb. 29 will be recorded as what epidemiologists call a "super-spreading event," in which a small number of people propagate a huge number



Albany, Ga., is part of an intense cluster of infections.

of infections.

This rural county in southwest Georgia, 40 miles from the nearest interstate, now has one of the most intense clusters of the coronavirus in the country.

Continued on Page A8

# Democrats Wage Uphill Battle on Digital Front | Trump to Deal Final Blow to Car Pollution Goals

#### By JIM RUTENBERG and MATTHEW ROSENBERG

The deceptively edited video that purported to show Joseph R. Biden Jr. endorsing President Trump's re-election bounced relentlessly around the internet, falsely painting the former vice president as too confused to know

what office he was running for or whom he was vying to run

The doctored video didn't originate with one of the extremist sites that trade in left-bashing disinformation. It was posted on Twitter by Mr. Trump's own social media director. From there, it collected shares, retweets and likes from the social media accounts of

the president, his eldest son and the multitudinous conservative influencers and websites that carry his message to voters' palms hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second.

The video, based on a speech Mr. Biden gave earlier this month, registered five million views in a day before his campaign re-

Continued on Page A22

## By CORAL DAVENPORT

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is expected to announce on Tuesday its final rule to rollback Obama-era automobile fuel efficiency standards, relaxing efforts to limit climate-warming tailpipe pollution and virtually undoing the government's biggest

effort to combat climate change.

The new rule, written by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation, would allow cars on American roads to emit nearly a billion tons more carbon dioxide over the lifetime of the vehicles than they would have under the Obama standards, and hundreds of millions of tons more than will

be emitted under standards being

enacted in Europe and Asia. Administration officials raced to complete the auto rule by this spring, even as the White House was consumed with responding to the coronavirus pandemic. President Trump is expected to extol the rule, which will stand as one of the most consequential regula-

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# **BUSINESS B1-7**

#### Alarm on Europe's Farms Eastern European workers who harvest

crops from Spain to Sweden can't enter, raising concern for food stocks. PAGE B1

#### G.M.'s Race for Ventilators

The company and a partner had strategized for days when the White House said G.M. was wasting time. PAGE B1 **INTERNATIONAL A17-18** 

#### Beijing Claims Indonesian Seas

Despite brazen moves by China into rich fishing waters, Indonesia has backed away from confronting its largest trading partner. PAGE A17

#### Signing Off as Royals

With little fanfare, Harry and Meghan transferred control of their brand to advisers in Los Angeles. PAGE A18

NATIONAL A19-23

#### Scientists Have Their Say Federal scientists have embedded data

into documents that lawyers can use to fight environmental rollbacks. PAGE A19 **SPORTSTUESDAY B8-9** 

#### Get Set: Olympics in July 2021

The Tokyo Games made the new start date official, allowing athletes and sponsors a chance to regroup. PAGE B8

#### **Antidoping Efforts Take Hiatus** The coronavirus pandemic is giving

elite athletes a break from the usual drug-testing regimens. The cheaters may see this as an opportunity. PAGE B8

**OBITUARIES A24-25** 

### **Nobel Laureate in Physics**

Philip W. Anderson, who deepened science's understanding of magnetism and superconductivity, was 96. PAGE A24



### Looking for Help Underwater

In a submerged forest, scientists raced to search for creatures that might conceal medicine of the future.

### The World vs. E-Cigarettes

The launch-first, seek-permission-later strategy of the e-cigarette company Juul seems to be backfiring.

#### Pouncing on Boldface Names

The virus has altered relations among the masses, the elites and the celebrities who liaise between them.

#### When 'Outbreak' Was on Top Wesley Morris decides to visit 1995,

when the pandemic-related film starring Dustin Hoffman was a hit. PAGE C1

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EDITORIAL, OP-ED A26-27

Michelle Goldberg



