



Press Review Taiwan Science, Technology and Education

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Science / Technology

Taiwan unveils technology for contact-free care of COVID-19 patients (Focus Taiwan, 01.05.2020)

Taiwan researchers on May 1 gave a demonstration of a new system that will allow doctors and other healthcare personnel to remotely monitor the health of hospital patients with highly contagious diseases like the COVID-19 coronavirus. The technology, developed by the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) and Taipei Medical University Hospital (TMUH), is designed for greater efficiency and less risk among the doctors and nurses treating such patients, Cheng Jen-chieh, director of the ITRI's Service Systems Technology Center, said during the demonstration at TMUH.

COVID-19 transmission highest within a week of symptom onset: study (Focus Taiwan, 02.05.2020)

The viral transmission of COVID-19 has been found to be highest within a week of the onset of symptoms, according to a medical study authored by a Taiwanese research team published by the American Medical Association May 1. The research paper "Contact Tracing Assessment of COVID-19 Transmission Dynamics in Taiwan and Risk at Different Exposure Periods Before and After Symptom Onset" was authored by six medical researchers for the Taiwan COVID-19 Outbreak Investigation Team and published in the monthly peer-reviewed medical journal JAMA Internal Medicine.

COVID-19 vaccine candidate shows promising results in early testing (The China Post, 06.05.2020)

Taiwan's Adimmune Corporation said May 6 that it has developed a COVID-19 vaccine candidate that has shown promising results in tests on lab rodents, and that it plans to begin human trials in the second half of this year. At a press conference, the partially state-funded company said that for safety reasons, it has focused on developing an inactivated vaccine — one that uses virus particles grown in a culture that lose their disease-producing capacity.

Scientists find clues to how prehistoric birds survived mass extinction (Focus Taiwan, 07.05.2020)

Taiwanese researchers said May 7 they have discovered features in the teeth of prehistoric birds that could offer clues to how they survived the mass extinction that wiped out dinosaurs 66 million years ago. In a statement, the National Synchrotron Radiation Research Center (NSRRC) summarized a paper published by a group of Taiwanese scientists in late April, in which they analyzed the structure of the birds' teeth and those of their ancestors. According to the paper, birds had probably evolved to feed on a wide range of food sources, including fruits, seeds and insects, which would have reduced their dependence on any one species.

Doctors inhibit key COVID-19 complication with blood purification (Focus Taiwan, 07.05.2020)

State-run Taoyuan General Hospital said May 7 it successfully used blood purification techniques to treat a patient suffering from complications of COVID-19, though a government expert cautioned more research is needed to determine the overall efficacy of the treatment. At a press conference, nephrologist Wang Wei-chieh said his team used the techniques to inhibit an extreme immune response -- known as a "cytokine storm" -- which often causes death in severe COVID-19 patients.

10-minute COVID-19 antibody test kit developed in Taiwan (The China Post, 07.05.2020)

A rapid antibody test kit for COVID-19 developed by a local biomedical company that can deliver results in just 10 minutes has passed clinical trials and is ready for mass production, a company official said May 7. The rapid test kit for the detection of antibodies of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has been validated by a comprehensive clinical study conducted by National Taiwan University Hospital (NTUH). The test boasts 100 percent sensitivity and 95 percent specificity, said Cooky Chen, chairman of Excelsior Bio-System, Inc., at an event for the presentation of the results.

Taiwan unveils locally made ventilator prototype (Focus Taiwan, 08.05.2020)

The Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) unveiled a prototype May 8 of what could become Taiwan's first medical grade ventilator amid interest in the device due to the new coronavirus outbreak. The prototype, which the ITRI said was made within a span of 17 days, was introduced during an online press briefing. "At the end of March, U.S. ventilator manufacturer Medtronic shared the basic design specifications of its PB 560 portable ventilator, free of charge," ITRI President Edwin Liu said.



Foreign companies share resources to accelerate COVID-19 research (Focus Taiwan, 13.05.2020)

Taiwan's National Applied Research Laboratories (NARL) is teaming up with three international technology companies to provide Taiwanese researchers with resources to accelerate drug discovery and treatment in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the institution announced May 13. NARL's National Center for High-Performance Computing said that following its partnership with graphics chipmaker NVidia Corp., it is collaborating with American multinational technology company IBM, molecular diagnostics and sample preparation technologies provider Qiagen, and Schrödinger, a leading provider of advanced molecular simulations and enterprise software solutions to support researchers studying COVID-19.

Taiwan ranks 26th in staging conferences, meetings by ICCA (Taiwan Today, 14.05.2020)

Taiwan ranks 26th in staging conferences and meetings, according to the annual country and city statistics released May 12 by Netherlands-headquartered International Congress and Convention Association. A total of 163 events, mainly relating to medicine, science and technology, were held in Taiwan last year. The number saw the country improve one spot in Asia to fourth—a five-year high—behind South Korea, third; Japan, second; and China, first. The top three spots went to the U.S., Germany and France in that order.

Taiwan, Australia cooperate on COVID-19 drug development (Taiwan Today, 15.05.2020)

Taiwan's Chang Gung University and Australia's Monash University are cooperating on developing drugs with possible applications in fighting viruses such as COVID-19, according to the Ministry of Science and Technology May 14. The tie-up between Taoyuan City-based CGU's Research Center for Emerging Viral Infections in northern Taiwan and Melbourne-headquartered Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute centers on ivermectin—a pharmaceutical used to treat parasitic infections and widely available due to its inclusion on the World Health Organization's model list of essential medicines.

Taiwan and Stanford discussing project on safe international travel (Focus Taiwan, 18.05.2020)

Taiwan is in talks with Stanford University to create a protocol for travelers that would help shorten the amount of time they have to stay in quarantine when they go abroad, the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) confirmed May 18. The project was proposed by researchers at Stanford University in the United States, and is still under discussion, CECC advisor Chang Shan-chwen said at the center's daily press conference. News about the proposal was first reported by the Financial Times.

Winners of Taiwan-US coronavirus Hackathon announced in Taipei (Taiwan Today, 19.05.2020)

Winners of an online hackathon co-organized by Taiwan and the U.S. with the goal of developing sophisticated solutions for managing the coronavirus pandemic were announced May 18 in Taipei City. Co-hosted by the Executive Yuan and American Institute in Taiwan in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Welfare, National Development Council, National Center for High-performance Computing under the National Applied Research Laboratories and Institute for Information Industry, the event attracted 53 entries from countries around the world including Canada, Germany, Hungary, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S.

Taiwan's COVID-19 vaccine could begin human trials this fall: VP (Focus Taiwan, 22.05.2020)

A vaccine Taiwan's National Health Research Institutes (NHRI) is developing for the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) will enter human trials as early as this autumn, Vice President Lai Ching-te disclosed May 22. Lai made the announcement in a Facebook post after visiting the NHRI's Animal Biological Safety Level 3 (ABSL-3) laboratory in Chunan in Miaoli County to see how work on a vaccine was progressing. In April, NHRI President Liang Kung-ye revealed that a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by the national health research institution had produced promising results in mice.

Philippines to join Taiwan's clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccine (Focus Taiwan, 24.05.2020)

The Philippines has decided to participate in clinical trials by Taiwanese and Chinese institutions aimed at developing vaccines against COVID-19, according to a resolution issued May 23 by the Philippine government's coronavirus response team. The Philippine Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has approved the recommendations of its government's Department of Science and Technology (DOST) on the participation of Filipinos in the clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccine candidates, according to the resolution.



Ex-HTC CEO to release world's first social 5G VR headset (Focus Taiwan, 26.05.2020)

Former HTC CEO Peter Chou, who three years ago started his own social virtual reality company XRSpace, on May 26 unveiled a new VR platform designed to facilitate social interaction and the world's first 5G VR mobile headset. These products are scheduled go on sale in Taiwan in the third quarter, according to the company. XRSpace, which focuses on developing VR and AR (augmented reality) apps has created the world's first social extended reality (XR) platform designed for mass-market use and the first 5G VR mobile headset, the XRSpace Mova, Chou said at a global presentation of the new project in Taipei May 26.

Research team finds key antibody against COVID-19 (Focus Taiwan, 28.05.2020)

A group of researchers based in Taiwan and the United Kingdom have found a key antibody against COVID-19 that could be used to develop medication for the disease, a Chang Gung University (CGU) professor said May 28. The antibody has the ability to prevent SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from entering human cells, and has a 90 percent to 98 percent efficacy rate, said Shih Shin-ru, director of the Research Center for Emerging Viral Infections at CGU. Shih explained that for the virus to infect the body, it has to integrate with a protein attached to the surface of human cells called the angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2).

Gogoro unveils e-bikes; starting price set at US\$3,899 (Focus Taiwan, 30.05.2020)

As part of its expansion into the electric bicycle market, Gogoro Inc., a Taiwan-based electric scooter maker, unveiled two e-bikes earlier this week with a starting price of US\$3,899. In New York, Gogoro founder and Chief Executive Officer Horace Luke introduced the Gogoro Eeyo 1 series of e-bikes -- Gogoro Eeyo 1 and Gogoro Smartwheel (Gogoro Eeyo 1s) -- as the company's first foray into the e-bike business. Luke said the company plans to start selling the two e-bikes in the U.S., European and Taiwan markets in the summer, possibly in July for consumers in the U.S. and Taiwan.

Education

Taiwanese scholar among appointees to new Facebook oversight board (The China Post, 07.05.2020)

National Chengchi University Professor Katherine Chen was one of 20 people named May 6 to Facebook's newly-established Oversight Board, which will be tasked with deciding what types of content the social media giant allows on its platforms. In a statement, the independent board said it will hear appeals from Facebook and Instagram users and questions from Facebook itself, and will issue public and binding decisions based on the company's policies, international human rights norms and the impact on users and society.

Education ministry to help foreign students return to Taiwan (The China Post, 28.05.2020)

The Ministry of Education (MOE) said May 28 it will help facilitate the return of foreign students who wish to continue their studies in Taiwan but have not been able to do so due to the country's border restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The MOE said, however, that such an undertaking would depend on whether the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) eases the border control measures, and whether schools have adequate facilities for the mandatory 14-day quarantine of returning foreign students.

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