
N. KOREA'S KIM FACES 'HUGE DILEMMA' ON AID AS VIRUS SURGES

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During more than a decade as North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un has made self-reliance his governing lynchpin, shunning international help and striving instead for domestic strategies to fix his battered economy.

But as an illness suspected to be COVID-19 sickens hundreds of thousands of his people, Kim stands at a critical crossroad: Either swallow his pride and receive foreign help to fight the disease, or go it alone, enduring potential huge fatalities that may undermine his leadership.

Kim Jong Un is in a dilemma, a really huge dilemma, said Lim Eul-chul, a professor at Kyungnam University's Institute for Far Eastern Studies in Seoul. If he accepts U.S. or Western assistance, that can shake the self-reliance stance that he has steadfastly maintained and public confidence in him could be weakened.

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