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**AT LEAST THREE MONTHS
NEEDED FOR CASINO SECTOR
RECOVERY AFTER CORONAVIRUS,
ACCORDING TO INSIDER**

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**GGCT IS PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO
DEVELOPMENTS ON THE CRUISE SHIP
HARBORED IN YOKOHAMA WITH FIVE
LOCAL RESIDENTS ABOARD**

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Thailand Health authorities have barred a cruise ship from docking that has already been turned away by the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan out of concern over a new virus, although no cases have been confirmed on board. Prime Minister Prayuth Chano-cha confirmed the ban but said Thailand was looking a way to give humanitarian assistance.
More on p10.



The Philippines notified the United States it would end a major security pact allowing American forces to train in the country, in the most serious threat under President Rodrigo Duterte to their 69-year treaty alliance. More on p11

Bangladesh An overcrowded boat carrying about 138 Rohingya refugees from Bangladeshi camps sank yesterday in the Bay of Bengal, leaving at least 15 confirmed dead, mostly women. The coast guard, navy divers and other rescuers recovered the bodies after the wooden boat capsized off St. Martin's Island.

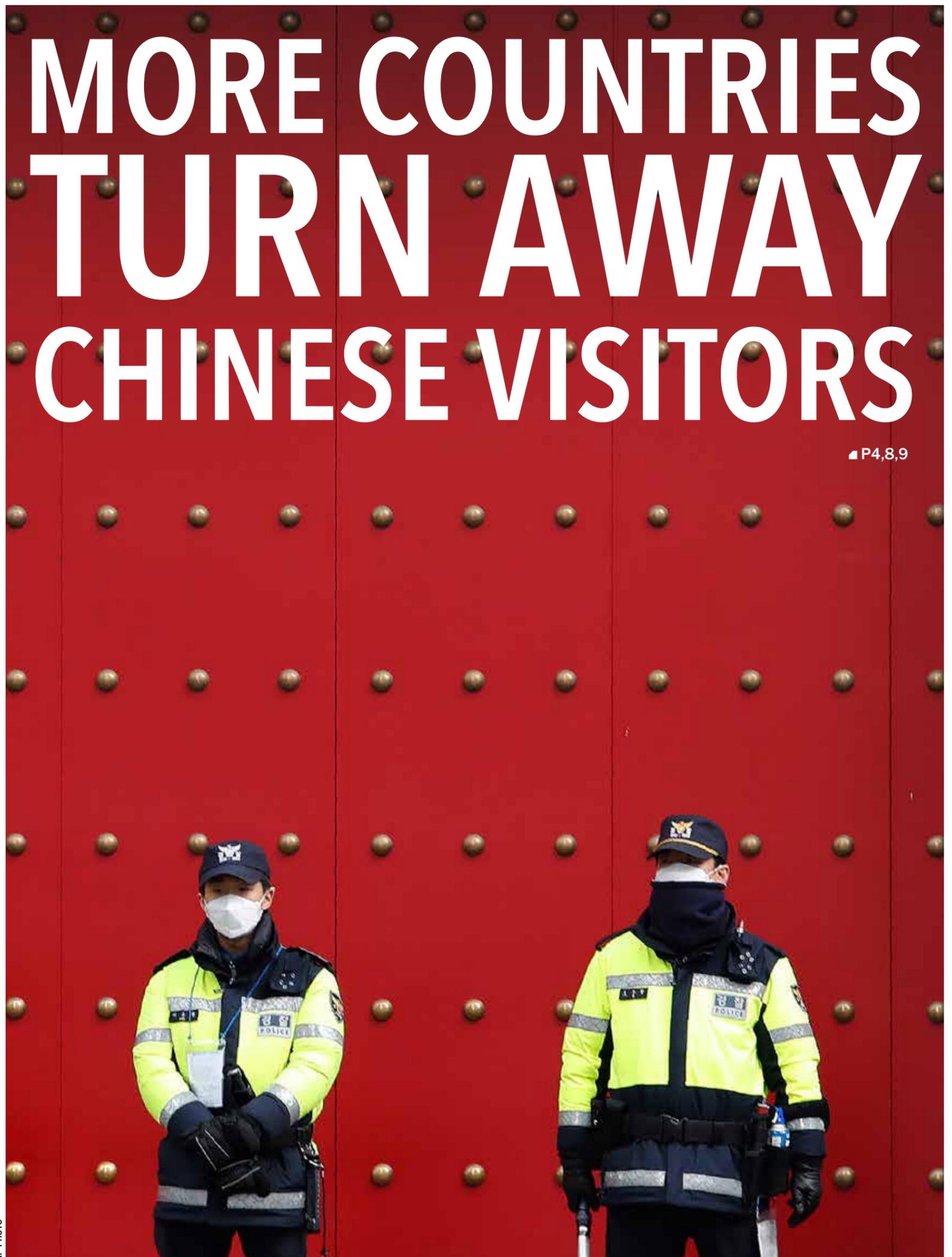


India Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party was given a stunning defeat by a regional party yesterday in elections in the national capital that were seen as a referendum on his policies, including a new national citizenship law that excludes Muslims. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to majority Hindus by focusing on national issues such as the citizenship law, which triggered widespread protests.

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MORE COUNTRIES TURN AWAY CHINESE VISITORS

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AP PHOTO



THIRD ROUND OF MASKS SALE STARTS TODAY, FIRST INCLUDING CHILDREN

RENATO MARQUES

The third round of distribution for protective face masks acquired by the government launches today. For the first time, this round of distribution will include masks specially for children aged between three and eight years, the Clinical Director of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center (CHCSJ) and member of the New Coronavirus Contingency Coordination Center, Lei Wai Seng informed yesterday at the daily press conference to update the media on the novel coronavirus outbreak.

"This time, we have acquired children's masks for the population [...] suitable for those aged 3 to 8 years old and that can be acquired exclusively at healthcare centers," said Lei.

The clinical director added that the limit of 10 masks per person remains in force, suggesting that people can acquire five masks in the children's size and another five in the adult size. According to the information released yesterday, each ID holder can only buy a maximum of five children's masks every 10 days.

Lei also urged the population not to rush to the sales points, stating that there is enough stock and people can be served easily.

"We appeal to citizens not to gather in long lines at the masks' sales points this time because we are trying to avoid as much as possible the gathering of many people in the same place to avoid infections," he added, calling on people to check their stock of masks and to acquire new ones "as late as possible."

Lei also noted that the government has been making an effort to find suppliers of face masks worldwide, and that as in the first two rounds, the masks being distributed might be of different colors and even include some activated charcoal or prints. He said, "no matter what colors the masks will be, even if they have any prints, all masks are of quality and have protective capacity."

Lei also informed that all the health services, including the public hospital and the healthcare centers, will stop distributing free face masks to people that arrive at these venues. The measure aims to conserve, where possible, the stock of face masks at each service for the use of the medical staff.

"People by now must have their own masks [supply] and they should wear them when they leave their homes. Our masks will be saved to distribute to our staff," Lei said.

He also raised an observation of health authorities that some people are regularly visiting healthcare centers to obtain face masks for free. This is an unfair practice that the authorities also want to end.

Also yesterday, another member of the New Coronavirus Contingency Coordination Center, Lam Chong, updated the media on the 29 people overseas who were both found to be infected with the virus and had either traveled or worked in Macau at some point during the incubation period of the disease.

Lam said that none of the cases are thought to constitute a high risk of contagion to the Macau public. After an investigation into the travel history and details of the infected, most of the cases should be related to infections inside their family circle.

Of the most recent cases reported on Monday, two people tested positive for the virus in South Korea after a trip to Macau (more on p4).

"The case is still being investigated but we can say that [the two people are] a couple in which

the wife is a Chinese national and who, before traveling in Macau, had been in the mainland," said Lam. "She would have been infected in China as when she entered Macau, she already had symptoms of the disease. She would also have infected her husband at a later stage."

Questioned on the fact the health authorities admit that the woman entered Macau already with symptoms, Lam replied, "She had some symptoms but [only a] very light cough that [...] did not suggest that she would be of potential risk since she had not been in Hubei Province."

Lam also informed that the health authorities have already managed to reach 23 people that traveled on the Air Macau flight that the couple boarded to Seoul on January 31. According to the information collected, none of the interviewed passengers have any symptoms of the virus.

However, three crew members were found to have had close contact with the patients and were recommended to be quarantined.

A third person involved in the case, who is a Macau resident, is still in South Korea where the health authorities say that he is considered unlikely to have infected others. "We managed to reach his family in Macau, as he is not in Macau at the moment. The family says he is well and has no symptoms," Lam reaffirmed.

Meanwhile, regarding the case of the Malaysian resident, the Health Bureau (SSM) ascertained that the man formerly worked for the City of Dreams property and his work required frequent travel between Macau and Zhuhai. The probability of the Malaysian resident having infected other people locally is also considered low as he only started to have symptoms two days after being back in Malaysia.

MEDICAL STAFF NOT FORBIDDEN FROM SPEAKING TO MEDIA

The medical staff of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center (CHCSJ) are not forbidden from speaking to media outlets, the Macau health authorities claimed yesterday in reply to a media inquiry on the topic.

According to the Clinical Director of the CHCSJ and member of the New Coronavirus Contingency Coordination Center, Lei Wai Seng, "our professionals are not forbidden or prohibited from presenting any comments or statements at the media outlets according to their professional specialties."

"Nevertheless, this Wuhan pneumonia is an ongoing epidemic so what we urge is that our

staff members communicate with us to warn us that they will have an interview or make some comments to media outlets. But we don't have an order to forbid them from speaking," said Lei.

"We also have press conferences every day at 5 p.m. and if the journalists want to get any information, they can use these [occasions] to ask questions."

Lei added that in cases where media wants to organize an interview with a particular specialist or on a specific topic, they should, "reach us [the Health Bureau] so we can organize a seminar for all journalists of all language media." **RM**

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MGEMA: Gaming industry may take three months to recover

LYNZY VALLES

AT least three months will be needed for business in the casino sector to recover from the effect of the coronavirus and the closure of entertainment facilities mandated by the government last week, according to an industry operator.

It has been a week since casinos in the city were closed and gaming operators have been recording significant daily losses. The closures occurred during what is usually a busy time of the year, over the Chinese Lunar New Year and the period after.

The closure was mandated by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng on February 3 to deter the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"After the outbreak is under control and visa restrictions [to Macau] are removed, it will most likely take at least three months for the gaming industry to get back on track again," the Macau Gaming Equipment Manufacturers' Association (MGEMA) said in an emailed newsletter.

In regard to the impact of the casino closures on the electric gaming manufacturing industry, MGEMA remarked in the statement, "All the on-going business will slow down because of the casino closure, such as machine installation, [and] a shrink in procurement budget."

Some casinos have already detailed their losses. Wynn Resorts Ltd. listed that it is losing about \$2.5 million a day, while Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd. said it would reduce its planned purchase of a stake in Australia's Crown Resorts from 10% to 20%, allegedly because of the business climate in Macau.



BLOOMBERG

Melco stated that its reason for not increasing its share in the Australian operator was due to the impact of the coronavirus epidemic and the need to use its capital on the firm's "core assets."

As the Chief Executive did not rule out the possibility of extending the shutdown of the 41 casinos in the SAR, Las Vegas Sands president and chief operating officer Robert Goldstein has remarked that the two-week closure of the casinos could last up to two months.

Industry analysts are forecasting a plunge of as much as 75% in the city's gross gaming reve-

nue for February, adding that the 15-day closure of casinos in Macau may take some 6% off the region's 2020 revenue.

In a note published before the casino closures, Nomura Instinet analyst Harry Curtis estimated that MGM China could lose \$56 million in EBITDA per month, Wynn Macau \$100 million per month, Melco \$125 million per month, and Sands China \$167 million a month, because of the operators' fixed costs.

As cited in CNBC report, Curtis noted, "We believe such a costly outcome would be temporary. Any impact on the stocks would be temporary and

most likely signal a near-term bottom."

Gaming revenue in Macau contracted 11.3% in year-on-year terms to 22.12 billion patacas in January, with the plummeting number of visitor arrivals from the mainland as the cause.

Since the outbreak, China has limited travel for its citizens, including a suspension of individual travel visas for visits to Macau.

Travel to Macau plunged 80% year-on-year during the seven-day Lunar New Year period because of the coronavirus outbreak in mainland China.

INFORMATION BUREAU OPENS INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT TO REACH YOUNG PEOPLE

The Government Information Bureau (GCS) has opened an official account on Instagram to bring government news to young people. The account was opened yesterday with the handle "macaugcs". The local government is seeking to cater to young people's daily habits of using new media sources to bring them up to date with the government's latest developments. Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus epidemic, the SAR government has been releasing new information every day to the public, including preventive measures, through various platforms such as the Health Bureau's website and the GCS website. Although the local government often provides simplified and traditional Chinese versions of these news stories, not all of them have been officially, nor promptly, translated into Portuguese or English.

BUSINESS LAWMAKERS WANT MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SMES

Three lawmakers jointly requested the local government to provide additional financial support to local SMEs following the introduction of the government's rental exemption benefits. The local government had previously decided to waive three months of rent for local SMEs operating out of government-owned commercial properties. Lawmakers Chui Sai Cheong, Ip Sio Kai, and Wang Sai Man want the local government to further help local SMEs by reducing or exempting them from paying various taxes, such as water and electricity bills, and some taxes. In addition, the three lawmakers, who are stakeholders in local SMEs, urged the Macau government to launch a financial subsidy and a "consumer vouchers" program to reduce SMEs' operational pressure and to encourage local residents to consume locally in Macau.

HEALTH BUREAU TO USE WECHAT GROUP FOR FRONTLINE MEDICAL STAFF

Leaders of the Health Bureau (SSM) have chosen WeChat as the medium through which they will communicate with the city's medical professionals working on the frontline to combat the novel coronavirus epidemic. According to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, leaders at the SSM have set up a group chat on WeChat with more than 500 frontline medical professionals hoping to gather information on the coronavirus from them. Yesterday, SSM Director Lei Chin Ion and others visited several medical facilities, including the Conde S. Januário Hospital, to learn more about the work of frontline medical staff. The visit comes after a group of nurses from Kiang Wu Hospital published an open letter accusing the private hospital of undermining the government's strategy to control the local outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

CRIME

Man abducts love interest to win affection

A man allegedly staged a fraudulent kidnapping attempt with the help of three other men to abduct a married former high school classmate, in the hope of making her fall in love with him, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday.

He told the PJ that he wanted to stage a rescue so that the woman might fall in love with him. According to the PJ, the entire process

cost the suspect a total of MOP600,000.

It all started a year ago or so, when the suspect met the victim again at an alumni reunion.

On February 9, the duo went for dinner at a restaurant near the Cinema Alegria and stayed there until late. The man walked the woman back to her place but both were intercepted and the woman abducted by the three

accomplices. The men pushed her into a seven-seater vehicle, covered her eyes and tied her wrists together, and drove away.

Later, the suspect made a call to the victim's phone, which was answered by the accomplices. The accomplices asked for a ransom of MOP5 million, which was lowered to MOP3 million after negotiation.

The victim was relea-

sed on Estrada de Sete Tanques in Taipa, half an hour after the ransom was supposedly paid.

She was able to untie herself and reach a building management office nearby to call her husband. Not long after, the suspect arrived at the scene in his Porsche Cayenne and told the victim the ransom had been paid.

The story failed to convince the victim,

who wondered how such a large sum of money could be gathered in such short time. At home, she discussed the crime with her husband and both decided to report the case to the PJ.

Among the group of kidnappers is a university student who attempted to earn some money during the special suspension of school as a result of the pneumonia outbreak, the PJ disclosed. **AL**

MAN CURSES AT TRANSMAC WORKERS AFTER BARRED FROM BOARDING BUS

A man reportedly cursed at workers of bus operator Transmac after he was not allowed to board a bus, according to a report by public broadcaster TDM. The man was not wearing a facemask when he attempted to board a bus. In coordination with government measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the passenger was informed he could not board. After being refused, he cursed Transmac workers at the bus stop. Transmac has already reported the case to the police authority. This is not the first case where people will have to face the consequences of issues related to facemasks. Earlier this month, one local resident spat over a pile of 300 facemasks at a hygiene center due to his dissatisfaction with their quality.

SMALLER BUSES TO COMPENSATE FOR PASSENGER REDUCTION

From yesterday, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) has reduced the size of seven bus lines in response to the reduction in the number of passengers. The seven lines include 72, 9A, 4 and 39, which are operated by bus company Transmac. According to Transmac, route 9A currently has an average of 27 passengers for each headway, while route 72 only has 12. The three other lines are 50B, 71 and MT1, which are run by bus operator TCM. TCM will continue using the current bus size but will request compensation from the government. TCM has reduced the bus frequency by over 50%, while passenger numbers have decreased by 70%.

URBAN RENEWAL COMPANY LIKELY TO PAY FOR HENGQIN PROJECT

The city's urban renewal company is likely to pay for a residential development project in Hengqin designed to accommodate Macau residents, according to the latest amendment of the urban renewal company. Yesterday, the Executive Council completed the discussion on the amendment, which suggests that the Zhuhai government will use a piece of land to develop a project named the Macau New Community in Hengqin. The Macau government proposed to its Zhuhai counterpart that the project should be developed by Macau's urban renewal company. The project will reportedly occupy an area of 180,000 square meters, where 3,800 residential units will be built for exclusive sale to Macau residents.

SOUTH KOREA TIGHTENS MEASURES ON TOURISTS FROM MACAU

FOLLOWING South Korea's confirmation of two novel coronavirus infections of individuals who flew in from Macau, the country has decided to require passengers arriving from China's two Special Administrative Regions to undergo stricter health screenings, according to a report by The Korea Times.

The new measure is set to take effect from today, according to the same report. People entering the Northeast Asian country from Macau or Hong Kong, along with Mainland China, are now required to make a health declaration and have their body temperature scanned. It is also applicable to passengers making a transit at either SAR.

A 51-year-old Korean man and a 37-year-old mainland woman, both of whom have lived in Hubei for some time, were confirmed as being infected in Korea. They made a transit through Macau, taking Air Macau flight 826 to Seoul, the capital of Korea.

Previously, only people arriving from mainland China and Chinese passport holders were required to fill out a health declaration. The form asked if they were experiencing respiratory problems or fever.

The South Korean border control has even set up "China-only" arrival counters at airports to screen passengers for coronavirus symptoms.

South Korea is not the only country imposing this measure on arrivals from China. On Fe-



An employee sprays disinfectant on a train as a precaution against a new coronavirus at Suseo Station in Seoul

bruary 2, the Japanese authority implemented a measure which is still in effect. All passengers arriving at the Narita Airport, serving the country's capital of Tokyo, from the People's Republic of China and its two SARs are required to take a designated passage route through immigration which is equipped with body temperature screening facilities.

Earlier, Taiwan banned entry from Macau and Hong Kong.

With exceptions made for three categories of people, nobody from the two SARs, including students studying in Taiwan, is allowed to enter the island.

According to a report by Marianas Variety, a Macau SAR passport holder was expelled from the Pacific island of Saipan due to her previous travel in mainland China.

The woman was held in the Saipan Airport because her travel record showed that she had

travelled to Mainland China in the previous 14 days. She flew from China to South Korea and then to Saipan.

Marianas Variety said it learned from an anonymous source that the Saipan authority criticized the South Korean immigration authority for not having screened the woman properly. According to the report, her expulsion sent her back to Korea, but her current whereabouts is unclear. **AL**

Hundreds of local students unable to return to Taiwan

JULIE ZHU

NEARLY 1,200 Macau students are unable to return to Taiwan to resume their studies after the Taiwan government suspended Hong Kong and Macau residents' entry to the territory, starting from today.

The information comes from the record of the online registration system of the Higher Education Bureau (DSES) as of 3 p.m. yesterday. The system shows that 1,145 students are enrolled in bachelor's degree courses, 44 are pursuing a master's degree, four are under PhD

programs, and another four are studying at other levels.

The students are from Tamkang University, Ming Chuan University, National Taiwan University, Soochow University, among others. They are now unable to return to Taiwan in line with their original travel plans, which were mostly scheduled to take place between February 12 and February 17.

To alleviate the concerns of Macau students who failed to return to Taiwan to study as scheduled and to reduce their financial burden, DSES and Ma-

cau's Civil Aviation Bureau have spoken with airlines to negotiate special ticket policies for these students.

Air Macau and Eva Air have agreed to allow affected students to change their tickets for free, while Tigerair allows affected students to cancel their flights. However, details of the policies were not mentioned in the statement.

In total, around 4,500 students from Macau are studying at universities in Taiwan. The majority of them have already returned to Taiwan and are under the government authority's quarantine mea-



asures. Classes in Taiwan are scheduled to resume in late February or early March.

Airlines have claimed they will increase flight frequencies and adjust aircraft types to help these students return to Taiwan

quickly once the epidemic subsides.

Taiwan's education department has launched a program to allow affected students to process school enrollment, registration, payment and course selection procedures.

IAM removes infographic after accusations of racism

JULIE ZHU

MUNICIPAL Affairs Bureau president José Tavares removed an inflammatory message that incited discrimination against domestic helpers from the government website after the bureau was accused of racism against Filipinos.

The infographic was heavily criticized by the Green Philippines Migrant Workers Union in Macau. President of the association, Nedie Taberdo, accused the message of being racist against domestic helpers, who are mostly from Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

"It is not just domestic helpers who handle garbage. Many Chinese people pick up things from the trash and sell them near Cinema Alegria. They sell used clothes, shoes and many other things. We Filipinos call the place Lapsapan, which means garbage

place," said Nedie Taberdo.

On Monday, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) issued an infographic urging the city's domestic helper employers to provide lessons on hygiene to their helpers.

The infographic contained three pictures and the title, "Teach domestic helpers not to go through trash."

The message was targeted at Macau local residents, skillful professional blue card holders, and those in possession of a special staying visas in Macau, as these parties are allowed to hire domestic helpers.

The infographic urges employers to teach their helpers not to go through trash, not to dump trash produced by business operations into ordinary trash collection systems, and instead to put trash produced by business operations into facilities provided by cleaning companies or to transport them to the incineration plant.

All of these warnings were intended to compel employers to give directives to their helpers on cleanliness in order to combat the epidemic.

In the IAM release, the bureau did not mention any fact or statistic that indicates that domestic helpers engage in the practices listed in the infographic.

As of July 2019, Macau has a total of 25,400 domestic helpers, most of whom are from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Most of these domestic helpers understand either Cantonese, Mandarin, English or Portuguese.

Despite the variety of languages spoken and understood by domestic helpers, and the fact that IAM wants domestic helpers to "learn", the bureau made the infographic available only in traditional Chinese and Portuguese, deeming employers who understand either language to be the target audience of the infographic.

GGCT IN CONTACT WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS ABOARD CRUISE SHIP IN YOKOHAMA

DANIEL BEITLER

THE Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT) said it is paying close attention to developments in the case of a cruise ship harbored in Yokohama, which has five local residents aboard.

The latest reports indicate that just halfway through its two-week quarantine, 135 people aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship have tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

According to the Japan Times, only a fraction of the roughly 3,600 people aboard have so far been tested, but the country's Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry said it is considering requiring all passengers to undergo screening before they are permitted to disembark. The Japan Times also reported that health authorities are scrambling to deliver the medicine requested by more than 600 passengers.

The GGCT informed the Times that it remains in close contact with the five Macau re-

sidents still aboard the cruise ship. As of last night, according to the available information, none had contracted the virus.

"There is no indication that the five Macau residents on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship have been diagnosed with the coronavirus. Since they are in an ongoing process of clinical observation, the GGCT will keep monitoring the development of the situation," the office told the Times.

The GGCT also said it was continuing to provide the residents and other relevant entities with information and assistance as necessary.

"At this moment the material needs of the affected passengers are being met," said the GGCT.

Last week, the government said that there were 22 Macau residents on the World Dream cruise ship under quarantine in Hong Kong. All passengers and crew members were released from the quarantine on Sunday, after the control measures were completed.

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Daniel Zhang, chairman and chief executive officer of Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. (center) speaks during the company's listing ceremony at the Hong Kong Stock Exchange

ALIBABA BLOCKED FROM HONG KONG STOCK LINK TO CHINA

INVESTORS betting on Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s inclusion in a program allowing mainland Chinese investors to buy its shares in Hong Kong could be in for a disappointment.

China's largest e-commerce company, valued at HKD4.56 trillion (\$587 billion) in Hong Kong, can't be included in the stock connect program linking the Asian financial hub with Chinese investors at present, according to people with knowledge of the matter, who asked not to be identified as the discussions are private.

The exclusion of companies with secondary listings and weighted voting rights from the program was part of an arrangement agreed to by the mainland and Hong Kong exchanges before Alibaba's Hong Kong debut last year, the people said. The Shanghai, Shenzhen and Hong Kong exchanges haven't agreed to make an exception or revise the agreement for Alibaba, though that could change in the future, they said.

With the bourses competing to draw the listings of local firms already floated in the U.S., allowing

companies in Alibaba's position into the program would run contrary to Beijing's ambitions of developing its mainland exchanges, particularly as unrest grips Hong Kong. Other Chinese firms - among the country's largest corporations, from JD.com Inc. to Baidu Inc. - may then be encouraged to also pick Hong Kong, bypassing the Shanghai or Shenzhen bourses.

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange & Clearing Ltd. has proposed changes to the China Securities Regulatory Commission, which

hasn't yet made a decision to revise the previous arrangement, one of the people said.

Companies with weighted voting rights and a secondary listing are not currently included in the stock connect and there's been no precedent for such a move, a Hong Kong Exchange spokesman said in response to questions on the agreement. "We look forward to discussing the potential for this with relevant parties in the future," he said. "More generally, HKEX is not in the habit of banning things that it considers positive for the

market."

Alibaba is not among the current batch of companies to be included in the stock connect, said a separate person, adding that the list will be updated on Feb. 17.

Representatives for Alibaba and the Shanghai Stock Exchange declined to comment. Shenzhen Stock Exchange and China's stock market watchdog, the China Securities Regulatory Commission, didn't immediately reply to emails seeking comment.

Alibaba's landmark \$13 billion secondary listing in Hong Kong last year was in part spurred by expectations that it would attract a vast pool of capital from its home country if included in the stock connect.

In the Hong Kong offering, Alibaba preserved its governance structure: Granting a partnership of top executives the right to nominate a majority of board members. That system falls broadly into the definition of having weighted voting rights in Hong Kong.

Alibaba's shares are up about 20% since the November listing, prompting other U.S.-listed technology companies including Trip.com to look at a secondary listing in Hong Kong, people familiar have said. Alibaba fell as much as 2.5% in Hong Kong Tuesday, the biggest drop in two weeks, before paring losses.

In the past, China has green-lit companies with weighted voting rights that conducted primary share sales in Hong Kong to join the stock connect program. For example, food delivery giant Meituan Dianping and smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp. joined in late October. Chinese firms with dual class shares started listing in July on Shanghai's new tech-focused Star board. **BLOOMBERG**

HK's richest tycoon gives \$13 million to battle virus

SHIRLEY ZHAO

THE charity of Hong Kong's richest man donated HKD100 million (\$13 million) to help Wuhan, the city at the epicenter of China's coronavirus outbreak.

The money from Li Ka Shing Foundation will be distributed via the Red Cross Society of China, according to an article posted Monday on the website of the Beijing's liaison office, which represents the mainland government in Hong Kong.

The founder of real-estate, telecom and ports conglomerate CK group is among the Hong Kong

tycoons giving money to charities, hospitals and local governments in mainland China during the outbreak that has infected more than 40,000 people and killed more than 900. Such donors along with some political leaders have donated a combined 1 billion yuan (\$143 million), goggles, protection suits and gloves for use in the mainland, according to the liaison office.

Li Ka-shing, 91, has a net worth of about \$28.3 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The Li Ka Shing Foundation is also sourcing supplies around the world

to help medical workers in Hong Kong and Wuhan, a spokesman for the group said Monday.

The liaison office report also cited Shimao Property Holdings Ltd.'s donation of HK\$30 million. The Lee family, which controls Henderson Land Development Co., set up an anti-epidemic foundation with seed funding of 10 million yuan (\$1.4 million), the report said. Adrian Cheng, scion of the family group behind New World Development Co., and Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group Ltd., donated 10 million yuan to a hospital in the southern city of Guangzhou, it said.

BLOOMBERG

VIRUS CASES IN HK APARTMENTS RECALL SARS MEMORIES

THE diagnosis of four people living in a single Hong Kong apartment block who were sickened by a new virus is prompting worried comparisons with the deadly SARS pandemic of 17 years ago.

Medical workers in full protective suits descended upon the Hong Mei House in Tsing Yi district on Tuesday, swiftly evacuating more than 100 people in 34 households after the four were found infected with the new pathogen from the same family of coronaviruses as SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome.

Health officials called it a precautionary measure after a 62-year-old woman diagnosed with the virus Tuesday was found living 10 floors di-

rectly below a man who was earlier confirmed with the virus. The woman's son and daughter-in-law who live with her were among seven new cases reported Thursday, raising the city's total tally to 49.

As in 2003, officials suspect the building's plumbing may be to blame.

The 34 households evacuated live vertically above or below the woman and share the same sewage system. A modified toilet drainage pipe in her unit may have helped spread the virus and officials are checking if any other units have made such alterations while they disinfect the building.

Authorities sought to assuage fears of an epidemic, dismissing similarities to the

SARS community outbreak at the Amoy Gardens housing estate in 2003. More than 300 people were infected and 42 people died at the time after a defective sewage pipe at the apartment block was believed to have caused the vertical spread of the SARS virus.

While some residents could be seen moving out with their luggage, others who spoke to The Associated Press said they weren't overly worried as long as they maintained good personal hygiene, and that they preferred to stay put rather than risk infection somewhere else.

Most of Hong Kong's 7.4 million people live in such apartments rising dozens of floors above the crowded city. **AP**

Singapore braces for 30% tourism drop after virus outbreak

FARIS MOKHTAR & HASLINDA AMIN

SINGAPORE could see a 25% to 30% decline in tourist arrivals and spending this year because of the coronavirus outbreak, as the industry braces for a worse impact than the 2003 SARS pandemic, the city's tourism chief said.

The city-state is losing about 18,000 to 20,000 tourists a day, and the figures could plummet further if the situation persists for longer, Keith Tan, chief executive of Singapore Tourism Board, said in an interview with Bloomberg TV.

"The main cry that I'm hearing is 'help' right now from the entire tourism industry," Tan said. "There's lots of anecdotal evidence of business drying up, but that's not surprising given how much China contributes to our visitor arrivals."

China accounts for about 20% of Singapore's tourism intake, the biggest source of visitors ahead of Indonesia and India. China's ban on outbound tour groups and Singapore's move to bar Chinese nationals from entering has led to an "evaporation" of a key source of revenue, Tan said.

"We have over 1,600 tourist guides who guide in Mandarin and their livelihoods have also evaporated because many of them are freelancers," said Tan.



A woman wearing a protective mask rides an escalator connected to the Orchard MRT station in Singapore

Tourists from other countries are also deferring visits to Singapore and other parts of Asia amid the outbreak.

South Korea and Kuwait have both advised citizens to minimize or delay travel to Singapore, as well as travel to some other countries in the region.

Singapore isn't the only nation reeling from the coronavirus. Across the globe, hotels, casinos, airlines and retailers who have come to rely on Chinese tourists have been hit. About 163 million Chinese tourists made overseas trips in 2018, accounting for more than 30% of travel spending worldwide.

For the city-state, though, its 2020 tourism projections stand in stark contrast to last year's record arrivals of 19.1 million. Tourism receipts rose to S\$27.1 billion (\$19.5 billion) in 2019 based on preliminary estimates, from SGD26.9 billion the year before.

But in a report last week, DBS Group Holdings Ltd. said it sees a decline of 1 million tourists, equal to about a SGD1 billion loss in spending, for every three months the travel bans are in place. The lower arrivals will cut about 0.5% off Singapore's full-year GDP growth, the bank added.

Cost-cutting measures have already been put in place by Singapore's hospitality sector, such as getting some workers to clear leave or go on a four-day work week, Charles Tan, secretary-general of the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore, said at a media briefing yesterday.

The Singapore Tourism Board will also form a Tourism Recovery Action Taskforce, comprising tourism leaders from public and private sectors to help with recovery efforts. That's similar to the action taken during SARS, when tourist arrivals declined by 18% to 19%. **BLOOMBERG**

DUBAI'S JOBS VANISH AT THE FASTEST PACE IN A DECADE

BUSINESS growth in Dubai stalled while jobs disappeared at the fastest pace in at least a decade in the latest signs of strain on the Middle East's commercial hub.

Operating conditions in Dubai's non-oil private sector worsened in January for a third straight month to the lowest level in nearly four years, according to IHS Markit. Its Purchasing Managers' Index dropped to 50.6, barely above the threshold that separates growth from contraction. Wholesale and retail, as well as construction, slipped below the no-change mark, IHS Markit said.

"Employment in Dubai was notably affected, with companies reporting the joint-quickest fall in job numbers seen throughout the 10-year series history," David Owen, economist at IHS Markit, said in the report Monday. "Firms expect little pick-up in sales in the near future."

Dubai business conditions deteriorated to near four-year low in January

The dim outlook is increasingly translating into layoffs as companies streamline operations in the face of weak demand, with average prices extending a decline uninterrupted since May 2018. Dubai's biggest bank, Emirates NBD, is among lenders in the United Arab Emirates that have cut thousands of jobs.

Across the U.A.E. as a whole - of which Dubai is a part - business conditions fell into contraction last month for the first time ever.

Already under pressure from regional geopolitical tensions, Dubai's travel and tourism industry actually showed a "modest improvement" in January, IHS Markit said. But now it faces disruptions because of the viral outbreak in China.

Dubai can't afford a downturn in tourism, however, since the city's prospects hinge on the success of its much-awaited World Expo exhibition later in 2020.

The emirate's spending this year is set to soar 17% ahead of the event, with the economy expected to expand 3.2%. A survey during the last quarter of 2019 published by the local government showed that three-quarters of consumers are confident of improvements in the employment situation during the next 12 months.

Still, it might take some time for the jobs market to pick up, according to Khatija Haque, head of Middle East and North Africa research at Emirates NBD. "The coronavirus will likely weigh on transport, logistics and tourism - in the first quarter at least," she said. **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

GEG to extend donation to local schools



Galaxy Entertainment Group announced a subsidy scheme to assist local schools and nursery service users amid the pneumonia outbreak caused by the novel coronavirus.

Initiated by the Galaxy Entertainment Group Foundation, the scheme will provide a one-

off subsidy of MOP30,000 to over 30 local schools to carry out necessary infection prevention measures.

In addition, a one-off subsidy of MOP2,000 for children registered at Macau's 20 non-government subsidized nurseries will be provided, as cited

in a statement issued by the gaming operator.

The scheme is part of the foundation's MOP25 million commitment aimed at supporting the 2019-nCoV infection prevention efforts in the local community and Hubei Province.

Through these measures, the foundation aims to provide subsidies for kindergartens and primary schools to carry out necessary infection prevention measures to ensure a safe and healthy environment for students when classes resume. In addition, the foundation also aims to help relieve the financial pressure for parents whose child is registered at non-government-subsidized nurseries.

Sands China donates 500,000 surgical masks



Sands China Ltd. is donating 500,000 medical facemasks to the local government as part of the company's pledge to support the SAR's efforts to combat the novel coronavirus. Secretary for Social Affairs

and Culture Ao Ieong U accepted the first batch of 300,000 facemasks on behalf of the government yesterday at The Parisian Macao, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

"Our thoughts are with the entire local community during this time of caution, and our company is pleased to be able to respond to the urgent need for facemasks in Macau as we cooperate with the Macau government in its virus prevention efforts," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

Alongside frequent and proper handwashing, doctors and medical agencies around the world have stressed the importance of wearing facemasks as a vital and easy-to-implement measure to diminish the spread of the novel coronavirus and to protect oneself and others against infection.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

UN experts meet to fast-track drugs, vaccines for new virus

THE World Health Organization convened a group of experts yesterday to fast-track promising tests, drugs and vaccines to help slow the outbreak of a new virus that emerged in China and has spread to two dozen other countries.

The new coronavirus was only identified late last year in the Chinese city of Wuhan and there are no licensed drugs or vaccines. Diagnostic tests have been developed by several laboratories, but there are no rapid tests available.

To date, the virus has infected more than 42,000 people and killed 1,007, with 99% of the cases found in China. Two dozen other countries have reported 393 cases of the virus, with one death in the Philippines.

At least 60 million people in central China are in a government-ordered lockdown aimed at halting the spread of the virus and health authorities around the world are racing to track down the contacts of infected people.

In Japan, more than 3,700 people remain quarantined aboard a cruise ship in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, after dozens of passengers tested positive for the virus.

"It's hard to believe that just two months ago, this virus — which has come to captivate the attention of media, financial markets and political leaders — was completely unknown to us," said WHO's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The U.N. health agency said there were still many critical but unanswered questions about the virus, including what animals it came from, how exactly it is spread between people and how best to treat infected patients.

"To defeat this outbreak, we need answers to all those questions and more," Tedros said.

The two-day meeting will end Wednesday.

Experts say it could still be months or even years before any approved treatments or vaccines are developed. **AP**

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

China's daily death toll from a new virus topped 100 for the first time and pushed the total for the outbreak above 1,000, authorities said yesterday, after leader Xi Jinping visited a health center to rally public morale amid little sign the contagion is abating.

More offices and stores in China were reopening after the extended Lunar New Year break, but many people were staying home. Public health authorities are closely monitoring whether workers returning to cities and businesses resuming will worsen the spread of the virus.

In a bid to boost morale, Xi visited a community health center in Beijing on Monday and expressed confidence in the "war against the disease."

Xi wore a surgical mask and had his temperature taken before expressing his thanks to health workers on behalf of the ruling Communist Party and government. "We will most definitely win this people's war," he said.

Much of Xi's message was focused on calling for citizens to follow the party's dictates and aimed at minimizing the potentially massive economic impact of the outbreak.

His appearance came amid questioning of the government's handling of the crisis, particularly the failure of local officials in the worst-hit city of Wuhan to clarify the extent of the outbreak. Public anger has been inflamed over the death of a young doctor from the virus who had been threatened along with seven others by police for warning of the potential for a major outbreak as early as December.

The virus outbreak has become the latest political challenge for Xi, who despite accruing more political power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, has struggled to

Mainland's daily death toll



handle crises on multiple fronts, including a sharply slowing domestic economy, the trade war with the U.S. and push-back on China's increasingly aggressive foreign policies.

While no top-level officials have lost their jobs over their handling of the crisis, state media reported yesterday that the top health officials in Hubei province, which surrounds Wuhan, have been relieved of their duties. No specific reasons were given, although the province's initial response was deemed slow and ineffective. Speculation that higher-level cadres could be sacked has simmered, but doing so could spark political infighting.

The National Health Commission said in its daily update that 108 deaths had been

reported over the previous 24 hours, increasing the total to 1,016 in mainland China since the illnesses began appearing in December. The total has far exceeded the toll of the 2002-03 outbreak of SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, which is caused by a different but related coronavirus.

The number of newly confirmed cases fell slightly to 2,478 from 3,062 the day before, bringing the total to 42,638 on the mainland, some of whom have since been cured and released from the hospital.

The crossing of more grim thresholds is dimming optimism that the near-quarantine of some 60 million people and other disease control measures are working.

The restart of business poses a risk of further spreading the virus, but the country has little recourse, said Cong Liang, secretary general of the National Development and Reform Commission, China's main economic planning body.

"Without the reopening of businesses, in the short term, it will affect the supply of medical material and ... in the long run, it will affect the supply of all kinds of production and life materials and will make the control and prevention efforts on the front line unsustainable. The target of defeating the epidemic will not be reached," Cong said at a news conference.

In Taiwan, the foreign ministry urged the Philippine

NEW VIRUS HAS INFECTED MORE THAN 43,000 PEOPLE

- China: 1,016 deaths among 42,638 confirmed cases on the mainland. In addition, Hong Kong has had 42 cases, including one death. Macau has had 10 cases. Most of the illnesses and deaths have been in central Hubei province, where illnesses from the new type of coronavirus were first detected in December. (see graphic; Courtesy CNN)
- Japan: 163
- Singapore: 45
- Thailand: 33
- South Korea: 28
- Malaysia: 18
- Taiwan: 18
- Australia: 14
- Germany: 14
- Vietnam: 15
- United States: 13. Separately, one US citizen died in China
- France: 11
- United Kingdom: 8
- United Arab Emirates: 8
- Canada: 7
- Philippines: 3 cases, including 1 death
- India: 3
- Italy: 3
- Russia: 2
- Spain: 2
- Belgium: 1
- Nepal: 1
- Sri Lanka: 1
- Sweden: 1
- Cambodia: 1
- Finland: 1



from virus tops 100 for first time



government to lift a travel ban on Taiwanese over virus fears, something apparently made as a political concession to Beijing, which claims the self-governing island as its own territory.

"We are trying to let them know that Taiwan is not an infected Chinese region, and that we are very well containing the epidemic," spokeswoman Joanne Ou said at a news conference.

Taiwan has 18 confirmed virus cases, but the outbreak has shown a spotlight on its China-imposed diplomatic isolation, including its inability to join the

World Health Organization.

In Hong Kong, authorities evacuated some residents of an apartment block after two cases among those living there raised suspicion the virus may be spreading through the building's plumbing.

It was reminiscent of the SARS outbreak that killed hundreds in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. The biggest number of connected cases in that outbreak were in one apartment complex where the virus spread through sewage pipes.

Britain, meanwhile, declared

the virus a "serious and imminent threat to public health" and said it would forcibly detain infected people if necessary. France tested scores of children and their parents after five British tourists contracted the virus at a ski resort.

The director-general of the World Health Organization said the agency is still unable to predict where the outbreak is heading but that he believes there is still an opportunity to contain it.

"In recent days, we have seen some concerning instances of onward transmission from

people with no travel history to China," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "The detection of the small number of cases could be the spark that becomes a bigger fire, but for now, it's only a spark."

Among the growing number of travel restrictions, the U.S. said that, as of Monday, it was suspending regular visa services at the embassy in Beijing and consulates general in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenyang. The Consulate General in Wuhan has already been closed and its staff evacuated.

A presidential proclamation issued Feb. 2 already banned entry to the U.S. to foreigners or non-permanent residents who had been in China fewer than 14 days prior to their arrival. Exceptions were made for foreign diplomats, flight crew and family members of U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

The Beijing city government told residential compounds in the capital to close their gates, check visitors for fever and record their identities. The government also warned people to strictly abide by regulations requiring wearing of masks in public and to avoid group activities.

More than 460 cases have been confirmed outside mainland China, including two deaths in Hong Kong and the Philippines. Of those, 135 are from a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama, near Tokyo.

Britain issued its "imminent threat" declaration after a British man who caught the virus in Singapore in January appeared linked to several other confirmed cases in Europe. Five Britons, including a 9-year-old boy, contracted the virus in the French Alpine ski town of Contamines-Montjoie after staying in the same chalet as the British man.

Jerome Salomon, head of France's national health agency, said 61 people including the boy's schoolmates were tested and proved negative for the virus. AP

UK man linked to virus spread thanks doctors for recovery

DANICA KIRKA,
LONDON

A businessman from England who contracted the new virus from China and may have spread it through his wide travels thanked Britain's National Health Service after he recovered.

Steve Walsh issued a statement yesterday after being the focus of intense media coverage once it became apparent that he may have unwittingly helped to spread the new coronavirus to Europe. Walsh had come into contact with the virus after a business trip to Singapore in January. He then went to a ski resort in the French Alps, potentially infecting other people before he was diagnosed with the virus and hospitalized.

"I would like to thank the NHS for their help and care," Walsh said.

AP PHOTO



"Whilst I have fully recovered, my thoughts are with others who have contracted coronavirus."

STEVE WALSH

infected after returning home on the Spanish island of Mallorca.

His case prompted French health authorities to test 61 other children

and family members at the resort and temporarily close some schools there, but they all tested negative.

Walsh said as soon as he realized he had been exposed to a confirmed case of the virus, he spoke to his doctor and public health authorities.

"I was advised to attend an isolated room at the hospital, despite showing no symptoms, and subsequently self-isolated at home as instructed," he said. "When the diagnosis was confirmed, I was sent to an isolation unit in hospital, where I remain, and, as a precaution, my family was also asked to isolate themselves."

The virus has infected more than 42,000 people globally and killed over 1,000, with the overwhelming majority of cases in China. It is unclear exactly how it is transmitted, but experts

think it is spread mostly by droplets when people cough or sneeze. Health officials warn it can take up to 14 days for those who have been exposed to show symptoms.

Most people have only mild symptoms such as a fever and runny nose. But some develop pneumonia. Those who have fallen severely ill have been mostly over 60 with other health problems.

Walsh flew to Singapore for a Jan. 20-22 event sponsored by his employer, Servomex. The company, based in the town of Crowborough, 35 miles south of London, makes industrial sensors sold around the world.

In a statement, Servomex said it was working with public health authorities "to ensure the welfare of our staff and communities and wish anyone with the virus a quick and full recovery." AP



SINGAPORE

VACANT BOOTHS AND GENERAL GLOOM AT VIRUS-HIT AIRSHOW

ANURAG KOTOKY

THE first day of the Singapore Airshow usually features teeming crowds, flashy presentations and big orders for aircraft makers.

The coronavirus outbreak has shot that to pieces this year as scores of companies steer clear of Asia's biggest aerospace and defense gathering. People who did attend limited their interaction to bows or uneasy elbow bumps.

Changi Exhibition Centre near the city-state's airport is dotted with vacant booths displaying signs from companies apologizing for their absence, while the static display area for aircraft is virtually empty.

Beyond a smattering of deals -

Korean Air Lines Co. buying engines from Pratt & Whitney Holdings LLC, PNG Air Ltd. ordering three ATR turboprops and Japan Airlines signing a service agreement with General Electric Co. - there was little action, with rainy weather adding to the gloom.

Concern about the coronavirus grew as the air show approached and more cases were reported beyond the epicenter in China's Hubei province. Singapore clamped down on arrivals from China, forbidding people who'd recently been to the country from entering. Confirmed cases of infection in Singapore have climbed to 45, making it one of the worst affected places outside China, where more than 1,000 people have died and

nearly 43,000 infected.

At the opening ceremony for the expo late Monday, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat said the outbreak cast fresh uncertainty on near-term prospects for the global economy. "With the situation still rapidly evolving, it is difficult to gauge the full impact at present," he said. "If SARS is a reference point to go by, it will be many months before the situation returns to normal."

Singapore last week raised its disease response level to the same grade used during the SARS outbreak in 2003 and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said it was a "major test for our nation." The government urged residents to stop hoarding supplies such as toilet

paper and instant noodles.

Organizers of Singapore's biennial airshow, which attracted more than 54,000 trade attendees in 2018, have advised people to follow a no-contact policy in which they should bow or wave instead of shaking hands. That followed news of several coronavirus cases in Europe being traced to a so-called super-spreader who attended a business meeting at Singapore's Grand Hyatt hotel last month.

MASKS DISCOURAGED

Very few people wore face masks at the airshow yesterday, heeding the advice on a notice pasted around the halls that said they were only necessary if you are sick. It also told people to cover

their mouths if sneezing or coughing.

The handshaking caused some confusion: some attendees extended their hands out of habit and pulled back at the last moment with a nervous laugh. Elbow-bumping appeared to be catching on as a greeting. Organizers also glued sanitizers to desks so they couldn't be taken away.

The show was deserted even before the scheduled 6 p.m. close, a far cry from previous years when organizers would plead with attendees and reporters to leave. Lights were turned off at several booths and cabs were easily available.

The Singapore Airshow isn't alone in being affected by the virus.

Intel Corp. and MediaTek Inc. became the latest big names to pull out of Mobile World Congress, the largest annual event for the wireless industry, which is due to start in Barcelona on Feb. 24. Large-scale events in China scheduled for as late as the end of March have been postponed and international art fair Art Basel Hong Kong canceled.

Airbus SE still played a relatively prominent part at the show in Singapore yesterday, unveiling a model of a futuristic blended-wing aircraft named Maveric. Later in the afternoon, Francois Caudron, the Toulouse-based company's senior vice president of marketing, said it expects to sell 1,000 A321 XLRs in 10 years, the long-range version of the narrow-body A320 family.

Meanwhile, Boeing Co.'s Vice President for Marketing Randy Tinseth said it will take several quarters to get all the 700 or so 737 Max jets grounded around the world flying again, though the company aims to return the model to the skies in mid-2020. Federal Aviation Administration chief Steve Dickson reiterated that there's no schedule as yet for a Max re-certification flight.

In another interview, jet-engine maker Rolls-Royce Holdings Plc's president for Southeast Asia, Pacific and South Korea Bicky Bhangu was confident about growth in the region and that the coronavirus would have a short-term impact. **BLOOMBERG**

THAI health authorities have barred a cruise ship from docking that has already been turned away by the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan out of concern over a new virus, although no cases have been confirmed on board.

The chief of the Department of Disease Control, Suwanchai Wattanayingcharoenchai, said yesterday that the Public Health Ministry had rejected a request from the crew of the MS Westerdam to dock at

THAILAND

Health authority yields to virus fears, bars docking of cruise ship

Laem Chabang in eastern Thailand.

He said the ministry will further consider how to deal with the ship's situation. It began its cruise on Jan. 16 in Singapore. Shipowner Holland America Line says there are no

known cases of the virus on board.

The virus has caused problems for the cruise industry. Japan's health ministry has confirmed 135 cases of the disease aboard Carnival Corp.'s Diamond Princess, which

is docked in Yokohama, Japan. The ship's 3,700 passengers and crew are expected to remain under quarantine until at least Feb. 19.

Thai Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakulhad indicated on

his Facebook page several hours before the official announcement that the ship would be denied entry.

He posted his declaration after Holland America announced it was sailing to Laem Chabang, where

passengers would disembark on Feb. 13 to take flights home from Bangkok. The announcement by the shipowner attracted much attention among Thai social media users.

Holland America had already announced that passengers would receive a complete refund. It said a scheduled departure of the Westerdam on Feb. 15 from Yokohama had been canceled and planned departures after Feb. 28 were being assessed. **AP**

Philippines notifies US of intent to end major security pact

THE Philippines notified the United States yesterday it would end a major security pact allowing American forces to train in the country, in the most serious threat under President Rodrigo Duterte to their 69-year treaty alliance.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said in a tweet that Manila's notice of termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement was received by the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. The termination would take effect after 180 days unless both sides agree to keep it.

Locsin signed the notice on the order of Duterte, who has often criticized U.S. security policies while praising those of China and Russia despite the Philippine military's close historic ties with its American counterpart.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila acknowledged receipt of Manila's notice and said Washington "will carefully consider how best to move forward to advance our shared interests."

"This is a serious step with



Rodrigo Duterte

significant implications for the U.S.-Philippines alliance," the embassy said in a statement. "Our two countries enjoy a warm relationship, deeply rooted in history. We remain committed to the friendship between our two peoples."

In a Senate hearing last week, Locsin warned that abrogating the

1998 security accord with Washington would undermine Philippine security and foster aggression in the disputed South China Sea. U.S. military presence in the strategic waterway has been seen as a crucial counterweight to China, which claims virtually the entire sea.

Locsin proposed a review of

the agreement to fix contentious issues, including criminal jurisdiction over erring American troops, instead of abrogating it. Philippine defense and military officials did not immediately issue any reaction to the government move.

Duterte threatened to terminate the security agreement after Washington reportedly canceled the U.S. visa of a loyal ally, Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, who was linked to human rights violations when he first enforced the president's deadly anti-drug crackdown as the national police chief in 2016.

Thousands of mostly poor suspects have been killed under the bloody campaign Duterte launched when he took office in mid-2016, alarming the U.S. and other Western governments and human rights watchdogs.

Duterte gave the U.S. a month to restore dela Rosa's visa, but U.S. officials have not publicly reacted to the Philippine leader's demand.

Duterte said in a speech late Monday that President Donald Trump has moved to save the agreement but added that he re-

jected the idea. He accused the U.S. of meddling in Philippine affairs, including seeking the release of opposition Sen. Leila de Lima, whom he has accused of involvement in illegal drugs. She has dismissed the allegation as a fabricated charge meant to muzzle dissent.

"America is very rude. They are so rude," Duterte said.

Locsin outlined in the Senate hearing what he said were the crucial security, trade and economic benefits the accord provides. The U.S. is a longtime treaty ally, a major trading partner and the largest development aid provider to the Philippines.

The accord, known by its acronym VFA, legally allows the entry of large numbers of American forces along with U.S. military ships and aircraft for joint training with Filipino troops. It specifies which country will have jurisdiction over American soldiers, who may be accused of crimes while in the Philippines, a sensitive issue in the former American colony.

A separate defense pact subsequently signed by the allies in 2014, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, allows the extended stay of U.S. forces and authorizes them to build and maintain barracks and warehouses and store defense equipment and weapons inside five designated Philippine military camps. AP

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what's ON



THE LONG JOURNEY: THE FORBIDDEN CITY AND MARITIME SILK ROAD

TIME: 10am-9pm (Last entry at 6:30pm; closed on Mondays and public holidays)

UNTIL: April 13, 2020

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 87919814

A PANORAMA OF RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS 3.0

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 15, 2020

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZERS: Cultural Affairs Bureau; Macau

Museum of Art; Palace Museum

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

THE WORLD AT THEIR FINGERTIPS – EXHIBITION OF WEAVING, DYEING AND EMBROIDERY SKILL ART OF JIANGSU PROVINCE AND GUANGXI ZHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION

TIME: 9am-7pm (Open on public holidays)

UNTIL: February 16, 2020

VENUE: Chun Chou Tong Pavilion, Lou Lim Ioc

Garden

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS FROM THE PALACE MUSEUM AND EDUCATION AREA

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: April 13, 2020

VENUE: Macau Museum of Art

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

A PEARL OF THE SEA – EXHIBITION OF MACAO'S URBAN EVOLUTION

TIME: 10am-6pm (Closed on Mondays: Ticket booth closes 5:30pm)

UNTIL: April 19, 2020

VENUE: Exhibition Gallery, 3rd floor of Macao

Museum

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 2835 7911

Offbeat

PROSECUTORS: THIEF DROPPED JOURNAL WITH LIST OF HOMES TO HIT

Authorities in Tennessee say they busted a well-organized burglar after he allegedly dropped a notebook during a break-in that contained a list of other places he planned to target.

Robert Shull Goddard, 49, is accused of smashing a glass door and breaking into a Nashville area home on Jan. 29, stealing a TV and a gun from the residents, according to records filed in Davidson County court.

But prosecutors said Goddard left something behind that allowed authorities to solve the case — a notebook that listed multiple addresses, including one for another home a few miles away that had been burglarized that same day, The Tennessean reported. Investigators were able to identify the suspect, in part, through notes his daughter left in the journal, along with her address.

Goddard was caught on video kicking in the back door of another house the next day, court records state.

He was arrested last week and was being held on a \$15,000 bond for felony burglary and theft charges, jail records showed. It's unclear whether he has an attorney who can comment on his behalf.

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
14:30	O Sábio
15:45	Beo and Peno Sr.1
16:00	Animaizinhos Selvagens Exploradores
16:15	Portugueses Pelo Mundo Sr.1o
17:00	Conferência de Imprensa Saúde (Directo)
18:05	Império (Repetição)
18:55	TDM Entrevista (Repetição)
19:30	Ouro Verde Sr.2
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	Semana Internacional
21:50	Dez Grandes Segredos e Mistérios
22:20	Império
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Madre Paula
00:35	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:20	RTPi Directo

this day in history



1999 SCIENTISTS HIGHLIGHT HAZARDS OF GM FOOD

A group of international scientists has reinforced warnings genetically modified food may be damaging to health.

The 20 independent scientists have signed a memorandum in support of Arpad Pusztai who was forced to retire last year over his revelations about the effects of biologically altered potatoes on laboratory rats.

An expert on plant toxins, Dr Pusztai was suspended by the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen and did not have his annual contract renewed after he publicised his findings on British television.

Former president of the British Society of Allergy and Environmental Medicine Ronald Finn said: "Dr Pusztai's results at the very least raise the suspicion that genetically modified potatoes may damage the immune system."

He continued: "You can imagine a doomsday scenario. If the immune system of the population was weakened, then the mortality would be increased many, many times."

Dr Pusztai, 68, found the internal organs and immune systems of rats was altered by the presence of an additional gene - responsible for the production of the plant toxin lectin - in the potatoes.

A researcher at the department of pathology at Aberdeen University, Stanley Ewen, has just released details of his own experiments indicating rats fed on GM - or transgenic - potatoes absorbed lectin into their intestines.

Mr Ewen explained: "It may be that in GM food a drug-delivery system has been created, delivering something you didn't want to."

The director of the Rowett Institute, Philip James, has defended his decision to suspend Dr Pusztai saying he had become "muddled" over key aspects of the potato experiments.

He denied he had come under political pressure to dismiss the controversial scientist.

Prime Minister Tony Blair has rejected calls for a moratorium on GM food saying there is a rigorous regulatory process before they reach supermarket shelves in the UK.

Courtesy BBC News

cinema



CINETEATRO

For the public health and safety, and to better cooperate with the government's anti-virus precaution, Cineteatro Macau has decided to suspend all movie screenings from January 27, 2020 until further notice.

IN CONTEXT

Arpad Pusztai was the first senior scientist to question the effects of genetically modified foods.

His research was publicised just as GM foods were first appearing in shops and many people were deterred from using them. Anti-GM campaigners like Friends of the Earth championed Dr Pusztai's cause, but most of the scientific establishment - including the Royal Society - pilloried him.

He launched a website in June 1999 to hit back at his previous employers and critics.

Leading medical journal The Lancet published the findings of Dr Pusztai and Dr Ewen in October 1999.

Investigations by the BBC and Guardian newspaper in June 2002 found government papers admitting mishandling the affair and making Dr Pusztai into a martyr.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

If you're negotiating among friends, don't try to anticipate how other people will react. Just focus on you and that other person. What other people think isn't important at all.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

It's too soon to tell whether there are things to be concerned about, so there's no need to act on any fears. Just feel what you feel, and give this thing time to assume its new shape.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Perhaps you've been focusing too much on what you've been spending money on and not enough on what you're doing to make your existing money grow.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

A new beginning is always very exciting. Grab hold of this powerful feeling and soak up the warmth for as long as you can. Appreciate every moment.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

A compromise will take time to arrange, but it will make everyone happier in the end. There is a way to solve this problem without asking anyone to sacrifice anything.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

The folks around you could get whiplash today if they try to follow your every move! With a million ideas buzzing in your head, you'll be going off in a million directions at once. But be careful.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Romantic goals could be blown away when you overhear a comment that forces you to reevaluate everything you thought you wanted in a partner.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

This could be a result of habit. An annual payment may have become so dependable that your body senses it coming. Once again, your subconscious is taking good care of you!



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

As much as you may want to hurl a drink in their face, try not to let someone's arrogance put you in a sour mood. There are way too many knuckleheads in this world to live life any other way.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

If ramping up your career isn't on the top of your to-do list right now, it should be, especially today, when you feel a yearning for something more challenging. That urge is getting tired of being ignored!



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Your compassionate nature is something others admire in you, but it could put you in the middle of a tense emotional situation. Today, you should think about having a more impersonal point of view about things.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

The problem with showing off is that sometimes in the course of strutting your stuff, you can trip and fall flat on your face! Take acclaim or praise with a great deal of caution and humility today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY					EASY+						
4		9	3	2	8	8				2	
5	9			8			6	2	3		
			7	1	4	6		1			
3		5			1	6	4	8			9
9	6	3		2		9	5	8		4	
6	5		9		3	7				8	5
	3	8	2					5		7	
		1		6	2		5	1	3		
1	6		7	5	4		4				3

MEDIUM					HARD						
8			5		9			4	1	6	
	4		3			2	3				
			2		3	4	7				
1		7			8		2		3		7
	9			2			4	6			
8			3		7			8			
5	8		2			5		2		3	
			6	2			8			4	
6		8			5						

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	11	smoggy
Harbin	-5	5	cloudy
Tianjin	1	14	cloudy
Urumqi	-9	0	snow shower
Xi'an	-1	15	clear
Lhasa	-5	12	clear
Chengdu	9	17	overcast
Chongqing	10	18	cloudy
Kunming	4	18	clear
Nanjing	6	17	cloudy
Shanghai	9	14	drizzle
Wuhan	6	16	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	16	overcast
Taipei	16	20	cloudy
Guangzhou	16	22	overcast
Hong Kong	18	22	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-2	2	drizzle
Frankfurt	2	9	drizzle
Paris	3	8	clear
London	3	7	clear
New York	-1	4	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Judges' garments; 6- Meat stew braised in red wine; 11- ___ Mahal; 14- Impertinence; 15- Clappett player; 16- Clean air org.; 17- Bellowing; 18- Food and water; 19- Tempe sch.; 20- Prepares for publication; 22- Norwegian dramatist; 24- Breastbone; 28- Most cunning; 29- Large soup dish; 30- Bendable twig, usually of a willow tree; 32- Till bills; 33- "Hyperion" poet; 35- Whaler's direction; 39- Four-sided fig; 40- Had a little something; 41- Clinton's birthplace; 42- This, in Tijuana; 43- Blessed ___; 45- Comedian Carvey; 46- Less common; 48- Was merciful to; 50- Harsh; 53- Religious festival; 54- ___ say more?; 55- Mikhail's wife; 57- Boxer Laila; 58- Motionless; 60- Sherpa's home; 65- Cartoon Chihuahua; 66- Art supporter; 67- Diciembre follower; 68- Trick ending?; 69- Glasses, briefly; 70- Unsaid;

DOWN: 1- Cellular stuff; 2- Done, to Donne; 3- Pal in the 'hood; 4- Sister of Zsa Zsa; 5- Tranquil; 6- Fabric of jeans; 7- Assist, often in a criminal act; 8- Employs; 9- Night spot; 10- Preserve, as fodder; 11- Fluff, as bangs; 12- Chevets; 13- Short journey; 21- Dip into coffee; 23- The date on which a person is born; 24- Put away; 25- Melodies; 26- Upright; 27- Put back; 28- Lisa, to Bart, briefly; 30- Western; 31- Anna of "Nana"; 34- Gutter site; 36- Accumulate; 37- Sleep disorder; 38- Not hesitant; 43- Able was I ___ I saw Elba; 44- General ___ chicken; 47- Comes up; 49- Heavenly body; 50- Capture; 51- Conger catcher; 52- Having some prominent blood vessels; 53- Small mountains; 55- Ascend; 56- One of the Baldwins; 59- Touch on the shoulder; 61- Bambi's aunt; 62- Delt neighbor; 63- Uris hero; 64- Auction unit;



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- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
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- [Coloane] Large apartment 2 3 3 2 2
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Is figure skating becoming acrobatics on ice?

BARRY WILNER

THERE are times when Brian Boitano marvels at what he sees on the ice.

And there are times — far too many times nowadays — when he shakes his head and wonders where figure skating is headed.

Boitano was one of the sport's greats as a competitor, winning four straight U.S. titles, two world championships and the 1988 Olympic gold medal in a memorable showdown with Brian Orser that people still talk about today.

One of the best jumpers America has developed, but in a time when triples were the currency, Boitano also had a flair artistically and incredible stamina. Working in the old 6.0 scoring system, he often came close to perfection.

The programs he now witnesses are anything but perfect. Blame the points method adopted soon after the 2002 Olympics judging scandal. And the adjustments made to that system that emphasize difficult jumps — yes, quads — and squeezing all sorts of elements into a program. That's created, in some instan-

ces, acrobatics on the rink.

"Skating has always been a jumping contest in some respect," Boitano says. "What's really disturbing is looking at, literally, these little Russian girls doing all these quads. Can their bodies handle it?"

"We always tried to make the creative side just as important as the jumps, so it was the mark that had the importance. That's not the case anymore."

With a reduction in the length of the free skate, Boitano sees artistry being curtailed even more.

"You can't take away 30 seconds and then expect programs to be as full," he said. "What will they take out of the programs to pack in everything, all the elements, the jumps and spins and footwork? It will be the artistry, the parts of a program that really connect with the audience."

Tara Lipinski, the 1998 gold medalists at the Nagano Games who retired early due to injuries, also has concerns about the current makeup of figure skating. She recognizes that all sports advance, usually meaning tougher challenges getting to the top.

"We're in a place where you just don't know what's possibly ahead," Lipinski says. "But there's been progress in knowledge about how you train and how much, and knowing your body."

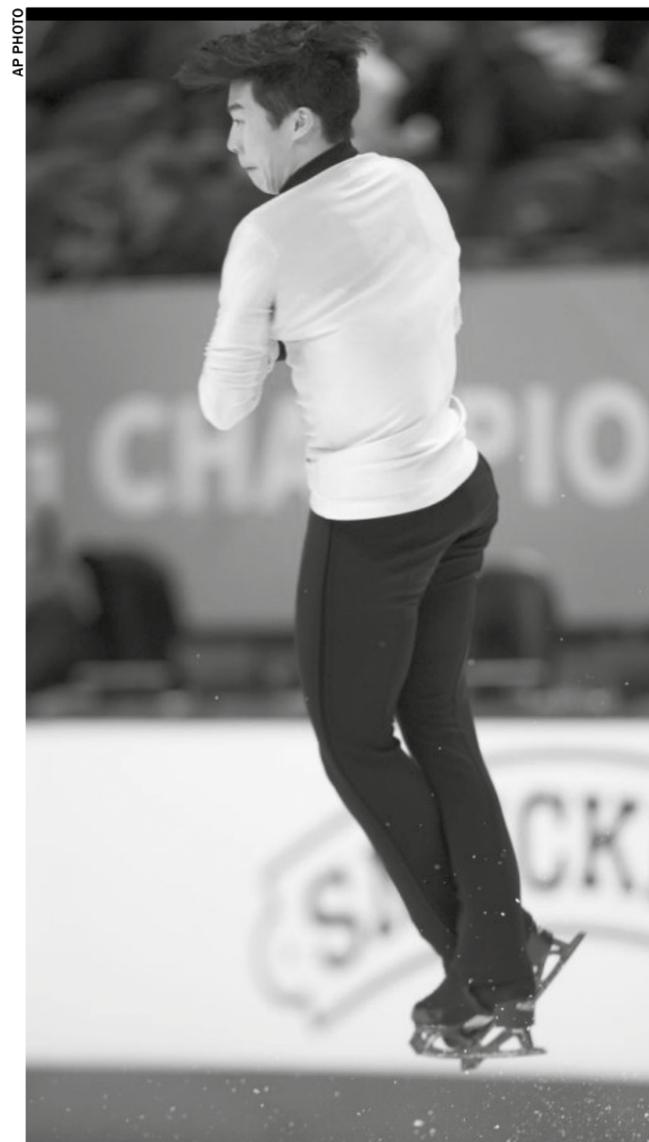
"Yes, the jumps they are doing could be really hard on the bodies, but we just don't know yet. And you can't generalize."

Adds her NBC broadcast partner, former three-time U.S. champion Johnny Weir: "There's not one skater I know who has not had an injury."

Weir is comfortable with how many quadruple jumps the men attempt per program — two-time world champion Nathan Chen, who last month won his fourth consecutive American title, did six at the Pyeongchang Olympics. That the women, especially nearly every skater the Russians send to senior competitions, are doing several quads per free skate is, Weir says, "mind-boggling stuff."

Maybe so. And when the parameters on the ice are stretched so much, it makes for enhanced strategies, which can wow the crowds in the arenas and those watching at home.

But is it figure skating? AP



Nathan Chen performs his men's free skate program at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships

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OPINION

Macau Matters

Richard Whitfield



SAND STORIES

I love the serendipity of the Internet where it is so easy to find information that brings out something interesting that makes you rethink your understanding of how the world works. For me, www.sandstories.org is just such a place – who would ever think that there are interesting things to say about sand, but there are!

Sand is a major industrial resource and we are quickly running out of easily extractable, useful sand. So much so, that illegal sand mining is a multi-billion dollar business and is 3rd in rankings of the main global crimes, behind piracy/counterfeiting and drug dealing and ahead of human trafficking and illegal logging. There are “sand mafias” in many countries and many, many people have been murdered or displaced because of sand. Who says that truth is not stranger than fiction?

By volume, sand is the major component in concrete, which is the world’s most widely used construction material. It is also used as the foundation base for buildings, roads and other infrastructure. Additionally, sand is the main raw component in glass, another very widely used material for buildings and containers. And, sand is the main raw material in the silicon wafers that are the base of all modern electronics – by volume, every computer chip is mostly sand. Annual demand for sand, the single most extracted material on the planet, is running at an estimated 40 to 50 billion tonnes globally – triple the level of just 20 years ago.

Sand is formed by the weathering of rocks over geological time periods – it takes many thousands of years for wind and rain to erode mountains and for rivers to flush the resulting sand down to the seas. There are many different kinds of rocks, and thus many different kinds of sand. Unfortunately, not all sands are made equal. Saharan (and other) desert sand, for example, is very fine grained and smooth and so is not good in concrete or other construction situations. We are rapidly running out of industrially useful sands that are easily accessible and mine-able. And geology is not going to replenish these deposits any time soon.

Indiscriminant, and often illegal, sand mining is exacerbating many global problems. It is destroying fragile natural land and aquatic environments and killing off flora and fauna and their breeding grounds thus reducing bio-diversity. In many cases this also destroys the livelihoods of farmers and fisher-people and entire local communities. It is also contributing to coastal and river erosion and reduces the resilience of communities in the face of natural disasters. Sand is also a natural water filter and absorbent so that removing sand from the environment reduces local water quality and the storage capacity of aquifers.

Just when you thought you had heard the worst about how humanity is committing global suicide by destroying the ecosystems that sustain its long term survival, sand is another one to add to the list along with land, sea and air pollution, drug resistant bacteria, global warming, bad diet and sedentary living – the list goes on and gets longer every day.

World leaders and others have been putting their collective heads in the sand (pun intended!) for far too long and we need to wake up and actually tackle these problems. To me, the starting point is wealthy communities that have the expertise and resources to start creating a sustainable world and showing everybody else the way forward. This means Macau has a significant role to play – we have the money, we have the expertise and we have the tourists who can spread the word after visiting us. If only we had local leaders with the vision and will to ensure that we make a difference.

China denied involvement in any hacking activities yesterday after the United States indicted four members of the Chinese military for allegedly breaking into the computer networks of the Equifax credit reporting agency and stealing the personal information of tens of millions of people.

The Justice Department accused Beijing on Monday of engineering one of the biggest hacks in history targeting consumer data.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China was

committed to “firmly oppose and combat cyberattacks of any kind,” adding that it is a staunch defender of cybersecurity and its institutions “never engage in cybertheft of trade secrets.”

Geng also turned the accusation back on the U.S., saying past events had shown Washington is “engaging in large-scale, organized and indiscriminate cyberstealing, spying and surveillance activities on foreign governments, enterprises and individuals.”

“China is also a victim of this,” Geng said.



BLOOMBERG

FITCH CONFIDENT MACAU BANKS BETTER PREPARED THAN IN 2003

BANKS in the two special administrative regions are “more insulated” from declines in property prices than they were during the SARs period, according to the latest report by credit rating agency Fitch Ratings released Monday. This is due to macro-prudential measures implemented over the years and bank buffers built up following the global financial crisis in 2008.

According to the Fitch release, the outbreak will add to the economic challenges of both regions following a troubling 2019. This threatens to influence Fitch’s assessment of the operating environments of Macau and Hong Kong, only “if the damage to confidence is comparable with the cities’ experience during the spread of SARS in 2003.”

Hong Kong banks in particular are better “positioned to meet the conflux of operational and financial challenges” posed by the coronavirus than they were during the SARS crisis. Less than 1% of mortgage loans in Hong Kong were in negative equity compared with June 2003, when as much as 30% of these loans were in negative

equity. Furthermore, the loan-to-value ratio for new mortgages was only 53% in December 2019 compared with 65% in June 2003.

Macau is highly vulnerable to external shocks because of its dependence on gambling from a single tourism source market

Meanwhile, authorities in Macau have announced relief measures aimed at reducing the financial burden of mortgage borrowers facing difficulties. They can now apply for a delay in principal payment of up to six months. The measures are akin to those implemented by the equivalent authorities in Hong Kong and the mainland.

Wedged between the world’s two largest economies, Macau is highly vulnerable to external shocks because of its dependence on gambling from a single tourism source market and the fact that its monetary policy largely follows

decisions made in the U.S.

Fitch said that the impact on Macau’s economy is likely to be significant as gaming revenue contributes around 70% of its gross domestic product. However, the impact on banks’ asset quality should be contained providing that the hit to the economy is not prolonged. “In previous downcycles, Macau banks managed to maintain their credit costs at tolerable levels,” noted Fitch. “For example, their asset quality remained benign in 2015 even when there was a significant drop in gaming revenue.”

Monday’s release follows two earlier reports from Fitch Ratings assessing the impact of the coronavirus outbreak in China on the Macau economy.

In the earlier reports, Fitch had warned that the 15-day closure of Macau casinos would “have a meaningful, immediate impact to cash flows for the Macau casino operators,” but that the six concessionaires were well-positioned to absorb the impact of the closure “thanks to their strong balance sheets, liquidity levers, and no near-term maturities.” **DB**

Australia’s highest court ruled yesterday that the government can’t deport Aboriginal people as part of its policy of ridding the country of foreign criminals. The High Court ruled in a 4-3 decision that indigenous Australians cannot be deported even if they do not hold Australian citizenship.



AP PHOTO

Malaysia Britain sees huge trading opportunities in Southeast Asia and seeks to build a “new modern and dynamic” relationship with the region’s 10 nations after leaving the European Union, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab (pictured, right) said yesterday. Raab said Britain sees Malaysia as a key partner in the ASEAN.



AP PHOTO

US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell says the U.S. economy appears durable with steady growth and unemployment near a half-century low but faces risks from the broadening viral outbreak that began in China. Giving the Fed’s semiannual monetary report to Congress, Powell said that the Fed is content with where interest rates are.



AP PHOTO

Europe Ferocious winds, with gusts over 200 kph, lashed Corsica and whipped up a forest fire that flared overnight on the French Mediterranean island yesterday, after a storm with hurricane-force winds and heavy rains battered northern Europe for days, killing at least eight people and causing severe travel disruptions.