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THIRD PHASE OF THE SALE OF FACE MASKS ADMINISTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT RUNNING BEHIND SCHEDULE: PHARMACIES P2,3

SECOND COVID-19 PATIENT DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL P2

OVER 130 DISTRESSED FILIPINOS STILL STRANDED IN MACAU DUE TO TRAVEL BAN IMPOSED IN MANILA P4

Cambodia The operators of a cruise ship that was barred from docking in four countries announced yesterday that it will land and disembark passengers in Cambodia. Thailand had said that it would not allow the MS Westerdam to dock at a Thai port after it had already been turned away by the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan. The ship has been unwelcome because of fears that those aboard could spread Covid-19, the new viral disease that originated in China.
More on p4,10



Japan A Japanese man with a sweet tooth who believes in smiles has become the world's oldest male at 112 years and 344 days old, according to Guinness World Records. Chitetsu Watanabe (pictured), who was born in Niigata in northern Japan in 1907, received a certificate for his accomplishment yesterday at a nursing home in the city. The previous record holder, Masazo Nonaka, another Japanese, died last month. The oldest living person is also Japanese, Kane Tanaka, a 117-year-old woman.



Japan Nissan filed a civil suit seeking 10 billion yen (\$91 million) in damages from the Japanese automaker's former Chairman Carlos Ghosn. Nissan Motor Co. filed the case in Yokohama District Court to recoup some of the monetary damages suffered, it said, "as a result of years of misconduct and fraudulent activity" by Ghosn. The claim was calculated by adding the costs from what Nissan called Ghosn's "corrupt practices."

More on backpage

CHINA RULERS FACE BIGGEST CRISIS SINCE SARS

P8,9



XINHUA

SECOND PATIENT DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL

RENATO MARQUES

WITHOUT the pomp and circumstance of the first recovery, Macau health authorities informed the public yesterday of the release of the second patient to recover from novel coronavirus (Covid-19). The information was disclosed by Doctor Chang Tam Fei during yesterday's press conference to provide updates on the epidemic.

"The patient that was released from the hospital is the fifth case [diagnosed in Macau]. She was released today [yesterday] from the hospital. She is a woman aged 21 from Wuhan and after a 16-day treatment [period]

presented a very stable condition and the lungs are working well. She also tested negative in the last two acid nucleic tests at the nasopharynxes. This means she meets the requirements [to be discharged]," Chang said.

Chang adding that the patient, contrary to what happened in the first case, did not request to be exempted from payment for the treatments, and was asked to pay a total of MOP25,000.

The same statement clarified that the woman, who had already left Macau on Wednesday afternoon, could not pay for the expenses immediately but that she promised to do so, having signed a document from the

hospital in which she acknowledged she would settle the bill in the upcoming 30 days.

Regarding the request for exemption of payment of the medical expenses of the first patient released, Chang said, "the request is still under consideration," as it has not yet been confirmed that the patient would not have to pay for her treatment, or at least cover part of the cost.

The Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre (CHCSJ) Emergency Division Acting Chief also informed that in the last 24 hours a total of 1,024 screening tests were performed, and that another 21 people are waiting for the screening test. From

those, 350 tests were performed on people considered to be of high risk such as shuttle bus drivers and other bus drivers, all of them with negative results, Chang added, noting also that another 103 samples collected from drivers on Tuesday were also negative for the virus.

Chang took the opportunity to thank the public for the high level of response registered by the Health Bureau (SSM) for volunteers to the Anti-Epidemic Assistance and Support Team. As of February 11, 900 applications had been received to be part of the team.

Of the applicants, Chang noted that 696 are healthcare professionals and 12 are university

students that are studying in the health field. Some 285 other candidates, although not qualified in the health field, expressed willingness to help with any needed tasks. The SSM will now analyze the candidates' professional experience to make a selection.

The Coordinator of the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Leong Iek Hou, also noted the support of the insurance company China Life, which is providing special insurance for all healthcare professionals and volunteers to ensure that these people are protected in case of an accident or sickness resulting from their activities.



DANIEL BEITLER

HOTELS OCCUPANCY RATE DROPS TO 16%

RENATO MARQUES

THE occupancy rate of local hotels during the week of February 1 to 7 was only 16%, a representative of the Macao Government Tourism Office said yesterday at the daily press conference of the New Coronavirus Contingency Coordination Center.

Inês Chan noted also that the number of hotels closing temporarily has grown to a total of 26, with three new hotels under a three-star rating joining the 15 others already recorded, raising the total to 18.

As for the properties of three stars or higher, the number of hotels closed remains at eight, she advised.

The same official noted that, regarding the number of people in isolation at the Hotel Pousada Marina Infante in Taipa, the number of people lodging in the venue is now eight, with the release yesterday of one of the people who concluded the period of isolation without presenting any symptoms or signs of infection.

Chan also said that the government is in regular contact with

the Macau residents in Hubei province as well as in other parts of the world to ensure that all are well and do not need any special or urgent assistance.

A Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson also added that the number of tourists entering and exiting Macau in the past days remains low, with the entries totaling 2,600 people on February 11, while the exits were slightly higher at 2,700.

The same person also noted that the number border crossing was in uninterrupted decline between February 1 and 9, ending only on February 10 with a slight increase, according to the PSP.

Over 100,000 queued for masks yesterday

RENATO MARQUES

SOME 100,000 people acquired face masks on the first day of the government's third round of distribution, the Coordinator of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) informed at yesterday's press conference.

According to Leong Iek Hou, a total of 1.06 million masks were distributed yesterday to all distribution points, a situation that led to long lines in several pharmacies and healthcare centers all over the city.

This fact led Leong to appeal to all residents to avoid rushing to the points of sale to avoid a high concentration of people, a situation that is contrary to the government's efforts to contain the epidemic and control possible outbreaks of the virus.

The same warning was shared by a representative of the Public Security Police Force (PSP), who said the officers on patrol have noticed over the last few days, and particularly yesterday, an increase in the number of people circulating in the streets and gathering in some areas of the city. The PSP and the CDC reaffirmed the government's wish



ANTHONY LAM

that people avoid, as much as possible, going out of their homes and avoid unnecessary gatherings in squares, leisure areas and public places in general, requesting the collaboration of all citizens in the fight against the virus.

The PSP spokesperson added that in several cases reported by the officers on patrol, "there were many people gathered outside and

some [were] not even wearing any protection mask. We urge people to respect the rules."

In the meantime, videos shared on the social media platforms yesterday showed people wearing police vests approaching those socializing outside, namely elderly residents who were gathered at places such as Praça de Luís de Camões playing "Chinese Chess" games.

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Mask provision delayed at some pharmacies

THE third phase of the sale of surgical face masks administered by the government was running behind schedule yesterday, reported some pharmacies.

Several pharmacies along and around the Avenida de Horta e Costa have posted notices, asking residents to make their purchases this morning, as opposed to yesterday. The reason given was that they need time to package the masks into packs of 10 each. At least two pharmacies have

posted the notice.

A pharmacy near the Red Market had all its prepared face masks sold out within hours. According to a pharmacy worker, there was only a small number of cartons of stock allotted to their shop, which was not sufficient to meet yesterday's demand.

A long queue was seen at a pharmacy on Rua do Barca. The queue started from inside the small corner shop, up the length of one side of the block.

A woman, surnamed Lam,

managed to purchase masks. She said she had queued up for about 45 minutes, but she did not think it was a long wait. She decided to line up because she incidentally needed to buy other items from the pharmacy.

At the start of the fight against the epidemic, the government acted quickly by announcing that it would collaborate with 56 local pharmacies, which was later expanded to 77 pharmacies and offices of local associations, to provide residents with masks at cost price.

Gov't efforts to ensure mask supply prove popular

THE efforts to ensure an uninterrupted supply of surgical masks to the public has proven the most popular government measure among a raft of other policies introduced to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

That is according to a survey of Macau residents conducted by a local association between January 30 and February 1. The survey analyzed nearly 200 responses to questionnaires from respondents in 16 industries, including submissions from 11 companies.

The Doctoral Think Tank Committee of the Macao Patriotic Education Youth Association

found that of the top five anti-epidemic measures with which respondents were most satisfied are the Macao citizens surgical mask supply policy (88%) and the Hubei traveler immigration measures (82%).

Some 81% of the respondents are also satisfied with the Chinese Lunar New Year event cancellation measure, while 78% were satisfied with the isolation measures for Hubei travelers staying in Macau.

About three-quarters of the respondents were also pleased with the deferral of class resumption for all schools and subsidized nurseries.

The measures taken by the government contrast with the situation in Hong Kong. The neighboring SAR has struggled with a shortage of face masks and the government there has faced criticism for leaving the task of their supply to private enterprises.

Meanwhile, measures that industries most want the government to take, in sequence, are reductions in or exemptions from corporate taxes or increasing occupational tax deduction rates, followed by providing more loans, bailouts, and other financial measures, as well as reducing utility bills and

providing more social security measures.

The survey shows that in the transportation, warehousing, and communications industries, 42% of the respondents said they were temporarily suspended or unable to operate. Fifty percent felt pressures to their cash flow, loan repayments, and order deliveries.

Meanwhile, in the catering industry, more than half of the respondents expressed they were experiencing difficulties paying employees' salaries and repaying loans, while nearly 50% of the respondents expressed that they had experienced pressure repaying loans and obtaining new orders.

Earlier this week, another survey showed that nine out of 10 members of the public are satisfied

The government's Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center revealed at yesterday's daily press briefing that, as of 5 p.m. yesterday, a total of 19,000 children's masks had been sold at the Health Bureau's health centers.

Children's masks sold during this phase are suited to children aged between three and eight. The government has pinpointed an age cut-off date. Children born after February 21, 2017 will not be eligible for the purchase of children's masks.

Residents who are looking to purchase children's masks are required to present the child's Macao SAR identification card at their respective health centers, according to the notice posted by several pharmacies.

Separate to the purchase of adult masks, with the presentation of each child's ID, five children's masks and five adult masks may be purchased. Each eligible adult, meanwhile, is entitled to purchase a pack of 10 masks every 10 days.

The government explained that the difference in quantity is because without the company of an adult, a child would have to stay home under the legal framework.

Furthermore, adults are advised to keep their children home as part of the effort to counter the epidemic. The Health Bureau also believes that children do not need to go out as often as adults, who may still need to work during this period of outbreak prevention.

The government has urged the public not to rush to buy masks as there is plenty of stock available in the near term and sudden bouts of large demand will cause temporary shortages. **AL**

JOINT UNIVERSITY EXAM POSTPONED UNTIL APRIL

The Higher Education Bureau (DSES) has decided to postpone the Joint Entrance Exam of Four Universities in Macau in view of the need to control the coronavirus epidemic. The bureau now plans to hold the exam between April 16 and 19. The four universities are the University of Macau, the Macao Polytechnic Institute, the Institute for Tourism Studies, and the Macau University of Science and Technology. According to the current plan, the Portuguese, Chinese, English and Mathematics exams will take place, respectively, on April 16, 17, 18 and 19. The four schools will announce the exam and enrollment results by the end of May. Students who intend to take part in the exam should register at the concerned school before 10 p.m. on February 14.

2020 MIECF CANCELED AMID EPIDEMIC OUTBREAK

The Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has decided to cancel the Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum & Exhibition 2020 (MIECF). Originally, the 2020 MIECF was set to take place from March 26 to 28. IPIM decided to cancel the event, instead of postponing it, because postponing would lead to an overlap of MIECF with other environmental exhibitions. Besides, IPIM was concerned that postponing the 2020 MIECF to later this year would attract fewer exhibitors, as it would be closer to next year's event. As of noon yesterday, IPIM was waiting for the government's confirmation in order to formally announce the cancellation. According to the president of IPIM, Irene Lau, a total of 183 exhibitions scheduled for February or March have been either canceled or postponed due to the coronavirus epidemic.

MUST ALUMNI SUPPORT HUBEI WITH MASK DONATIONS

Alumni of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) have been doing their part to support Hubei province in fighting against the coronavirus epidemic. From January 23, MUST alumni from Hangzhou have donated 20 boxes of N95 facemasks to Hubei. Moreover, a workgroup named "Wuhan Jiayou - MUST" has been formed and is calling for donations from all previous MUST graduates. The school's alumni have been contacting mask producers in Japan, Switzerland, the U.K. and other countries to purchase masks. On February 8, a batch of 3,000 medical gloves were delivered to Hubei. On February 10, another 2,000 medical gloves were sent to Hubei. In mid-February, another 20,000 facemasks will be transported to the province.

FOG LEADS TO MACAU-SHENZHEN FERRY SUSPENSION

Foggy weather yesterday led to the suspension of some ferry services between Macau and Shenzhen, according to the Marine and Water Bureau. Yesterday's weather report showed that an easterly airstream affected the weather of Macau, which caused rain in the early hours of the day. The marine authority said that, due to substantial fog, ferries heading to Shekou, Shenzhen, and to Fuyong, Shenzhen departing from the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal were suspended. Amid restricted visibility, ferries from the Taipa Ferry Terminal to the abovementioned two ferry terminals in Shenzhen operated limited services. The city's weather authority has also forecast that the Pearl River Delta area will be affected by disturbances in the upper air today and tomorrow.

HOUSING BUREAU CALLS FOR TENDERS FOR RESIDENTIAL RENOVATION PROJECT

The Housing Bureau (IH) has called for public tenders for the renovation of a residential project comprising 500 public housing units. According to the bureau's official tender announcement, the tenderer will need to replace doors, windows, waterpipes and other amenities on this batch of public housing units. The renovations will commence from the contract signing day until December 13. The IH will divide these units into different groups and the contractor may renovate a maximum of two groups every week, with a maximum renovation cost of 500,000 patacas. Each group of renovations should take fewer than 35 working days.

IAM REMOVES 'DOMESTIC HELPER' CONTENT SUGGESTION FROM INFOGRAPHIC

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has updated a controversial infographic with new information. Published earlier in the week, the infographic prompted complaints from the public after it appeared to cast non-Chinese domestic workers in a bad light. It had urged employers of domestic helpers to provide lessons on hygiene to their employees. The infographic contained three pictures and the title "Teach domestic helpers not to go through trash." It also showed a person with a darker complexion, while its replacement had a noticeably lighter one. The infographic was removed from the Government Information Bureau later the same day. Its replacement no longer accuses any specific group of people of "going through the trash." Instead, it makes a suggestion to the general public not to dig through trash.

LYNZY VALLES



OVER 130 FILIPINOS STILL STRANDED IN TRAVEL BAN

LYNZY VALLES

WE'RE really helpless at this moment as there is no other way for me, my wife and my seven-month old son to go back to the Philippines," said Richard Tadina, just one among 134 distressed Filipinos that have been requesting the Philippine Consulate's help so they can return home.

With only a few days or weeks remaining on their work permit or travel visas, many are running out of options. Traveling to another country prior to the Philippines is one option, but for many, the cost is prohibitive.

But so is staying in the Macau SAR longer than originally planned, giving rise to the idea of travelling to Thailand or Vietnam before landing in the Philippines.

Tadina, who is currently employed in a manufacturing company in Macau, is representing his wife and his seven-month old who were supposed to go back to

the Philippines on February 8.

Initially, their flight was bound for Clark but diverted to Manila before the carrier cancelled all its flights to China and its SARs.

"I know some who went back home via Taiwan but they had a stopover of 19 hours because the region was also reducing their flights. I cannot do that in our case because we have a baby. A layover of 19 hours is not an option for us," Tadina told the Times.

"Since I am employed, if we choose that route, I still cannot go back directly to Macau due to the absence of a direct flight between the two cities," he added.

Fortunately, for Tadina's family, his wife and his child still have some 18 days of their visa left, as they undertook their 'U-turn' trip to Zhuhai recently and were given another 20 days.

Philippine passport holders who plan to have their visas extended beyond the 30-day visa granted upon arrival are free to cross to Zhuhai and return on the same day for another 20 days.

Among the 134 distressed Filipinos are pregnant women, senior citizens and people with infants.

Last week, some of them turned to social media to plea for help, as they are not only running out of money but out of time.

"I hope you can help us because it's really hard here. We don't have work here and we can't work here," one said in video clip that was among the several videos that were posted.

Khimie Tercias, with a baby, is also six months pregnant. In need of a check-up, she is one of

those calling on the government to help them be repatriated.

"I am unable to go for a check-up because of the [...] cases of those infected with the novel coronavirus. I also worry for children as they are prone to viruses. What we want is to just go home," she said.

The group of 134 Filipinos have already handed a petition to the government requesting a chartered flight back to Manila.

Many have slammed the consulate for its slow move in assisting the community. However, Consul General Lilybeth Deapera implied that the decision to request a chartered flight from Manila is not under their control.

Deapera yesterday briefly told the Times, "there are still no replies from Manila" regarding a solution.

However, the indefinite answer from the consulate has not appeased the community.

Tadina considers himself lucky because he can continually provide for his family's needs. But that is not the case for many others.

"Fortunately, I'm working and I can provide for them. But what about those tourists? I could really see and feel their dilemma when we handed the petition letter [to the consulate] on Tuesday," he said.

There are still several Filipinos who are stranded in the SAR who have not come forward to the consulate. Some of them are just waiting for the travel ban to be lifted, hoping this occurs before their visa ends.

Yet since three of the airlines that fly to and from Macau and the Philippines have extended their travel ban, their chances are becoming slimmer by the day.

COMMUNITY COLLECTS MASKS FOR TOURISTS

TO ease some of the burden of the group, the Filipino Community Alliance in Macau have called for mask donations for these remaining tourists, as this particular group is not included in the government's mask distribution measure. Led by the president, Hazel

Mamanghon, the association has packed a total of 700 masks, which will benefit 140 Filipino tourists in the city. Each tourist will be able to receive five masks per pack. According to organizers, this is just one way the community can show solidarity.

Japan confirms 39 new virus cases on cruise ship

THIRTY-NINE new cases of the coronavirus have been confirmed aboard a cruise ship quarantined at a Japanese port, on which five Macau residents are being held. The update brings the total cases on the Yokohama-harbored Diamond Princess to 174.

In response to the new

cases, Macau authorities said during yesterday's daily press conference that the five Macau residents aboard the cruise ship are "in a stable condition."

According to the latest information, there is no record of the five Macau residents having contracted the virus. Macau's Tourism Crisis Manage-

ment Office informed the Times that the residents are being provided with information and assistance as necessary.

The U.S.-operated Diamond Princess had completed a 14-day tour, during which it stopped at Hong Kong and several other Asian ports before returning to Japan. An 80-year-old man who di-

sembarked in Hong Kong tested positive for the virus, prompting Hong Kong to notify the ship and Japanese authorities, who then ordered the quarantine and testing.

Concerns over the virus have led to the re-routing and cancellation of other cruises. The Westerdam cruise ship carrying 2,257 passen-

gers and crew is now in the Gulf of Thailand with nowhere to dock after being refused entry in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand. There are no confirmed cases of the virus on board, but it stopped in Hong Kong less than two weeks ago, which is within the incubation period of the virus. **DB/AP**

LAWYERS ASSOCIATION CONCERNED WITH COMPUTER CRIME AMENDMENT

INSTANCES when the Judiciary Police (PJ) is not required to obtain judicial approval before accessing personal computer systems should be well-defined in the law, according to the Macau Lawyers Association.

The local association noted the recommendation in a report submitted to the Legislative Assembly's First Standing Committee, which is currently studying proposed amendments to the Counter Computer Crime Law.

The proposed amendments aim to renew the law with four main additions. The main concern of the Macau Lawyers Association is in related to third addition, which will allow authorities in Macau to make copies of computer data stored outside of the Special Administrative Region for use as evidence in criminal procedures.



GLENN CARSTENS

Under normal circumstances, the PJ will be required to obtain judicial approval before it can start the process of accessing the data. In special situations, the requirement can be waived, empowering the PJ to access such data without judicial consent, although the judiciary must be notified within 72 hours of access.

The Lawyers Association considers it crucial that such scenarios are clearly stipulated, in order to safeguard the ri-

ghts of local residents. It recommends utilizing the current stipulation in the Penal Procedures Code. The stipulation orders the police to notify an investigating judge immediately once access to a personal computer is deemed crucial to an investigation.

For the Macau Lawyers Association, another underlying problem of the proposed amendment is that the owner has no means to object to the decision to access such data.

In addition to this particular amendment, there are three other changes to the Counter Computer Crime Law currently being studied by the legislative committee.

The first amendment seeks to make transmitting devices mimicking telecom operator base stations an illegal practice. This is intended to combat mass messages sent out to cell phones advertising fake casinos near the Border Gate.

The second amendment will provide added protections to computer systems used by key infrastructure operators, as well as the Central Government's representative offices in Macau.

The fourth amendment will make violation of occupational confidentiality an independent crime, with aggravated punishment. **AL**

FUGITIVE BILLIONAIRE LAU SELLS HOCKNEY WORK FOR \$30 MILLION

A painting of a swimming pool by David Hockney, owned by fugitive Hong Kong billionaire Joseph Lau, fetched 23.1 million pounds (\$30 million) at Sotheby's in London on Tuesday.

Painted in 1966, "The Splash" was estimated at 20 million pounds and offered anonymously. Lau bought the work at Sotheby's in 2006 for 2.9 million pounds, a person familiar with the transaction has said.

The canvas was a highlight of the first post-Brexit auction season in the U.K. capital. It drew a single bid from Jackie Wachter, Sotheby's director of contemporary private sales in Los Angeles, bidding on behalf of a client who had provided a third-party guarantee to the auction house.

Lau, 68, is the controlling shareholder of Chinese Estates Holdings, a Hong Kong property developer that builds offices,

shopping malls and housing projects. He has an \$8 billion fortune, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

In 2014, Lau was convicted of bribery and money-laundering in Macau in a case connected to the city's former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man Long. Lau has avoided a five-year jail term by not traveling to the Macau Special Administrative Region.

Last year, Lau filed - and later retracted - a lawsuit challenging the government's proposal for extraditions to China, Macau and Taiwan. The proposal ignited months of protests and crippled Hong Kong's economy.

Lau is known for his investments in art, wine and jewelry. He spent \$17.4 million on Andy Warhol's "Mao" in 2006 and \$39.2 million on Paul Gauguin's "Te Poipoi" in 2007. He bought five diamonds for \$128 million from 2009 through 2015. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

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AP PHOTO



HONG KONG
VIRUS PUTS PROTESTS ON ICE. WILL THEY RETURN?

In this January 1, 2020 file photo, a protester shows a "five demands" gesture as Hong Kong people participate in an annual pro-democracy march

EILEEN NG

THE crowd lining up recently on a cold, dark Hong Kong street wasn't part of the anti-government protest movement that rocked the semi-autonomous Chinese territory for months.

Their demand: surgical masks, now in short supply as fears grow over a new virus that has claimed more than 1,000 lives across the border in mainland China and one in Hong Kong.

The city's often-tumultuous street protests had already slowed over the past two months. Now they have ground to an almost complete halt as attention focuses on how to avoid a recurrence of the SARS pandemic, which killed about 300 people in Hong Kong in 2002-03.

But with most of the protest demands unmet, it's too early to declare the movement dead.

RALLIES SHRINK

The frequency and ferocity of street protests eased after a land-

slide victory by the pro-democracy bloc in November's district council elections. The vote was a sharp rebuke of Chief Executive Carrie Lam's rule and ushered in a period of relative calm.

Hundreds of thousands of people packed streets on Dec. 8 for a peaceful march as they sought to press the government on demands for full democracy and an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality in suppressing earlier protests.

The protesters returned on Jan. 1 as they sought to maintain their momentum into 2020. The march degenerated into familiar violence, with police firing tear gas and a water cannon and black-clad protesters throwing gasoline bombs. More than 400 people were detained.

Occasional, smaller demonstrations have taken place since then, including lunch-time rallies by slogan-chanting office workers and vigils for a student who died during a protest.

FRUSTRATIONS LINGER

Anger still simmers against the government, and the wrath has been channeled against what is perceived as government mishandling of the virus outbreak.

Simmering anger against the government has been channeled against Carrie Lam's handling of the virus outbreak

Residents in several areas have staged angry protests against government plans to quarantine possibly infected people nearby. Thousands of hospital staff who are part of a newly formed medical union went on strike last week with calls for five demands, including full closure of the border with the mainland, and better protection for health care workers against the virus. A flight atten-

dants' union at Cathay Dragon, a sister company of Hong Kong's main carrier, Cathay Pacific, has also threatened to strike unless all flights to mainland China are halted.

Dixon Sing Ming, a political science professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said the protest movement has morphed into an engine for broader activism through new labor unions and the use of social media to boycott pro-government businesses. Reports say Labor Department records show 27 unions were formed in the month up to Feb. 6, compared with 23 in all of 2019.

After calls rose to close the border, the government suspended rail links and halved flights and later sealed all border checkpoints except for three. It then imposed a 14-day home quarantine for all arrivals from mainland China. Many in Hong Kong feel the measures came too late and weren't strong enough.

TRIGGER POINTS

Protest organizer Ventus Lau said anger has only grown over Lam's handling of the crisis, especially her refusal to block all mainland visitors. Many believe Lam was responding to pressure from the central Chinese government, and even some government supporters have joined the chorus of criticism.

The current crisis will press home the protest movement's goal of political reforms and will "add fuel to the whole movement in the long term," Lau said.

On the horizon lie potential trigger points that could stir people to return to the streets. The release of a report by a watchdog probe on police behavior during the protests due in January, but since delayed, could spark anger among those who say the body has limited powers.

A poster circulating on private Telegram internet messaging groups describes the current sentiment: "Fight the virus, but don't forget our cause." **BLOOMBERG**

HK coronavirus-hit property market grinds to a halt

SHAWNA KWAN

HONG Kong's usually booming property market has virtually ground to a halt as the fear of coronavirus impacts life in the city.

Just 13 homes were sold in the first three weekends after Chinese New Year at

the city's 10 largest housing estates, according to Centaline Property Agency Ltd. data.

"Buyers are adopting a wait-and-see attitude," said Sammy Po, chief executive officer of Midland Realty International Ltd.'s residential department. "They will act only if they find bargains."

However, sellers aren't willing to budge much, betting the outbreak of the deadly virus will be short-lived and demand in the world's least-affordable housing market will soon rebound. Prices in the secondary market rose 0.8% between Jan. 19 to Feb. 2, according to Centaline.

"Owners believe the disease can be contained, therefore their outlook on the property market isn't very bleak," said Benny Wan, a branch manager at Centaline. "This is unlike SARS, when people had to slash prices drastically because they had never witnessed anything like that. The

market condition isn't that severe now."

The number of diagnosed coronavirus cases in Hong Kong climbed to 49 as of late Tuesday, RTHK reported. Fear of catching the disease has also deterred people from visiting showrooms, while would-be sellers are reluctant to open

their homes for inspection.

Meanwhile, Midland Realty, one of the largest property agencies in Hong Kong, started to offer front-line staff unpaid leave for "health concerns" on Tuesday. Po expects property prices to drop by 5% to 10% this year as a result of the outbreak. **BLOOMBERG**

FARIS MOKHTAR

CO-LIVING concepts are largely similar across Asia. Residents pay for a private room with a bed, and common areas like living, dining, kitchen and often bathroom, are shared.

Singapore's Figment Pte is setting out to change that, offering residents their own piece of the city-state's history and local flavor.

Its residences are heritage shophouses — some built in the 1930s — with differing interior concepts. At one in Little India, a 10-minute drive from the Orchard Road shopping district, the space has a mix of colonial and oriental vibes.

At its entrance, columns have been hand painted with animal-patterned chinoiserie by an artist flown in from China's Fujian province; Islamic-influenced eaves adorn the roof.

Stepping into the house, the walls and staircases are chalk white. The floors and kitchen splash-backs are fitted with charcoal tiles. In the living room, a rattan sofa is surrounded by large, leafy plants, evoking the feel of being in one of Singapore's 'black and white' colonial bungalows. Each bedroom has a private ensuite bathroom and kitchenette.

While other co-living operators typically organize activities for tenants to bond, like casual weekend barbecues, Figment offers bi-monthly private dinners, inviting well-known Singapore chefs who put a posh spin on local street fare.

With those perks and Instagram-worthy interiors come steep prices. A room in one of Figment's shophouses starts at around SGD2,000 (\$1,440) a month and can stretch to over SGD4,000. Even in Singapore, one of the world's most expensive property markets, you could easily rent a two- or three-bedroom apartment for that.

Figment's founder and 32-year-old chief executive officer, Fang Wei Low, makes no apologies, saying it's a key strategy to keep ahead of competitors in what's becoming crow-

Singapore luxury co-living comes with steep prices and no apologies



BLOOMBERG

ded market.

"What we offer is a response to market demand. We offer boutique homes and there's demand for that," Low said. "If other people want cheaper and more minimal options, there are many apartments to choose from. They're not our customers."

Low started Figment in May last year. The company now has 14 shophouses, each with five suites.

Inspiration for Figment came after Low joined the family property business, which centered around buying shophouses and leasing them out to expatriates. A graduate of New York University and Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Low quit the corporate world in 2015 after a two-year stint as a derivatives analyst at Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

The co-living sector in Singapore is still in its nascent stages. Operators in the city-state number less than 10 but competition is fierce.

There's rising demand among expats and local millennials seeking alternative living options

There's rising demand among expats and local millennials seeking alternative living options; many are enticed by co-living's minimum lease duration of three months versus one year in the conventional rental market. The ability to network over extracurricular activities such as private parties and sporting events is also appealing.

Already, consolidation is gathering pace.

In January, Hong Kong-based Dash Living, whose backers include Mindworks Ventures and Clearmind Capital, acquired Singapore's EasyCity. Hmlet, which raised \$40 million in a Series B round led by Burda Principal Investments in July, last week signed a new collection of properties in Singapore's Tiong Bahru, bringing its portfolio of rooms in the city-state to more than 1,000.

As the market expands, operators need to offer unique and curated experiences, according to Kishan Pillay, a partner at Singapore-based TSMP Law Corp. "First and foremost, it shouldn't be a race to the pricing bottom," he said.

It also probably won't be long before property developers and other real estate firms start buying or partnering with proven co-living operators to get into the

sector, Pillay said.

Cognizant of that, Fang has other strategies to elevate Figment. Its shophouses offer as much local flavor as possible - interiors, furniture and homewares are all locally designed and produced.

Ceramic mugs, for instance, are made with clay pigments taken from the soil of the shophouses when they were under construction. Wood for some of the homewares comes from local trees. The Singapore-handcrafted laundry bags are fashioned from olive-green canvas, reminiscent of those used by the city-state's military.

Each shophouse also has a distinctive interior. One currently under construction will be decked out in all white, down to five of the six koi in the indoor pond at the base of the staircase. Only one fish will be orange, to accentuate the whiteness of the house.

Low also plans to expand Figment to Hong Kong and Sydney, employing the same "hyper local" concept in those two markets.

"We don't want to grow for the sake of growing or you'll end up like WeWork," he said. "We want to stay true to our concept and will be picky when it comes to investors also."

Shruti Swarup, a 34-year-old entrepreneur who's been living in one of Figment's shophouses since August, said the space's sense of history and depth of design were main reasons why she chose to rent a suite instead of going with other co-living options.

"I love the fact that these shophouses have both character and convenience," she said. "They have all the facilities while maintaining an old-world charm." **BLOOMBERG**

CORPORATE BITS

Macao Water will waive late charges during coronavirus period

Macao Water, the city's sole water supplier, has announced that it will not suspend water supply to users who cannot settle their water bills in a timely manner, while waiving all late charges should a bill be settled after the payment deadline.

The decision was made in response to the interruptions of postal services made necessary by the development of the

Covid-19 outbreak in Macau and around the world. Such an interruption may delay the receipt of water service bills to a date after the payment deadline.

To cope with the current conditions, Macao Water has made special arrangements. Unpaid amounts from the current bill will be carried across to the next bill.

In the meantime, users may opt to access their

electronic water service bills by way of the WeChat public account or the Macao Water website. E-payment options, including credit card and online banking, are also available on the website.

Macao Water will maintain vigilance regarding the development of the epidemic and will update its clients using its various e-communication channels.

BNU offers credit packages to support local businesses

Alongside the measures taken by the government, Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) has launched a special credit facility package in order to support the continuity of local businesses during this difficult period.

Aiming to provide diversified solutions that cover all lines of business, Macau companies are being invited to approach BNU with their special needs so that a solution may be catered for

each case.

BNU said that the cases will be treated with priority processing and rapid approval, from business operational support, rental and payroll support or procurement of self-use hygiene products and equipment.

Loans of up to 1 million patacas may be offered for the procurement of business inventories or for certain self-use hygiene and

medical products. Loans of up to 1.2 million patacas may be offered for business payroll and rental payments, with a grace period on the repayment of the principal for up to six months.

BNU has also asked that its customers make use of existing digital channels available for most day-to-day banking services, so as to limit the potential of a further coronavirus outbreak.

COVID-19

VIRUS STORYTELLERS CHALLENGE
BEIJING'S OFFICIAL NARRATIVE

AP PHOTO

JOHN LEICESTER
& DAKE KANG, BEIJING

AFTER nearly a week of roaming China's epidemic-struck city, filming the dead and the sickened in overwhelmed hospitals, the strain of being hounded by both the new virus and the country's dissent-quelling police started to tell.

Chen Qiushi looked haggard and disheveled in his online posts, an almost unrecognizable shadow of the energetic young man who had rolled into Wuhan on a self-assigned mission to tell its inhabitants' stories, just as authorities locked the city down almost three weeks ago.

Until he disappeared last week, the 34-year-old lawyer-turned-video blogger was one of the most visible pioneers in a small but dogged movement that is defying the ruling Communist Party's tightly policed monopoly on information.

Armed with smart phones and social media accounts, these citizen-journalists are telling their stories and those of others from Wuhan and other locked-down virus zones in Hubei province. The scale of this non-sanctioned storytelling is unprecedented in any previous major outbreak or disaster in China. It presents a challenge to the Communist Party, which wants to control the narrative of China, as it always has since taking power in 1949.

"It's very different from anything we have witnessed," said Maria Repnikova, a communications professor at Georgia State

University who researches Chinese media.

Never have so many Chinese, including victims and health care workers, used their phones to televise their experiences of a disaster, she said. That's partly because the more than 50 million people locked down in cities under quarantine are "really anxious and bored and their lives have pretty much stopped."

Official state media extol the Communist Party's massive efforts to build new hospitals in a flash, send in thousands of medical workers and ramp up production of face masks without detailing the underlying conditions that are driving these efforts.

Chen did just that in more than 100 posts from Wuhan over two weeks. He showed the sick crammed into hospital corridors and the struggles of residents to get treatment.

"Why am I here? I have stated that it's my duty to be a citizen-journalist," he said, filming himself with a selfie stick outside a train station. "What sort of a journalist are you if you don't dare rush to the front line in a disaster?"

A video posted Jan. 25 showed what Chen said was a body left under a blanket outside an emergency ward. Inside another hospital, he filmed a dead man propped up on a wheelchair, head hanging down and face deathly pale.

"What's wrong with him?" he asked a woman holding the man

up with an arm across the chest.

"He has already passed," she said.

Chen's posts and vlogs, or video blogs, garnered millions of views — and police attention.

In an anguished video post near the end of his first week in Wuhan, he said police had called him, wanting to know where he was, and questioned his parents.

The scale of this non-sanctioned storytelling is unprecedented in any previous major outbreak or disaster in China

"I am scared," he said. "I have the virus in front of me, and on my back, I have the legal and administrative power of China."

His voice trembling with emotion and tears welling in his eyes, he vowed to continue "as long as I am alive in this city."

"Even death doesn't scare me!" he said. "So you think I'm scared of the Communist Party?"

Last week, Chen's posts dried up. His mother broke the silence with a video post in the small hours of Friday. She said Chen was unreachable and appealed for help in finding him.

Later that evening, his friend and well-known mixed martial artist Xu Xiaodong said in a live broadcast on YouTube that Chen

had been forcibly quarantined for 14 days, considered the maximum incubation period for the virus. He said Chen had been healthy and showed no signs of infection.

On Sunday, Xu tweeted that despite pleading with authorities for a call with Chen, he and others haven't been able to get in touch.

Police also came knocking last week for Fang Bin, who has been posting videos from Wuhan hospitals, including footage of body bags piled in a minibus, waiting to be carted to a crematorium.

Fang, a seller of traditional Chinese clothing, filmed a testy exchange through the metal grill of his door with a group of four or five officers. The footage posted on YouTube offered a glimpse into how the security apparatus is working overtime to keep a lid on public anger about the spread of the virus.

"Why are there so many of you?" Fang asked. "If I open the door, you'll take me away!"

Chen re-posted that video on his Twitter feed — one of his last tweets before his disappearance.

The death of a Wuhan doctor last week focused attention on earlier attempts to suppress speech, and its consequences. Police had accused Dr. Li Wenliang of spreading rumors after he raised alarm in December about the outbreak. He succumbed to the virus, bringing an outpouring of grief, along with anger at authorities for how he had been treated.

Wuhan police referred a request for comment to Hubei provincial authorities. Repeated calls to the Hubei foreign affairs office rang unanswered, playing instead a pre-recorded message: "Don't believe rumors, don't spread rumors."

For Gao Fei, a migrant worker detained after criticizing Chinese President Xi Jinping over the virus outbreak, the doctor's death and Chen's disappearance are "a wake-up call for the Chinese people."

"The number one reason our government couldn't control this is because they always conceal the truth and block information from citizens," he said from his hometown in Hubei.

Gao, a welder who had rushed home from southern China right before the lockdown, went to hospitals and drugstores and shared what he saw online. After tweeting that Xi's measures were against humanity, he was detained with drug users and a "rumormonger" who pointed out overcrowded hospitals.

He admires Chen's bravery and push for social progress. "He's the spine, the backbone of China," Gao said.

Since graduating from law school in 2007, Chen has worked as a waiter, hotel cleaner, voice actor, police reporter, and eventually, a TV host, launching a budding media career. He passed the bar in 2014 and began practicing in Beijing.

In 2018, Chen started a video blog on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, and quickly amassed over a million fans for his legal commentary.

He ran into trouble last year after posting videos of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. Traveling to the semi-autonomous Chinese city, he attended both a patriotic pro-Beijing rally and a protest march, showing both sides to give his mainland audience a balanced perspective. In response, authorities shut down his Chinese social media accounts and called him back to the mainland.

From Wuhan, Chen has broadcast on YouTube and Twitter, which are blocked in China. Only people who use a virtual private network, or VPN, can see the videos. His YouTube page sports the motto: "Don't sing the praises of the wealthy and powerful, speak only for the common people."

Some of his posts were tinged with dark humor. Chen posed in a plastic bottle with its bottom cut off over his head, looking like a spaceman. He showed two men, one wearing a sanitary towel, the other incontinence pants, in lieu of sold-out face masks.

Others posts shouted defiance. "Letting people speak cannot cause deaths," he tweeted on Jan. 28. "Not letting people speak can cause many deaths." AP



Communist Party faces its biggest crisis since SARS

JOE McDONALD

CHINA'S ruling Communist Party needs to make a politically fraught decision: Admit a viral outbreak isn't under control and cancel this year's highest-profile official event. Or bring 3,000 legislators to Beijing next month and risk fueling public anger at the government's handling of the disease.

The party was already facing criticism of its heavy-handed censorship, on display during the outbreak, and other social controls under President Xi Jinping, who took power in 2012 and has accrued more political power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong.

Now, the new disease named Covid-19 has become the party's biggest crisis since China's last outbreak of a mystery disease in 2002-2003. SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, killed nearly 800 people and led to accusations Beijing had endangered the public by hiding the disease to avoid disrupting a party leadership transition.

There is no indication Xi faces any serious challenge to his position, but public anger could give opponents in the ruling party ammunition to push back

against his autocratic rule.

"In the long term, I think it will damage him," said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

But for now, even party figures who might be quite happy to see Xi weakened feel obligated to rally around him, Tsang said. "They will not risk allowing a crisis like this to destroy the credibility of the Communist Party itself," he said.

Prominent but powerless, the National People's Congress, due to open on March 5, endorses the ruling party's economic and social welfare plans. The premier and Cabinet ministers hold their only news conferences of the year, while delegates mingle at group meetings and talk to foreign reporters — a potentially explosive mix.

Party leaders worry delegates "might vent their anger and frustration," said Willy Lam, a political scientist at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

He said there would likely be "heavy censorship" to make sure angry delegates can't talk to reporters if the meeting isn't postponed

for the first time since the ultra-radical Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976.

The party could postpone holding the gathering to May or later in hopes the outbreak might have abated and the event could be held "without presenting an image that they don't care how it affects people," Tsang said.

Going ahead with it would contradict Beijing's intensive anti-disease controls. They have isolated cities with a total of 60

In an essay, a law professor at elite Tsinghua University criticized Beijing for 'ruling through big data totalitarianism and WeChat terrorism'

million people and discouraged travel and public gatherings nationwide, disrupting business and imposing mounting economic losses.

China has reported more than 1,100 deaths and over 44,600 confirmed cases, most of them in the central city of Wuhan and the surrounding province of Hubei.

The party has used its monopoly control of media and pervasive censorship controls to stifle criticism online, over the popular WeChat messaging service and through other social media. But it faces grumbling, including in its own ranks, about Xi's autocratic rule and assertiveness over the South China Sea and other foreign issues that have strained relations with China's neighbors.

In an essay titled "angry people are no longer afraid," a law professor at elite Tsinghua University in Beijing criticized "ruling through 'big data totalitarianism' and WeChat terrorism."

"Politics is corrupt and the regime is ethically exhausted," wrote Xu Zhangrun in the essay published on China Digital Times, a website in California.

Last year, Xu was suspended from his post and investigated by Tsinghua for criticizing the party's decision in 2018 to remove presidential term limits from China's constitution, allowing Xi to stay in office indefinitely.

The party has also faced an outburst of public anger following

the death this month of Li Wenliang, a physician in Wuhan who was reprimanded in December for warning about the virus. Local authorities were accused of discouraging doctors from talking about the outbreak to avoid overshadowing Hubei province's major political event, a legislative meeting in preparation for the National People's Congress.

Comments left on Li's microblog account accused Wuhan authorities of valuing politics over public safety.

Party leaders have tried to divert anger by allowing state media and social media users to criticize local Wuhan officials.

The party faced similar criticism over SARS.

The first cases were reported in November 2002, but the party said the disease was under control. It didn't declare an emergency until after then-President Jiang Zemin handed over power to Hu Jintao in March 2003 in a once-a-decade transition.

Xi has amassed vast authority after being named party general secretary in 2012, effectively becoming leader for life. He took over as leader of the military and sidelined rivals including the No. 2 party figure, Premier Li Keqiang. Xi appointed himself to head party bodies that oversee economic reform and other important issues.

It was a break with two previous generations of leadership, which were based on consensus among members of the ruling party's inner circle of power, the Standing Committee.

That has allowed Xi to push through ambitious plans, including the multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, to expand trade by building ports, railways and other trade-related infrastructure across Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

But it also makes it harder for Xi to deflect blame. This week, he broke a lengthy public silence about the disease by visiting a neighborhood of Beijing that has had about 340 cases of the virus.

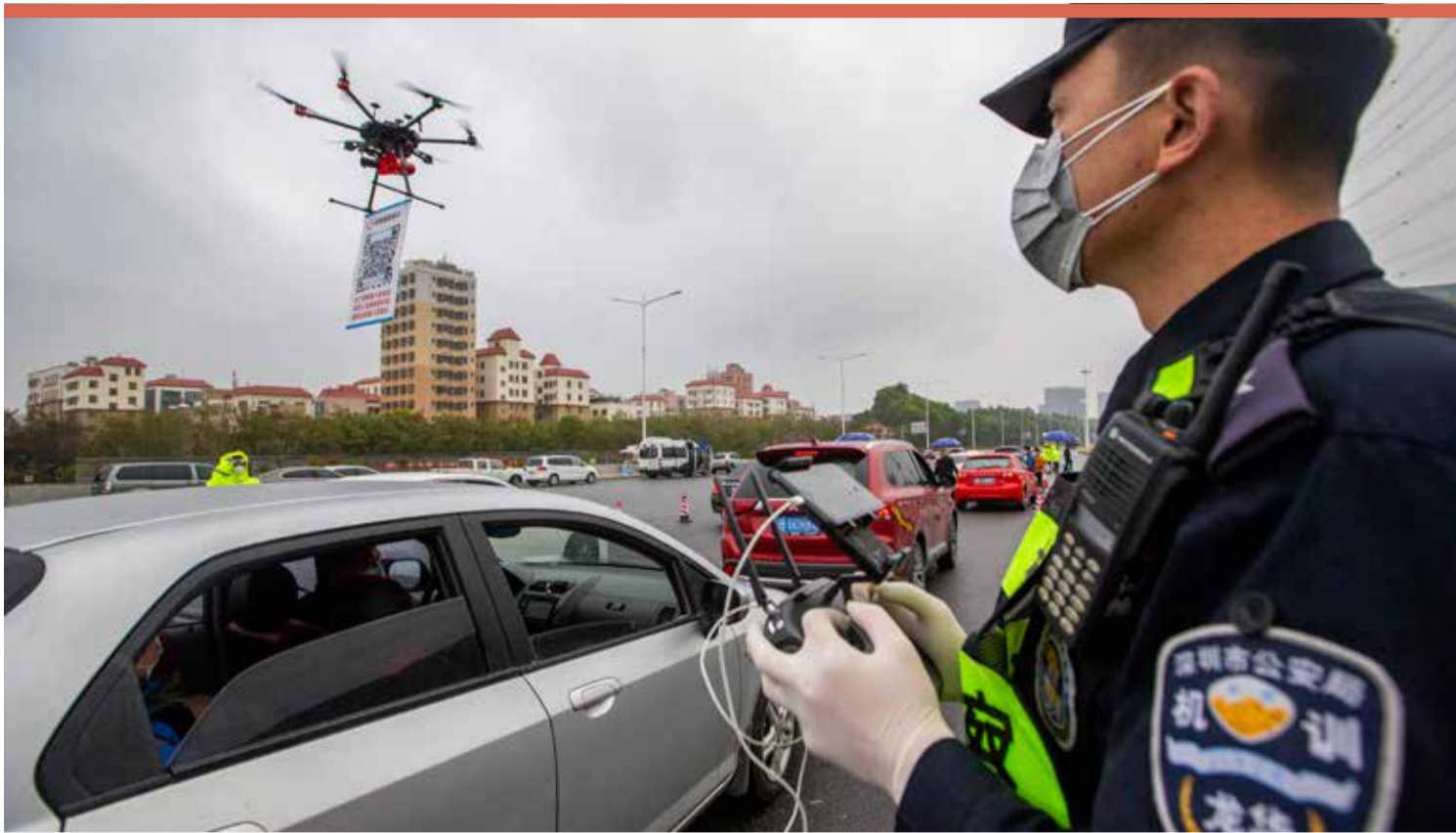
Xi is personally identified with a slew of thorny issues, from Beijing's tariff war with Washington and prickly relations with Taiwan, the self-ruled island the Communist Party claims as its territory, to anti-government protests in Hong Kong and the mass detention of ethnic Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang region in the northwest.

Xi has appeared to try to distance himself from the latest virus outbreak by naming the premier, Li Keqiang, on Jan. 26 to head the party group in charge of anti-disease work.

The next day, Li flew to Wuhan, met with doctors and nurses and visited a supermarket.

"This looks like an attempt to shift blame to Li Keqiang if progress in fighting the disease is unsatisfactory," Lam said. **AP**

AP PHOTO



A police officer operates a drone carrying a QR code placard near an expressway toll station in Shenzhen

Coronavirus epidemic named Covid-19

THE World Health Organization says the official name for the disease caused by the new coronavirus is Covid-19.

"We now have a name for the disease and it's Covid-19," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva.

It comes after the death toll from the virus passed 1,000. Tens of thousands of people have been infected.

Dr Ghebreyesus called on the world to fight the new virus as aggressively as possible.

The word coronavirus refers to the group of viruses it belongs to, rather than the latest strain.

The virus itself has been designated SARS-CoV-2 by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.

Researchers have been calling for an official name to avoid confusion and stigmatization of any group or country.

"We had to find a name that did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or group of people, and which is also pronounceable and related to the disease," the WHO chief said.

"Having a name matters to prevent the use of other names that can be inaccurate or stigmatizing. It also gives us a standard format to use for any future coronavirus outbreaks."

The new name is taken from the words "corona", "virus" and "disease", with 2019 representing the year that it emerged (the outbreak was reported to the WHO on 31 December).

There are now more than 44,600 confirmed cases across China. The number of deaths has overtaken that of the Sars epidemic in 2002-2003.

On Monday, some 103 people died in Hubei province alone, a daily record, and the national death toll is now 1,113.

The central government has sent a team from its highest anti-corruption agency to Hubei to investigate the treatment of Dr Li by police.

Scientists from around the world are meeting in Geneva to discuss ways to combat the outbreak.

Dr Ghebreyesus of the WHO said there was still a realistic chance of containing the disease if enough resources were devoted to the fight.

He praised the measures being taken in China, which he said were "slowing the spread to the rest of the world".

The US Federal Reserve meanwhile has warned that disruption to the Chinese economy could spill over and affect the rest of the world. **MDT/BBC**

COVID-19

NEW VIRUS CASES FALL AGAIN, DEATHS NOW EXCEED 1,100

KEN MORITSUGU

CHINA yesterday reported another drop in the number of new cases of a viral infection and 97 more deaths, pushing the total dead past 1,100 as postal services worldwide said delivery was being affected by the cancellation of many flights to China.

The National Health Commission said 2,015 new cases had been reported over the last 24 hours, declining for a second day. The total number of cases in mainland China reached 44,653, although many experts say a large number of others infected have gone uncounted.

The additional deaths raised the mainland toll to 1,113. Two people have died elsewhere, one in Hong Kong and one in the Philippines.

In the port city of Tianjin, just southeast of Beijing, a cluster of cases has been traced to a department store in Baodi district. One-third of Tianjin's 104 confirmed cases are in Baodi, the Xinhua state news agency reported.

A salesperson working in the store's small home appliance section became the first individual in the cluster to be diagnosed on Jan. 31, Xinhua said. The store was already closed at that point, then disinfected on Feb. 1. Nevertheless, several more diagnoses soon followed.

The next to have their infections confirmed were also salespeople at the store. They had not visited Wuhan recently and, with the exception of one

married couple, the patients worked in different sections of the store and did not know one another, according to Xinhua.

Japan's Health Ministry said that 39 new cases have been confirmed on a cruise ship quarantined at Yokohama, bringing the total to 174 on the Diamond Princess.

And in Singapore, the bank DBS yesterday cleared a downtown office and told some 300 employees to work from home after one of its staff was infected with the virus.

"We are also currently conducting detailed contact tracing with all employees and other parties that the infected person may have come into contact with," DBS said.

The U.S. Postal Service said that it was "experiencing significant difficulties" in dispatching letters, parcels and express mail to China, including Hong Kong and Macau.

Both the U.S. and Singapore Post said in notes to their global counterparts that they are no longer accepting items destined for China, "until sufficient transport capacity becomes available."

The Chinese mail service, China Post, said it was disinfecting postal offices, processing centers and vehicles to ensure the virus doesn't spread via the mail and to protect staff.

It said the crisis is also impacting mail that transits China to other destinations including North Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekis-

tan and Vietnam.

The World Health Organization has named the disease caused by the virus as Covid-19, avoiding any animal or geographic designation to avoid stigmatization and to show the illness comes from a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.

The illness was first reported in December and connected to a food market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the outbreak has largely been concentrated.

Zhong Nanshan, a leading Chinese epidemiologist, said that while the virus outbreak in China may peak this month, the situation at the center of the crisis remains more challenging.

"We still need more time of hard working in Wuhan," he said, describing the isolation of infected patients there a priority.

"We have to stop more people from being infected," he said. "The problem of human-to-human transmission has not yet been resolved."

Without enough facilities to handle the number of cases, Wuhan has been building prefabricated hospitals and converting a gym and other large spaces to house patients and try to isolate them from others.

China's official media reported Tuesday that the top health officials in Hubei province, of which Wuhan is the capital, have been relieved of their duties. No reasons were given, although the province's initial response was deemed slow and

ineffective. Speculation that higher-level officials could be sacked has simmered, but doing so could spark political infighting and be a tacit admission of responsibility.

The virus outbreak has become the latest political challenge for the party and its leader, Xi Jinping, who despite accruing more political power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, has struggled to handle crises on multiple fronts. These include a sharply slowing domestic economy, the trade war with the U.S. and pushback on China's increasingly aggressive foreign policies.

China is struggling to restart its economy after the annual Lunar New Year holiday was extended to try to curb the spread of the virus. About 60 million people are under virtual quarantine and many others are still working at home.

In Hong Kong, the diagnosis of four people living in an apartment building prompted worried comparisons with the deadly SARS pandemic of 17 years ago.

More than 100 people were evacuated from the building after a 62-year-old woman diagnosed with the virus was found living 10 floors directly below a man who was earlier confirmed with the virus.

Health officials called it a precautionary measure and sought to assuage fears of an epidemic, dismissing similarities to the SARS community outbreak at the Amoy Gardens housing estate in 2003. **AP**

USA PRIMARIES

Sanders' narrow win ups pressure on moderates to coalesce

FOR Bernie Sanders, not all victories are created equal. In 2016, Sanders carried New Hampshire by 22 points, pummeling Hillary Clinton and setting the stage for a protracted fight over the Democratic presidential nomination. Yesterday [Macau time], he won the state's primary by less than 2 points, raising questions about his ability to broaden his coalition beyond his most loyal supporters.

But the Vermont senator is benefiting from a crowded and fractured primary field, with several moderate candidates dividing up the rest of the vote. Taken together, Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar and Joe Biden drew support from more than 50 percent of New Hampshire voters — twice as much as Sanders.

"It's clear that a majority of Democrats do not want Bernie Sanders to be the nominee," said Ben LaBolt, who advised President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign. "But if the more pragmatic candidates do not consolidate in the weeks ahead — especially those hanging by a thread in the single digits — Sanders has a very real chance of winning the nomination."

Sanders has energized young voters and liberals with his calls for a Medicare for All health care system and free college tuition. Yet his pricey policy proposals and



AP PHOTO

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders

his standing as a self-described democratic socialist have some in the party on edge, fearful he would struggle to defeat President Donald Trump and damage Democrats' prospects of holding or picking up congressional seats in more moderate parts of the country.

Yet the top tier of the Democratic field shows no signs of shrinking as the primary shifts to more diverse states. And it will only get more crowded as Mike Bloomberg, who is blanketing the delegate-rich states that vote March 3 with hundreds of millions of dollars in advertisements, starts

showing up on ballots.

If anything, questions about Sanders' strength, and uncertainty about which moderate is best to take him on, seem to be giving candidates incentive to stay in as long as they have money to fund their campaigns. That fundraising challenge becomes more urgent for Biden, as well as Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a progressive candidate who finished a disappointing fourth in New Hampshire.

Though the Democratic race is in its early stages — just two states have voted and the vast majority of delegates are still in play — the primary has echoes of the 2016 Republican primary. Trump consistently won contests with about one-third of the vote, while his competitors split up the rest of the electorate.

In the 2016 New Hampshire primary, for example, Trump carried 35% of the vote, while more centrist competitors John Kasich, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio and Chris

Christie divided up more than 40% of the electorate.

Those moderate Republican moderates faced the same dilemma now in front of their Democratic counterparts: How long do they stay in the race and allow Sanders to eke out victories and potentially deepen his support?


In 2016, some of the moderate candidates hung on for weeks, laboring under the expectation that Trump's controversial candidacy would crater and some of his support might swing their way. Instead, Trump only grew stronger.

"Winning begets momentum, which begets people wanting to be on your team," said Matt Gorman, who worked for Bush's campaign. "The more Trump won, the more people went over to him."

Gorman's advice to Sanders' rivals? Move on quickly if you want to stop Sanders.


"For a coalescing to happen, it would need to happen immediately," he said. AP

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what's ON



EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY TAM CHECK WUN AND LAO CHON HONG, ARTISTS WINNING THE GRAND PRIZE OF THE JURY AWARD OF THE COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF MACAU ARTISTS 2017

TIME: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: March 1, 2020

VENUE: Exhibitions Gallery and the Nostalgic House of the Taipa Houses

ADMISSION: Free

KONG SENG TICKETING SERVICE: 8988 4000

THE WORLD AS WILL AND IDEA – COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF EMERGING ARTISTS FROM MAINLAND CHINA

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

UNTIL: February 23, 2020

VENUE: Macau Contemporary Art Centre - Navy Yard No.1, located at Rua de S. Tiago Da Barra

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814

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

Offbeat

PUPPY LOVE: WESTMINSTER DOG AT THE HEART OF A HUMAN ROMANCE

It's a love story that all starts with Spuds MacKenzie.

And this tale of puppy love — and human romance — gets a new chapter under the TV lights at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show Tuesday night. It's the first time there for a bull terrier named Vinny and owner Grace Thomas.

"I guess when you're passionate about it, it works," said Thomas, who's among a minority of people handling their own dogs at the nation's most prestigious canine event.

The gregarious Vinny was chosen this week as best colored bull terrier (all-white ones show separately).

The story goes like this: Thomas fell for bull terriers after seeing Spuds, the party animal of late-1980s Bud Light ads, but it was some time before she acquired one. When she eventually did, in 2001, the breeder pressed her to show the pup.

Thomas didn't know what showing would entail, but she was game to try. So she watched, asked questions, learned the ropes.

"People think it's all fun. It's a lot of work," said Thomas, of Napa, California. She said it takes lots of conditioning and bond-building to get a dog to sparkle in the show ring.

"Owner-handlers" are often overshadowed at Westminster by star professional handlers, some of whom started competing as children.

"It's hard to have confidence when you go out there with a group of professionals, but you can do it," Thomas says. "A lot of people feel that only professionals can win, and it's not true. If you have a good dog, your dog's going to win."

For all the professionals' polish and experience, she and some other owner-handlers feels they bring something of their own to the show ring: their dog.

"The ribbons are nice, but it's the journey that you're on with your dog," Diana Gerba of Menlo Park, California, said after showing her Tibetan spaniel, Marco, at Westminster. "The bond is really strong between him and me."

Still, Thomas notes, there are other challenges -- like juggling dog shows with a full-time job in human resources before her retirement last year. But her professional background helped a bit.

In H.R., she notes, "you have to learn to deal with all types of characters, and bull terriers are characters. And so are show people."

One show person, Robert Thomas, became a particularly big

TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	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.1
20:30	Telejornal
21:15	TDM Talk Show
21:50	Livros com João Guedes
21:55	Viagens Gastronómicas
22:20	Império
23:15	TDM News
23:50	5 Para a Meia Noite
01:30	Telejornal (Repetição)
02:15	RTPi Directo

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.

this day in history



2001 LANDMARK AIDS CASE BEGINS IN SCOTLAND

A man has gone on trial in Glasgow for knowingly infecting a woman with the HIV virus in a case believed to be the first of its kind in Scotland.

Stephen Kelly, 33, is charged with taking no precautions when having sex with a former girlfriend despite knowing he was HIV-positive.

Mr Kelly contracted HIV in prison after sharing needles to inject heroin.

He met mother-of-three Anne Craig in 1994 after leaving prison but in court Ms Craig said he did not tell her about his condition for more than three months.

Ms Craig said initially Mr Kelly had denied being infected and said he had tested negative in prison.

It was only when Miss Craig began feeling unwell and took a blood test that revealed she had contracted HIV that Mr Kelly revealed the truth about his condition.

Ms Craig, 34, said that at first Stephen Kelly told her he had only just discovered that he had caught the virus from a previous girlfriend.

But she said he later changed his story.

"Mr Kelly told me he had actually caught the virus in Glenochil Prison and the story he told me was a fabrication," she said.

Mr Kelly denies telling Ms Craig it was safe to have unprotected sex with him and alleges he told her the truth about his condition from the start.

After learning that she had the HIV virus in March 1994 Miss Craig stayed with Kelly for several months but went to the police after they broke up.

The case continues.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After a nine-day trial the jury at Glasgow High Court took just two hours to find Stephen Kelly guilty of "culpable and reckless" conduct.

Kelly was sentenced to five years in prison.

Aids campaigners were outraged at the sentence saying it could deter people from being honest about their HIV-positive status.

There were also concerns that police obtained Kelly's blood samples from a confidential clinical trial to use in the case against him.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Getting your blood pumping will serve as a great outlet for all the energy that you don't know what to do with. Getting active with your body also encourages you to get active in your brain.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Sophisticated language can be a veil hiding what you truly mean but are too afraid to say. But fancy talk can also be a tool to help folks understand what exactly it is that you mean at a high level.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Being by yourself isn't going to be your idea of fun right now. The solo life is fun and rewarding at times, but not now. Today, you want action, lots of people, and definitely lots of noise.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

New inventions and "just so crazy it could work" ideas could enter your mind throughout the day, sparking your attitude and making you feel empowered. Suddenly, the world is full of opportunity and inspiration!



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You've won them over for now, but that doesn't mean you're the leader in this partnership. They have some amazing things to teach you, so realizing that the two of you are equals is very important.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

When you look in your wallet, do you see neatly organized currency and credit cards, or do you see a mishmash of scraps of paper, crumpled up bills, and random phone numbers?



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

You are to be commended for trying to see things from all different angles and having empathy for the motivations of unpopular people, but right now these behaviors are throwing important things out of balance.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You may think you know best right now (because you usually do), but you don't. Defer to the directions and advice of people who have more experience in the current situation.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Everybody's facing in the same positive direction again. You could be surrounded by a lot more goodwill today than you have been of late. It'll help the day go by quickly and joyfully.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You clean your kitchen when it gets messy; you clean your car when the back seat gets cluttered, and you should clean your mind when it gets filled with a bunch of negative things.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Some people try to distract themselves from problems at home by immersing themselves in work or school. But that tactic is a poor one since it only delays the inevitable.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	10	clear
Harbin	-6	-1	moderate snow
Tianjin	1	14	cloudy
Urumqi	-14	-7	clear
Xi'an	0	16	clear
Lhasa	-4	13	clear
Chengdu	10	16	cloudy
Chongqing	11	19	cloudy
Kunming	3	19	clear
Nanjing	7	18	drizzle
Shanghai	9	15	drizzle
Wuhan	6	17	cloudy
Hangzhou	10	16	drizzle to moderate rain
Taipei	17	21	drizzle
Guangzhou	17	20	heavy rain to rainstorm
Hong Kong	18	21	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-1	1	sleet
Frankfurt	2	9	drizzle
Paris	6	9	moderate rain
London	2	9	moderate rain
New York	1	3	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Ford flop; 6- "Tattered Tom" author; 11- Mil. address; 14- Racket; 15- Farm layers; 16- Caesar of comedy; 17- Concise; 18- Gives a 9.8, say; 19- How was ___ know?; 20- Read 'em and ___!; 22- English royal house; 24- Movie scenes; 28- Selected; 30- Conductor Toscanini; 31- Apportion; 32- Schleppe; 33- See-sawing; 37- Hydrocarbon suffix; 38- Recipient; 39- ___ anglais (English horn); 40- Chief municipal officer; 43- Milan's La ___; 45- Western; 46- Fiddle; 47- Joined by treaty; 49- Colonized; 50- Whatsoever; 51- Famous last words; 52- Second-century date; 53- Number game of chance; 56- Saw; 61- Pitch; 62- Ancient Indo-European; 63- Hard drinker; 64- Pompous fool; 65- Garish; 66- Viscounts' superiors;

DOWN: 1- Med. specialty; 2- Her partner would be a buck; 3- Round Table title; 4- Lion tail?; 5- Away from the wind; 6- Go along (with); 7- Jump; 8- Acquire; 9- Nationality suffix; 10- Bring back; 11- Footnote; 12- Metal spike used by mountaineers; 13- Sml or fragrance; 21- Narcissist's problem; 23- Consumer; 24- Deadly; 25- Home of the Black Bears; 26- Brown-furred aquatic carnivorous mammal; 27- Datebook abbr; 28- Gaiety; 29- Detest; 31- Spanish Mister; 33- Fiddled; 34- Poker declaration; 35- I swear!; 36- Stately; 38- Go out with; 41- Barbie, e.g.; 42- Postal carrier's tote; 43- Place; 44- Barracks bed; 46- Fido's appointment; 47- Collection of maps, Titan of Greek mythology; 48- Retreats; 49- Rocklike; 50- Official records; 51- Mild oath; 54- One of the Gershwins; 55- Big Apple sch.; 57- 1950 film noir classic; 58- Spring mo.; 59- Hair goo; 60- Trauma ctrs.;

Yesterday's solution

R	O	B	E	S		O	A	U	B	E		T	A	J
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A	R	O	A	R		N	E	E	S			A	S	U
						E	D	I	T	S		T	B	S
S	T	E	R	N			S	L	I	E	S	T		
T	U	R	E	N			O	S	I	E	R			
O	N	E	S			K	E	A	T	S		T	H	A
R	E	C	T			A	T	E				H	O	P
E	S	T	O			E	V	E	N	T		D	A	N
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R	E	N				E	A	S			L	E	N	E
E	R					S	P	E	C			T	A	C

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PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
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OSKAR ROZENBERG

Swedish star fronts skateboarding's move

STEVE DOUGLAS, MALMO

OSKAR Rozenberg nonchalantly drifts around the skate park before unleashing a series of high-energy tricks — mounting a wall, sliding down a railing with his arms outstretched, vaulting a stairwell, accelerating into a ramp and giving it some air.

"I'm just warming up," the two-time skateboarding world champion and Olympic hopeful says over his shoulder as he floats away.

His long, dark hair flowing beneath his black cap and over his hoodie, the 23-year-old Rozenberg is in his element — and in his own world — as he seeks out every line, every dip and every hollow of the indoor park to satisfy his creative needs.

He gets particularly excited talking about his current favorite trick, the backside nose blunt.

"You go up on the edge of the quarter pipe, you do a backside 180 turn and you land on the nose. Then you pop in, back into the transition," Rozenberg said.



Skateboarder Oskar Rozenberg in action, at Bryggeriet Malmo Skatepark in Sweden

"It's such a flowy trick. It's just vibey."

If that's akin to a foreign language, it might not be six months from now.

Skateboarding is coming to

the Olympics for the first time at this year's Tokyo Games and Rozenberg, a stand-out Swede in a field mostly dominated by Americans and Brazilians, might be its breakout star.

"Oski," as he is fondly referred to, is a skateboarder best known for his outrageous creativity and for thinking on his feet — or, in his case, his wheels. He will arrive in Tokyo as the world champion of

the Vans Park Series Pro Tour after his win in Salt Lake City in September.

"He is spontaneous," said John Magnusson, who works for the Swedish Skateboard Association and will be Rozenberg's coach in the run-up to the Tokyo Games. "He maybe has the first two tricks planned and then he goes for whatever. When Oski flows it all together, he is unbeatable because he is that good."

Rozenberg's strength may yet prove to be his weakness when it comes to the Olympics.

The edgy, rebellious, somewhat underworld pursuit of skateboarding is about to enter the mainstream, joining the more structured world of traditional sports.

It will freshen up the Olympics, for sure, and appeal more to younger viewers, but will the popularization of skateboarding mean it loses its counter-cultural status? There are also concerns that judging in the Olympics will be more about box-ticking rather than a desire for expression and creativity, potentially dampening its appeal — and the medal chances

AD

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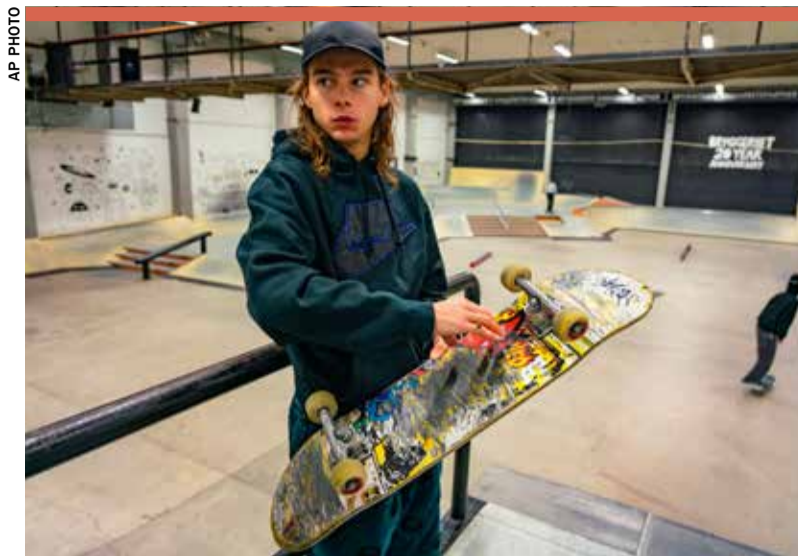
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

to mainstream



AP PHOTO

of Rozenberg, with his off-the-cuff style.

He thinks, however, that skateboarding being added to the Olympic program has "more positives than negatives."

"It pushes the sport into a different direction it hasn't really been in before," Rozenberg said. "It's kind of new territory."

"A lot of other sports are about jumping a centimeter longer or a centimeter higher than what you did last year. But skateboarding is the opposite of that. There is so much you can do. I think it will actually bring a new aspect to sports."

Rozenberg first came across skateboarding at the age of 9, when he was on a bike ride with his father and bumped into friends at the newly built skate park in Malmo — Stapelbaddsparken.

He tried it out, went back the next day, and "was there every day for four years."

"I think what attracted me the most was the group of people and how everyone took care of each other, and how all of a sudden I

was able to hang out with people five or 10 years older than me," Rozenberg said. "There wasn't an age barrier. Everyone was just hanging out."

He liked the easy-going nature of skateboarding.

"When I was playing football, I remember being a bit sick of it, always having to come to practice on time and do this or that in practice," he said. "Skateboarding was the complete opposite ... It's like everything was on your own conditions."

Rozenberg attended a one-of-a-kind high school — Bryggeriets Gymnasium — that had skateboarding on the curriculum and was located inside one of the top skate parks in Malmo. Rozenberg said this background means he

has a "different story" to the big skaters from America who grew up in California and had "all the best skate spots, all the best parks, all the contacts that you need in terms of sponsors."

"I think a lot of skaters who are coming up right now who are from Europe are adding a new dimension to skateboarding," he said. "The skate spots here are

so different to the skate spots in America, so that naturally forms a different environment, a different type of skater."

Rozenberg's idols include Tony Hawk, a skateboarding pioneer from the 1980s who had a series of computer games — one of which Rozenberg remembers completing on one New Year's Eve. Another is modern-day American skater Grant Taylor.

"He was the coolest guy in my eyes," Rozenberg said of Taylor. "Some skaters only specify in one skating but he did it all. His style is unexplainable."

Up-and-coming skaters might be saying similar things about Rozenberg, whose imaginative routines put him among the world's

most popular competitors and likely attracted him to Nike, one of his many sponsors.

"I try to put together a line in my head," he explains as he goes through his typical routine. "It might be a line I have been thinking about as I was standing on the platform, like 'Oh, that could be cool to do that there.' Or it might be a line I actually did, a line I stumbled upon and I was like, 'Oh, that was a really good line.'"

"A lot of times, especially when I pull off a good contest run, I figure it out literally at the last moment. On certain occasions, I figured it out while I have been doing the run, like spontaneously, and it just works out."

With qualification events to come in Peru, China and the United States, Rozenberg is on course to qualify for the Olympics and compete in the park tournament that will feature 20 skaters.

He will be one of Sweden's biggest gold-medal hopes in Tokyo.

"Skateboarding is at its best when you get that 'no one expected that' feeling. That's what Oski is good at. He can bring that something that no one thought about," Magnusson said. "Some people, you already know what they are going to do when they drop in. But Oski doesn't even know himself what he is going to do. And that's his strength." AP

"It pushes the sport into a different direction it hasn't really been in before. It's kind of new territory."

OSKAR ROZENBERG



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OPINION

The Stranger

Sheyla Zandonai



WHERE IS THE ECONOMY?

The 2020 edition of Art Macao, an arts event spanning six months and featuring exhibitions, performances and workshops by local and international artists, has been cancelled. It is yet another bold move from the administration to attempt to contain the spread of novel coronavirus, now named Covid-19, although little is more astonishing than the unprecedented closure of the city's 41 casinos ordered by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng last week. Following suit, more than a dozen local hotels and inns have also shut for business. According to sector representatives, some 80 per cent of restaurants in Macau have, likewise, closed their doors. Other small business operations are striving to survive. Millions of people are trapped under lockdown in mainland China. Travel ban measures have been adopted to stop visitors from coming. Foot traffic at the city's borders has been reduced to the slightest amount. As a tourism-focused place, Macau has taken a tremendous blow.

Amidst the public health crisis stemming from the epidemic which forced China to 'amputate' Hubei Province – where Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus, is located – in order to 'save' the rest of the country, Art Macao is the least of anyone's concerns, one should say. It matters though, not for its nature, but for what its cancelling represents: no clear skies ahead for months to come vis-à-vis the normal operation of the city's economy.

Uncertainties, many and of many sorts, lie ahead. The public sector has somewhat found ways to continue minimal operations. Schools and higher education institutions are setting up their teaching programmes online, so that students begin tackling content before they can effectively return to class. However, the city's economic life is in a cloudy mess.

Revenue losses estimated by casino operators and costs necessary for keeping staff on their payroll while not working or working at a lower rate, with few clients likely to come in the near future, are monumental. And yet, properties in Cotai strip remain all lit up, throwing dazzling lights at the occasional driver passing by. It is a phantasmagoric scene of desolation, those empty masses and their sparkling façades, perhaps signalling hope for business to revive sooner than later.

Where else is Macau's economy sitting? Nearly nowhere to be seen. Apart, for instance, from disinfecting companies, delivery businesses, or knowledge services, with a rushed change to online learning in local schools and universities, little is worth mention, bar the evidence of Macau's dependency on everything tourism. Nothing new there, but for the first time, we feel the effects of a deep crisis affecting the sector.

Due to force majeure, the city has been temporarily stripped from its black gold, which fuels a powerful and yet vulnerable economic engine. As it is reduced to a gambling-less enclave, people are searching for answers and means to stay above water for the months to come. The scope of businesses being affected spans Macau and abroad in a chain effect: first casinos and hotels, then restaurants, entertainment joints, cleaning companies, food suppliers, logistics firms, transport companies, engineers, and frontline workers on the gaming floor.

This is no minor distress. Companies will default. People will lose jobs. Bosses, dividends. The words of previous CE Chui Sai On about adopting austerity measures when gambling revenues dropped a few months in a row during the height of the Chinese anti-graft campaign in 2014-15 sound pale under the current course of events. The epidemic and its impact are bringing unprecedented changes to Macau and its people's lifestyle. It will require leadership, tenacity, and a lot of new ideas to get past this mess. But not all change is for the worse. Sometimes, it brings out the best in people.

FORMULA ONE'S CHINESE GRAND PRIX POSTPONED DUE TO VIRUS

THE BUZZ

Formula One organizers last night postponed the Chinese Grand Prix that was due to be staged in Shanghai in April, the latest sporting event impacted by the fast-spreading viral infection in the country.

One of 22 races on the F1 calendar for 2020 that opens in Melbourne next month, the Chinese Grand Prix was due to be staged on April 19.

The decision to postpone the race was taken after a re-

quest from the Shanghai promoter to "ensure the health and safety of the travelling staff, championship participants and fans," F1 said in a statement.

It is the first time a race has been called off since political unrest led to the cancellation of the 2011 Bahrain Grand Prix.

"It's tough," Renault driver Daniel Ricciardo said shortly after the F1 announcement on China.



KAI PILGER

HOME-DELIVERED MEALS, INTERNET USAGE RISE DURING VIRUS 'STAYCATION'

JULIE ZHU

MEMBERS of the public have been spending more time on the internet and opting for more home-delivered meals than normal while they wait for the government's epidemic prevention measures to finish.

On Tuesday, telecommunication service provider CTM held a video news release, with network services vice president Declan Leong Pui Hong indicating that the company recorded significant growth in internet usage after the local government urged people to stay home as much as possible.

CTM users spent as much as 30% more time on the internet during this 'staycation' period than normal. The most popular activity of the public is browsing social media, followed by time spent watching videos.

Since January 25, the local government has exempted work for non-essential civil servants, urging them to stay home as much as possible. On February 4, the government decided to close the city's casinos for two weeks, and many

hotel and casino staff have since been asked to stay at home too.

In addition to these 'staycation' workers, the general public is also spending more time at home.

After the government urged the public to stay inside, many restaurants have temporarily suspended operations or shifted to providing home-delivered meals.

Whereas eat-in restaurant businesses are suffering from significant decline, consumers are helping the food delivery businesses boom. Some restaurants are also offering discounts for deliveries to make use of the increased demand.

Last week, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) issued a statement targeting food delivery services and other suppliers of prepared food. The IAM did not disclose the precise data regarding the rise in food delivery activity during the recent period, but acknowledged the general increase.

In Macau's neighboring Guangdong province, the government authority has announced new policies, which may

aid the food delivery business.

Yesterday, the Guangzhou government officially banned all eat-in services across the entire city to prevent people from gathering together. Nevertheless, the same policy details that people in Guangzhou can still resort to delivery services.

A news report by mainland media Eastmoney said that many well-known chain restaurants in Beijing have enhanced their online delivery services by offering discounts.

With home-delivered meals rising in popularity, online platforms are implementing extra measures to ensure food safety.

To respond to the Macau government's epidemic prevention call, popular food delivery platform Aomi put out a notification on its app regarding hygiene measures to assure customers of the food delivery process.

In mainland China, food delivery platforms have also been implementing enhanced hygiene standards applied to food deliveries.



AP PHOTO

Russia Two Chinese nationals hospitalized with Covid-19 in Russia last month have fully recovered from the disease and were discharged from hospitals this week, officials said. A tourist from China hospitalized in eastern Siberia was discharged yesterday after a series of tests revealed that he was no longer infected. He is "completely healthy and poses no danger to people around him," local health officials said.

Russia One patient jumped out of a hospital window to escape her quarantine and another managed to break out by disabling an electronic lock. Two Russian women who were kept in isolation for possible infection by a new virus say they fled from their hospitals this month because of uncooperative doctors, poor conditions and fear they would become infected. Russian health authorities haven't commented on their complaints.



AP PHOTO

USA Bernie Sanders is benefiting from a crowded and fractured primary field, with several moderate candidates dividing up the rest of the vote. Taken together, Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar and Joe Biden drew support from more than 50 percent of New Hampshire voters — twice as much as Sanders. More on p11



AP PHOTO

Sudan's transitional authorities have agreed to hand over ousted autocrat Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court to face trial on charges of war crimes and genocide. For a decade after his indictment, al-Bashir confounded the court based in The Hague, Netherlands. He not only was out of reach during his 30 years in power in Khartoum, but he also traveled abroad frequently to visit friendly leaders without fear of arrest.