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MACAU RCR electronics

**A NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE ILHA VERDE AREA EXPRESSED WORRIES ABOUT NON-LOCAL WORKERS MOVING INTO CASA RETIRO** P5

**ROAD WORKS ON THE RISE AS STREETS GRADUALLY RETURN TO NORMAL** P5

**HO IAT SENG APPOINTS FORMER SECRETARY ALEXIS TAM AS MACAU'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION BY EXECUTIVE ORDER** P3

**Covid-19** Several European countries have announced their first coronavirus cases, all apparently linked to the growing outbreak in Italy. Austria, Croatia and Switzerland said the cases involved people who had been to Italy, as did Algeria in Africa. The first positive virus test has been recorded in Latin America - a Brazilian resident just returned from Italy.

More on p8



**Hong Kong's** government is proposing a HKD10,000 cash handout for each resident over 18 years old to help alleviate hardships brought on by the spreading viral outbreak and prolonged political protests. The subsidy was among a slew of emergency measures in a budget presented to the LegCo by Financial Secretary Paul Chan (pictured). More on p6



**Iran's** president said Tehran has no immediate plans to quarantine cities over the new coronavirus rapidly spreading across the country, even as the Islamic Republic suffers the highest official death toll outside of China with 19 killed amid 139 cases confirmed yesterday. Other sources indicate the numbers are higher.

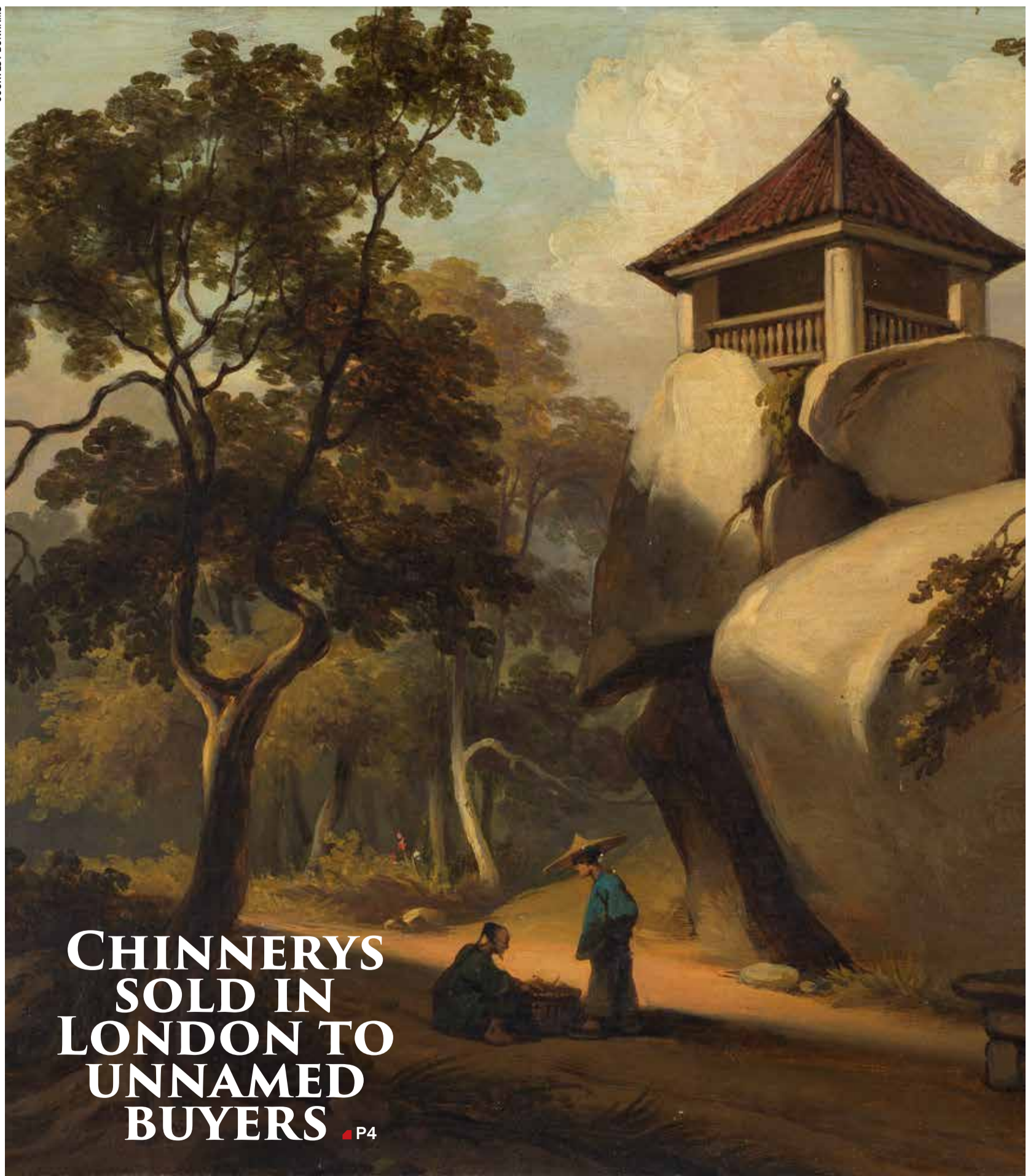
**Economy** Ratings agency Moody's is lowering its forecast for global auto sales because of the new coronavirus outbreak. It now reckons that sales will decline 2.5% in 2020 instead of only 0.9%. This year's anticipated decline follows a fall in 2019 of 4.6%. Moody's said in a report sales in China, the world's biggest car market, would fall as people avoid crowded areas, including auto dealerships.

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# VIRTUAL HOSPITAL

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF APPOINTMENTS ARE ON REMOTE MODE P3

COURTESY BONHAMS



**CHINNERY'S  
SOLD IN  
LONDON TO  
UNNAMED  
BUYERS** P4

# ANYONE WITH TRAVEL HISTORY TO SOUTH KOREA WILL FACE QUARANTINE

ANTHONY LAM

**A**NYONE who has been to South Korea in the past 14 days is now required to undergo monitored quarantine at locations designated by the Health Bureau (SSM), announced the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center at yesterday's daily press briefing.

If any respiratory symptoms are recorded or detected at the time of visitors' arrival, they will be sent to the Conde de S. Januário Hospital for consultation and therapy. The new measure applies to everyone, not only non-locals.

Aside from the aforementioned, all those with travel history to the northeast Asian country in the past 14 days will need to declare the exact places they have been to in South Korea. Several places in the country are severely affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. These places are Daegu, Gyeongsangbuk-do and the Shincheonji Church. People who have been to these places will be sent directly to the SSM facility in Coloane for monitored quarantine.

Non-residents of Macau will have the option to undergo quarantine at the Pousada Marina Infante, at their own cost.

Otherwise, they can choose to leave Macau immediately.

Macau residents, on the other hand, can choose to undergo quarantine at their own homes, provided their households meet the guidelines set by the health regulator. For example, the premises must be able to separate the quarantined person from other members under the roof, for example through the use of a separate room.

People under home quarantine will be contacted by the SSM daily to obtain data about their health condition. They will also be required to measure their own body temperature twice a day.

Officers from the Public Security Police Force (PSP) will conduct random spot checks to confirm whether the quarantined remain at home for the entire two weeks.

If the households do not meet the SSM guidelines, they will undergo quarantine at the Pousada. The costs of quarantine for residents will be borne by the Macau government.

The Center issued a clarification yesterday in response to a rumor online. The rumor claimed that Macau would close its

borders at 10 p.m. last night.

The Center clarified that there was no measure concerning such a border closure. However, it reminded the general public that measures are in place to check people coming in from highly affected areas or Macau residents who are crossing borders at unreasonable frequency.

People who have been in such areas will be brought to

Apart from South Korea, Italy and Japan are also severely affected with reported outbreaks, but the latter two countries are not yet on the SSM's list of severely affected areas.

Leong stressed that the bureau is closely and constantly monitoring the situation worldwide, and will take timely action once necessary. The case of Italy, however, is a bit tricky, as it

is part of the European Union, which allows its citizens freedom of movement. It means that an Italian citizen can make a detour en-route to Macau.

Explaining the difficulty, Leong said the SSM is discussing plans in this respect.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, 12 Korean citizens had tried to enter

Macau. Six of them arrived by 12 p.m., which was the enactment of the quarantine measures on people with Korean travel history in the past two weeks. They were required to undergo medical checks.

The seventh person was able to prove to the PSP that they had not been to South Korea in the past 14 days and was allowed to enter the city.

## Italy and Japan are also severely affected with reported outbreaks, but the two countries are not yet on the Macau Health Bureau's list

provisional medical stations either at the Taipa Ferry Terminal or the Workers' Stadium to undergo hours of medical checks, regardless of nationality.

As such, a Korean citizen who has not been to his or her home country in the past 14 days will be allowed into Macau, Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the SSM's Centre for Disease Control, said.

The other five people declined to undergo monitored quarantine, so they returned to mainland China, from where they had attempted to enter Macau.

The Macau government announced yesterday that it has paved a way to help Macau residents currently in South Korea to come home.

With all flights between Macau and the northeast Asian country before March 1 canceled and Hong Kong barring entry of non-Hong Kong residents from South Korea, before today, Macau residents had no opportunity to return through the neighboring Special Administrative Region from South Korea. It was impossible because they had to enter and exit the city in order to make the air-to-land transfer.

The Macau government managed to find a way to help this group of Macau residents. Consensus has been reached with the Hong Kong government to adopt a solution.

Returnees must contact the Tourism Crisis Hotline prior to their return date. The airline and the Hong Kong government will be notified. Once they have arrived in Hong Kong, they will be taken straight to Macau by charter vehicles.

Leong stressed that they may not be allowed to board their flights if no prior notification has been made to the hotline.

## CTM DEPLOYS CONTINGENCY MEASURES WHILE SUBMARINE CABLE AWAITS REPAIR

**L**OCAL telecom operator CTM has deployed a series of contingency measures including 24-hour network monitoring after it detected that a section of an optical submarine telecommunication cable located near Hong Kong had a fault, the operator has announced.

According to a statement, the repair vessel will be arriving at the site of the damaged cable section and carrying out restoration work at 12 p.m. on March 3 until 12

p.m. on March 6.

After it was detected that the SEA-ME-WE3 (SMW3) submarine cable was defective, CTM coordinated with the administrator of the cable to implement power reconfiguration and relocate the network resources to ensure stability of internet connection.

In the meantime, CTM has imposed measures, including the timely allocation of bandwidth resources, to re-route the data transmission via another telecommunication

network to offload and divert the data traffic.

The measure was implemented to ensure the overall operation of Internet services.

CTM warned that during this period, internet users may experience slow speed when accessing some overseas websites.

It also pledged that CTM will continue to monitor the progress of the restoration and will keep the public updated in a timely manner. LV

## CONSUMER PRICES GREW NEARLY 3% IN JANUARY

**T**HE composite consumer price index (CPI) for January 2020 has increased by 2.98% year-on-year, up by 0.42 percentage points compared to that of December 2019.

Recent data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed that the increment was attributable to higher charges for eating out and package tours, rising rentals for dwellings as well as the higher prices of fresh pork and gasoline.

The price index of the transport sector

surged 6.53% year-on-year, while that of recreation and culture grew at a similar rate of 6.49%. Meanwhile, the index of communication fell by 8.64% and clothing and footwear dropped 6.51%.

The composite CPI for January 2020 rose slightly by 0.57% in month-to-month terms.

The soaring charges for package tours and higher airfares during the Lunar New Year period as well as rising gasoline prices drove up the indexes of re-

creation and culture, as well as transport by 6.64% and 2.47% respectively.

For the 12 months ending January 2020, the average composite CPI increased by 2.75% from the previous period, with notable growth in the price indexes of education at 5.59%, transport at 4.99% and food and non-alcoholic beverages at exactly 4%.

The composite CPI reflects the impact of price changes on general households in Macau. LV

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HEALTH

# New 'virtual hospital' solving 85% of non-coronavirus cases, says official

RENATO MARQUES

**R**ESTRICTIVE measures applied to public hospital visits due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 coronavirus has led to the cancellation of a large number of medical appointments with several specialists. In response, the Health Bureau (SSM) is said to have put in place a system in which the physicians conduct as much follow-up as possible remotely, contacting patients via phone calls or video calls.

Although it is not clear how many appointments were conducted like this, the SSM informed the Times that the disruption of the normal operations in the consultation arm of the public hospital has seen an average of 2,000 medical appointments canceled per day.

From this number, the health official said that "85% are being handled by remote means."

The SSM informed that follow-up on these cases began after the resumption of the basic government services earlier this month.

The same source informed the Times that most of the remaining 15% are contacted for follow-ups in person, scheduled for a later date.

Separately, the coordinator of the accident and emergency units of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center (CHCSJ), Chang Tam Fei, told the Times, "certain cases have been postponed be-

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY VIA UNSPLASH



cause the patients didn't want to visit the hospital," as well as in the cases where "remote consultation was not suitable because they are cases in which either physical check-up is crucial or the patients need to undergo diagnosis tests, such as X-ray or blood tests."

On this topic, a source close to the SSM had previously hinted to the Times that the reason for the delay in the rescheduling of the medical appointments of those in need of the physical examination or complementary diagnos-

tic tests could be because some services were being used to test the patients suspected or confirmed to have been infected with Covid-19.

Although there were several attempts to clarify the current progress of the medical appointments canceled or postponed, as well as which clinical specialties were most affected by the suspension of services by the CHCSJ, it was not possible to obtain a clear answer from the health authorities.

It is also not possible at this point to ascertain the degree of satisfaction and opinion from the patients that experienced remote consultation.

Macau has registered a total of 10 cases of infection with Covid-19, from which seven patients have already been discharged from the hospital, with only three remaining under treatment and observation.

Yesterday was the 22nd day with no new cases of infection reported in the region.

## WATER HEATER EXPLODES, NO INJURIES REPORTED

Yesterday, a water heater exploded in an apartment at Mong In residential building located on Rua de Francisco Xavier Pereira. The incident took place at 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday. No one was injured in the accident. The Fire Services Bureau inspected the apartment and discovered the reason behind the explosion. The water heater had been continuously turned on, constantly heating up the water. The high pressure inside the heater led to an explosion. As the heater was installed in the kitchen, items inside the kitchen were also damaged. According to the bureau, the incident did not result in a fire. The two people living in the house were both unharmed.

## CASES OF DOG FOULING IN PUBLIC SPACES RISES DURING EPIDEMIC PERIOD

During the epidemic prevention period, cases of dogs fouling public places have become more frequent, according to a Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) advisory committee member. Yesterday, several representatives of the bureau spoke on a TDM radio programme about hygiene matters. One of the representatives said that dogs had been fouling public spaces, mostly late at night. Dog owners are failing to clean up dogs' faeces properly in accordance with IAM's instructions, which suggest that dog owners should clean up with a material that absorbs water instead of just using water to wash the ground. The IAM hopes dog owners can change their dogs' habits and train the pets to do their business at home.

## 1,000 PROSECUTIONS RELATED TO HYGIENE MATTERS

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has prosecuted over 1,000 cases of behaviour that violates the city's public hygiene law so far this month. According to the IAM, the bureau has requested that cleaning companies enhance sanitization in the city, including carrying out more frequent washing of public streets, public bathrooms, bus stops, among others. The bureau has also enhanced inspections of local restaurants. The IAM also expressed its appreciation of cleaners both in public and private spaces.

# Former secretary Alexis Tam to represent Macau in WTO

**C**HIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has appointed Alexis Tam, former Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, as the director of the Macao Economic and Trade Office to the World Trade Organization, as announced in an Executive Order.

Prior to this appointment, the former government secretary already held the directorship at the Macao Economic and Trade Offices to the European Union in Brussels and to Portugal in Lisbon, and is expected to retain these two posts.

Tam's appointment

representing Macau to the WTO will take effect on May 1. He will replace Fung Ping Kuen, according to the government's staff portal.

Although Macau is not a sovereign country, it is a member of the WTO. The Economic Bureau recorded that Macau is a founding member of the organization overseeing global trade.

After the change of sovereignty, Macau retained its membership of the organization because, according to the bureau, Macau and mainland China are two independent customs

territories.

Such membership can be retained under the stipulations of the Basic Law, particularly Article 137. Meanwhile, Articles 136 and 138 respectively stipulate Macau's right to bridge international exchange and the enactment of international treaties in Macau.

"Furthermore, it is also stipulated in the Basic Law that Macau shall continuously effectuate its free trade policy with freedom in the movement of goods, intangible assets and capital," the Economic Bureau explained. **AL**

RENATO MARQUES



COURTESY BONHAMS



A view of Macau looking towards the gardens of the Casa, with figures in the foreground

## GEORGE CHINNERY PAINTINGS SOLD TO UNNAMED BRITISH BUYERS IN LONDON AUCTION

DANIEL BEITLER

**T**WO rare paintings by 19th century British artist George Chinnery, who spent the last quarter-century of his life in Macau, have sold in London for a combined 178,000 pounds.

Auctioneer Bonhams, one of the world's oldest auctioneers of fine art and antiques, informed the Times yesterday that the buyers are based in the U.K., but said it could not disclose any more information about their identity.

Chinnery set the definitive tone and image of the former Portuguese enclave during the early 19th century, as understood by modern viewers.

Lawyer and historical researcher Ian Grenville Cross best summed up the influence of Chinnery in a 2015 article published in Macau Daily Times. "More than any other painter, he created the images that define in the popular imagination the city during the 27 years he lived here."

"His paintings are not only works of art but important historical items for the research of Macau culture and social change," local artist Ung Vai Meng had once said while serving as president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau.

The English painter departed Europe at the start of the 19th

century for Asia. At first he carved out work as both a freemason and a painter in Calcutta, then the capital of British India, before leaving for Macau some 23 years later on account of his indebtedness. He would spend the rest of his days in the southern Chinese city, leaving an imprint on the lives of many.

"Chinnery was the only European professional artist who lived in China until late into the 19th century. This is an artist who lived in and made a home in Macau," said Dr Patrick Connor, art historian and author of George Chinnery, 1774-1852. "As the market for landscape paintings was not that developed at the time, artists generally made their money through portraits. That is what Chinnery did in Calcutta – painted portraits of governors, military officials and their families – until he ran up huge debts and came to Macau."

For Glenn Timmermans, an associate professor at the University of Macau with a background in issues spanning the arts and humanities, "Chinnery is hugely significant because he, almost alone, provides a detailed pictorial record of life here for a period of over twenty-five years, a visual legacy which few, if any, other cities or ports in China can claim."

"It is impossible to imagine Macau [from this period] without Chinnery," said Timmermans. "Our views of Shanghai, Xiamen, even Hong Kong, from this period, are largely of the waterfront or harbor, while in Macau we have that and much more. We have a better sense of some of Canton [Guangzhou], but that is because Chinnery spent time there too."

**"He alone offers a full vista of Macau in the first half of the nineteenth century."**

ASSOCIATE PROF. GLENN TIMMERMANS  
UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

"There were of course other artists travelling to Macau during this time, of whom Auguste Borget is probably the best known, and thus Chinnery is not alone in representing Macau," conceded Timmermans. But Chinnery "immersed himself in the daily life of the city," documenting ordinary people like fruit sellers and gamblers, as well as the distinguished personalities of the period, and in this sense, "he alone offers a full vista of Macau in the first half of the nineteenth century."

Asked about the rarity of these works, Connor said the two oil paintings that went to auction last night were unusual among Chinnery's works, as the 19th century artist typically painted in watercolor or drew sketches. He was also known for producing small, intricate pieces, rather than the larger oil paintings that went under the hammer last night.

Jonathan Wattis of Wattis Fine Art in Hong Kong, said that "Chinnery would go around drawing in pencil sketching details, and then later in more detail with pen and ink. These sketches would sometimes be incorporated later in paintings [...] but there would be far fewer of them and so these oil paintings are quite unusual."

The rare artworks proved popular among bidders.

With the auctioneer's cut considered, the two pieces fell in the upper bound of the estimates' range, in what one art buyer told the Times was "good news for the industry."

"The Grotto of Camões, Macau" depicts the monument named after Portuguese epic poet, Luís Vaz de Camões, which still overlooks the western point of the peninsula. It was estimated in the range of 60,000-80,000 British pounds prior to the auction, and sold last night for 87,563 pounds including the auctioneer's cut.

"A view of Macau looking towards the gardens of the Casa, with figures in the foreground" is a landscape work understood to have been captured from a high point above the Inner Harbor. The pitched roof of the Grotto of Camões is visible among the trees of the Casa gardens in the middle distance. Estimated in the range of 70,000-100,000 pounds, the piece sold for 90,813 pounds.

"We are delighted that these two important and historical landscape paintings of Macau attracted such interest and achieved such good prices," Bonhams senior specialist Rhyanon Demery told the Times last night, immediately after the sale.

Asked about the significance of these historical documents, Macau's cultural authority said on behalf of the Macau Museum of Art that there were no representatives available to comment.

It was not immediately clear yesterday whether the local government had bid for the pieces or expressed an interest. "One can only hope that the Macau government has someone on the telephone this evening bidding for these two important pictures," said Timmermans last night.

"These are two paintings that should end up in a Macau museum, as far as I am concerned," concurred Wattis in a separate conversation.

# New Pearl Horizon development will have 13 residential towers

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government plans to build 13 residential towers at the site of the failed Pearl Horizon project with as many as 4,500 housing units, according to information disclosed at this week at the year's first plenary meeting by the Urban Planning Committee (CPU).

This latest plan is a reduction from the 18 residential towers and 5,220 housing units previously advanced. Committee members have commended the new proposal as it will allow more space for leisure and public areas, as well as wider streets than in the initial project.

According to the project's urban plan, the government plans to build the 4,500 housing units and make them available for the previously disclosed "house exchange plan", as well as for temporary housing to accommodate residents when their buildings undergo urban renewal.

The project also includes several other facilities for public use such as shops and commercial



spaces, leisure areas and a public transport hub.

The government-owned company in charge of the project, Macau Urban Renewal Company Limited, presented the project at the CPU meeting, noting that the land plot will be divided into four

different areas, with the first to be made available for acquisition by the buyers of "Pearl Horizon" development. Two other areas will be used to construct the apartments for the urban renewal projects and the last area will include social facilities, a bus terminal and

a shopping area, explained company Chairman Peter Lam, and the architect, Johnathan Wong.

During the presentation of the project, Lam noted that solving the problem of the former Pearl Horizon buyers is one of the major tasks of the company.

The buyers were left without their pre-sale property purchases after the original Pearl Horizon developer did not complete the planned residential project within the 25-year land concession. The government subsequently confiscated the land plot and decided to build its own residential complex to be released into the market, with Pearl Horizon buyers being granted purchasing priority.

Lam said that the zone of the new project designed to accommodate the Pearl Horizon buyers would also include parking lots, public squares and other public facilities. It would not include the construction of a municipal market, as it was first aired.

"We want to make the best possible use of the land plot and maximize the available resources to solve the problem of Pearl Horizon buyers," said Lam, as cited by Portuguese newspaper Hoje Macau.

According to Lam, it was also decided that the hub for public transport was more important for the future residents of the area than a market, adding that the mobility of the population was the priority.

Wong added that to shorten the time of construction, the new project will make full use of the foundations already built by the previous developer, accelerating the construction time as much as possible.

## Road works on the rise as streets gradually return to normal

LYNZY VALLES

**D**ESPITE the halt or stalling of several construction works in the SAR due to the coronavirus outbreak, public works are on the rise on the city's main roads.

Earlier this month, amid the low frequency of public transportation services, several public works projects were initiated. The well-timed move offered little inconvenience, as government offices, schools and other business enterprises were already instructed to remain closed.

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) previously said that it had received 301 road construction proposal plans this year, with 55 of these projects involving construction at the city's major intersections. Although the number of projects this year is similar to that of last year, it is expected that traffic



congestion may occur.

Yesterday, there were several traffic enforcers deployed on the city's busiest streets, managing the movement of the vehicles and the residents. As the city's operations have gradually returned to normal, slight traffic congestion has been experienced by private and public vehicles.

The Road Construction Co-ordination Group of DSAT previously pledged that it would strive to shorten the construction period and

minimize the impact on citizens' travel.

The Times contacted the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau to enquire as to whether the bureau is conducting more public works at this time of the year, but the bureau did not immediately reply yesterday.

Meanwhile, several private construction works in the SAR were halted due to the strict measure implemented by the SAR for incoming non-resident workers from Zhuhai.

The local government has imposed a 14-day quarantine period for migrant workers who had been in mainland China in order to deter frequent border crossings to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus. To this same end, the government has also called on employers to provide lodging for their non-resident workers from mainland China.

Some gaming operators, including Melco Resorts & Entertainment and Galaxy Entertainment Group, have confirmed likely delays to their Cotai construction projects.

However, it is a different case for Sands China's The Londoner, as the gaming operator said that their works are progressing according to their initial timeline, and that there were no indications of delay.

## COMMUNITY COMPLAINS FOREIGN WORKERS HAVE MOVED INTO MONASTERY

JULIE ZHU

**T**HE local community in Ilha Verde area has expressed their worries about non-local workers moving into the Casa Retiro monastery.

Earlier this week, the president of a local association for the Ilha Verde community, surnamed Cheong, led a group of media representatives on a visit to the monastery.

According to Cheong, some local residents complained to his association that they believe a group of 50 to 60 non-local workers have moved into the monastery. The complainants said that the non-local workers were carrying luggage, and that they believe the workers to be settling in the monastery during the current epidemic prevention period.

Speaking on behalf of the complainants, Cheong said he is worried that Casa Retiro will become a place posing risks of epidemic exacerbation, poor hygiene, and fire. In addition, he worries that Ilha

Verde Hill's environment will be further damaged.

According to Ilha Verde residents represented by Cheong, the monastery is not for residential purposes and does not have adequate residential facilities. If non-local workers live there, not only will safety and hygiene issues worsen, but Ilha Verde Hill will also become a place easily ignored on an epidemic prevention front.

As to whether these non-local workers have illegally moved into Casa Retiro, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has confirmed that there are some people living there.

According to a PSP representative at the government's daily press conference, approximately 20 people recently moved into the monastery, all being employees of the organization responsible for the monastery.

The PSP also confirmed that the non-local workers were indeed found inside the building, but all non-local workers inspected by the PSP had the proper documentation and were legally allowed to stay in Macau.

# HONG KONG UNVEILS HKD10,000 HANDOUT AS PART OF STIMULUS PACKAGE

ERIC LAM & ENDA CURRAN

**H**ONG Kong's government unveiled a budget packed with giveaways including a one-time cash handout that economists said isn't likely to spur growth, as the city struggles to stabilize an economy battered by political unrest and the coronavirus.

The main feature of the annual budget announced Wednesday is a payment of HK\$10,000 (\$1,284) to each permanent resident of the city 18 or older, aiding a population "overwhelmed by a heavy atmosphere," Financial Secretary Paul Chan said. Chan estimated the deficit will reach a record HK\$139.1 billion in the coming fiscal year.

The administration of Chief Executive Carrie Lam is seeking to stop the slide of the collapsing economy, rolling out the boldest budget in recent years amid blame for government inertia. Months of political unrest over China's role in the city pushed Hong Kong last year into its first annual recession in a decade, with economists forecasting a second annual contraction in 2020 as disruptions from the coronavirus outbreak further depress output.

"In these unprecedented times, I am confident that the 2020-21 budget proposals will provide effective and targeted support to help the Hong Kong community withstand the current difficulties and gear up for a brighter tomorrow," Lam said in a statement welcoming the spending plans.

However, the handout immediately came in for criticism from economists.

"This is obviously untargeted and regressive and will not

solve the problem of those most severely hit," said Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief Asia Pacific economist at Natixis SA. "It is like throwing a drop in the ocean for many while you could have used that amount to cure the injuries of only a few."

Ahead of the budget, accounting firm KPMG LLP pushed for handouts yet in the form of electronic vouchers to encourage direct spending, rather than saving or moving the cash abroad.

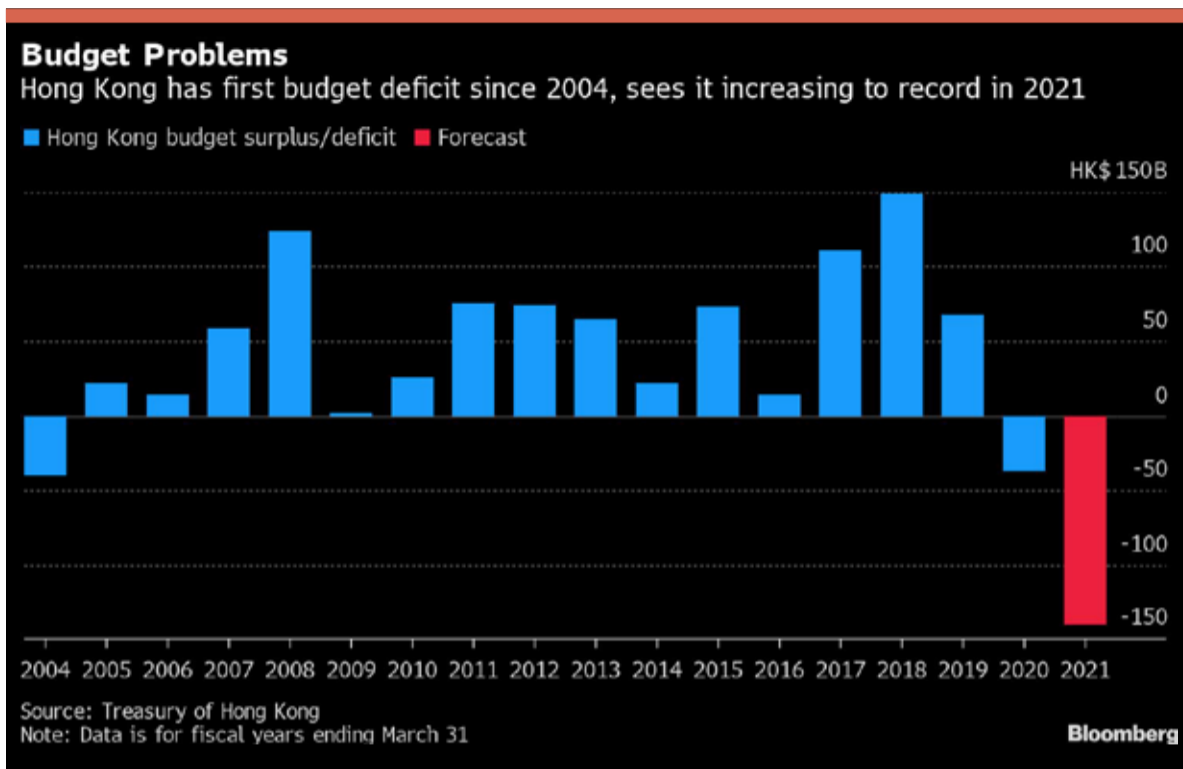
Kevin Lai, chief economist for Asia excluding Japan at Daiwa Capital Markets, is skeptical as to whether Hong Kong residents will rush to spend a cash windfall.

"That sounds like a lot, but would you go out and spend it? The answer is no," he said. "The economic benefits will only be marginal. Shops and restaurants are screaming for business. It's not going to help."

The handout is not the first in Hong Kong. The government distributed HK\$6,000 to all permanent residents in 2011. In 2018 the government introduced a "Caring and Sharing" program to hand out as much as HK\$4,000 to certain low-income residents.

Singapore also announced cash handouts in its budget last week, pledging a one-time payout of between S\$100 (\$71.52) and S\$300 for Singaporeans age 21 and older, as part of a S\$1.6 billion support package to help households cope with expenses. The city state is forecasting its biggest budget deficit in more than two decades in the coming fiscal year, with S\$6.4 billion in support for an economy slammed by the coronavirus outbreak.

The budget contained a ran-



ge of measures aimed at lessening the pain of the recent downturn. Homebuyers, students, investors and small businesses all were targeted for support in the budget. In all, the package is worth 4.2% of 2018's gross domestic product, according to Bloomberg Economics.

"In view of the tough economic environment, we will adopt an expansionary fiscal stance and make optimal use of our fiscal reserves to implement counter-cyclical measures," Chan said. The objective is "supporting enterprises, safeguarding jobs, stimulating the economy and relieving peo-

ple's burden, so as to help Hong Kong tide over the difficulties," he said.

The Hong Kong Police Force, widely criticized by residents for using excessive violence during the protests, is getting a big boost from the government that will push its spending to HK\$25.8 billion in the coming fiscal year, according to a budget document. That's a 9.3% increase on revised spending projections of HK\$23.6 billion for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. The police force plans to increase its staff by more than 2,500 by March 2021, the document shows.

Chan unveiled an official

forecast for economic growth this year of between -1.5% and 0.5%, and confirmed a contraction of 1.2% in 2019. The 2019-2020 fiscal deficit came in at HK\$37.8 billion, the first shortfall since 2004.

The economy in the first quarter is expected to be "rather bad," Chan said at a briefing after the budget speech.

"If the benefits from the cash handouts and tax cuts are distributed this year and everyone spends them this year, the economic boost could be 0.5% to 1% of GDP," said Tommy Wu from Oxford Economics in Hong Kong. **BLOOMBERG**

## GOV'T TO SPEND MILLIONS PROMOTING RULE OF LAW AFTER PROTESTS

**H**ONG Kong's government will launch a multi-million dollar campaign to promote the rule of law after public trust in the government plummeted following months of violent pro-democracy protests and criticism over its handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

In his budget speech yesterday, Financial Secretary Paul Chan announced a HK\$450 million (\$58 million) plan to "strengthen our community's understanding of the concept of the rule of law and its implementation." The money will go to the Department of Justice for an awareness campaign entitled "Vision 2030 for Rule of Law."

"Respect for the rule of law and independence of the judiciary are among the cornerstones underpinning Hong Kong's success," Chan said.

The marketing campaign comes after months of protests which saw Chief Executive Carrie Lam's approval rating fall to a record low of just 9.1%. While authorities say numerous demonstrations have been unruly and illegal, many of the protesters say they're battling to protect the rule of law and push back on an erosion of the city's freedoms since its return to China in 1997.

The protests began over a since-scraped bill allowing extraditions to the mainland. Even though protests waned over the Christmas break

and over Chinese New Year, the government's perceived mishandling of the rapidly spreading coronavirus outbreak provided a new battlefield for protesters -- and frontline medical staff -- to voice dissatisfaction with the government.

The city, which inherited a common law legal system from Britain, ranks highly in global rankings of rule of law, despite the running street battles between police and demonstrators. While protesters have lobbed petrol bombs and fired arrows, the police have faced widespread accusations of using excessive force.

The World Justice Project ranks Hong Kong the 16th best jurisdiction for the rule of law globally, just behind Japan and ahead of France and the U.S.

The initiative to promote respect for the rule of law comes after Chinese officials previously urged Hong Kong to instill more patriotism in Hong Kong students. And President Xi Jinping praised the neighboring former colony of Macau for its patriotic education on a recent visit.

In a previous campaign, Hong Kong's government put out a rap video that criticized protesters for blocking roads and public transit, and suggested they would ruin their future if they attended protests.

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BUDGET

- **RELIEF** measures for businesses including a low-interest loan with 100% guarantee provided by the government, to a ceiling of HK\$2 million, and a profits tax reduction of 100% on the first HK\$20,000.
- Waiving business registration fees, extending subsidies on electricity and water and sewage bills.
- HKD700 million to promote tourism in the city once the coronavirus epidemic abates.
- For citizens, measures including salaries tax reduction of 100% on the first HK\$20,000, waiving rates on residential properties to a ceiling of HK\$1,500 per quarter, one month's rent for lower-income tenants.
- Total recurrent funding of HK\$75 billion provided to the Hospital Authority in 2020-2021.
- Hong Kong Mortgage Corp. to launch pilot program offering fixed-rate mortgage loans through the banks to provide homebuyers with more options and reduce risk of interest rate volatility.
- On the innovation front: HK\$3 billion earmarked for a possible Phase 2 of the Science Park expansion program, as well as a possible third InnoHK research cluster at the park, HK\$2 billion for a re-industrialization plan to support manufacturers setting up new smart production lines.
- The Department of Justice will receive about HK\$450 million to enhance the community's "understanding of the concept of the rule of law and its implementation."

AP PHOTO

# South Korean virus cases jump again, first US soldier infected

A worker wearing a face mask sprays disinfectant as a precaution against the new coronavirus at Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

**S**OUTH Korean virus cases jumped again yesterday and the U.S. military confirmed its first case among American soldiers based in the Asian country, with his case and many others connected to a southeastern city with a growing illness cluster.

South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 216 of the 284 new cases were in Daegu, where the government has been mobilizing public health tools to contain the spread of the outbreak, and in neighboring towns.

The U.S. military said the 23-year-old soldier was in self-quarantine at his off-base residence. He had been based in Camp Carroll in a town near Daegu, and visited both Carroll and nearby Camp Walker in recent days, according to the statement.

South Korean authorities and U.S. military health professionals were tracing his contacts to determine if other people may have been exposed.

About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea as deterrence against potential aggression from North Korea. United States Forces Korea previously said a widowed dependent had the virus, the first case involving a USFK-related individual. South Korea's 600,000-member military has re-

ported 18 cases and quarantined thousands of soldiers as a precaution.

Bowling alleys, movie theaters and a golf course at four U.S. bases were closed after the soldier's case was confirmed, Col. Edward Ballanco, commander of the U.S. Army Garrison Daegu, said. All restaurants at the bases, and at Camp George in Daegu, could now provide only takeout meals with soldiers and family members prohibited from dining there, he said.

"This is a setback, it's true, there's no getting around that, but it's not the end of the war," he said on a video message posted on Facebook.

"We are very well equipped to fight this thing off. I am certain that, that soldier that has tested positive, he's on his way up to Camp Humphreys today, is going to get better medical care than anyone else in Korea who has the coronavirus."

South Korea now has 1,261 confirmed infections of the virus and 11 fatalities from the COVID-19 illness it causes. The national government has been channeling medical personnel, protective suits and other supplies to Daegu, and there are concerns the local hospitals are being overwhelmed and fatigued doctors are becoming vulnerable to infections.

"This week will be critical in the fight to combat the illness," Prime

Minister Chung Se-kyun said at a meeting in Daegu City Hall to discuss quarantine efforts.

The number of cases were expected to rise as health workers finish testing hundreds of members of the Daegu branch of a church that has the country's biggest cluster of infections. The Shincheonji Church of Jesus, which mainstream Christian organizations describe as a cult, provided a list of 212,000 members nationwide to government authorities who plan to widen the screening. Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip said authorities plan to find and test churchgoers exhibiting symptoms first.

South Korea's virus patients also include a 25-year-old cabin crew member of Korean Air, the country's biggest airline, who worked on a flight that departed from Israel and arrived in South Korea on Feb. 16, according to Jung Eun-kyeong, director of the KCDC. The flight also carried a group of tourists, of which 30 have tested positive.

China, by far, still has the most cases and deaths from the illness, though its daily increase in cases has slowed recently. Chinese officials yesterday reported another 406 cases and 52 additional deaths, all of them in hard-hit Hubei province and all but 10 in the epicenter of the city of Wuhan.

China has recorded 2,715 deaths from COVID-19 and 78,064 confirmed cases of the virus on

the mainland since the illness emerged in December.

China has put Wuhan and nearby cities under virtual quarantine for weeks, halting nearly all movement except for disease prevention, health care and supplying necessities. It has sent thousands of personnel to build and staff virus-dedicated hospitals in the epicenter region. In the capital Beijing and throughout the country, public events were canceled and factories, offices and schools closed.

Chinese banks have been ordered to disinfect old banknotes before reissuing them to the public. State broadcaster CCTV showed staff of a state-owned bank in Shanghai putting old banknotes under ultraviolet disinfection and putting them into a vault. The bank told CCTV money removed from high-risk sites such as hospitals and markets would not be returned to circulation. Other banknotes will be disinfected and sealed for at least 7 days before being recirculated, the bank said.

Uncertainly remained over how best to stem the spread of the illness. Italy had taken Europe's most stringent preventative measures and yet became home to the biggest outbreak outside Asia. Experts in Japan acknowledged the mishandling of a virus-stricken cruise ship could have allowed the problem to magnify.

Japanese government spokesman Yoshihide Suga yesterday downplayed the assertion by International Olympic Committee veteran member Richard Pound the fast-spreading virus could cancel the Tokyo Olympics set to open in July. Pound said organizers face a three-month window to decide the fate of the games.

Suga said Pound's opinion does not reflect the official view of the IOC. Suga said the IOC and local organizers are going as planned with the Tokyo Olympics.

Several Middle Eastern countries reported jumps in cases tied to travel from Iran, which has the highest in the Middle East with 95 cases and 15 deaths. Kuwait's KUNA news agency said 12 cases have been confirmed there, and Bahrain's state-run news agency said it had 26 cases.

Japan's total of 861, third highest behind China and South Korea, includes 691 from the Diamond Princess. Four former passengers on the ship have died and more than a dozen people who were evacuated by their home countries later tested positive for the virus. Six government officials involved in the quarantine effort also became sick.

Overnight, 445 Filipinos who were mostly crewmembers on the ship flew home to begin a 14-day quarantine. Eighty Filipinos from the ship have the virus and stayed behind in hospitals in Japan. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Lawmakers Matteo Dall'Osso (right) and Maria Teresa Baldini wear sanitary mask during a work session in the Italian lower chamber

COVID-19

# Italy sees cases rise 45% in a day; contagion rises in Europe

ITALY reported a 45% one-day increase in people infected with the coronavirus as other countries in Europe recorded their first cases Tuesday, producing evidence that travelers are carrying the virus from the European outbreak's current epicenter.

Italian officials reported 11 deaths and 322 confirmed cases of the virus, 100 more than a day earlier. While the majority were concentrated in northern Italy, some of the new cases registered outside the country's two hard-hit regions, including three in Sicily, two in Tuscany and one in Liguria.

An Italian couple from the afflicted north tested positive in the Canary Islands off Africa, forcing the quarantine of their hotel in what one guest said felt like being "monkeys in a cage." Austria, Croatia and Switzerland reported their first cases, all in people who recently traveled to Italy.

The four new deaths in Italy, like the seven reported earlier, were in patients who were elderly, suffering from other ailments or both, officials said.

Amid increasing cases and distribution problems with protective gear and

test kits, Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte defended the measures Italy has taken to contain the outbreak and predicted a stabilizing of numbers soon. But he acknowledged that the rise in cases — the most outside Asia — was "worrisome."

"Obviously I can't say I'm not worried because I don't want anyone to think we're underestimating this emergency," he said before a meeting with a visiting World Health Organization mission. "But we trust that with the measures we've implemented there will be a containing effect in the coming days."

Italy has closed schools, museums and theaters in the two regions where clusters have formed and troops are enforcing quarantines around 10 towns in Lombardy and the epicenter of the Veneto cluster, Vo'Euganeo.

The sponsors of one of the world's largest furniture and design trade shows, held in Milan, announced late Tuesday that they decided to postpone the international event s due to concerns over the virus. Milan is the Lombardy regional capital.

Italian health officials haven't yet confirmed the source of the outbreak. An-

gelo Borrelli, the head of the Italian civil protection department, said the case count grew from 222 to 322, representing a 45% increase, in a 24-hour period from Tuesday to yesterday [Macau time].

The southern island of Sicily reported its first three positive cases from a woman vacationing from Bergamo, in Lombardy and two others travelling with her. Two cases were also reported in Tuscany, south out of the epicenter.

FROM ITALY...

Authorities in western Germany said yesterday that a man who contracted COVID-19 is in critical condition and has been taken to a specialist hospital in Duesseldorf, as officials in neighboring Austria sealed off an apartment complex where a female tourist from Italy with a possible infection died overnight.

The health ministry of North Rhine-Westphalia state said the man was first hospitalized Monday with serious pneumonia in the town of Erkelenz near the Dutch border.

He was then diagnosed with the new virus and isolated in an intensive care unit before being transported to Duesseldorf's Uni-

versity Hospital. The man's wife was also isolated on suspicion of contracting the virus after showing symptoms.

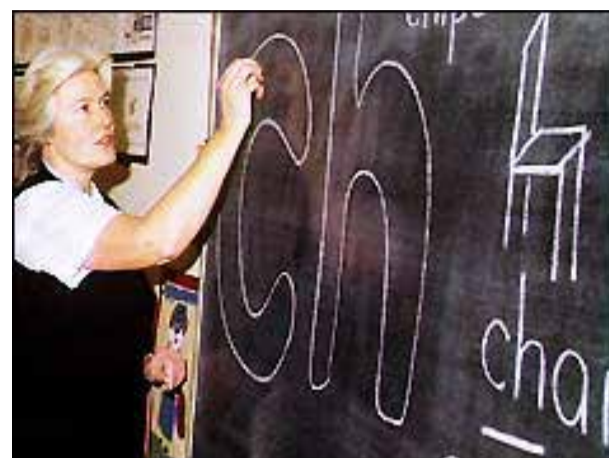
German news agency reported that the man was in his 40s and had a pre-existing condition.

Stephan Pusch, who heads the district administration in Heinsberg, where Erkelenz is located, said Wednesday that schools and kindergartens in the area would remain shut Wednesday. He urged people who display symptoms of illness to stay at home and contact their doctors by phone.

Authorities in Austria placed an apartment complex in the southern town of Bad Kleinkirchheim under quarantine yesterday after a 56-year-old woman from Italy died overnight. Kaernten state officials said tests were being conducted to determine whether the woman, from the town of Friaul in northern Italy, had the virus. Other residents of the apartment complex were also being tested, they said.

Austria, Switzerland and Croatia on Tuesday reported their first cases of the virus, all involving people who had recently come from Italy. AP

## this day in history



### 1953 SPELLING BILL PASSES SECOND READING

A proposal to simplify English spelling has cleared its second hurdle in parliament.

After a second debate MPs in the House of Commons voted by 65 votes to 53 to approve the Simplified Spelling Bill for consideration by parliamentary committees.

The private member's bill was introduced by Labour MP Mont Follick earlier this month.

It proposes setting up an investigation into the feasibility of introducing a simpler version of English to make reading easier for younger children.

The children would switch to standard English as they got older.

The new system would be tested in school experiments in England and Scotland paid for by the government.

It is Mr Follick's second attempt to get parliamentary support for a new spelling system.

A bill he introduced in 1949 was eventually defeated by just three votes in spite of opposition by the Labour government of Clement Attlee.

The new bill has also attracted cross-party support - it was seconded by a Conservative MP, James Pitman, whose grandfather devised the Pitman shorthand system.

During a debate lasting four-and-a-half hours Mr Pitman said that around 150,000 of the 400,000 children who started school each year would leave without being able to read properly.

Mr Pitman - a member of the Simplified Spelling Society - used large printed cards with words such as "out" and "ought" to display what he said were inconsistencies in the spelling and pronunciation of some English words.

"English is halfway between the alphabetic system of Spanish and picture-writing of Chinese," he told MPs.

However, Labour's MP for South Shields James Ede said the bill would only confuse the less intelligent by making them learn two ways of spelling.

But Mont Follick said they had no intention of forcing children to learn two different systems.

Spelling reform was also one of the passions of the writer George Bernard Shaw who died two years ago.

His will set aside money for a national competition to devise a simplified version of English.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Mont Follick withdrew his bill after reaching a compromise with the government.

The Ministry of Education backed a small-scale research project conducted under the aegis of the University of London.

However, the idea was put on the back burner until James Pitman devised the Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) - a phonetics-based system made up of 44 characters.

ITA was tested in a handful of schools in England during the early 1960s with mixed success for the children involved.

It largely fell into disuse although James Pitman had some success in persuading schools in the USA and Australia to try out the system.

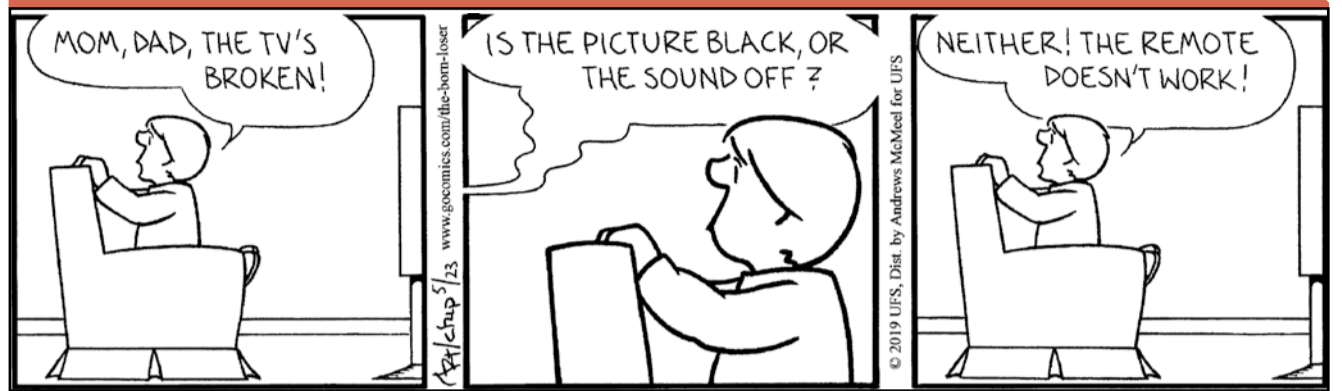
ITA is among numerous alternatives to standard English spelling - others include Spanglish and Cut Spelling.



**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b> Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>There are so many different types of communication to choose from, so why not choose one that's a little bit out of the ordinary today? It will get you noticed by people with good taste and vision.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b> Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>While you wait, distract yourself with fun adventures with friends. Do some mindless activities and soak up the latest news about what other people are doing.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b> May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>Make it clear that you are not available, either because you're already taken or you're just not interested. The truth is the best solution even if it seems like leading them on will feed your ego.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b> Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>You're quite right to stand up for what you believe in, but today you should try to understand that not every one of your opinions requires such a rigid posture.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b> Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>You can't worry about coming off as having a big ego right now. Show your pride. Let people think what they want to think. It's not going to affect your mood. Be proud of what you have done.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b> Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>It just goes to show that life always has surprises that keep you on your toes. Community involvement could give you a bigger sense of purpose, so consider moving into a volunteer situation.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b> Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>If you're shopping today, try to stop off at a flea market, vintage clothing shop, or antiques store. There's an undiscovered gem waiting to be found, and you're in just the right place to discover it today.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b> Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>It might send your life in a new direction. Show them you have what it takes, but try not to come on too strong. Lead with your personality and just be yourself.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b> Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>More than ever before, you may notice the fabric of the community around you and your place in it. Everyone around you has an effect on your day, and this could be either a good thing or a bad thing.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b> Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>It's been a long time since you've been tested to this extent, and you could really use the exercise. It's nice to have a long period of calm, but you need to push yourself every once in a while.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b> Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>You might need to read a few pages before you get a good idea of how breathtakingly attractive someone truly is. Don't miss the opportunity to get to know this person better.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b> Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>It takes time for some people to come out of their shell and join the group activities, so don't try to force things. If you can give them the space and time they need to get comfortable, you'll win them over.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

<b>EASY</b>					<b>EASY+</b>						
1			3	8	9		8	6			
3	4		1		6				6	1	
	8	9	3	1	4	6	1				
5	4	2			3		7		9		
7		6		9		1		8			
			1	4	6	7		1		4	
	9	7	2	6				7	5	9	
4			5		8	3	5	3			
1	7			5			4	2		3	

<b>MEDIUM</b>					<b>HARD</b>						
	1	8	6						7	1	
		3		1	4		9				
4	6			9	3		5				
2			8		4						
	7			1	4	7		6		4	5
8		7			5					9	
5			9	1			7	2			
2		5			8		1				
	1	2		4	5						

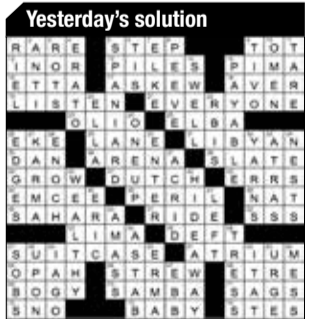
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-5	8	clear
Harbin	-22	-9	snow shower
Tianjin	-2	8	smoggy
Urumqi	-12	-3	clear
Xi'an	-1	8	overcast
Lhasa	-5	4	snow shower
Chengdu	7	12	overcast
Chongqing	10	12	overcast
Kunming	3	20	clear
Nanjing	7	10	drizzle
Shanghai	8	10	moderate rain
Wuhan	2	7	drizzle
Hangzhou	6	9	moderate rain
Taipei	17	21	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	24	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-6	-4	flurry
Frankfurt	0	5	overcast
Paris	0	4	clear
London	4	6	drizzle
New York	-7	1	clear

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Muscle injury; 5- Gives a hoot; 10- Cupola; 14- Upper hand; 15- Get the better of; 16- Slaughter in Cooperstown; 17- Stains; 18- Stands for; 20- Trims; 22- Truman of literature; 23- Twinned; 25- Quote; 26- Like grams and liters; 27- Lout; 28- Flat sound; 32- Spillane's "\_\_\_ Jury"; 33- Reckoning; 35- Carry; 36- Never, in Nuremberg; 37- Adj. modifier; 38- Man-mouse connector; 39- Sicilian smoker; 41- Shakespearean sprite; 43- Doozy; 44- Mariners can sail on seven of these; 45- Cedar Rapids college; 46- "Gunsmoke" star; 48- Witnessed; 50- Furry swimmers; 51- Still; 54- Sporting blades; 55- Canopy bed, e.g.; 57- Mal de \_\_\_; 61- Work without \_\_\_; 62- Collection of Hindu aphorisms; 63- Chieftain, usually in Africa; 64- Beatty Oscar film; 65- Peer; 66- School orgs.;

**DOWN:** 1- Abbreviation of the name Edward; 2- Dreyer's partner in ice cream; 3- Era; 4- Breathe; 5- Make right; 6- On \_\_\_-to-know basis; 7- Gym counts; 8- Where It's at; 9- State in detail; 10- Most profound; 11- \_\_\_ account (never); 12- Feminist Lucretia; 13- "\_\_\_ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 19- Watched the kids; 21- Jackie's second; 23- Diminutive; 24- Goddess of wisdom; 25- Have a cow?; 26- Floating bombs; 27- Blast from the past; 29- Oklahoman; 30- Accent; 31- Singes; 34- Biblical brother; 40- Declares positively; 41- Vinegary; 42- Situated on the side; 43- Ragtime dance; 47- Hwy.; 49- Mentalist's claim; 50- Musical drama; 51- Yonder; 52- Muscle quality; 53- Regretted; 54- Famous last words; 56- Arab market; 58- CPR specialist; 59- Carrere of "Wayne's World"; 60- Sounds of hesitation;



**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	



<p><b>FOR SALE</b></p> <p><b>Nova City 3 bedroom, ready to move in</b> HK\$11,750,000 1,515 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p><b>FOR RENT</b></p> <p><b>Taipa Village one bed apartment</b> \$10,900/mth 740 ft² 1 1/2 1 1/2</p>	<p><b>FOR SALE</b></p> <p>[Macau] Commercial Space in Barra n/a ft² \$42,000,000 (ref: 20016002)</p> <p>[Macau] Seaview Garden 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,420 ft² \$11,800,000 (ref: 20016004)</p> <p>[Macau] Waterfront Duet - New studio 1 1/2 469 ft² \$5,100,000 (ref: 20016001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nam Long 1 1/2 1 1/2 785 ft² \$4,780,000 (ref: 20016009)</p>	<p><b>FOR RENT</b></p> <p>[Taipa] Buckingham 2 1/2 2 1/2 1,439 ft² \$20,900/mth (ref: n/a)</p> <p>[Macau] Central Macau unit 2 1/2 2 1/2 n/a ft² \$20,000/mth (ref: 20011001)</p> <p>[Macau] Vai Fung Triplex 2 1/2 2 1/2 n/a ft² \$15,800/mth (ref: 19121001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nam Long 2 1/2 1 1/2 645 ft² \$11,800/mth (ref: 1911 1001)</p>
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Bob Chapek, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Experiences

## BOB IGER HANDS DISNEY'S REINS TO PARKS CHIEF IN SURPRISE SUCCESSION

CHRISTOPHER PALMERI

**B**OB Iger abruptly stepped aside as Walt Disney Co.'s chief executive officer, handing the reins to theme-parks head Bob Chapek after years of speculation over who would succeed the longtime CEO of the world's largest entertainment company.

Chapek, 60, who led Disney's theme parks and consumer products businesses, takes over immediately, the company said Tuesday. Iger will stay to direct the company's creative endeavors as executive chairman through 2021.

With the appointment, Chapek lands one of the most coveted jobs in entertainment. He's a 27-year company veteran who led Disney's home-video business during the DVD era, before transitioning to consumer products. In that role, he reorganized the business to cut costs and focus on franchises, including the "Frozen" toy craze.

"It's a huge surprise," Laura Martin, a Needham & Co. analyst, said on Bloomberg Television. "The suddenness of it - the fact that it's as of today and they don't have a new parks head yet - makes it feel like it's all very sudden."

The change jolted investors, who sent the shares down 2.3% to \$125.30 in premarket trading yes-

terday. The stock had fallen 11% this year through Tuesday's close.

But in an interview on Bloomberg Television, Chapek said he'll follow the course laid out by Iger, who has recently steered the company into new streaming businesses such as Disney+.

"The center of our brand is creative storytelling," Chapek said. "If the creative storytelling is right, then everything else is right, no matter where you put it, whether you put it in the theatrical channel, Disney+ or the theme parks."

While Disney had been under pressure to name a successor, Iger wasn't expected to relinquish the CEO role right away. The timing of the announcement, just weeks after an upbeat earnings report, created an air of mystery around a transition that has been frequent parlor talk in Hollywood.

Disney has bet its future on streaming services, including the Disney+ platform that launched in November. That had fueled speculation that its streaming chief, Kevin Mayer, was in line for the CEO job.

On a call with investors on Tuesday, Iger said the transition will allow him to focus on creative endeavors at the company in a way that he couldn't when he was still running the business day-to-day.

Chapek, on the other hand, will be able to immediately immerse himself in businesses he hasn't run before, such as television. A native of Indiana, he is just the seventh CEO in Disney's history. The company said Tuesday that its new chief will report to both Iger and the board.

"When I leave, he will be familiar with all parts of the company," Iger said. "Not just the ones he managed."

### AVATAR LAND

Iger handed Chapek the job of parks chief five years ago, a role that Disney's now former CEO has long deemed crucial because it represents daily interaction with fans around the world.

In that post, Chapek supervised the launch of the new Avatar-themed land in Orlando, Florida and the \$5.5 billion Disney Shanghai resort, as well as two Star Wars-themed lands that opened last year in California and Florida.

Chapek also redesigned pricing in the parks, selling higher-priced tickets on peak travel days in an effort to manage crowds. Theme-park attendance was flat last year, but revenue and profit rose under the new model.

Disney didn't name a successor to lead the parks, underscoring the swiftness of the change.

Iger, 69, steered Disney through several multibillion-dollar acquisitions, including the \$71 billion takeover of Fox's entertainment assets last year.

### MOVIE MAESTRO

He set the industry standard for managing in the film business, cutting back on the number of one-off pictures to focus on established characters and franchises that could be marketed around the world.

Along those lines, he acquired Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm, building the most successful movie studio in Hollywood history. With the acquisition of Fox, Disney garnered one-third of total U.S. box-office revenue last year.

Iger postponed his retirement multiple times as he pondered life after Disney and stuck around, most recently, to supervise the Fox deal. Chapek's appointment is a setback for other potential contenders, most notably TV streaming chief Mayer.

Chapek takes over a company that faces challenges, such as the continuing erosion of viewers in its core TV business, led by ABC and ESPN. The coronavirus, meanwhile, is crimping profit at his parks division. The company's resorts in Shanghai and Hong Kong remain closed under government orders.

He'll be well compensated. Chapek will enter the job with a \$25 million annual target compensation, consisting of \$2.5 million in salary, a \$7.5 million target bonus and a long-term incentive worth \$15 million, according to a regulatory filing.

### CREATIVE CHALLENGES

While all of his dealmaking brought Disney a wealth of content, Iger clearly has his work cut out for him on the creative side as well.

The newly acquired Fox studio has produced a string of duds and Disney has yet to prove itself capable of delivering more grown-up films or online programming aimed at adults.

And one of Iger's crowning achievements, the acquisition of the Star Wars brand, remains a question mark as the company takes a hiatus on making films until it can plot out the future of the franchise.

Over his 15 years as CEO, Iger collected more than \$500 million in salary, bonuses and share sales, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. He still owns stock worth about \$150 million as of Tuesday's close in New York.

In an interview on Bloomberg Television, Iger deflected questions about his future after Disney.

"I will have to use my imagination," he said. "I am concentrating on the priorities we have talked about. I will not take my eye off the ball until I retire at the end of 2021." **BLOOMBERG**

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# Barcelona draws at Napoli in first leg

ANDREW DAMPF, NAPLES

## NAPOLI 1, BARCELONA 1

**O**n a night when Lionel Messi was expected to put on a show in the stadium that was once Diego Maradona's, the Barcelona forward did relatively little in a 1-1 draw at Napoli in the first leg of the Champions League round of 16 yesterday [Macau time].

Dries Mertens tied Napoli's all-time scoring record by curling in a first-half shot and Antoine Griezmann equalized for Barcelona near the hour mark after being set up nicely by Nélsón Semedo for the visitors' only shot on target.

Mertens matched former Napoli captain Marek Hamšík with 121 goals in all competitions for the club -- six more than Maradona.

"This result leaves a bitter taste, because we played on level terms and showed sacrifice," Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne said. "It was emotional to face

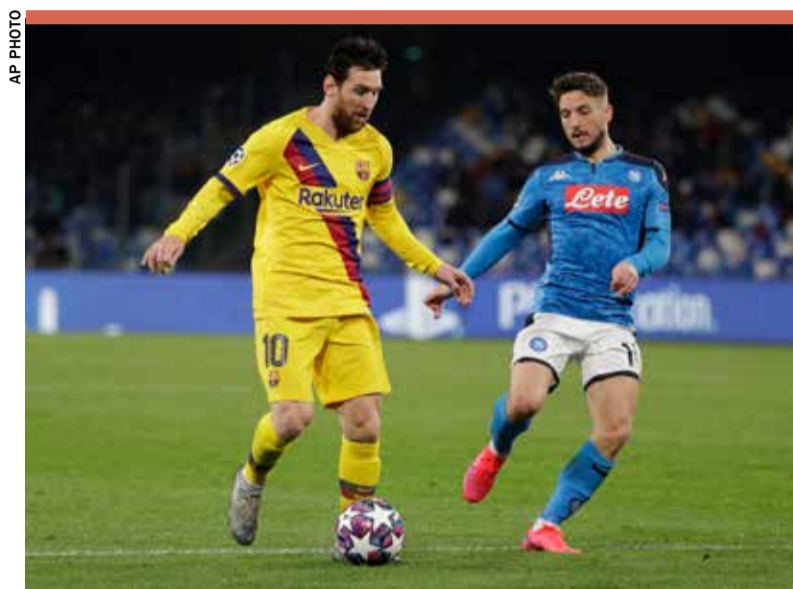
Barcelona and Messi for the first time. I just feel we could have had a better result in front of our fans, especially with the chances we created."

Napoli has reached the Champions League knockout stages for the third time in six appearances but has never progressed further than the round of 16.

Key Barcelona midfielder Arturo Vidal -- who deputized in attack amid a shortage of forwards for Barcelona -- was sent off in the final minutes after picking up two quick yellow cards, first for a hard foul on Insigne then for physical contact with Mario Rui after play had stopped. Already depleted by injuries, Barcelona will also be without Sergio Busquets in the second leg on March 18 due to accumulated cards.

Also, veteran Barcelona defender Gerard Piqué limped off with an apparent injury toward the end.

Five-time champion Barcelona controlled the game for long stretches in Napoli's half but created few concrete chances.



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (left) and Napoli's Dries Mertens

"We will have more options in the second leg," Barcelona coach Quique Setién said. "It's unlikely a team will be able to defend for that long at Camp Nou. We've got to think positive and cannot complain."

"It was difficult to break Napoli down or find the right passing line, as they were always in the way."

An error from Barcelona left back Junior Firpo led to Napoli's goal, as Piotr Zielinski took control and surged forward before crossing to Mertens, who unleashed a precise shot into the far, top corner.

After Mertens performed a little celebratory dance, Napoli's announcer celebrated the goal by yelling the Belgium forward's

first name seven times before the crowd responded with "MERTENS!"

Minutes later, Napoli nearly scored again when José Callejón pulled back for Kostas Manolas, who missed just wide from close range.

Messi -- playing in the stadium where fellow Argentina great Maradona achieved some of his greatest exploits -- had his best chance nine minutes in when he evaded a crowd of defenders and got off a difficult shot from just beyond the area that missed high.

Before kickoff, fans held up signs featuring an image of Maradona that read "Bienvenido a la casa de Dios" -- Welcome to God's house.

Mertens had to come off following a rough foul from Busquets early in the second half that resulted in a costly yellow card for the midfielder.

But Busquets then provided the through ball that led to Griezmann's goal, with Semedo running in behind Mario Rui to set up the France forward. AP

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OPINION

World Views

David Fickling, Bloomberg

**CORONAVIRUS  
COMPLACENCY IS  
WORSE THAN PANIC**

Don't think about a white bear.

What did you just see in your mind's eye? If the answer was "a white bear," you'll have grasped one of the problems facing public health officials in talking about the risks from the Covid-19 coronavirus.

The message most experts will want to convey is, naturally, "Don't panic." But it's almost impossible for humans to hear that instruction without its alarming echo: "Panic."

If Covid-19 turns into a global pandemic, as looks increasingly likely, this problem is going to crop up again and again. Doctors want to convey information that will help people limit their own risks and minimize the burden on health systems. At the same time, they worry that the very act of sharing information will encourage people to act as if they're in the grip of an emergency.

Take canned goods. Many public health experts would recommend that people keep well-stocked food and medicine cupboards at the moment. In the event of a serious pandemic, that will mean you're not forced out of the house too often, or left at the mercy of supply chains that may be damaged by illness in the workforce.

The best way to do this is probably to marginally upgrade your normal daily purchases — an extra pack of tissues here, one more bag of rice there — and build up a stockpile over a course of weeks. That's clearly not what's happened in places where coronavirus is spreading, though: We've already seen a toilet paper heist in Hong Kong and panic-buying in orderly Singapore.

One obvious reason for this is that it's not all that hard to clear out a supermarket. Grocery stores typically have no more than two to four weeks of inventory on hand at any one time, and much of that will be held off-site. If everyone buys sufficient supplies to see themselves through an extra few weeks, it's not unlikely that you or someone you follow on Facebook is going to find some empty shelves, and take this as evidence that society's foundations are quaking.

The behavior that leads to such shortages isn't necessarily irrational.

How should we deal with this situation?

One lesson can be learned from the failure of China's initial response to Covid-19: Treat the population like adults.

The more that information is shared — not just on confirmed cases and deaths, but on how many tests came back negative, and on which subgroups of the population are most and least at risk, for example — the more individuals will be able to make their own judgments about safety and act responsibly.

Another lesson: The only thing we have to fear, is the fear of fear itself.

"Actual panic is quite rare in these situations," said Julie Leask, a professor of risk communication at the University of Sydney's nursing school.

Despite the way things may look if you spend a lot of time on social media, humanity isn't really one bad press conference away from descending into bloody anarchy. The situation isn't helped when our political leaders fail to prioritize pandemic preparedness — President Donald Trump has repeatedly pushed to cut funding for the area — or to speak up in defense of ethnic-Chinese people at risk of prejudice. But sharing timely information with the public; encouraging readiness; and putting a bit more pressure on supply chains now when they're best able to bear it — all of that is a better strategy than waiting and then sounding a red alert at the last minute.

At this point, the fear of coronavirus is probably spreading through the world's population even faster than the virus itself. That may not be a bad thing if it encourages behaviors that will slow down the outbreak. A measure of fear may be not so much infecting our societies, as inoculating them. (Abridged)

President Donald Trump said he'll discuss the coronavirus threat at a White House news conference today, a day after he sought to minimize fears of the virus spreading widely across the U.S.

Trump tweeted that representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and others, would join him at the late-afternoon appearance.

Trump and members of the administration have been sending mixed messages about the virus.

The CDC this week warned the American public to prepare for an outbreak of the disease, which has spawned more than 80,000 cases around the world but relatively few so far in the U.S.

But before he flew home from India on Tuesday, Trump said the coronavirus situation is "very well under control in our country."

The administration has asked Congress for an additional \$2.5 billion to speed development of a vaccine, support preparedness and response activities, and to gather needed equipment and supplies.



AP PHOTO



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**Thailand's** normally docile students have been holding rallies around the country to express their discontent with the established political order. The rare mass activism was triggered by a court ruling dissolving a popular opposition political party whose democracy-promoting policies had attracted substantial support among younger Thais. As many as 2,000 students gathered yesterday in Bangkok at the main undergraduate campus of Thammasat University.

**GLOBE BRACES FOR  
LONG BATTLE AGAINST  
VIRUS AS CASES SPREAD**

**SCIENTISTS** raced to find a treatment, crews scrubbed everything from money to buses, and quarantines were enforced yesterday from a beachfront resort in the Atlantic to an uninhabited island in the Pacific as the world fought the spread of a new virus.

Worries over the ever-expanding economic fallout of the Covid-19 crisis multiplied, with factories idled, trade routes frozen and tourism crippled, while a growing list of countries braced for the illness to claim new territory. Even the Olympics, five months away, wasn't far enough off to keep people from wondering if it would go on as planned.

"We don't expect a miracle in the short term," said Kianoush Jahanpour of the health ministry in Iran, where an official tally of infections of 139 was doubted by some who thought the problem was far bigger.

About 82,000 people around the globe were sickened by the coronavirus that kept finding new targets.

Though the virus pushed into countries both rich and poor, its arrival in places with little ability to detect, respond and contain it brought concern it could run rampant there and spread easily elsewhere.

"We're going to be trying to slow down the spread so that our hospitals are not overwhelmed in one big gulp, one big hit," said Ian Mackay, who studies viruses at the University of Queensland in Australia.

In South Korea, workers sanitized public buses, while in China, banks disinfected banknotes using ultraviolet rays. In Germany, authorities stressed "sneezing etiquette," while in the United States, doctors announced a clinical trial of a possible coronavirus treatment.

Around the world, as Christians marked the start of the holy season of Lent with Ash Wednesday, worshippers found churches closed and rituals changed by virus fears. Even in St. Peter's Square, many of those gathered for Pope Francis' weekly audience wore face masks and clergy appeared to refrain from embracing the pontiff or kissing his ring.

Services in Singapore were broadcast online to keep people from crowded sanctuaries where germs could spread, bishops in South Korea shuttered churches for what they said was the first time in the Catholic Church's 236-year history there, and in Malaysia and the Philippines, ashes were sprink-

led on the heads of those marking the start of Lent instead of using a damp thumb to trace a cross of ashes.

"We would like to be cautious so that the coronavirus will not spread," said the Rev. Victorino Cueto, rector of the National Shrine of our Mother of Perpetual Help in Manila in the Philippines.

Major gatherings were eyed warily, with organizers scrambling to respond in the face of the epidemic. Looming largest of all are the Olympic games, whose opening ceremonies are scheduled for July 24 in Tokyo. A member of the International Olympic Committee, Richard POUND, sounded alarms a day earlier, saying the virus could force a cancellation of the games. The Japanese government, in turn, gave mixed signals, insisting they would go forward yet urging that sports events now be curtailed.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for major sports and cultural events in the coming two weeks to be canceled or postponed to stem further infections. Meanwhile, the top government spokesman said Olympics preparations would proceed and the games would go on as planned. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

**India** At least 20 people were killed and 189 injured in three days of clashes in New Delhi that coincided with U.S. President Donald Trump's first state visit to India, with the death toll expected to rise. Violence between Hindu mobs and Muslims protesting a new citizenship law that fast-tracks naturalization for foreign-born religious minorities of all major faiths in South Asia except Islam left shops smoldering.



AP PHOTO

**Syria** Shelling and airstrikes regular forces killed at least three people in northwestern Syria, where dozens of villages, including major rebel strongholds in the last opposition-held area, have been captured over the past few days. The new push by Russian-backed Syrian troops could worsen the humanitarian crisis that has displaced nearly a million people and left more than 300 civilians dead since the beginning of December.