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**GAMING ANALYSTS EXPECT LITTLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE WAY OF GROSS GAMING REVENUE THIS MONTH, THOUGH THE OUTLOOK FOR 2020 REMAINS MIXED**

P5

**NEW DOCUMENTARY EXPLORES MACAU IN HISTORIC MARITIME TRADE**

P4

**NORTH KOREA'S TOUTED CONFIDENCE MAY BELIE A BREWING DISASTER AS MANY OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY FEAR IT IS VASTLY UNPREPARED FOR A VIRUS OUTBREAK**

P7

AP PHOTO



**Indonesia's** most active volcano erupted yesterday, spewing sand and pyroclastic material and sending a massive column of smoke and ash as high as 6,000 meters into the sky. The eruption of Mount Merapi unleashed searing gas clouds and ash that made rain thick and muddy in several villages.

AP PHOTO



**British** authorities laid out plans yesterday to confront a COVID-19 epidemic, saying that the new coronavirus could spread within weeks from a few dozen confirmed cases to millions of infections, with thousands of people in the U.K. at risk of death. Officials hope the most drastic measures won't be needed.

**England** prop Mako Vunipola has gone into self-isolation because of the virus outbreak after travelling through Asia and may miss his team's last two Six Nations rugby matches. Vunipola returned at the weekend from Tonga, but flew through virus-hit Hong Kong.

AP PHOTO



**Global outbreak** Fine wines and hipster gin. Hunting rifles and knives. Contemporary paintings and million-dollar sports cars. They're all marketed at trade events that are quickly going dark across the globe due to the new coronavirus - and taking with them sales opportunities that may be difficult to make up.

More on backpage



## SEVEN AIR MACAU CREWMEMBERS TO JOIN WUHAN RESCUE MISSION

P3

## MANY SMES WANT LOAN REPAYMENTS POSTPONED, NOT NEW LOANS

More than 40% of requests to the Economic Bureau concerned the adjustment of repayment plans for SME loans granted as far back as eight years ago

P2

DANIEL BEITLER





## TUTORING CENTERS SAID TO BE RAISING FEES

Some of the city's parents have said that tutoring centers are raising their fees to mitigate losses in the past few weeks brought about by the coronavirus-induced drop in business. According to a report by Macao Daily News, a group of parents have accused a tutoring center located in the Areia Preta area in particular. The center informed parents that it would provide limited services in March, and that because the number of students in March is only half that of ordinary periods, tuition fees would be more than double. This particular tutoring center told parents that if they disagreed with the fee increase, then later, when public schools officially reopened, the tutoring center would raise fees by 200 to 300 Macau patacas per month anyway, and that most of Macau's tutoring centers had agreed to a 200 to 300 Macau patacas fee increase.

## 68 SUSPECTED ILLEGAL WORKERS FOUND IN JANUARY

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) identified 68 suspected illegal workers in January, according to a statement released by PSP and the Labour Affairs Bureau. The two bureaus inspected over 337 locations, including construction sites, private and commercial buildings, and industry facilities. Last year, in January of 2019, the PSP found 78 suspected illegal workers in 365 inspections together with other government departments.

## TSI CONFIRMS PUBLIC LAND CONCESSION EXPIRATION DECISION

The Court of Second Instance (TSI) has backed the government's decision to reclaim six land plots whose concessions expired without the expected developments going ahead. In a statement, TSI has confirmed that the government's decision as lawful. Five of the land plots are located in the Nam Van area and were for the Nam Van Lake Plan. The five land plots are A3, C12, C6, C3 and A9. These land plots occupy areas of 4,169 square meters, 3,690 square meters, 3,131 square meters, 1,027 square meters and 3,449 square meters, respectively. The sixth land plot is situated at Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde and occupies an area of 659 square meters.

# GOV'T APPROVES 344 APPLICATIONS FOR SME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Economic Bureau (DSE) has approved a total of 344 applications for the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) Aid Scheme, a program that offers an interest-free loan of up to 600,000 patacas, with a maximum repayment period of eight years.

According to a statement by the bureau, the approved applications were made in the period between February 1 and March 2, even though the measures were supposedly not formally announced by Secretary Lei Wai Nong until mid-way through February.

Secretary Lei had announced the program, among many others, as a "special relief measure" for SMEs at a press conference organized by the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center on February 14.

However, as the Times revealed on Monday, the measure has been part of the DSE SME Aid Scheme since 2003, and was renewed in 2006, 2009, 2012, and most recently in 2017, making it neither a "new" nor special measure to tackle the difficulties posed by the Covid-19 outbreak.

The DSE added that, from a



ANTHONY LAM

total of 2,500 applications received, 1,328 were requests related to the abovementioned program. The bureau has already managed to process 446 applications, 344 of which have been approved, representing a 77% approval rating.

As for the remaining requests, the DSE informed that they were mostly (1,151) requests for readjustment of the repayment of the loans for SMEs that have enrolled in several programs in the past.

According to the DSE pro-

gram rules, the "reimbursement adjustment" allows companies that benefit from three DSE support plans, "Young Entrepreneurs Aid Scheme," "SME Aid Scheme" and "Special Aid Scheme for SMEs affected by Typhoon Hato," and that have not fully reimbursed the support granted, to submit a request for an adjustment of reimbursement so that the amount of the next installment due is reduced to 1,000 Macau patacas.

The DSE informed that of all the requests received, the vast

majority of the cases (1,081) have been accepted by the DSE.

Only 14 out of the 2,500 requests were related to the SME Credit Guarantee Scheme, in which the government secures loans made by the companies at banking institutions to a maximum of 70% of the total and a ceiling of 4.9 million patacas. Only one of these requests has so far been approved, according to the DSE data release.

The DSE also said that a total of 973 applications were submitted online, contributing to the promptness of the decision-making process.

Besides the applications and requests received, the bureau also noted it had received a total of 6,958 requests for information, the vast majority (5,037) of which continue to be made via phone. The DSE WeChat account was the second-most popular method, accounting for 1,610 requests for information, while the WhatsApp account registered the remaining 311.

Although the bureau has resumed normal operation, it has appealed to citizens applying for the programs to apply online to avoid the unnecessary gatherings of people and waiting at the services.

# Education authority to distribute masks, hand sanitizers to tutoring centers

**S**OME 3,750 facemasks and 7,000 units of hand sanitizer will be offered to 1,000 private tutoring centers in response to permissions for service resumption, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau has announced.

The bureau stressed that it had not purchased the resources; they were donated by various local entities as an act of goodwill to support the government's work against the Covid-19 outbreak.

In response to concerns over why the bureau

is distributing these materials to private entities, the bureau explained that this was being done according to donors' requests. In other words, the bureau had been advised to distribute the products to ensure that students can study in a safe and hygienic environment.

The materials will be distributed to formal schools, centers for private tuition and continuing education facilities.

Previously, the government had allowed a local

pharmaceutical company to manufacture alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The products are now available in outlets across the city. As for facemasks, the Health Bureau has reiterated that it has been conducting worldwide procurement. It will endeavor to secure supplies for local residents.

However, the health authority stressed that it would not provide facemasks or sanitizer to private companies, which are required to source their own for their employees. **AL**

DANIEL BEITLER



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**NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS** Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Lynzy Valles, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui  
**DESIGNERS** Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | **ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS** JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | **NEWS AGENCIES** Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua  
**SECRETARY** Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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**ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

**OFFICE MANAGER** Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

**ADDRESS** Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR **Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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# Seven Air Macau crewmembers to join Wuhan rescue mission

ANTHONY LAM

**S**EVEN staff members from the government and seven crewmembers from Air Macau will play core roles in a rescue mission for Macau residents in Wuhan to be conducted on March 7, Lei Chin Ion, director of the Health Bureau (SSM), has announced.

The seven government members will comprise of two doctors and three nurses from the SSM, and two representatives of the Macao Government Tourism Office's (MGTO) Tourism Crisis Management Office (GGCT).

Although the health authority head maintained that as few people as possible should be involved to minimize risk, the local flag carrier will assign three pilots and four cabin crew to assist in the mission.

This first repatriation mission is expected to bring back 60 Macau ID holders from and around Wuhan. However, Lei stressed that fewer people than that may be repatriated, depending on their actual health condition.

In order to qualify for the flight, the ID holders will need to arrange their own connecting transport to the airport in Wuhan. Furthermore, they must submit a health evaluation form, which they already have done, the SSM director disclosed. Final checks will be conducted at Wuhan's airport.

It is hoped that the 60 people being repa-



triated have understood the requirements. Inês Chan, an official from the MGTO, said that the office has been reminding them about the connecting transport.

The Air Macau charter flight, the flight number of which has not been undisclosed, is expected to depart for Wuhan at 9:30 a.m. this Saturday. The staff and crew will fly to Wuhan to facilitate checks at the airport. As such, the SSM is aiming for 4 p.m. as the time for the return flight.

Checks at the airport will include measuring body temperature. The 60 will need to pass several screening measures before boarding the plane. Protective kits, consisting of a fa-

cemask, hand sanitizer, protective wear and a diaper, will also be distributed to them.

The SSM previously announced that nobody would be allowed to leave their seat during the return flight. Therefore, the diapers are being distributed in case of need.

Once they have touched down in Macau, all the passengers will be transferred to vehicles parked right next to the aircraft. The repatriated citizens will be sent to a quarantine facility on Coloane Alto for 14 days of observation. Six staff members from both the MGTO and Air Macau will also be quarantined.

The MGTO has unveiled the particulars

of the returnees-to-be. The 60 preliminarily qualified represent 33 families. Nineteen are under 18 years old, six of which are under 5 years old. Of the six children under 5, two are infants, one is 1 year old, two are 2 years old and one is aged 4. The six children have temporarily been made eligible to fly, as they will travel with their guardians.

Aside from the 60 being repatriated, there are about another 120 Macau residents currently in Hubei Province.

Meanwhile, a group of five foreign workers

currently being quarantined in Zhuhai will be let out on March 5. They will be taken straight to Macau in a charter vehicle.

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau said that it has conducted spot checks on some extracurricular education centers, including continuing education facilities, after the official resumption date.

As of yesterday, the bureau recorded about a 60% reopen rate, with only one-third of all students resuming their lessons or tuition at the venues.

## UNITED NATIONS APPOINTS LOCAL PROFESSOR AS ADVISOR

**T**HE United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Centre for Excellence on Criminal Justice Statistics in Asia and the Pacific has appointed Liu Jianhong, professor and associate dean at the University of Macau's (UM) Faculty of Social Sciences, as an advisor to the office.

The appointment was made in recognition of his work on drugs and crime prevention, according to a statement issued by the university.

The international criminology scholar was elected president of the Scientific Commission of the International Society of Criminology in 2014 and was re-elected in 2019 for another five-year term.

He founded the Asian Criminological Society (ACS) at UM in 2009 and was elected its first president.

He is currently the chairman of the General Assembly of the ACS and a leading member of various criminology organizations.

The main function of the UNODC is to lead and coordinate global efforts in response to drugs and conduct research on issues related to global crime and criminal justice.

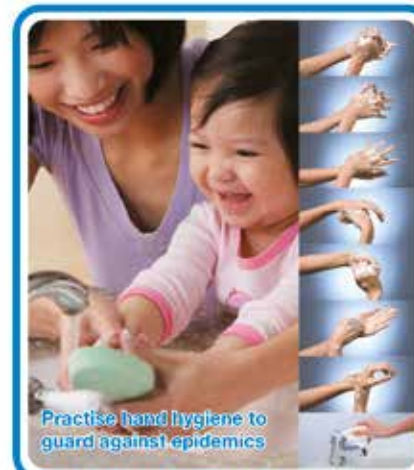
Recently, the UNODC held a meeting in Bangkok to discuss the specific tasks of its center in South Korea, as well as crime strategy and policy and criminal justice statistics. **LV**



## NINTH PATIENT RECOVERS

**AFTER** Macau's 28th day without a new infection yesterday, the city's ninth Covid-19 patient, a 29-year-old female floral supervisor at a Cotai integrated resort, recovered from the virus. The patient was discharged yesterday after being hospitalized for 29 days. Following the Health Bureau's latest measures, she was then sent to the quarantine center on Coloane Alto for recovery observation. Before being discharged, she was tested twice for Covid-19 on March 1 and 3 respectively, like other cases. In addition, a chest scan was also performed.

The scan showed no signs of pneumonia. The patient attended an orchestra performance in Zhuhai on January 19, and spent about three hours with the eighth local case on the evening of January 24. The next day, the patient developed a fever and cough. On February 4, she approached the Conde de São Januário Hospital (CHCSJ) for medical assistance and was admitted. With the ninth case being discharged, there is only one Macau resident still in hospital with Covid-19, in a stable condition, according to the CHCSJ.



### Notes on hand washing

1. Wash hands frequently with liquid soap and water, or use alcohol-based handrub for disinfection.
2. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds, including front and back of the hands, fingers, nails, wrists and forearms.
3. Dry hands with paper towel or hand dryer; never share towels with others.



or enter URL:  
<https://www.ssm.gov.mo/PreventWuhanInfection/>

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

Enquiries: Centre for Disease Control and Prevention  
Tel: 26700800

The Macao SAR Government urges:  
Let's all persist; Avoid crowd gathering; Wash hands frequently;  
Wear a mask properly; Declare health conditions; Reduce leaving Macao.



### MAN INJURED AFTER STONE FALLS FROM BUILDING

A man was injured after being hit by a stone which fell from a building earlier this week. The stone, which came from the building's external wall, fell onto the street by Rua do Visc. Paço de Arcos and Rua da Ribeira do Patane. The victim was passing by the building when the debris struck his head. Afterwards, the man admitted himself to Kiang Wu Hospital. The Fire Services Bureau reported that the falling stone had caused him a minor head injury. Bloodstains from the incident were left on the section of road. The bureau was unable to determine the exact location the stone fell from.

### WOMAN ATTEMPTS TO SMUGGLE MACAU PATACAS TO MAINLAND AGAIN

The Zhuhai Gongbei customs authority has apprehended a Macau resident carrying large amounts of cash to mainland China. Earlier this week, the female local resident was found carrying 614,500 Macau patacas in cash while crossing the border from Macau to Zhuhai. Gongbei customs found her in a vehicle at Gongbei's immigration checkpoint for cars. The cash was hidden inside her handbag, pockets and clothes. This is the second time the woman has been caught by the same government department trying to carry undeclared amounts of cash. The last time was in March 2019. This case is so far the largest amount of cash discovered by the Gongbei customs authority in 2020.

### TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR 1,100 NON-LOCAL WORKERS READY THIS MONTH

Sometime this month, 1,100 non-local construction workers will likely see their temporary Macau dormitory become ready. Earlier this week, the Infrastructure Development Office (GDI) reported on the progress of the temporary dormitory project. According to the GDI, the construction contractor for the island's medical complex received approval by the local government to build temporary houses occupying a total area of 11,700 square meters. The houses are located on the medical complex's construction site. The dormitories will have two floors and will be made using movable materials. The houses will be ready sometime this month. The local government had approved these houses for use for a maximum duration of one year. The construction contractor will bear all the costs of building these temporary apartments.



A scene from the "Macau From Above" documentary, provided by Campbell McLean

## NEW DOCUMENTARY EXPLORES CITY'S ROLE IN MARITIME TRADE

LYNZY VALLES

A new documentary project titled "Canton" aims to raise awareness of the historic role Macau played in the establishment of a global maritime trading system.

The documentary is set to provide a historical account of the Canton Trade, including references to Macau and the early Portuguese trade with China, using human-interest stories that follow the lives of foreign merchants and captains, Chinese compradors, Hoppo, Hong, and officials and shopkeepers.

According to the producer, Campbell McLean, the series offers an in-depth and objective explanation of how nations in the West began trading with China, using 17th century Canton, modern-day Guangzhou, as a base.

An explanation for how Chinese commodities including tea, silk and porcelain, along with botanical specimens, were shipped across the oceans to Europe and North America will also be showcased.

Local audiences and those in mainland China ought to better understand Macau's history and development, according to McLean, who writes for and produces documentaries. "People

need to understand the context of how Macau evolved to what it is today - only then will they gain a deeper appreciation of its sense of place in the world," McLean told the Times.

"Over the years, a great amount of research has been undertaken that reveals a vast collection of facts and figures behind the Canton System of trade and Macau's role, but it is also important to reveal and understand many of the characters who played both leading roles or simply observed as bystanders to history in the making," the producer added.

The documentary series interweaves narrative accounts by Chinese, Portuguese, American, British and other European historians with dramatized re-enactments that describe the people behind the stories and events as they unfolded.

The story starts from the arrival of the first Portuguese traders and concludes in the aftermath of the First Opium War and the cession of Hong Kong island in 1842.

The documentary series offers a different perspective on the events that shaped history and Macau's role and sense of place

in the exchange between Canton and West in the years prior to the opening of the Treaty Ports.

"We need to flesh out the stories and drama behind everyday lives and events of the time - and bring those back to life. The people of Macau have every reason to be proud of their history and achievements - and look around, Macau is still history in the making today," said McLean.

**"The people of Macau have every reason to be proud of their history - and look around, Macau is still history in the making today."**

CAMPBELL MCLEAN  
DOCUMENTARY MAKER

According to the producer, the series also tells a story for Portuguese-speaking countries wanting to reach out and do business in China today.

"Macau and Hengqin offer all incentives and levels of assistance that are needed to explore and break into new markets - both

outbound and inbound, but we have to ask ourselves, how are we getting that story out there in a way that is engaging to a wider audience?" questioned McLean. McLean also works with an international television distributor based out of Paris and Hong Kong to provide them with exposure and promotional opportunities for international television markets.

Partnering with the distributor, McLean's previous project "George Chinnery" was broadcast on CGTN International, along with sales of its "Macau From Above" documentary, to France-5, Rai-3 in Italy, GloboSat in Brazil, TVB, Discovery Asia and Cathay Pacific.

His team has also secured a pre-sale with Discovery for its current production.

However, the current biggest challenge for the team is to secure the long-term funding they need.

"There should be a shared responsibility between the public and private sector to support the growth of our industry - to encourage new talent to enter this sector and fine tune our ability to communicate and share stories about Macau," he said.



GAMING

# Analysts review forecasts for city's 2020 growth outlook

LYNZY VALLES

**G**AMING analysts expect little improvement in the way of Macau gross gaming revenue this month, with one brokerage forecasting that revenue may plunge 70%.

Last month, the city suffered from a drop in gaming revenue due to Covid-19, recording only 3.1 billion Macau patacas in revenue, an 87.8% plunge compared to a year earlier and the lowest monthly revenue since 2004. The forced closure of all casinos in the city for 15 days was a major factor in the drop in revenue.

In February, the daily run-rate was MOP107 million, implying above MOP220 million per day during the 14 days of operation for the month.

As JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Ltd expects that the city's gross gaming revenue will continue to dive this month, it forecast that there would be a 24% decrease in this year's overall gaming revenue, as well as a 35% decline

BLOOMBERG



in the second quarter, before the decline is forecast to narrow to 8% in the following three months. A 5% drop in the final quarter is also expected.

Meanwhile, CitiGroup has de-

cided to lower the forecast for 2020 gross gaming revenue growth from -12% year-on-year to -28% year-on-year.

The group forecasted that Macau would likely see an 11% year-

-on-year decline in gross gaming revenue in the third quarter of 2020.

The lack of clarity over next month's performance is based on several factors, including the halt

in the issuing of Individual Visit Scheme permits for mainland residents to travel to Hong Kong or Macau.

This has severed the supply of tourists and gamblers from the mainland to Macau, which derives a large portion of its income from the gambling sector.

Despite the reopening of casinos on February 20, there are restrictions still in place, including the number of tables casino operators can have and the number of seats at each table.

Macau casinos struggled to adjust to a perfect storm of economic headwinds last year, including the fallout from the China-U.S. trade war, relentless protests in neighboring Hong Kong and a crackdown on online gambling in both Macau and the mainland.

Gaming executives are also concerned about the impact of the coronavirus on this year's economic slowdown.

Galaxy Entertainment Group's deputy chairman Francis Lui previously said that the impact of the virus "won't be small." He said he expects construction of the company's new casinos in Macau will be slowed by the outbreak.

The chairman and CEO of Melco Resorts and Entertainment, Lawrence Ho, has also remarked that economic progress will be slow and that it will still take some time for the gaming operator to regain the momentum it previously had.

CRIME

## Firefighter accused of theft; second case in under a week

JULIE ZHU

**T**HE police authority has charged another firefighter with theft, the second case in less than a week.

During yesterday's joint police press conference, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported a case which took place in the early morning of March 2 at Avenida do Conselheiro Borja. The target was a convenience store located on said road.

On the day, the suspect entered the convenience store. He was intoxicated while shopping inside the store. Eventually, he bought a number of snacks and drinks, and paid for all the products.

However, as he was leaving the store, he picked up two ramen noodle cups from a product rack close to the entrance of the shop and left the



shop without paying for them.

A female employee at the shop tried to call the suspect back to pay. The suspect, instead of returning to the cashier, ran away from the shop. As he was running on the street, an off-duty police officer from the Public Security Police Force (PSP) noticed the suspected was being chased by a woman and caught him.

In total, the two cups of noodles were worth 44

Macau patacas.

The suspect denied the theft accusations, saying that he had left money to pay for the noodles.

According to the PJ, the suspect is a 28-year-old man who joined the Fire Services Bureau (CB) in 2016. He has been serving as a firefighter since then. The PJ forwarded the case to the prosecution authority on Monday.

This is the second case of suspected illegal activi-

ty involving a firefighter in less than a week.

On February 25, an off-duty firefighter allegedly entered an unlocked shop located in the ZAPE area and stole a total of 50,000 Macau patacas in cash, one diamond bracelet and two bottles of wine.

The following day the firefighter, a 27-year-old man surnamed Wong called the shop and admitted to the theft of some 29,000 Macau pata-

cas only. He said he would return the cash to the shop the next day. After the phone call, the shop owner called the police authority.

On February 27, Wong went to the shop to return the stolen items to the victim. He was apprehended inside the shop by some PJ investigators who were there waiting for him.

The PJ found a total of 29,000 Macau patacas in cash on the suspect's person. Wong claimed he had stolen under the effects of alcohol, and that he only realized what he had done the next day. Wong also said that he had only stolen 29,000 Macau patacas, not 50,000 Macau patacas, and also claimed that he had not taken the wine and the bracelet.

The police authority charged Wong with aggravated theft.

On February 28, CB issued a statement reaffirming that the bureau will not tolerate any acts that violate the law and relevant discipline, and that all illegal acts must be punished in accordance with the law.

CRIME

## TEENAGE BOY ACCUSED OF RAPE AFTER GIRLFRIEND FALLS PREGNANT

**T**HE Judiciary Police (PJ) has charged a 16-year-old Macau local teenage boy with rape after his 15-year-old girlfriend became pregnant.

According to a report from the PJ, both the boy and the girl are middle school students from two different schools.

The pair had been dating since 2018. Prior to February 29, when the girl's mother took her daughter to the police station to report the case, the couple had engaged in sexual intercourse on multiple occasions.

Recently, the girl discovered she was pregnant and informed her mother. Her mother took her to the hospital, where the pregnancy was confirmed. She is nine weeks pregnant.

Following these events, the boy's parents accompanied him to the police station for further investigation. **JZ**



# VIRUS CRISIS SPREADS IN IRAN, EBBS IN CHINA; G7 VOWS RESOLVE

KEN MORITSUGU  
& LORI HINNANT, BEIJING

**T**HE coronavirus spread deep into Iran's government, South Korea ramped up its fight against the epidemic by starting drive-thru testing, and seven major economies tried to shore up global confidence yesterday with a pledge to use "all appropriate tools" to counter the economic fallout.

Mushrooming outbreaks in the Mideast, Europe and South Korea contrasted with optimism in China, where thousands of recovered patients were going home. Virus clusters in the United States led schools and subways to sanitize, quickened the search for a vaccine and spread fears of vulnerability among nursing home residents.

"We are in uncharted territory," World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

Iran's supreme leader ordered the military to assist health officials in fighting the virus, which authorities say has killed 77 people — the deadliest outbreak outside China.

Among the dead in Iran are a confidant of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's former ambassador to the Vatican and a recently elected member of parliament. The sick include 23 members of parliament and the head of the country's emergency services, state media reported.

Iran's judiciary chief, Ebrahim Raisi, said some people are sto-



Ambulances are parked to transport patients with mild symptoms of the coronavirus in Daegu, South Korea

ckpiling medical supplies for profit and urged prosecutors to show no mercy.

"Hoarding sanitizing items is playing with people's lives, and it is not ignorable," he said.

France's finance minister ordered an investigation into possible price spikes for sanitizer and masks and warned that binge-shopping for household essentials could trigger shortages.

South Korea saw its largest daily increase in new cases yesterday, with 851 more infections reported, largely in and around the southeastern city of Daegu. In all, 5,186 in South Korea have

tested positive for the virus.

In the capital of Seoul, drive-thru virus testing centers began operating, with workers dressed head-to-toe in white protective suits leaning into cars with mouth swabs, a move meant to limit contact with possible carriers of the illness. Troops were also dispatched across the city to spray streets and alleys with disinfectant.

Stock markets shed some of their gains after the Group of Seven countries held off announcing specific new measures to help the global economy cope with the disruptions.

Many traders had been ho-

ping for a broad package of economic support. Instead, the G-7 finance ministers and central bankers reaffirmed their commitment to use "all appropriate policy tools to achieve strong, sustainable growth and safeguard against downside risks."

"The fear factor is still very high," said Kirk Hartman, president of Wells Fargo Asset Management.

Worldwide, more than 90,000 people have been sickened and 3,100 have died. The number of countries hit by the virus has reached at least 70, with Ukraine and Morocco reporting their first cases.

In China, the count of new cases dropped again yesterday, with just 125 reported. It is still by far the hardest-hit country, with over 80,000 infections and about 95% of the world's deaths.

China's ambassador to the United Nations said the country is winning its battle against COVID-19.

"We are not far from the coming of the victory," Zhang Jun said.

In Italy, the count of infected people climbed to 2,036 with 52 dead, and officials said it could take up to two weeks to know whether measures including quarantines in 11 northern towns are working.

The U.S. count of COVID-19 cases surpassed 100, spread across at least 11 states. There have been six deaths, all in Washington state.

On Capitol Hill, aides said negotiations are nearing completion on an emergency bill to fund the development of a vaccine and offer disaster loans to businesses hurt by the crisis.

Surgeon General Jerome Adams, a leading public health official in the U.S., urged calm: "Caution, preparedness, but not panic."

In Japan, questions continued to build about how the virus might affect the Olympics.

The country's Olympic minister, Seiko Hashimoto, said the country is "making the utmost effort" to proceed with the games' planned opening on July 24 in Tokyo. But she told parliament that the country's contract with the International Olympic Committee only specifies that the games be held in 2020, meaning they could be postponed to later in the year if necessary. **AP**

## Beijing denounces US cap on reporter numbers as prejudicial

**C**HINA yesterday denounced a move by the Trump administration to cap the number of Chinese state-run media journalists who can work in the United States as "based on the Cold War mentality and ideological prejudice."

The State Department announced Monday that a total of 100 journalists from five outlets would be given visas, citing in part China's increasingly harsh surveillance, harassment and intimidation of American and other foreign journalists in China for the move.

The decision "severely interrupted Chinese media's normal reporting tasks in the United States (and) seriously tarnished Chinese



se media's reputation," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said yesterday.

"Based on the Cold War mentality and ideological prejudice, the U.S. State Department suppressed Chinese media agencies

with political means in the United States for unexplained reasons," Zhao said at a daily briefing. China reserves the right to take further measures in response, he said.

The U.S. announcement

followed the expulsion last month by China of three Wall Street Journal reporters over an opinion column headline that the foreign ministry called racist, and the release of survey results by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China showing a continuing deterioration in working conditions for overseas media in China.

The FCCC report found that Chinese authorities have "weaponized visas" for foreign media by issuing press credentials with shortened terms of validity to a dozen journalists in 2019, in addition to expelling four since August. It called that "one of the most brazen attempts in the post-Mao Zedong era to

influence foreign news organizations and to punish those whose work the Chinese government deems unacceptable."

The U.S. said it is not planning to place any restrictions on the content of Chinese media but that it is seeking "reciprocity" and a "level playing field."

The five Chinese outlets, including the Xinhua News Agency and China Global Television Network, currently employ about 160 Chinese citizens in the U.S. There are about 75 Americans and other foreigners authorized to work for U.S. news outlets inside China, according to the White House.

Last month, the administration designated

Xinhua, CGTN and three others as foreign missions, requiring them to register their properties and employees in the U.S. The State Department said that was in recognition of the fact that "they are effectively controlled" by the Chinese government.

Chinese citizens working for other media organizations in the United States are unaffected by the cap, the State Department said. China's ruling Communist Party and state outlets now dominate Chinese-language media in the U.S. and have made inroads into the struggling mainstream English-language press through vast ad purchases and the placement of newspaper inserts. **AP**



AP PHOTO



People wear masks to protect themselves from a new coronavirus as they walk through the Kwangbok Street in Pyongyang, last week

# North Korean swagger may conceal brewing virus disaster

FOSTER KLUG, TOKYO

**I**N these days of infection and fear, a recent propaganda photo sums up the image North Korea wants to show the world, as well as its people: Soldiers with black surgical masks surround leader Kim Jong Un, ensconced in a leather overcoat and sans mask as he oversees a defiant military drill.

As a new and frightening virus closes in around it, North Korea presents itself as a fortress, tightening its borders as cadres of health officials stage a monumental disinfection and monitoring program.

That image of world-defying impregnability, however, may belie a brewing disaster.

North Korea, which has what experts call a horrendous medical infrastructure in the best of times, shares a porous, nearly 1,450-kilometer border with China, where the disease originated and has since rapidly spread around the world. The North's government has also long considered public reports on infectious disease — or, for that matter, anything that could hurt the ruling elite — matters of state secrecy.

This has raised fears that North Korea, which claims zero infections, may be vastly unprepared for a virus that is testing much

more developed countries across the globe — and even that infections could already be exploding within its borders.

“Unfortunately, the international community has no idea if the coronavirus is spreading inside North Korea,” said a recent report by Jessica Lee, an East Asia expert at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a think tank in Washington. “The fact that we know nothing about the level of infection or deaths within North Korea is extremely problematic and, left unchanged, could have serious public health implications.”

North Korean media, meanwhile, are filled with self-described examples of ultra-vigilance — as well as a sense of urgency.

Calling its anti-virus campaign a matter of “national existence,” the North has banned foreign tourists, delayed the school year, quarantined hundreds of foreigners and thousands of locals who've traveled abroad, shut down nearly all cross-border traffic with China, intensified screening at entry points, and mobilized tens of thousands of health workers to monitor residents and isolate those with symptoms.

A parade of media photographs show North Korean doctors, scientists and health workers in masks, paper hats and protective clothing, discussing matters of science, or disinfecting public transportation, or planning ways to further protect citizens.

## North Korea's strong moves to shut down border areas with China, its only major ally, signal that the virus has already spread into the nation

“No special cases must be allowed within the state anti-epidemic system,” Kim, emerging recently from a prolonged period out of the public spotlight to oversee a politburo meeting on the virus, said, according to state media. Officials must “seal off all the channels and space through which the infectious disease may find its way.”

On Monday, Kim's military fired unidentified projectiles into the sea, weapons tests apparently aimed, in part, at showing that all's well amid outside worries about an outbreak in the North.

Despite the bravado, there are rising doubts that North Korea has dodged the virus.

Some North Korea monitoring groups, which claim to have a network of sources inside the nation, recently said that there are virus patients and deaths in North Korea, a claim the South Korean government couldn't confirm.

“I'm 100% sure that North Korea already has infected patients,” said Nam Sung-wook, a North Korea expert at South Korea's Korea University who served as president of the Institute for National Security Strategy, a think tank affiliated with South Korea's main spy agency.

If North Korea had an outbreak similar to what's happening in South Korea, the world's hardest-hit country aside from China, it would cause serious turmoil because of a chronic lack of medical supplies and medicine, Nam said.

“North Korea would be helpless,” he said.

Some analysts believe that North Korea's strong moves to shut down border areas with China, its only major ally and aid benefactor, signal that the virus has already spread into the nation from China, which has had more than 80,000 cases.

There is usually heavy border traffic between the two countries, and tens of thousands of North Koreans were believed to be working in China before a U.N. order for Beijing to send them back home expired in December. It's unknown how many of them have returned home.

There have been growing outside calls for North Korea to open up about what's going on inside its borders.

The U.N. Special Rapporteur on human rights in North Korea, Tomás Ojea Quintana, urged North Korea to “allow full and unimpeded access to medical experts and humanitarian actors, and relax restrictions on access to information. Further isolation of the country is not the answer.”

Ojea Quintana said that many North Koreans, especially in the countryside, lack proper access to health services, water and sanitation, and that more than 43% of the population is undernourished.

The United States also expressed worry about North Korea's vulnerability to the viral outbreak and said it was ready to support efforts by aid organizations to contain the spread of the illness in the impoverished nation.

An epidemic in North Korea, which experts say has a chronic lack of medical supplies, could further shake an economy battered by U.S.-led sanctions over its nuclear weapons and missile program. That, in turn, could quicken the depletion of the North's foreign currency reserves by choking off income from tourism and smuggling.

Decreased trade with China could also dry up the goods going to North Korea's informal private markets, which have emerged as a big part of the national economy following the collapse of the state rationing system during a devastating famine in the 1990s, experts say.

And the country's intensified anti-virus efforts could potentially hamper Kim's ability to mobilize his people for labor on major development and tourist projects, said Lim Soo-ho, an analyst from South Korea's Institute for National Security Strategy think tank.

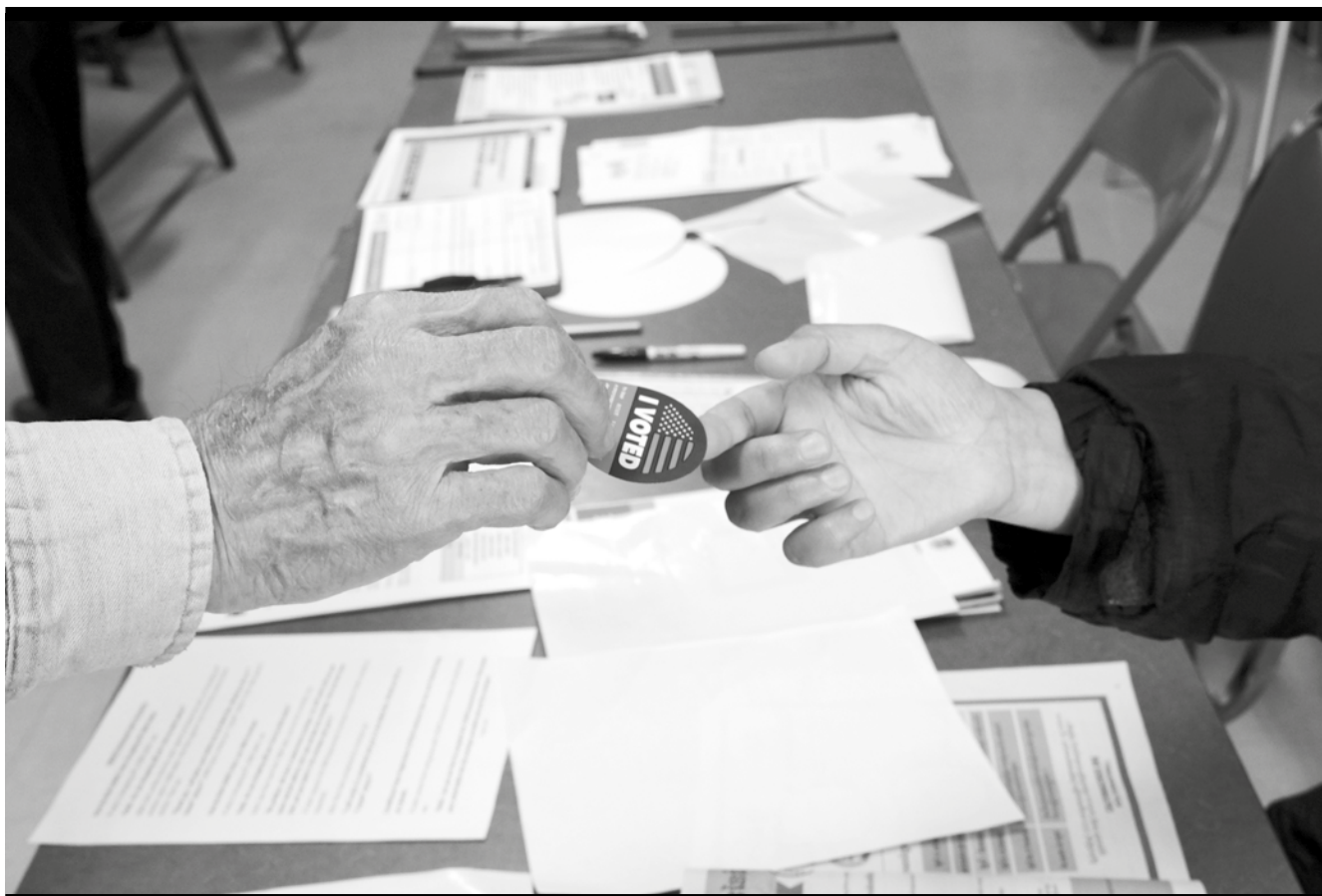
Despite a big economic hit to many North Koreans, however, the elite may survive a serious outbreak.

“North Korea has a powerful control over its people, and that was how it maintained its leadership when 2 to 3 million people died during ‘the arduous march period,’” Oh Gyeong-seob, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification, said, referring to the North Korean euphemism for the 1990s famine.

“Public dissatisfaction with Kim Jong Un will grow, but not at a level that will deal him a critical blow,” Oh predicted. **AP**



AP PHOTO



**T**HE Democratic presidential candidates are racing toward the biggest day in the primary calendar, when 14 states vote on Super Tuesday (today, Macau time). It's the day when the primary moves from retail to wholesale. Instead of one state voting at a time, candidates have to focus on contests in every region of the country with all types of voters.

While Super Tuesday won't necessarily determine who wins the nomination, it has historically been difficult for a candidate who performs poorly on the day to recover. Here's a look at Tuesday's contests:

#### THE STATES

Fourteen states hold primaries on Super Tuesday, including California and Texas, the two biggest delegate hauls of the entire primary season. California offers 415 delegates and Texas 228. In total, more than 1,300 delegates will be up for grabs, about a third of the total available in the race to the Democratic presidential nomination.

Although Super Tuesday was originally created as a regional primary featuring Southern states, it has morphed over the years. This year, it includes states from every region of the country.

The other states are Arkansas, Alabama, Colorado, Maine, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Vermont, Utah, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and

USA

## What to watch as 14 states vote in Super Tuesday primaries

Oklahoma. Most of the Southern states are Republican strongholds in the general election, while others like California are solidly Democratic. North Carolina is likely to be a battleground state in the general election.

Polls close between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. local time, depending on the state.

#### THE VOTERS

The Super Tuesday states are home to diverse electorates, both when it comes to demographics and political ideology. In California and Texas, white voters make up less than half the population. Latinos count for nearly 40% of the populations in both states. California, meanwhile, has the nation's highest Asian population, at roughly 15%. North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama and Arkansas have large populations of black voters, one of the Democratic Party's core voting blocs. The states blend a mix of urban and rural voters, as well as Democrats from all sides of the political spectrum. As candidates focus on wooing Southern Demo-

crats in states like Texas and Arkansas, they must also be thinking about a message that can resonate in progressive San Francisco.

Most of the Super Tuesday states have some form of widespread early voting. Voters in Minnesota, for example, could start casting ballots in January. Millions of mail-in ballots went out to California voters on Feb. 3, the day of the Iowa caucuses.

#### THE CANDIDATES

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg have had the widest and most aggressive footprint across the Super Tuesday states, largely because they've got the money to spend. Bloomberg is advertising in all 14 states, while Sanders is on the airwaves in 12. It's the first time Bloomberg will be on ballots after he skipped the first four voting states, making the day a critical test of his theory that he's the best candidate to stand against Sanders and, later, Republican President Donald Trump.

Sanders spent Sun-

day in California, holding rallies in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, the state's major liberal strongholds. He's hoping his monthslong focus on the state and resonance with Latino voters will help him win a large chunk of the state's 415 delegates. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren will be in California on Monday, and Joe Biden plans to return on primary day.

Biden, for his part, hopes his strong showing in Saturday's South Carolina is a harbinger of coming success with black voters, who dominate the Democratic electorate in a handful of Super Tuesday states. Warren hoped to win her home-state primary, though Sanders is making a play for it. Bloomberg has also campaigned across the South in recent days as he tries to prove he can build a winning Democratic coalition.

Democrats opposed to Sanders are hoping to see voters coalesce behind a moderate alternative. Any of the candidates could face pressure to drop out if they don't perform well on Tuesday. **AP**

## this day in history



### 1975 COMIC GENIUS CHAPLIN IS KNIGHTED

Silent film legend Charlie Chaplin has become Sir Charles after a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

The star of such films as *The Kid* and *The Great Dictator* was knighted in the New Year's Honours List.

The ceremony took place just miles from the south London district where he spent much of his childhood.

Sir Charles was accompanied to Buckingham Palace by his fourth wife, Oona, and the two youngest of his nine children.

The slapstick legend, famed for his acrobatic routines, received his knighthood, from a wheelchair.

It was a reflection of just how late in life - at the age of 85 - his honour had finally come.

As he was pushed into the hall where the ceremony was taking place the band struck up his signature tune, the theme from his 1951 film, *Limelight*.

He sat stiffly as the Queen tapped him on each shoulder and stooped to hang the KBE insignia around his neck.

The two then chatted briefly before Sir Charles was wheeled to the front of the hall to watch the rest of the ceremony.

Speaking to reporters afterwards Sir Charles said he had been "dumbfounded" by the occasion.

He said the Queen had thanked him for what he had done and that his films had helped her a great deal.

Sir Charles' knighthood follows years of calls for him to be honoured.

In the 1940s and 1950s he was accused of "communist sympathies" and vilified in his adopted home of the United States.

In 1952 his US visa was cancelled forcing Chaplin to relocate to Switzerland.

Three years ago, in what was seen as an act of contrition, he was awarded a special Oscar by the US' Academy of Motion Pictures.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Charlie Chaplin died in 1977.

In 2002 confidential Foreign Office papers from 1956 released by Britain's Public Record Office revealed the comic's knighthood had been delayed because of his perceived "communist" sympathies.

Worries about his morals had also played their part - he was twice married to 16-year-olds and once lost a paternity suit. Charlie Chaplin's body was stolen from his grave and was missing for 11 weeks until recovered in May 1978.

Two men were convicted of the theft and trying to extort money from the Chaplin family.



YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

When everyone around you is rushing around today, you won't be able to resist the urge to rush around with them, which means that you're going to have a day full of lively activity.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Socially, you're starting to compare yourself to someone is who an apple to your orange. Stop trying to follow in someone else's footsteps. Go your own way!



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You could be wrestling with a tricky situation right now, and getting other people's input on the situation is important. You could really use a chance to see things from someone else's perspective.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

To get where you want to be faster in your career, you should consider teaming up with someone who balances out your skills. Two heads are better than one, and you both can help each other.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Helping other people feel more comfortable is something that you're awfully good at, and it's something that will enable you to make stronger personal and professional connections today.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Be open to a different opinion and hear the other person out, even if it takes everything you've got to keep from interrupting them. The more respectful you are, the more respectful they will be, too.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

An upcoming social event has you torn. On the one hand, you're looking forward to it. On the other, you're worried about how you'll handle seeing a certain person again.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Someone you care about could do something that really irks you today, but you'll have to do your best to avoid getting angry with them. They're a good person and you know it.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Everything should fall into place - parking spots will open up, traffic lights will turn green, and lines will be short. Time is on your side right now, so make the most of it.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

If a new relationship that has been picking up speed suddenly comes to a screeching halt, don't worry! This isn't a sign that things aren't going to work out between the two of you.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Being picky is still a good way to be right now. It's unwise for you to start any patterns in your life that could be regarded as desperate or careless.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Your energy is high today, but a little bit of exploration will boost it even higher! Get out there and dive into some new foods, sights, sounds, and neighborhoods.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   | 6 | 3 |   |   | 8 | 2 |
| 6 | 1 | 7 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 8 | 9 |   |   | 1 | 6 |   |
| 1 | 3 |   |   | 5 |   |   |   |   |
|   | 9 |   |   | 1 |   |   | 6 |   |
|   |   | 3 |   |   | 2 | 5 |   |   |
| 2 | 6 |   |   | 7 | 8 |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | 5 | 7 | 3 |   |
| 8 | 7 |   | 4 | 3 |   |   |   |   |

EASY+

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 |   |   |   |   |   | 8 |   |
|   |   |   | 2 | 1 |   | 6 |   |   |
|   |   | 9 |   |   | 8 |   |   | 3 |
| 3 |   |   |   |   |   | 4 |   |   |
|   |   |   | 5 |   | 1 |   |   |   |
|   | 6 |   |   |   |   |   |   | 5 |
| 8 |   | 7 | 7 |   |   | 9 |   |   |
|   | 7 |   |   | 9 | 5 |   |   |   |
| 9 |   |   |   |   |   |   | 6 | 7 |

MEDIUM

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   |
|   | 8 |   | 2 |   |   |   |   | 1 |
|   |   | 3 |   | 8 |   | 6 |   |   |
| 7 |   |   |   | 3 |   | 4 |   |   |
| 5 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 3 |
|   | 3 |   | 4 |   |   |   |   | 2 |
|   |   | 7 |   | 1 |   | 4 |   |   |
| 9 |   |   |   |   | 2 |   | 1 |   |
|   | 1 |   | 9 |   |   |   |   |   |

HARD

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| 5 |   | 8 |   | 3 |   |  |   |   |
| 3 |   |   | 7 |   |   |  |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| 1 |   |   |   |   |   |  | 8 | 5 |
|   | 4 |   | 6 |   | 7 |  |   |   |
|   |   |   | 2 |   |   |  |   |   |
|   |   |   |   | 8 |   |  | 3 |   |
|   | 2 |   |   |   |   |  | 7 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |  | 6 |   |

WEATHER

|           | MIN | MAX | CONDITION              |
|-----------|-----|-----|------------------------|
| CHINA     |     |     |                        |
| Beijing   | -3  | 7   | clear                  |
| Harbin    | -14 | -2  | cloudy                 |
| Tianjin   | -1  | 8   | clear                  |
| Urumqi    | -2  | 5   | cloudy                 |
| Xi'an     | -2  | 15  | clear                  |
| Lhasa     | -3  | 9   | cloudy                 |
| Chengdu   | 9   | 16  | cloudy                 |
| Chongqing | 10  | 14  | drizzle                |
| Kunming   | 7   | 17  | shower                 |
| Nanjing   | 5   | 13  | cloudy                 |
| Shanghai  | 8   | 12  | overcast               |
| Wuhan     | 6   | 14  | cloudy                 |
| Hangzhou  | 7   | 12  | overcast               |
| Taipei    | 16  | 20  | moderate rain          |
| Guangzhou | 15  | 20  | moderate to heavy rain |
| Hong Kong | 17  | 21  | moderate rain          |

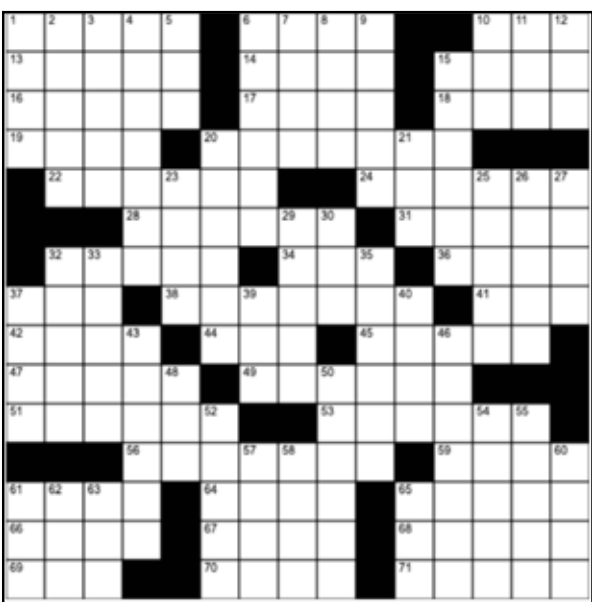
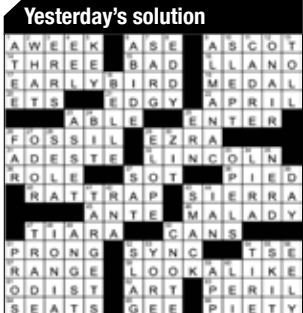
WORLD

|           |   |    |         |
|-----------|---|----|---------|
| Moscow    | 1 | 4  | drizzle |
| Frankfurt | 2 | 13 | drizzle |
| Paris     | 9 | 11 | cloudy  |
| London    | 7 | 10 | cloudy  |
| New York  | 0 | 12 | drizzle |

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Plant again; 6- Calculus calculation; 10- Big galoot; 13- Actress Verdugo; 14- Own (up); 15- Tease; 16- Bent; 17- Phooey!; 18- Cravings; 19- Copycat; 20- Satanic; 22- Washes away; 24- Mantra; 28- Mischievous boy; 31- TV producer Michaels; 32- Beast of Borden; 34- Russian space station; 36- Zip; 37- Half of MCII; 38- Skin eruptions; 41- Occupational suffix; 42- Paris pronoun; 44- Up to, informally; 45- Vends; 47- Gettysburg general; 49- Benzene derivative; 51- Cut into; 53- Complete; 56- Confined to the berth; 59- Room in a casa; 61- Sincere; 64- K-12; 65- Old stringed instruments; 66- Drama award; 67- Exec's note; 68- Establish; 69- Big Blue; 70- Yemeni port; 71- Outer coat of a seed;

DOWN: 1- First name in country; 2- Run away with a lover; 3- Effluent system; 4- Burdensome; 5- Glob of gum; 6- Anew; 7- Enlarge, as a hole; 8- This, in Tijuana; 9- Orgs.; 10- Feeling of being overwhelmed; 11- Slender metal fastener; 12- French connections; 15- Magnate; 20- Duplicity; 21- Green around the gills; 23- Faucet problem; 25- Chalice; 26- Cordillera of South America; 27- In the neighborhood; 29- Suggest; 30- Goose egg; 32- Actress Barkin; 33- Light purple; 35- Take as an affront; 37- Moore of "G.I. Jane"; 39- Blend; 40- Posted; 43- Fit to be eaten; 46- Unhurried ease; 48- End for Siam; 50- Wound; 52- Plant problem; 54- Gives a 9.8, say; 55- Give a seat?; 57- Ran away; 58- Words of woe; 60- Nick and Nora's pooch; 61- Louis XIV, e.g.; 62- Decline; 63- Direct a gun; 65- Court call;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999

Fire department 28 572 222

PJ (Open line) 993

PJ (Picket) 28 557 775

PSP 28 573 333

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

Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283

Water Supply - Report 2822 0088

Telephone - Report 1000

Electricity - Report 28 339 922

Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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[Taipa] Historical Centre apartment 2 1 1  
840 ft² \$4,580,000 (ref: 20016003)

[Taipa] Taipa Village apartment 1 1 1  
785 ft² \$4,780,000 (ref: 20016009)

**FOR RENT**

[Taipa] Taipa Village 1 1 1  
740 ft² \$10,900/mth (ref: 19101006)

[Coloane] Hellene Garden 1 3 2 1  
1,663 ft² \$14,000/mth (ref: 19121001)

[Macau] Luxury apartment 2 2 2  
n/a ft² \$20,000/mth (ref: 20011001)

[Taipa] Buckingham 2 2 1  
1,439 ft² \$20,900/mth (ref: n/a)

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**J**APAN'S Olympic minister said yesterday the contract to hold the Tokyo Games only specifies the event has to be held during 2020.

Seiko Hashimoto's response to a question in the upper house of parliament implies the Olympics could be held later in the year and would not have to start on July 24 as planned. The Paralympics open on Aug. 25.

The Tokyo Olympics are being threatened by a fast-spreading virus that has been blamed for 12 deaths in Japan and has shut down most schools, sports competitions and Olympic-related events in the country. The virus that started in China has been detected in at least 70 countries, with 90,000 cases and 3,100 deaths reported.

"The IOC has the right to cancel the games only if they are not held during 2020," Hashimoto told parliament. "This can be interpreted to mean the games can be postponed as long as they are held during the calendar year."

IOC President Thomas Bach and Tokyo organizers have repeatedly said they expect the Olympics to open on schedule. Others have suggested the spreading virus could force cancellation, postponement or moving events to other cities.

During a scheduled executive board meeting yesterday, the IOC issued a statement expres-

TOKYO 2020

# Olympic Minister: Games could be held any time

AP PHOTO



sing "full commitment to the success of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, taking place from July 24 to Aug. 9, 2020."

"The IOC (board) encourages all athletes to continue to prepare (for the games)," the Olympic body said, restating it would "con-

tinue to follow the advice of WHO (World Health Organization)."

In an interview last week with only Japanese media, Bach declined to "fuel the flames of speculation" about reports of cancellation or postponement.

Hashimoto was asked if she

believed the Olympics should be held even if the coronavirus outbreak is worse than it is now.

"We are making the utmost effort so that we don't have to face that situation," she said.

Any decision to move the games back would impact interna-

tional broadcasters, who would have sway over any changes.

The International Olympic Committee gets 73% of its \$5.7 billion income in a four-year Olympic cycle from selling broadcast rights. About half of that TV income is from American network NBC.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were held in October. But the games have now shifted to summer, largely because it's the only time slot open for sports broadcasters. North America in the fall is filled with the NFL, college football, baseball, basketball and hockey. Europe is jammed with soccer in England, Spain, Germany, France and Italy, not to mention rugby and cricket where those sports are popular.

Former IOC vice president Dick Pound told The Associated Press in an interview last week that a decision about the Olympics probably has to be made in the next several months. Kevan Gosper, another former IOC vice president and now an honorary IOC member, also said cancellation was feasible.

The Olympics have been canceled only three times, all during wartime.

Tokyo organizers were forced to call off a Paralympic wheelchair rugby test event following suggestions from Prime Minister Shizo Abe to hold down large crowd events for several weeks. AP

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OPINION

World Views

Virginia Postrel, Bloomberg

THE WORLD IS A  
GIANT CRUISE SHIP  
CALLED THE COVID-19

I extended my hand to the woman with whom I'd been chatting for the past few minutes. "I'm Virginia," I said.

To my surprise, she responded not with a handshake but with a closed fist. A white woman of a certain age, she was incongruously going for a fist bump. Her husband recommended it, she explained, to avoid spreading germs. We were, after all, on a cruise ship.

We were sailing from Los Angeles to Hawaii on the same line, Princess Cruises, that had a different ship quarantined in Yokohama, Japan, with an outbreak of the coronavirus known as Covid-19. As we set sail in mid-February, a ship was either one of the safest places, isolated from potential contagion, or the riskiest. But even without the threat of a potential pandemic, we had reason to be cautious.

Like college dormitories and military barracks, ships crowded with tourists are great incubators of disease, particularly the highly contagious norovirus, which causes vomiting and diarrhea. Come down with it, and your vacation is ruined. If enough people get sick, the whole cruise can come to an abrupt stop. Over the weekend, a norovirus outbreak forced a Princess cruise in the Caribbean to end a day early. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requires ships to report sick passengers or crew. Last year, 10 cruises reported that more than 3 percent of their crew and passengers suffered gastrointestinal illnesses; eight were positively identified as norovirus.

On a cruise, you start paying attention to washing your hands properly. Signs in all the bathrooms, including your cabin's, remind you to wash with soap for at least 20 seconds before rinsing thoroughly. Hand-washing stations and sanitizer dispensers greet you on entering the buffet.

With all those nudges, and the sight of other passengers conscientiously washing their hands, I developed better habits. Rather than a perfunctory soap and rinse, I really did count out 20 seconds, and made sure to get the backs of my hands and between my fingers. I washed my hands after blowing my nose and when I used the bathroom in the middle of the night. Never mind the coronavirus, I didn't want to spend my vacation throwing up.

Why don't we act this way all the time? Taking a half minute to wash your hands with soap is a trivial act that costs next to nothing, yet almost no one does it. We'd all be better off if it became a habit. "People who perform proper hand-washing have lower rates of diarrhea, viral infections (like the common cold) and foodborne illnesses," notes the Cleveland Clinic. "The CDC says proper hand-washing also reduces kids' absenteeism at school from gastrointestinal illnesses by at least 29%." That was before Covid-19.

Pandemics can dramatically change everyday habits. AIDS certainly did. In the 1977 movie, "Looking for Mr. Goodbar," Diane Keaton plays a woman who lives a double life teaching school by day and picking up men in bars by night. Her conventional would-be boyfriend proves himself a complete loser by wearing a condom, then regarded mostly as an old-fashioned form of birth control. She breaks into hysterical laughter. "Is this supposed to protect you or me?" she says, blowing it up like a balloon.

A decade later, attitudes had changed. In the 1987 summer comedy "Dragnet," the cool young cop played by Tom Hanks wakes up with his girlfriend, finds his condom box empty, and foregoes morning sex. "The first AIDS-influenced movie has reached the screen," declared the New York Times. As "safe sex" entered the American vocabulary, real-life habits changed as well.

Washing your hands carefully is, by comparison, a minor shift in behavior. The coronavirus is a reminder that the world is a cruise ship, where we're all trapped with each other. We need to start acting like it.

US LAWMAKERS CLOSE IN ON \$7.5B  
MEASURE TO BATTLE CORONAVIRUS

Lawmakers are finalizing a \$7.5 billion emergency bill to fund the government's response to the coronavirus outbreak, in a burst of bipartisan cooperation that's atypical of today's Washington.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, a caustic critic of President Donald Trump's handling of the spreading crisis, said he's expecting a bipartisan deal among lawmakers on the House and Senate Appropriations committees today (Macau time) in hopes of clearing the measure through Congress by week's end.

The \$7.5 billion package would triple Trump's request but is ex-

pected to enjoy support from both the White House and Trump's GOP allies on Capitol Hill.

"When it comes to Americans' health and safety, there is no reason to be penny-wise and pound-foolish," Schumer said.

Deliberations on the bill are a bipartisan bright spot as Congress seeks to rebound from the bitterness of Trump's impeachment and involves the pragmatic lawmakers on the House and Senate Appropriations panels, which have a track record of bipartisan success despite the partisanship engulfing Washington.

THE  
BUZZ

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IPHONE MAKER EXPECTS  
RETURN TO NORMAL IN  
CHINA BY END-MARCH

HON Hai Precision Industry Co., Apple Inc.'s most important manufacturing partner, expects its Chinese plants to begin operating normally by the end of March after resolving severe labor shortages brought on by the coronavirus outbreak.

The Taiwanese company, which assembles the majority of the world's iPhones from China, joins a growing number of corporations envisaging a return to normalcy in the world's No. 2 economy. Beijing has curbed the spread of an epidemic that erupted in January and forced millions to work from home, tangled up logistics and dented economic growth. Hon Hai said yesterday its factories are now operating at about 50% of seasonal capacity but that should ramp up over the course of the month as workers stream back into its plants.

Still, Chairman Young Liu warned it remained difficult to quantify the full impact of a weeks-long disruption, or gauge the effect on final demand for the swathe of consumer electronics it makes from laptops to game consoles. Business across all of Hon Hai's four major divisions should decline in the Mar-

ch quarter compared with the previous year, meaning sales in the first half could end up being flat, Liu told investors and reporters on a conference call.

"There's not a huge hit on demand yet so far, but I dare not and don't want to predict the outlook of the outbreak," Liu said. "We don't see a huge issue with our suppliers and we are helping them to secure resources."

As China's largest private employer and a key partner to many of the world's most recognizable consumer brands, Hon Hai - known also as Foxconn - has become a symbol of how the outbreak could disrupt the global supply of made-in-China electronics. Apple scrapped its revenue guidance for the March quarter because of the work slowdowns and worsening demand, showing the outbreak was taking a bigger-than-predicted toll on one of the world's most valuable companies.

Foxconn has already slashed its 2020 revenue projections in the wake of the epidemic. The contagion has disrupted Apple's carefully calibrated production chain: Hon Hai was forced to postpone the reopening of its "iPho-

ne City" mega-complex in the central city of Zhengzhou while it imposed strict quarantine measures on thousands of laborers. But Foxconn has since sharply raised signing bonuses to attract the new workers it needs to assemble its products.

The first quarter is typically a lull for Apple and Foxconn, because most iPhone sales occur over the holiday season. But Foxconn's supply chain turmoil coincided with the envisioned launch of Apple's cheaper iPhone SE2, slated for launch as early as this month. Yesterday, Liu deflected questions about the gadget, saying only that Foxconn's product research and development efforts were proceeding.

Liu also said Foxconn was considering reducing its annual revenue outlook. Hon Hai is projecting a sales increase of 1% to 3% this year, Liu told Bloomberg News in a text message last month. That's down from a Jan. 22 forecast for 3% to 5% before the epidemic spread around the globe and lagged the average of analysts' projections at the time. Analysts expect Hon Hai to post 4.9% topline growth in 2020. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

AP PHOTO



France Chanel staged a comparatively low-key affair for Paris Fashion Week as the coronavirus outbreak kept many of the regular VIPs and fashion editors away. The stalwart Parisian design house streamed its show online. Some of the guests who came to see Chanel's fall collection up close yesterday wore CC-branded face masks.

AP PHOTO



USA In a surprise move, the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate by a sizable half-percentage point yesterday in an effort to support the economy in the face of the spreading coronavirus. Chairman Jerome Powell (pictured) said at a news conference that the virus "will surely weigh on economic activity both here and abroad for some time."

AP PHOTO



USA Tornadoes ripped across Tennessee yesterday, shredding at least 40 buildings and killing at least 19 people. One of the twisters caused severe damage across downtown Nashville, destroying the stained glass in a historic church and leaving hundreds of people homeless. Daybreak revealed a landscape littered with blown-down walls and roofs, snapped power lines and huge broken trees, leaving city streets in gridlock.

Iran has nearly tripled its stockpile of enriched uranium since November in violation of its deal with world powers and is refusing to answer questions about three possible undeclared nuclear sites, the U.N. atomic watchdog agency said. The International Atomic Energy Agency made the statement in a confidential report distributed to member countries that was seen by The Associated Press.