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THE MEDICAL STATION AT THE WORKERS STADIUM IS BEING RELOCATED TO THE MACAU FORUM DUE TO CAPACITY CONCERNS

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NEW THAI TRAVEL RULES TARGET THOSE WHO SET FOOT IN MACAU

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ONE OF MACAU'S LARGEST GAMING PROMOTERS WAS SAID TO HAVE REVERSED A DECISION TO LAY OFF 200 EMPLOYEES

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AP PHOTO



Travel Amazon and other big companies are trying to keep their employees healthy by banning business trips, but they've dealt a gut punch to a travel industry already reeling from the virus outbreak. Amazon's nearly 800,000 workers postpone any non-essential travel within the United States or around the globe. Description Nestlé told its 291,000 employees worldwide to limit domestic business travel and halt international travel until March 15. L'Oréal issued a similar ban until March 31.

AP PHOTO



Dubai Six more people with links to the canceled UAE Tour cycling race have been infected with the virus spreading around the world. The Ministry of Health in the United Arab Emirates said that two Russians, two Italians, one German and one Colombian have been diagnosed with the virus. They were all linked to two previous cases involving Italians, it said.

AP PHOTO



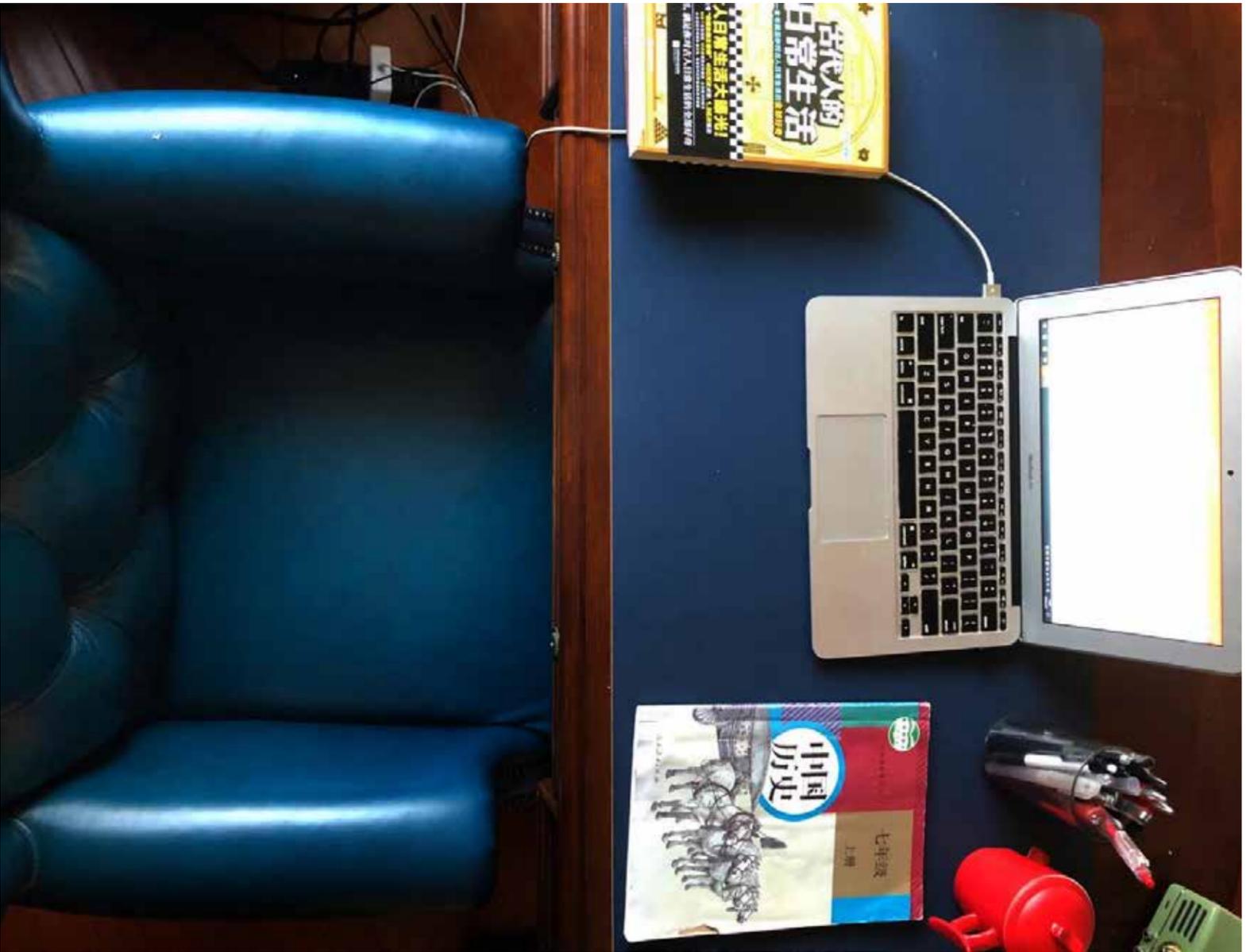
North Korea In her first known official statement, the younger sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un leveled diatribes and insults against rival South Korea for protesting her country's latest live-fire exercises. Kim Yo Jong (pictured) is in charge of propaganda. But her statement carried by state media was the first of its kind and indicated a further elevation of her political status.

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AP PHOTO



BLOOMBERG

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WORKERS STADIUM MEDICAL STATION TO BE MOVED TO MACAU FORUM

ANTHONY LAM

THE provisional medical station at the Macao Federation of Trade Unions Workers Stadium, located right beside the Border Gate, will be relocated to the Macau Forum due to capacity concerns, Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the Health Bureau's (SSM) Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), announced yesterday.

Data shows that the number of checks conducted each day at the two medical station facilities of the Workers Stadium and the Taipa Ferry Terminal has climbed to more than 3,000. Both venues can only accommodate a maximum of 1,000 people at one time.

The Public Security Police Force (PSP), which assists the SSM with the transportation of people, said it escorted more than 1,600 people to the Workers Stadium and 2,000 to the Taipa Ferry Terminal on Tuesday.

"Auditoria A and B at the Workers Stadium can accommodate at maximum 400 and 100 people at one time [respectively]. The Taipa Ferry Terminal has a capacity of 500," Leong said. "At peak hours, there is no space to accommodate all users. Therefore, we need a larger space."

The Macau Forum station will be in use from 8 p.m. today. The Macau Forum has more than 7,000 square meters of space, with over 4,000 seats.



A staff member tests the body temperature of a customer at a branch of Bank of China in Macau

When questioned as to why a new medical station was being sought, the SSM official said that medical staff at the Workers Stadium are currently being separated and working across two auditoria. At the Macau Forum, they will be able to work in the same auditorium, improving communication and lowering the pressure on the workers.

Leong added that Workers Sta-

dium will be on stand-by. "It depends on the number of people required to be checked," Leong said. "If the number increases significantly, we may need to make the Workers Stadium a third location."

On Tuesday, two Macau residents began their quarantine periods, as they had been to Italy in the past 14 days. So far, 58 people have been quarantined

after travelling to highly infected areas such as Italy and South Korea, including two Koreans, three mainland Chinese and 53 Macau residents.

Three days before Macau's first repatriation mission in Wuhan, Hubei province, the Tourism Crisis Management Center (GGCT) recorded a total of 180 Macau residents in Hubei. Sixty of them will be returned to Ma-

cau by the Air Macau flight that has been chartered by the local government for the coming Saturday. They will be taken straight to the quarantine facility on Coloane Alto upon arrival.

Yesterday, the St. Regis Hotel in Cotai resumed operation. Its neighboring property, the Conrad Macao, remains closed. A total of seven short-term accommodation providers are not in operation, which equates to about 1,000 rooms.

Meanwhile, Pousada Marina Infante is considered by the tourism authority as operating, even while it is used by the government as a designated hotel for quarantine.

The MGTO has also conducted spot checks at entertainment venues – licensed by the Office – which were allowed to resume operation from March 2. It has checked about 30 venues, and no violations of the SSM hygiene and health guidelines were detected.

Furthermore, the tourism regulator recorded that only 60% of all venues have reopened.

In terms of border crossings, the PSP recorded 61,000 crossings in total yesterday, with 31,000 inbound and 30,000 outbound. The majority of border crossings are still being made by local residents, with 22,000 inbound and outbound respectively. The government has been discouraging people from crossing.

Some 8,100 inbound and 7,200 outbound crossings were made by non-Macau residents, including Hong Kong ID holders. Among them, 3,600 were mainland Chinese and 3,800 were Hong Kong residents.

Monetary Authority cuts base rate to 1.50%

THE Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) lowered the benchmark interest rate yesterday by 50 basis points to 1.50%, in line with similar decisions in Hong Kong and the U.S.

The U.S. Federal Reserve announced yesterday (Macau time) that it would cut interest rates to the range of 1% to 1.25%. It marked the first time the central bank has cut rates between scheduled policy meetings since the 2008 financial crisis and it's the steepest rate cut the Fed has made since then.

Bloomberg reported that the move in Hong Kong was an automatic response to Fed Chairman Jerome Powell's emergency 50 basis point reduction to counter the economic effects of the spreading coronavirus epidemic.

According to the Associated Press, Powell said lower rates can help keep credit flowing, particularly to struggling businesses already laden with debt that would otherwise face higher borrowing costs. He suggested that the Fed's

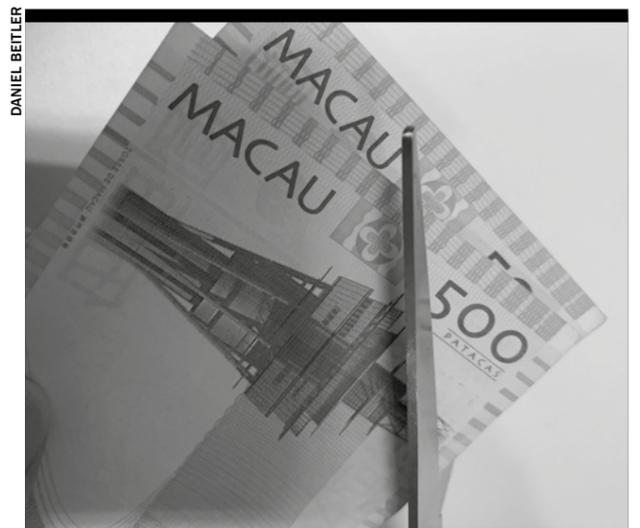
intervention would boost consumer and business confidence and provide "a meaningful boost to the economy."

The local governments in Hong Kong and Macau have already unveiled stimulus programs designed to shore up their coronavirus-battered economies.

The Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the U.S. dollar in a band that ranges between HKD7.75 and 7.85 to the U.S. dollar. In turn, the Macau pataca is fixed to the Hong Kong dollar at

an exchange rate of 1.03. As the Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the greenback, both special administrative regions essentially import U.S. monetary policy, although local banks are not obliged to follow with lower retail costs.

In a statement issued yesterday, the AMCM noted that the policy rates in Hong Kong and Macau "should be basically consistent in order to maintain the effective operation of the linked exchange rate system." DB/AGENCIES



DANIEL BEITLER

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New Thai travel restrictions target those who set foot in Macau

RENATO MARQUES

AN announcement Tuesday from Thailand's Public Health Ministry designated nine countries and two territories as high-risk areas for Covid-19.

The two territories referenced are the special administrative regions of Macau and Hong Kong. They join the list of Japan, South Korea, Germany, China, Taiwan, France, Singapore, Italy, and Iran as locations from which travelers must be submitted to a 14-day quarantine upon arrival in Thailand.

The government of Nepal has also informed that it will suspend the issue of visas on arrival to people arriving from the Macau and Hong Kong SARs, as well as for all holders of passports from China, Japan, South Korea, Iran, and Italy.

The measure, which will be enforced from March 10, was justified by the Nepalese government as complying with the recommendations made by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Despite the restrictions imposed, the Nepalese government has clarified that the measure does not mean travelers are banned from entering the country. All people wishing to visit Nepal can do so by applying for an entry visa in advance in the diplomatic representations of the country, and by presenting a medical certificate stating that they have not been infected with Covid-19.

As for the restrictions to be imposed by Thailand, health authorities in the country explained that the restrictions will apply to Thai nationals arriving from any of the



Flight crew wear protective masks as they arrive at the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok yesterday

11 high-risk countries and territories, even if they have a medical certificate clearing them of the infection.

Exceptions will only be granted with permission from Thai health officials, the statement says, although it did not explain in which cases such permission might be granted.

Those who do not have a permanent residence or lodging in Thailand will be required to show officials, upon arrival, evidence of where officials can locate them during the 14-day home quarantine period.

Foreign visitors or Thai returnees from the designated high-risk areas will also have to file a daily report about their health with officials during the quarantine period. If they have any symptoms of infection they must inform health officials within three hours so that they can undergo testing, receive

treatment or be isolated.

Thai health authorities also warn that during the quarantine period, and in case people need further medical assistance, all expenses incurred will be borne by the individuals themselves.

When questioned during yesterday's daily press conference of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, Inês Chan, the representative of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), acknowledged that they were aware of the bans, but said, "For the time being, the MGTO has no official confirmation from the Thai government." Chan also added that the recommendations from the MGTO regarding travel restrictions advise that when people learn about such measures, they should abide by the requirements.

"We suggest Macau residents to

be mindful of measures in place, especially during this period when measures [enforced] can change quickly from time to time," she said.

Chan added that even in the case of flight suspensions, the measures do not necessarily need to from the government's initiatives, "it can just be a simple commercial decision [by airlines]."

The Coordinator of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center Leong Iek Hou, who said that such decisions being enforced by foreign jurisdictions might not just be related to the situation in Macau, but the fact that "some countries might consider [the] mainland and Macau as a whole [jurisdiction], so the measures they have implemented [with regards to China] apply to Macau as well."

It is not yet clear when the restrictions introduced in Thailand

will be officially implemented, as they must first be published in Thailand's Royal Gazette.

For the time being, the only countries that have imposed restrictions on Macau residents or people that have recently traveled through Macau are North Korea, Comoros, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu.

North Korea was one of the first countries to impose border control measures against Covid-19, closing its borders with Russia and China effective January 30. At the same time, the country imposed an entry ban on all foreign tourists and all North Koreans in China. Earlier, the country had already declared the suspension of all flights to China.

Comoros' restrictions on Macau come from an entry ban on travelers coming from China or any other country affected by Covid-19 unless they undergo a 14-day quarantine period in an unaffected third country before entering Comoros, effective February 10.

Samoa imposed an entry ban on all travelers originating from or transiting through mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau, requiring that they must spend 14 days of self-quarantine in a country that is free of Covid-19 and must undergo a medical clearance three days before arrival.

As for the two archipelagos in the western and southern Pacific, Palau imposed an entry ban on all travelers who originate from or have transited through mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau within 14 days of their arrival in Palau, according to an order from the Office of the President effective February 1. Palau also suspended all flights from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau on the same date.

A statement from the Embassy of Japan in Vanuatu has noted the imposition of an entry ban on all foreigners who have stayed, lived in, or transited through China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau in the past 14 days, effective February 9.

Philippine gov't to bring home citizens stranded in Macau

SOME 148 Filipinos stranded in Macau will be repatriated by the Philippine government, the country's presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo has announced. An official date for the chartered flight, arranged by the country's Department of Foreign Affairs, is yet to be disclosed.

Panelo said that 48 of the Filipino nationals will be repatriated by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration – a government agency that protects the interests of overseas Filipino workers.

Stranded Filipinos in Macau

have been calling on the Philippine government to assist since flights were first canceled due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Earlier, a group of 134 Filipinos sent the government a petition via the Philippine Consulate General in Macau, requesting a chartered flight back to Manila. Among them were elderly people, pregnant women and people with infants.

However, negotiations with the airline could not be satisfactorily concluded. The airline was concerned about quarantine procedures for the flight crew. These Filipino nationals are

mostly tourists stranded in the SAR in the wake of the Philippine government's decision to restrict travel between the Philippines and China and its SARs after news of the Covid-19 epidemic surfaced.

Currently, there are still no flights connecting Manila to Macau as Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific Air and AirAsia, the three airlines who run the routes, have not yet resumed operations.

Some Filipino nationals wishing to return home have taken a route via Hong Kong or Taiwan. LV

AIRASIA, EVA AIR EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL MARKET DESPITE VIRUS BLOW

AIRASIA has expressed full confidence that Southeast Asian routes can resume in a short time, after several of its flight routes were canceled due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Amid the travel bans and cancellations of flights connected to Macau, the low-cost carrier has continued to operate limited flights, including some to Kuala Lumpur.

CAM executives held a meeting this week with AirAsia to discuss market

trends and industry information as air traffic in the SAR has been affected by the epidemic.

As cited in a statement issued by the Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. (CAM), the company expressed hopes that it and AirAsia can cooperate to restore routes and expand new markets in the future.

According to Celia Lao, CEO of AirAsia Hong Kong and Macau, they are confident about resuming their operations in

the market, as they have "accumulated experiences" from past uncertainties and challenges.

CAM also met with the EVA Air Macau Branch. The Taiwanese airline has continued to run daily flights to Taipei amid the outbreak. The carrier pledged to immediately adjust their flights and aircraft once the market recovers.

"They are full of confidence and prospects in the market," said CAM. LV

POLICE ACADEMY TO HAVE A NEW RECTOR

Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak has appointed a new rector to the Academy of Public Security Forces. The new director is Wong Chi Fai, who is the current director of police affairs at the Public Security Police Force (PSP). The appointment will take effect on March 10 and will be valid for one year. Wong has a bachelor's degree in police science, and bachelor's and master's degrees in Chinese law. In 1996, Wong started serving at the academy. Between 2002 and 2013, Wong served at the PSP. Wong was also a consultant at the office for the Secretary for Security between 2015 and 2016. He became a deputy director at the PSP in 2016. Three years later, in May 2019, he was appointed deputy rector of the academy.

WORKER INJURED BY OWN MALPRACTICE

A non-local worker has been injured due to his own malpractice. Earlier this week, a non-local worker was operating a suction pump inside a shop located at Rua do Canal Novo. The non-local worker, a man in his 50s, was using the pump to transfer gas from a big container to a smaller one. When he attempted to connect the pump to a power supply, the pump exploded. The man sustained injuries to his eyes, face, left arm, right hand and right leg. The Fire Services Bureau took the man to the hospital. He is in stable condition. The case has now been forwarded to the Labour Affairs Bureau.

MERCHANDISE IMPORT FALLS 3.6% IN JANUARY

The total merchandise import to Macau slid by 3.6% year-on-year in January to 8.48 billion patacas (about \$1.06 billion), the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has informed. The latest report from DSEC indicated that the imports of motor cars and motorcycles, as well as mobile phones, declined by 58.3% and 33.3% respectively. Meanwhile, those of beauty, cosmetics and skincare products, and handbags and wallets expanded by 55.2% and 22.3% respectively. By place of origin, merchandise imports from the Chinese mainland decreased by 12.8% year-on-year to 2.73 billion patacas in January 2020. Imports from the European Union (2.66 billion patacas) increased by 9.8%, while imports from Portuguese-speaking countries dropped by 27.3% to 69 million patacas.

GOV'T SUBSIDIZED HOUSING APPLICATION PERIOD POSTPONED

ANTHONY LAM

THE application period for an upcoming government subsidized housing project has been extended by a month, with the new closing date to be April 27, the Housing Bureau (IH) announced yesterday in the Official Gazette.

Along with extending the application period, the bureau has also postponed the deadline for document re-submission to May 25.

Some of the original requirements were also altered or canceled, following widespread complaints over the complicated application process.

Initially, the IH required applicants to submit a valuation report for their fixed assets. Furthermore, they would have to forgo applications they had made in 2013 for a previous economic housing project.

Another issue that stirred up public unease was the requirement that financial reports be signed by a certified accountant or auditor, should the applicant be a business owner. All three of these requirements have been removed.

The other requirements will remain unchanged. Applicants should submit the documents as required.

The extension is the IH's delayed response to public complaints. At least three lawmakers and a commentator found the ori-



ginal absence of postponement "incomprehensible."

As part of measures to contain the Covid-19 outbreak, the Macau government suspended the operation of its offices, or kept operations to a minimum last month. The special measures lasted for nearly a month.

When the head of the government, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, suspended the operation of public offices, the IH also called off applications of the housing project to align with the major policy directive.

During the special period, the bureau did not announce any extension or postponement with regards to the application, causing applicants to form long queues at the office on the first day of the government resumption, which was March 2.

The Economic Housing Scheme is a social welfare scheme provided to qualifying Macau residents only. Applicants qualify on the basis of their financial status and ownership of real properties. Since it is not welfare for all, a strict process underlies the distri-

bution of residential units.

Applications will be ranked in relation to their structure. The law stipulates three types of structures, namely "Core Family," such as married couples; "Non-core Family," such as siblings; and "Individual Applicant."

After that, the IH will review several other factors to determine whether an applicant or family is eligible to purchase an apartment.

The 2013 round attracted more than 40,000 applications to compete for just over 1,000 residential units.

TOUR GUIDES, DRIVERS, AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AMONG MOST AFFECTED BY COVID-19

TOUR guides, occupational drivers and construction workers are among those local employees most affected by the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) said in a statement yesterday.

From February 17 to March 2, the DSAL claimed to have provided help to local residents in 1,066 occurrences relating to employment services. Some 171 of these workers are occupational drivers.

The bureau specifically identified the three aforementioned occupations as being more affected by the epidemic.

The DSAL said that the bureau has already held several job-matching fairs for unemployed workers

recently. The bureau also organized employment-hiring procedures specifically for tour guides, construction workers and occupational drivers.

The DSAL has also transferred workers' information to potential employers in order to arrange interviews for the workers. Some 344 interviews were attended by the workers. From these interviews, 204 people were eventually recruited, including 36 construction workers who visited DSAL on February 24 to give accounts of their unemployment situation.

According to DSAL statistics, 180 construction workers, 19 tour guides, and five occupational drivers successfully found a job through the DSAL service.

The labor authority claimed that other job seekers were unable to find jobs using these employment assistance procedures because they gave up on interviews, could not be contacted, or their skills did not meet the requirements.

The bureau claimed that it would continue to help unemployed local workers find more employment opportunities.

In order to help local residents get through these difficult times, the DSAL will implement a program aimed at improving workers' skills.

At the same time, the DSAL said it also hopes that local residents having difficulties in finding the ideal job can adjust their attitudes during the epidemic in order to find employment. **JZ**

VULNERABLE FAMILIES TO RECEIVE EARLY SUBSIDY TODAY

HOUSEHOLDS benefiting from subsidies from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) will receive an early payment of the subsidy today as announced by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, as part of a raft of measures aiming to make life easier for residents.

In a statement, the IAS said that the early subsidy will be paid to a total of 3,200 vulnerable households and will be paid today by bank transfer from eight local banks or through other regular subsidy payment methods for those who do not have a bank

account with those banking institutions.

As Lei mentioned in a press conference held on February 13, the households will also be receiving an extra payment of the same subsidy that was scheduled to be paid by this September.

The double subsidy for poor families was one of the measures announced by the government to mitigate the impact of Covid-19, in order to contribute to residents' quality of life and ease their difficulties.

According to the government, the measure will cost an estimated 19.3 million Macau patacas. **RM**



MGM Rides Out the Storm of Epidemic with Macau

The outbreak of coronavirus has led to weeks of bitterness for both Mainland China and Macau. At this difficult time, MGM has launched a series of relief initiatives, proactively contributing to community-wide efforts to fight the epidemic with faith and unity.

DONATION TO HUBEI AND SURGICAL MASKS TO MACAU

In support of anti-epidemic measures for Hubei province, MGM donated MOP 20 million, made in coordination with the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau, for the purchase of preventive and medical supplies, as well as urgently needed materials and equipment.

In view of Macau's increasing demand for face masks, MGM donated 500,000 surgical masks to the Government to support their anti-epidemic initiatives. The Government thanked MGM for proactively fulfilling corporate social responsibility and fully supporting its initiatives to combat the epidemic.



Ms. Pansy Ho, Co-chairperson & Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited, expressed her gratitude to medical personnel for their unceasing effort and dedication to protect the public. She also felt sympathy for the families that were affected by the epidemic. In her view, Mainland China and Macau have demonstrated to the world that they go the extra mile to be a responsible world citizen. "Under the leadership of the Government, we should be able to overcome the storm if we stay united," she said.

DISTRIBUTE SUPPLIES TO FRONTLINE WORKERS AND SENIOR CITIZENS

Even though the epidemic has loused up the order of our city, a number of frontline workers are still committed themselves to serve the community, such as nursing home staffs, social workers, outreach teams and bus drivers. To show appreciation and protect them during their duty, MGM supplied the frontline staff of Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macau (UGAMM) and Caritas Macau with masks, disposable caps and other necessary items.



MGM also prepared 1,000 supply kits for solitary and vulnerable senior citizens, which were distributed by the above three associations. Each supply kit includes hand sanitizer, toilet paper, noodles, oatmeal and other daily necessities. The kits help sparing them the trouble of going out and thus reducing their risk of infection.

Lee Chong Cheng, Director General of FAOM, expressed his appreciation, "MGM's donation of supplies is helpful, and at the same time a heart lifting act for frontline workers. The supplies, as a token of encouragement, will be distributed to our frontline colleagues and public bus drivers."

HELPS SMES TO FIGHT THE EPIDEMIC

Earlier this month, MGM became the first integrated resort operator to answer the government's call to waive retail rents, announcing a

15-day rent-free period for its retail tenants. Recently, MGM offered to extend the rent-free period for tenants in need to help them ride out the adversity. The Company will continue to support its SME tenants for as long as necessary, easing their rental and operational stress to ensure that their business will stand a good chance to recovery.

As the epidemic has also raised concern over the hygiene of public areas, it is important for all businesses to maintain a high standard of hygiene in order to restore the confidence of customers and employees. MGM has launched the "MGM SME Anti-Epidemic Support" program, a win-win initiative engaging a local SME cleaning company to carry out cleaning and sterilizing work for local SMEs to create a clean environment for a fresh start, which will significantly help them get their business back on track. The Company targets to help clean the shops, offices, warehouses and even business vehicles of 120 local SMEs in the next two months. In addition, hand sanitizers and wipes will be distributed to them, which will come in handy for their staff's good personal hygiene.

Chloe Wong, Operation Manager of Food Mac, a frozen meat vendor, said, "Business hasn't been easy recently, and like many SMEs in town, we are suffering from this epidemic situation and plagued by a long list of problems. It is generous of MGM to give a helping hand and clean 10,000 square feet of space encompassing our warehouse, office and shop. As part of the supply chain, I believe the entire chain will benefit from this program."



CHINA'S SCHOOLS, FORCED ONLINE BY VIRUS, RUN INTO CENSORS

YANAN WANG, BEIJING

LESS than 30 minutes into a lecture on bioinformatics, Chu Xinjian's class was abruptly cut short.

It was the first day of an unusual semester. Across China, schools are shut indefinitely in a bid to contain a new virus that has killed some 3,000 people. Chu's class was one of tens of thousands of courses, from grade school to university, that have been forced online.

Chu's professor was painstakingly sending voice recordings to the class group chat when, without warning, the system disbanded the group for violating China's Internet regulations — a pervasive, almost mundane part of life under Communist Party rule.

The students were puzzled. Was it because of something about the subject matter? Bioinformatics is the science of collecting and analyzing complex biological data. "I'm not sure exactly what phrases triggered it," said Chu, who recounted the incident. "I guess we touched on some sensitive topic."

Major social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are blocked in China, while homegrown ones such as Weibo and WeChat are heavily monitored and scrubbed for offensive content by the state Cyberspace Administration and police.

Now, the sudden arrival of public education onto platforms that are generally the domain of celebrity livestreamers has thrown the controls into stark relief. Classrooms are confronting the ubiquity and often arbitrary nature of the ruling Communist Party's online censorship.

Biology courses have been blocked for "pornographic content." History and politics classes are among the most vulnerable; subjects such as the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward are regularly censored in classes and online discussions.

Daily life in the world's most populous nation has undergone a radical transformation in the past six weeks. Once-bustling streets are empty, fast-food restaurants offer only takeout service and group activities have been replaced with remote everything — remote work, remote fitness class, remote schooling.

"Classes have stopped but learning will not," the Education Ministry said in a February notice. It has established 24,000 free online courses on 22 web platforms, covering both under-



AP PHOTO

graduate and vocational disciplines.

Yet many lesson plans have been stymied by the country's strict online regulators.

Louis Wang, a middle school history teacher in northeast China, said his workload has ballooned because of an arduous approval process for online classes.

While teachers have some leeway to facilitate spontaneous discussion in a classroom setting, online classes can be recorded, with the potential for clips to be taken out of context and

circulated online.

"Every word that is spoken in a video recording must be pre-approved," Wang said.

For him, that means writing word-for-word his entire lecture — about 5,000 Chinese characters — for review by school administrators.

Even seemingly non-controversial statements can run afoul of the censors.

Wang said one of his colleagues, a politics teacher, was trying to upload a document for his students with "socialism with Chinese characteristics" in

its title. The phrase was championed by former leader Deng Xiaoping and is still frequently used by the government today.

For reasons unexplained, the cloud platform blocked the document. It could be uploaded only after the overtly political phrase was removed.

Teachers are using workarounds to skirt a variety of digital obstacles. On the messaging app WeChat, documents can be rejected for transmission to a group chat if a file fails a "safety inspection."

The same documents, how-

ever, can often be shared in direct messages, so some teachers have resorted to sending files to parents and students one-by-one.

"Teachers having their online classes blocked, that's funny, because it's too absurd," Wang Yuechi, a well-known Chinese comedian wrote on his verified account on Weibo, an app similar to Twitter.

"This is not normal — it's because there's no freedom of speech," he wrote. "Just like how it's not normal that this post will also be deleted. I hope everyone can be aware of this. The absence of freedom of speech will impact our education, our lives. This has already happened. It's not so funny now, is it?"

As Wang predicted, his post can no longer be viewed on Weibo.

Not every online class mishap involves censorship. Sometimes technical difficulties are the culprit.

Cheng Yufan, a university student in the southern province of Jiangsu, inadvertently became the host of a lecture on the first day of online classes last month.

When class was set to start, her philosophy professor was nowhere to be found, Cheng said. The professor was logged onto a different platform; meanwhile, the other one had designated Cheng as group administrator.

Their professor fared no better on the second platform. Internet connection issues resulted in Cheng and her classmates tuning into two hours of silence.

Afterwards, the unwitting professor wrote in their class group chat, "See you next time!" AP

93,069

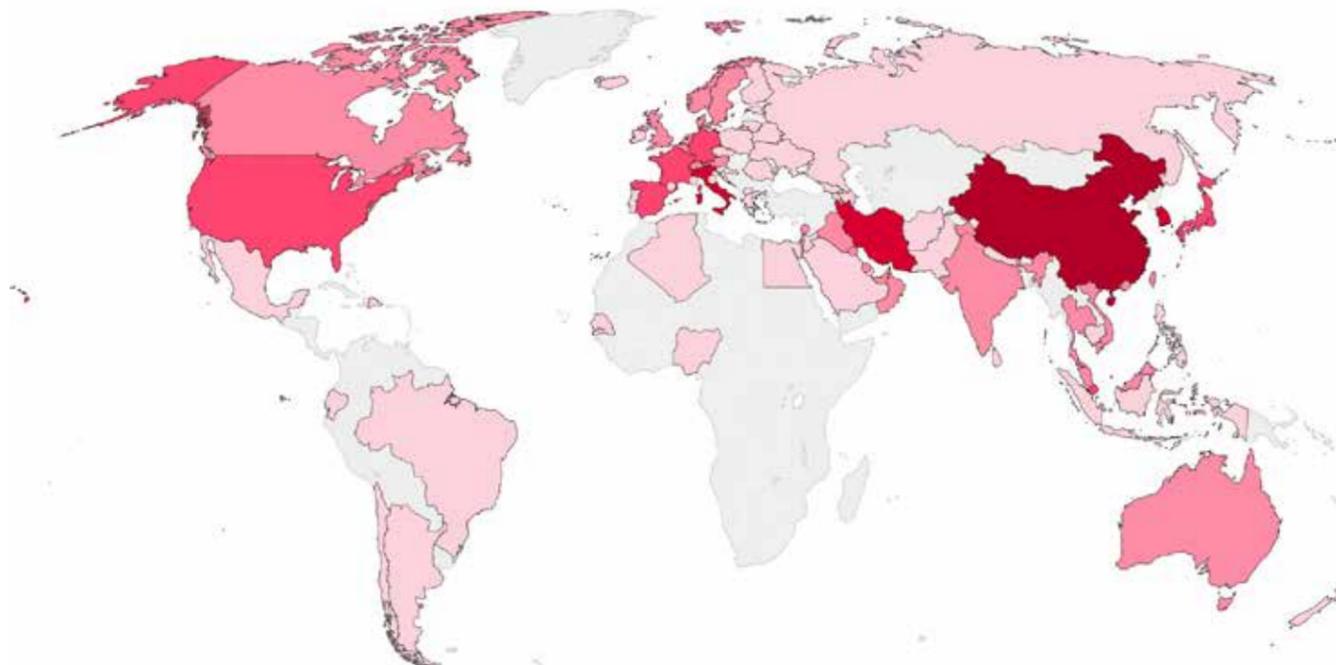
Confirmed cases worldwide

3,201

Deaths worldwide

Jurisdictions with cases confirmed as of 4 March 2020, 15:30 GMT+8

■ 1-9 ■ 10-99 ■ 100-999 ■ 1,000-9,999 ■ 10,000 or more



COVID-19

South Korea hunts sick beds as West readies for long virus fight

CHINA prepared to close temporary hospitals while South Korea struggled to find enough beds for its sick yesterday as the virus epidemic that began in Asia increasingly troubled the West.

"We have entered a phase that will last weeks and, undoubtedly, months," said President Emmanuel Macron of France, where more than 200 people were infected.

As new cases were dropping in worst-hit China, worrisome clusters were growing sharply in South Korea, Italy and Iran, which each exceed 2,000 cases. Italy newly surpassed Iran with the most deaths outside China, with 79 as of Tuesday.

World Health Organization leader Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said though the virus caused more serious illness and death than the flu, data suggests it's not as easy to catch.

"People are afraid and uncertain. Fear is a natural human response to any threat," Tedros said. "But as we get more data, we are understanding this virus and the disease it causes more and more."

In Daegu, the South Korean city at the center of that country's outbreak, a shortage of hospital space meant about 2,300 patients were being cared for in other facilities while they await



Army soldiers wearing protective suits spray disinfectant as a precaution against the new coronavirus at a shopping street in Seoul yesterday

ted a hospital bed.

"I feel assured that we can absolutely overcome this situation," said Prime Minister Chung Se-Kyun in a meeting about quarantine strategies in Daegu.

China reported 119 new cases Wednesday, all but five in the ou-

tbreak's epicenter of Wuhan. In a sign of the shifting threat, Beijing's health commissioner said two new cases in the Chinese capital were apparently infected abroad, in Iran and Italy.

The state-run Xinhua news agency said Hubei province,

where Wuhan is located, was expected to gradually shut down its hastily built temporary hospitals, where thousands of beds were empty.

"We believe this decline is real," WHO outbreak expert Maria Van Kerkhove said of China. The country has reported 80,270 infections and 2,981 fatalities. It has about 85% of the world's cases and 95% of deaths from the COVID-19 illness.

Italy's death toll rose sharply Tuesday, with 45, mostly in the northern region of Lombardy where its outbreak has been concentrated.

Fear over the virus' spread led even the Vatican to insist Pope Francis was not infected. He became ill last week, but the Vatican said Francis only had a cold.

The outbreak was blamed for market instability around the globe. Asian stock markets were mixed Wednesday after Wall Street continued its zigzag performan-

ce, despite an interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve. Business of all types were experiencing pain as travel and tourism were spurned and worried consumers changed their habits.

"People are afraid to touch anything or take anything from us," said Maedeh Jahangiri, a perfume seller at an upscale mall in Tehran. "Everyone is at a loss."

Spain had dozens of health workers quarantined or being monitored after at least five were infected with the new virus. In France, the government requisitioned all current and future stocks of protective masks to ensure they go to health workers and patients. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned cases could spread, unveiling a 25-page plan for a worst-case scenario in which retired doctors and nurses are called back to work and police could stop investigating minor crimes to help deal with an outbreak. AP

AD

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銀河娛樂集團
Galaxy Entertainment Group

13TH JUNE @ STARWORLD SAVE the DATE

A vibrant, multi-colored bus is the central focus. The side of the bus is painted with a rainbow and the text "BRITCHAM MACAO'S PEACE 'N' LOVE BALL" in a playful, bubbly font. Below the rainbow, it says "DON'T MISS THE BUS". The roof of the bus is loaded with several colorful suitcases and a guitar. The background is white with some faint, stylized text and graphics.

AP PHOTO



Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill attend a primary election night rally

JULIE PACE, WASHINGTON USA

LESS than a month ago, Joe Biden's campaign was in free fall. Even after he mounted a comeback in South Carolina, he confronted the reality of competing in crucial Super Tuesday contests with little money and no discernible campaign infrastructure.

It didn't matter.

The former vice president swept to victory in Democratic primary contests across the country, from New England to the Atlantic seaboard swing states, from the Upper Midwest to the Deep South. His coalition was broad, with black voters, women, older and college-educated voters all drawn to his campaign.

Biden's stunning performance cemented a remarkable turnabout, remaking the Democratic presidential primary with head-spinning speed. A candidate once on the brink of collapse, Biden is now a favorite for his party's nomination.

"I'm here to report, we are very much alive," Biden declared at a raucous rally in Los Angeles.

California, the night's biggest prize, was one of the few states Biden lost to Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. But Biden picked off Texas, the second-biggest state up for grabs, as well as eight other contests. His victories in Virginia and North Carolina, two crucial general-election states, were particularly decisive.

Biden's show of force puts him on a collision course with Sanders that will test who Democrats view as more electable in November. Sanders, a liberal firebrand, has spent decades calling for sweeping overhauls of economic and health care systems, while Biden, a moderate, is running less as an

Biden's stunning turnabout remakes democratic race

ideologue and more as a candidate who can reset the nation after President Donald Trump's divisive administration.

Sanders' fast start in this primary season — he won in New Hampshire and Nevada and effectively tied in Iowa — rattled centrist Democrats who fear he is out of step with vast swaths of the electorate and would not only cost the party the White House, but also the House and the Senate.

Many in the party quickly recognized that Sanders was benefiting from a crowded field of more moderate candidates who were dividing up the rest of the Democratic electorate. But it wasn't until Biden's commanding victory in South Carolina on Saturday that they began to see him as the best alternative.

The speed at which Biden's standing has shifted is virtually unprecedented in recent memory.

In the days since South Carolina, high-profile Democrats have flocked to Biden's campaign with dizzying speed, including several former rivals whose campaigns once appeared promising. Pete Buttigieg, Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Beto O'Rourke all endorsed Biden on Monday in a forceful show of party unity.

Much-needed money is also pouring in.

The resource gap between Biden and some of his rivals

yesterday [Macau time] was staggering, making his successes all the more striking.

In Minnesota and Massachusetts, billionaire Mike Bloomberg plunged roughly \$17 million into TV. Biden carried both states without spending a dollar, according to TV advertising data released late last week.

In Virginia, a key general-election state where Biden won by more than 25 percentage points, the former vice president spent a paltry \$291,000 to Bloomberg's \$12 million, the data shows.

A similar pattern emerged in Texas, where Bloomberg spent \$47.8 million to Biden's \$291,000, and in North Carolina, where Bloomberg outspent Biden 28 times over.

Bloomberg ended the night without winning a single state, though he picked up a smattering of delegates. He planned to huddle with advisers in New York on Wednesday to reassess whether to press on with his campaign.

Also facing reality: Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who finished a disappointing third in her home state. Though she's vowed to take her campaign to a contested convention, it was unclear how she would justify continuing with little to cling to out of the Super Tuesday results.

That leaves Biden and Sanders, two white men in their late 70s, to battle it out to become the standard-bearer

for an increasingly diverse party.

The race has echoes of Sanders' face-off in 2016 against Hillary Clinton, a more moderate candidate who was deemed a safer choice until her stunning loss to Trump in the general election. Sanders and his supporters are urging the party against taking a similar path this time around.

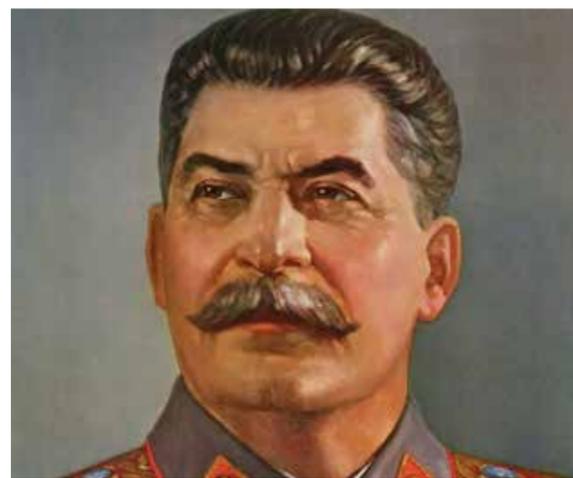
But Biden's surge has underscored just how many Democrats fear the prospect of a Sanders nomination. If Bloomberg were to drop out in the coming days, it's likely he would plunge his fortune into helping Biden and blasting Trump with millions of dollars in television advertising through the fall.

To be sure, Biden remains a candidate with risk. He has struggled to mobilize young voters and at times seems out of step with his party's energized left flank. He has also proven to be an uneven campaigner, often delivering unwieldy, rambling speeches.

But his vastly improved prospects appear to have refocused Biden. He was visibly energized as he blitzed the Super Tuesday states, relishing an outpouring of support from voters and party leaders who had appeared ready to send him into retirement just days ago.

"They don't call it Super Tuesday for nothing!" Biden exclaimed. AP

this day in history



1953 SOVIET LEADER 'ON BRINK OF DEATH'

Rumours are circulating in Moscow that Joseph Stalin, the long-time leader of the Soviet Union, is near death.

The first official news of Mr Stalin's illness came in a statement on Wednesday.

It said the Soviet leader, who came to power in 1928, had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage on Wednesday night.

An update issued earlier today mentioned "sharp disturbances of the heart functions".

There is speculation that the 73-year-old, born Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, in the Soviet republic of Georgia, is now in the final stages of an illness he has been suffering some time.

Soviet newspapers today are clearly preparing their readers for the worst.

Their front pages carry the bulletins on Mr Stalin's health as well as sombre leading articles.

On the inside pages, feature articles praise the Soviet leader both as a man and politician.

World leaders have expressed concern for Mr Stalin's health.

A statement issued by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said his private secretary, John Colville, had yesterday called on the Soviet ambassador.

Mr Colville had passed on the prime minister's regret at the news of Mr Stalin's ill-health and asked to be kept informed of his progress, the statement said.

US President Truman also expressed sympathy for Mr Stalin.

"I am sorry just as I would be if such a thing happened to any other acquaintance of mine," Mr Truman said.

If Mr Stalin's death is confirmed, he will be most remembered for instigating political purges in which tens of thousands were killed.

He was also behind the introduction of farming collectives which led to a famine and the death of up to 10 million people.

His death is expected to provoke a power struggle within the ruling Politburo.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The death of Joseph Stalin was officially announced at just after 0100 GMT on 6 March.

The statement said he had died at 2150 local time on 5 March.

Hundreds of thousands of people queued to see Joseph Stalin's body lying-in-state.

He was embalmed and put on display alongside the first Soviet leader, Vladimir Illyich Lenin, in his mausoleum in Red Square in Moscow.

But Nikita Khrushchev, who became Soviet leader after a power struggle, led a move to denounce Stalin as a tyrant who caused millions of deaths.

In 1961 Stalin's body was removed from its place in the honoured Lenin's Tomb.

It was reburied near the Kremlin wall along with other minor figures from the Bolshevik Revolution.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Listen to your gut when it comes to any business or financial dealings today. Any contracts put in front of you today will have some mighty small type, and you'd better read every single word.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Don't ignore the problems that are going on, but don't let them control your day. These aren't fires you need to extinguish. They're merely facts you need to deal with.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Don't waste any of your energy on blame or culpability. Even if those people who are making things complicated fess up to the charges, nothing will change. The problem will remain. Stay solution oriented.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 To foster this spirit of open-mindedness, be prepared to create a place where new people can meet and mingle. A social event like a dinner party or even bowling can help cultures meld instead of collide.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You need to help the person who helps you whenever you need a leg up. It's time for a karmic payback, and you're the person who will be making the payment.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 You can't change people's minds about things that are important to them, so don't even try. Acceptance would be a good skill to learn today.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Building this relationship could pay off in a very big way, sending your life in a brand-new direction. Show them you have what it takes, but try not to come on too strong.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 If you're seeking inspiration right now, look to the things in your life that are a source of frustration. It might sound counterintuitive, but the stars say that is the right idea.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You're sharper than a tack, quicker than a whip, and much more charming than a puppy! Plus, you have an unbeatable secret weapon: your organizational skills.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 And don't just complain about it to your friends or co-workers. Make an appointment with the person who can really make the changes that you need. Stand up for yourself. You're not asking for more than you deserve.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 The last time you spent any time with old relatives, you learned a lot. Why not plan another visit with someone from your family who can offer some insight into your current conundrum?	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Get out of the past today. The days of yesteryear are relevant in terms of retro clothing styles, classic movies, architecture, and musical inspirations. It's the future you should be focusing on right now.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

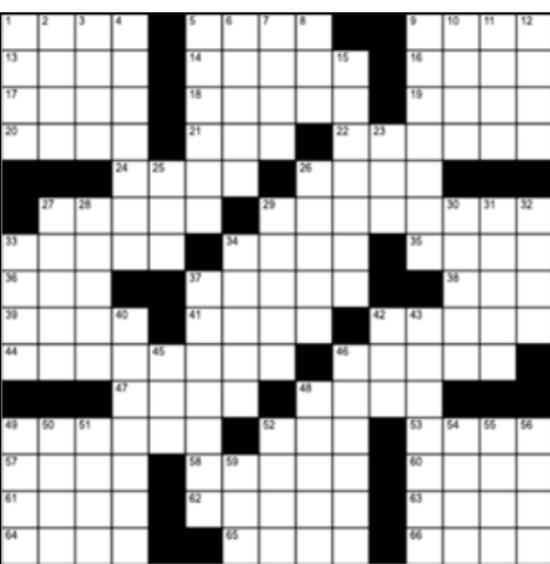
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	11	clear
Harbin	-16	0	clear
Tianjin	0	12	cloudy
Urumqi	-2	7	clear
Xi'an	2	16	cloudy
Lhasa	-2	11	cloudy
Chengdu	10	15	overcast
Chongqing	11	16	overcast
Kunming	8	20	cloudy
Nanjing	2	12	clear
Shanghai	5	10	clear
Wuhan	5	16	clear
Hangzhou	4	12	cloudy
Taipei	15	16	drizzle
Guangzhou	13	18	overcast
Hong Kong	16	19	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	2	6	cloudy
Frankfurt	2	10	moderate rain
Paris	6	9	moderate rain
London	2	10	drizzle
New York	0	9	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Not a dup.; 5- Pale; 9- The majority of; 13- Actress Olin; 14- Fastening device; 16- Large jug or pitcher; 17- Pull down; 18- Yo Yo's instrument; 19- "Whip It" band; 20- Take down ____; 21- Conductor de Waart; 22- Canceled; 24- Wimp; 26- Lab fluids; 27- Snares; 29- Strangle; 33- Follows orders; 34- Ovid, e.g.; 35- Quod ____ demonstrandum; 36- Alphabet trio; 37- Marshal; 38- Actress Alicia; 39- Singles; 41- "The Alienist" author; 42- Supports; 44- Move; 46- Trunk line; 47- Created; 48- Toronto paper; 49- Elude; 52- Court cry; 53- Hit the ground; 57- Wyoming resource; 58- Gettysburg general; 60- Scottish loch, home to a monster!; 61- Snake dancers; 62- Some locks; 63- Big bash; 64- Draft classification; 65- Sharp to the taste; 66- Cabinet dept.;

DOWN: 1- Olive genus; 2- Get as a result; 3- As to; 4- Used by passengers to board a ship; 5- Entry; 6- Snow conveyances; 7- Head light?; 8- Fashion monogram; 9- Intervene; 10- Due; 11- Golf's Ballesteros; 12- Stepped; 15- Indigence; 23- Guadalajara gold; 25- FedEx rival; 26- Clip wool; 27- Steak order; 28- Drive back; 29- Baseball manager Joe; 30- Stretch of land; 31- Sri ____; 32- JFK postings; 33- ____ about (approximately); 34- Babble; 37- Secondary school; 40- East African nation; 42- Anaconda; 43- Place in order; 45- Bottle lid; 46- Swear; 48- Passover meal; 49- Parrot; 50- In a jiffy; 51- Headland; 52- In ____ land; 54- The Tower of Pisa does this; 55- It's deserted in fantasies; 56- Boris Godunov, for one; 59- Grab a bite;



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



FOR SALE



One Central High Floor, Macau
HK\$12,500,000 1,269 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2

FOR RENT



Manhattan high floor
\$26,800/mth 2,305 ft² 4 1/2 2 1/2

FOR SALE

- [Taipa] Ocean Garden 1 1/2 1 1/2
100 ft² **\$1,190,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Nova City 1 1/2 1 1/2
100 ft² **\$1,590,000** (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Historical Centre apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2
840 ft² **\$4,580,000** (ref: 20016003)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village apartment 1 1/2 1 1/2
785 ft² **\$4,780,000** (ref: 20016009)

FOR RENT

- [Taipa] Taipa Village 1 1/2 1 1/2
740 ft² **\$10,900/mth** (ref: 19101006)
- [Coloane] Hellene Garden 1 1/2 3 1/2 2 1/2
1,663 ft² **\$14,000/mth** (ref: 19121001)
- [Macau] Luxury apartment 2 1/2 2 1/2
n/a ft² **\$20,000/mth** (ref: 20011001)
- [Taipa] Buckingham 2 1/2 2 1/2
1,439 ft² **\$20,900/mth** (ref: n/a)

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AD

The Art of Giving

Lurdes de Sousa *



MODERN PHILANTHROPY: THE LOVE OF HUMANKIND AND SOCIAL DISTANCE

SOCIAL distance" is one of the most debated concepts in international sociology. The term is extensively used today in studies of ethnicity, class, gender, socio-economic status and many other kinds of relations. It was originally developed to advance the understanding of processes of acceptance and estrangement between groups of people in cities where people who belong to different groups come into regular contact with one another.

The phenomenon of social distance has been explained in many ways by sociologists and anthropologists for the latter reason, mainly as a result of technological advances. In fact, social distance is probably understood by the majority of us as an expressed norm about who should be considered an "insider" and who should be considered an "outsider" or "foreigner." In other words, it specifies the distinction between "us" and "them."

Nowadays, "them" is mostly thought of as migrant, refugee or LGBT communities. This social distance can be linked to anxiety, according to some scholars. Anxiety about seeing "them" invade our social space, our neighborhood, our inner circles. This obviously generates in us a rejection of "them," a sense of mistrust, intolerance, bitterness, even a sense of hatred.

Us and them.

When pandemics occur, the concept of us and them becomes distressingly evident. If "social distancing," a term applied to certain actions taken by public health officials to stop or slow the spread of a highly contagious disease, is undoubtedly necessary (multisectoral coordination and communication, encouraging proper personal hygiene, school closures etc.), it inevitably leads to "social distance" referred as above.

The excessive emotional distress associated with the threat of infection addresses the question of socially disruptive behaviors. In these cases, the psychological footprint is likely to be larger than the medical footprint, some scholars argue. When pandemics unfold, the social distance created endangers the very sense of love of humankind which best defines philanthropy as a result.

Us and them is in our minds more than ever and destroys the social fabric of our societies. It is understandable (as there can be no deeper and more sensitive fear than the fear of your life being threatened) but very regrettable.

If modern philanthropy is to be reinvented, it is needed precisely in these moments, when the feeling of us and them is at the highest level on the scale of social distance. Philanthropists have a major role, through their donations and actions, in reinvesting in the love of humankind. It is a challenge and will require cooperative networks with specialized institutions, corporate social responsibility, solidarity and an understanding of cultural patterns.

Us and them must return to an "affective social distance" and that's when philanthropy and philanthropists will be needed the most.

*President, Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau)
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Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau).

VIETNAM BUYING \$3 BILLION IN US FARM GOODS TO EASE TRUMP TARIFF THREATS

VIETNAM, looking to allay the Trump administration's wrath over its soaring trade surplus with the U.S., is committing to buy \$3 billion in farm products from Nebraska.

The agricultural shopping spree is part of a campaign to address complaints about the trade surplus and difficulties U.S. companies face in accessing Vietnamese markets.

"We see a lot of room to increase purchases from America, and that will significantly help narrow our trade gap with the U.S.," said Nguyen Do Anh Tuan, the agriculture ministry's spokesman, who was part of a recent Vietnamese delegation to meet farm-product producers in the U.S. "Our demand for American farming products is very high."

Vietnamese companies signed 18 agreements with American producers to buy about \$3 billion of farm products in the next two to three years, Tuan, director general of the agriculture ministry's international cooperation department, said in an interview. The deals include purchases of 100,000 cows, 3 million tons of wheat and barley worth as much as \$800 million, and fruit, corn and soy animal feed, according to Tuan.

"We will have regular meetings with these Vietnamese companies to give them timely support in implementing the signed MOUs," Tuan said. "We also want to buy more high-tech equipment from the U.S. to make more value-added farm products in the future."

Vietnam's leaders are doing all they can to avoid China's fate after U.S. President Donald Trump, asked in June 2019 if he wanted to impose tariffs on Vietnam, described the Southeast Asian nation as "almost the single worst abuser of everybody."

Vietnam's exports to



BLOOMBERG

the U.S. reached \$61.3 billion in 2019, widening the trade gap to \$47 billion from \$34.8 billion in 2018, according to Vietnamese customs data. The U.S. Census Bureau reports a \$55.8 billion trade deficit with Vietnam for 2019 and \$39.5 billion for 2018.

In an interview last year, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc promised that Vietnam would buy more U.S. products, such as Boeing Co. aircraft. In

August, state-run Vietnam National Coal-Mineral Industries announced it was negotiating to buy U.S. coal for the first time, from Xcoal Energy & Resources LLC.

Vietnam is cracking down on fake labeling of Chinese goods being routed through its territory to bypass U.S. tariffs. Meanwhile, the central bank and government ministries have vowed to address U.S. concerns about Vietnam's monetary policy

and trade surplus with the U.S., after the Treasury added Vietnam to a watchlist of countries being monitored for possible currency manipulation.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said last year that Vietnam needs to resolve "market access restrictions related to goods, services, agricultural products, and intellectual property."

Vietnam is working to address Lighthizer's concerns, Tuan said.

"We will work on changes in some relevant regulations to make it easier for American companies to sell more in Vietnam," he said. "We are trying to create opportunities for businesses of the two countries to boost trade exchange in a fair manner. This will surely help the bilateral relations between Vietnam and the U.S." **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

AD

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STEPHEN WADE, TOKYO

TOKYO 2020

JAPAN'S Olympic Minister Seiko Hashimoto suggested in Parliament this week that the Tokyo Games could be postponed by a few months from the planned July 24 opening and still meet a contract agreement with the International Olympic Committee.

It's not that clear cut and seems unlikely.

The IOC has said repeatedly the Olympics will open as planned in just under five months despite a virus outbreak that started in China and has spread to at least 70 countries.

More than 3,100 deaths have been reported including 12 in Japan, which has closed schools, called off mass gatherings, and canceled several Olympic test events. Preseason baseball is being played in empty stadiums, the soccer J-League is suspended until at least March 18, and a major spring sumo tournament won't allow fans.

The 81-page "Home City Contract" signed in 2013 by the IOC, the city of Tokyo, and the Japanese Olympic Committee, gives the IOC wide latitude to terminate.

Reading from a prepared text earlier this week, Hashimoto said: "The IOC has the right to cancel the games only if they are not held during 2020. This can be interpreted to mean the games can be postponed as long as they are held during the calendar year."

'Host City Contract' gives IOC much leeway to cancel Olympics



Under a section titled "Termination," the IOC has the right to terminate for many reasons; state of war, civil disorder, boycott, and others. It also says the IOC can terminate if it has "reasonable grounds to believe, in its sole discretion, that the safety of participants in the games would be seriously threatened or jeopardized for any reason whatsoever."

In the same section, it says the IOC can terminate if "the games are not celebrated during the year 2020." The contract says the IOC has to give local organizers, the city, and the national Olympic committee, 60 days notice to terminate.

The section also says the city, local organizers, and the national Olympic committee "waive any

claim and right to any form of indemnity, damages or other compensation."

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

Acting as the No. 1 cheerleader, IOC President Thomas Bach told athletes on Tuesday to remained focused.

"I would like to encourage all

the athletes to continue their preparation for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 with great confidence and with full steam," he said in Switzerland.

Toshiro Muto, the CEO of the Tokyo Olympics, was expected to announce crowd restrictions for the torch relay, which opens officially in Japan on March 26 in Fukushima prefecture, located 250 kilometers northeast of Tokyo.

Any change to the July 24 opening would have to be approved by international broadcasters. Tokyo is spending about \$12.6 billion to organize the Olympics, although a national government audit says it's twice that.

The IOC 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.

NBC parent company Comcast said that because of insurance and the way contracts are written, NBC won't suffer losses if the Olympics are canceled.

The IOC says it's relying heavily on the World Health Organization for advice. **AP**

AD

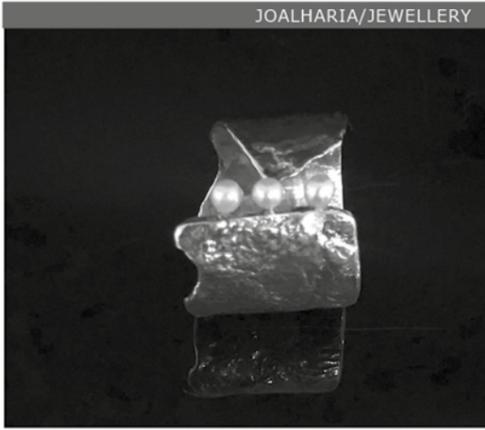
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School of Arts and Crafts

workshop

Anel e Brincos em Prata Reticulada
Reticulated Silver Ring and Earrings

JOALHARIA/JEWELLERY



≥ 18 anos/years old

monitora/monitor:
Cristina Vinhas

total: 8 horas/hours
4 sessões/sessions

data/dates:
06, 13, 20, 27/03/2020

Sextas
Fridays
18h30 - 20h30

início/starts: 06/03/2020
fim/finishes: 27/03/2020

propina/fee:
MOP 320 *

língua/language: Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English ** patrocínio/sponsor: **Fundação Macau**

local/venue:
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número máximo de participantes/maximum number of participants:
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CASA DE PORTUGAL EM MACAU 澳門葡人之家協會

Escola de Artes e Ofícios
School of Arts and Crafts

workshop

Vitrofundição
Glass Fusion

JOALHARIA/JEWELLERY



≥ 18 anos/years old

monitora/monitor:
Cristina Vinhas

Quintas
Thursdays
18h30 - 21h30

total: 9 horas/hours
3 sessões/sessions

data/dates:
12, 19, 26/03/2020

início/starts: 12/03/2020
fim/finishes: 26/03/2020

propina/fee:
MOP 360 *

língua/language: Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English ** patrocínio/sponsor: **Fundação Macau**

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OPINION

World Views

Elaine Ou, Bloomberg

**TECH COMPANIES CAN
 TRACK YOUR PANICKY
 CORONAVIRUS SEARCHES**

Two weeks ago, Sand Hill Road VC firm Andreessen Horowitz received some heckling after posting a “No Handshakes” notice on their front entrance. Coronavirus cases were still rare outside of China, and it was easy to dismiss the precautions as symptomatic of Silicon Valley’s heightened self-importance. Now that multiple U.S. cities have declared a state of emergency, it may be worth considering the decisions of those who spend their days analyzing massive troves of user data — and considering whether that data might be used to draw any conclusions about the virus now known as Covid-19.

Amazon was one of the first companies to withdraw from last month’s Mobile World Congress in Barcelona over coronavirus concerns. Amazon ships products to over 100 countries around the world, so it’s not surprising that they would be ahead of the curve in predicting disease outbreaks. Just follow the flow of face masks and hand sanitizer. According to Amazon price tracking site camelcamelcamel, the prices of Pirell hand sanitizer and disposable masks began to rise around the end of January, a reflection of the impact of supply and demand on automated pricing algorithms.

Then there’s Facebook, which tracks the interests, relationships and real-time physical location of 2.4 billion users. (Don’t worry, we consented to this when we clicked “Agree” on the terms of service pop-up window.) It’s not too much of a stretch to say that the popularity of Facebook Groups may have given the company some insight on the state of global gatherings. Last week, the company confirmed the cancellation of the annual F8 developers conference, originally scheduled to take place in May in San Jose, California.

Google keeps track of user location as well as global traffic flows through its mapping service. On top of that, the search engine fields 3.5 billion queries a day, many of which are health-related search requests from consumers seeking medical advice. Searches for pneumonia, for example, reached an all-time high in January of this year. Google’s decision to cancel an internal conference in Vegas and move its upcoming Cloud Next event to a virtual gathering may be better-informed than the guidance issued by our own CDC.

Widespread panic, whether from terrorism or pandemic, provides a handy excuse to erode civil liberties.

What will happen if the government asks mobile phone carriers to share location data? AT&T and Verizon (who both canceled their participation in last week’s RSA conference in San Francisco) were recently fined for failing to safeguard information about customers’ real-time locations. Both carriers were previously revealed to have assisted the NSA in warrantless wiretapping.

To see how this might play out, look to Asia. Singapore’s Ministry of Health has provided enough information for local citizens to create a website tracking the movement and status of individual cases. Such transparency may be reassuring to the public, but it’s also a potential violation of patient privacy.

In China, mobile phone apps such as AliPay and WeChat are used by the government to track people’s interactions and perform contact tracing. China has accomplished impressive containment measures, but few Americans aspire to turn the country into China.

Mass surveillance, of course, is not the only solution. Genomic epidemiology, which examines how viruses mutate and accumulate changes during the course of transmission, may be a decent predictor of disease spread. Better distribution of test kits will certainly fill information gaps and help the public manage disease risk.

So far the CDC has been remarkably inadequate on COVID-19 testing, forcing employers into a collective action problem — no one wants to be the first to scale back business interests. Several of the biggest U.S. banks have restricted non-essential international travel. In San Francisco, Square, Twitter, Stripe, and Coinbase have all urged employees to work from home. Maybe it’s time for the rest of us to consider following their lead. (Abridged)

China’s most popular messaging app has been censoring key words about the coronavirus outbreak from as early as January 1, a report has found.

Toronto-based research group Citizen Lab found that WeChat blocked combinations of keywords and criticism of President Xi Jinping, BBC reported yesterday.

The report also found that WeChat, owned by Chinese firm Tencent, blocked more words as the outbreak grew.

This report, cited by BBC, suggests China began censoring discussions weeks before officials began acknowledging the severity

of the outbreak.

It was on December 31 that China first alerted the World Health Organization to an outbreak of a new coronavirus in Wuhan.

But authorities initially withheld information from the public — under-reporting the number of people infected, downplaying the risks, and failing to provide timely information that could have saved lives.

According to BBC, WeChat was found to have censored 132 keyword combinations in January. As the outbreak continued, it censored 384 new keywords between February 1-15.

GAMING

**JUNKET REVERSES DECISION
 TO FIRE 200 EMPLOYEES**



A local gaming promoter has reportedly reversed a decision to lay off some 200 staff members.

First reported by All In Media, a gaming industry news website, the report did not identify the junket operator said to have relieved 200 of its staff. However, it is believed to be one of the top five junkets in the city.

The website reported today that, “it is unknown whether the junket was under internal and external pressure in deciding to re-employ the laid-off employees.”

All In Media reported that the 200 workers had accounted for about one-quarter of the firm’s staff and included 20 in the marketing department, 30 from the concierge de-

partment and about 150 people “on the floor” and in administration.

All In Media said it was “understood” that the junket’s chief executive officer had personally met with the laid-off staff on Tuesday, trying to explain that the decision had been motivated by an uncertain market situation.

The CEO is reported to have told the group about the company’s uncertainty regarding whether tourists would start returning to Macau in the second or third quarters of this year. But the CEO said a shareholders meeting had been held and it was decided to reopen all offices, even if “this year will go down.”

Gross gaming revenue saw a record-breaking

87.8% year-on-year drop last month after casinos were forced to close for a 15-day period starting February 5. Gaming analysts are mixed in their outlook for March, though most expect an improvement. Even the most optimistic of analysts do not anticipate a general recovery before the third quarter at the earliest.

In response to media enquiries, Macau’s Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau said it was “highly concerned” about the reported layoffs, noting that it has appealed not only to casino operators, but also gaming intermediaries and equipment suppliers, to protect local employees as part of their corporate social responsibility commitments. **DB**

**FEBRUARY SHIPPING
 MOSTLY CONTAINED MASKS**

In February, more than 75% of the city’s shipping packages contained masks, according to the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT).

Last month, the postal authority sent out over 10,000 express parcels, 7,500 of which contained facemasks. In turn, 60% of ordinary shipping packages contained facemasks.

While most sectors have slowed down their operations during the epidemic, the Macau postal authori-

ty reported an increase of 20% to 30% in the number of packages.

On Saturday, the local government will repatriate residents currently waiting in Hubei. As of yesterday, the local government has already shipped over 100 packages to Hubei for Macau residents who are still in the mainland province.

These packages primarily contain facemasks, sanitizers, milk powder and medicines.

In order to ensure that the packages arrive safely,

the postal authority has been fully committed to tracking them. Every Macau resident targeted eventually received this package, according to the CTT.

In addition, from March 1, the CTT started using a special stamp on every parcel leaving Macau.

According to CTT Director Lau Meng Wai, the stamps are themed with epidemic prevention measures in order to remind Macau local residents to undertake preventative measures. **JZ**

China-US Dozens of countries are voting in a pivotal phase of an election to choose the next head of the U.N.’s intellectual property agency, a contest for a key post in the Digital Age that has pitted the United States against China’s candidate. The results of the closed-door voting by 83 states on a key committee of the World Intellectual Property Organization to choose its next director-general could come today.



Malaysia’s new leader has postponed the next session of Parliament by more than two months, effectively delaying plans by Mahathir Mohamad’s former ruling alliance to seek a no-confidence vote against him. Lawmakers will reconvene on May 18 instead. He said the decision was based on Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin’s (pictured, center) order, but no reason was given for the postponement.



USA Less than a month ago, Joe Biden’s campaign was in free fall. Even after he mounted a comeback in South Carolina, he confronted the reality of competing in crucial Super Tuesday contests with little money and no discernible campaign infrastructure. It didn’t matter. The former vice president swept to victory across the country. **More on p8**



Greek authorities were firing tear gas and stun grenades yesterday to repulse a push by migrants to cross its land border from Turkey, as pressure continued along its frontier after Turkey said its own border with Europe was open to whoever wanted to cross. The clashes were near the border village of Kastanies, along a border fence that covers much of the land border.