

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.

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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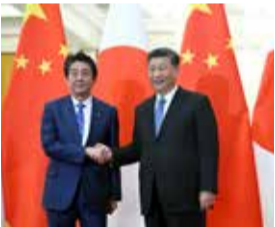
AP PHOTO



China To keep his 40 employees indoors and away from China's virus outbreak, the manager of an electronics factory in Dongguan, near Hong Kong, says he hired a cook and arranged dormitories for them. Cjtouch Electronic Co., is one of thousands of manufacturers trying to protect employees.

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AP PHOTO



China says a visit by its president, Xi Jinping, to Japan in April has been called off because both countries are focusing on combating the virus outbreak. The two countries both agree that "President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan must take place under the most appropriate timing, environment and atmosphere, and must be a complete success," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says Japan will impose a 14-day quarantine on all visitors from China and South Korea before they are allowed an entry permit. They will be sent to a government facility for the quarantine and will not be allowed to use public transportation. Abe said as officials stepped up their efforts against the spread of the virus.

Australia has banned travel from South Korea and will more thoroughly screen travellers from Italy in a bid to curb the spread of the new coronavirus. The travel ban from late yesterday follows similar bans on travel from China and Iran. Australian citizens and permanent residents are exempt from the ban. Those returning from Korea are asked to self-isolate for 14 days when they return home.

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FINANCIAL SECRETARY URGES MACAU TO STUDY DIVERSIFICATION

ANTHONY LAM

THE Covid-19 outbreak in Macau is a lesson for the city to learn about the importance of economic diversification, Lei Wai Nong, Secretary for Economy and Finance, told the government's daily press conference yesterday.

It has been about three weeks since the secretary last presented himself at the daily press conference.

"The current outbreak has given us an important lesson: a narrow economy leads to a narrow employment market," the secretary said. "Once the tide comes, it gets extremely bumpy."

The secretary believes that economic diversification is a must. "Economic diversification must be faced and must be faced now,"

the secretary emphasized. "I've seen many intellectuals give their opinion. I encourage the public to do so too, from which we can see more possibilities to diversify our economy."

Many small to medium sized enterprises have petitioned the government for further relief measures. The financial head said that the government must consider benefits to help people from all walks of life. People should benefit from the measures fairly.

"We should see the whole picture when we make our policies," the secretary stressed.

He was reminded that the relief measures might have overlooked an expanding group of self-employed freelancers, which is an emerging profession in Macau. Many of these freelancers work in

new areas, such as e-sports development.

The secretary was confident that his team is doing enough work to support this group. "The scope of the self-employed can be wide. They can be lawyers or taxi drivers," the secretary pointed out.

"Considering the difficulties now faced by the self-employed, I think the most effective way is by contacting the Labor Affairs Bureau, which offers job-matching services," the secretary elaborated. "We hope they can have a job stability, so that they can solve the current challenges."

The main reason the secretary appeared at yesterday's press conference was to disclose further details on the anticipated e-coupon measure. It was confirmed that the government had assigned Macau Pass to manage the service.

For the time being, there are about 13,000 points of sales installed with the Macau Pass payment gateway in Macau. The number is expected to rise as the government rolls out the relief measure, in addition to the government's

ongoing encouragement of local retailers to install the payment console.

A special Macau Pass card will be issued for this campaign, after which the card will remain functional. Registration will start this month, with cards being issued in April for use between May and July.

"The current outbreak has given us an important lesson: a narrow economy leads to a narrow employment market."

LEI WAI NONG
SECRETARY FOR ECONOMY AND FINANCE

All Macau ID holders – permanent or non-permanent – will be eligible for the relief measure. Each registered ID holder will enjoy a MOP3,000 spending limit, with a daily cap of MOP300.

When asked why he was confident that the campaign could roll out in May, the secretary noted

it was just a schedule. "We need a direction to relieve the public," referring to the fact that the community is expected to hear details of the campaign.

Thirty-two government public service points and 130 bank outlets will help with the distribution of cards, "in order to avoid people crowding," the secretary explained.

People have raised concerns that Macau Pass will be able to obtain the personal data of individuals. The secretary reassured the press that Macau Pass would obtain no personal data. "The registration process is conducted by the Monetary Authority," Lei said.

When a registered resident collects the card, the ID number will be scanned. The secretary did not explain why this step would be required, nor did he explain who would provide the machine used to scan the ID card.

The secretary also advised that a previously announced policy whereby the government would cover the water and electricity bills for the three-month period from March to May for all Macau private households would be extended to cover companies, excluding casinos and 3- to 5-star hotels.

In contrast to the unlimited coverage, companies will enjoy as much as MOP3,000 for water and a MOP10,000 monthly allowance for electricity use. The programs are expected to cost the government MOP1.8 million and MOP240 million respectively.

Another topic of great concern in the community is the possibility of an extra cash handout, which was considered unlikely by the financial policymaker. Macau has a financial reserve of MOP570 billion. Lei expects this year's financial deficit could go up to MOP40 billion. However, he expressed his belief that the cash handout policy will continue into next year.

Lei also referred to the proposed financial relief measures. Citizens will be able to enjoy as many as nine types of allowances, while enterprises had access to 11 types. The secretary once again emphasized that it was made possible due to the foundation of Macau's financial reserve.

The financial head is confident that when the situation improves, tourists will return to Macau. He also added that it would be unlikely that gambling tax is cut, as it is a legally stipulated policy and any change will require it be passed by the legislature.

FIRST QUARANTINED WORKERS ENTER

THE first batch of mainland non-resident workers who were required to be quarantined at a designated hotel in Zhuhai entered Macau yesterday after completing their 14-day quarantine period. The measure was enacted jointly by the Macau and Zhuhai authorities on February 20. Workers who have been in the main-

land within the past 14 days were required to undergo quarantine. They were then given a no-infection certificate by the Zhuhai authority. Afterwards, they were driven directly to Macau by charter vehicles to avoid any possible infection. As of 4 p.m. on March 4, some 1,114 people had been quarantined.

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An official inspects a gaming facility as casinos prepared for their February 20 resumption of service after an unprecedented 15-day shutdown last month

ANALYSIS

Macau facing worst recession because this time China can't help

DANIEL BEITLER,
LYNZY VALLES

FROM early 2014 to early 2015, Macau went from being one of the fastest growing economies in the world to one of the slowest. A crackdown on corruption orchestrated by President Xi Jinping dampened the appetite for gambling in the Macau SAR and exposed the city's reliance on high-roller gamblers.

And yet, neither the 2015 recession, nor the 2008 financial crash nor the 2003 SARs epidemic before it measure up to the impact of Covid-19.

Right now, Macau faces possibly its toughest economic challenge since the handover. Economists say this is partly because of the already weak economic conditions in the SAR before the coronavirus outbreak, but also because, this time, the mainland

cannot come to the SAR's rescue.

Although a 35% fall in gross gaming revenue led to a two-digit contraction back in 2015, some economists believe it is worse this time as the Macau SAR entered 2020 from a 3.4% contraction in 2019.

"I think that overall, it's worse [than previous recessions]. I think this is the most vigorous economic challenge since the handover. I think it is happening because there are several negative factors that are occurring at the same time," economist José Luís de Sales Marques told the Times.

SECOND MONTH UNDER PRESSURE

Macau is into its second month of experiencing the dramatic effects of the epidemic outbreak on its top visitor source market – mainland China.

There are some indications that the health crisis is being con-

trolled. Today is the 31st day of having no recorded cases of Covid-19 in the SAR. But outside this small city, the virus' spread is still ongoing apace across Asia, and notably in South Korea and Japan.

For Sales Marques, the SAR will need to wait for the health crisis to be brought under control in mainland China and Hong Kong before the city's economy returns to life.

"Economic recovery takes longer because we have the Chinese economy facing several issues," said the economist. "China has [quite severe] problems itself in terms of its economic performance and recovery and how long it will take. We depend so much on China as our main market."

In the meantime, the government will play a major role to stimulate the economy through measures such as the handing out of MOP3,000 coupon vouchers to local residents to boost the com-

munity's purchasing power.

The economist suggested that the government needs to find more ways to acquire supplies from the private sector, either in goods or services, in a bid to encourage consumer confidence.

"We cannot expect the casino sector to invest this year. There's no way. So, there is a lot of work from the public sector as well as the private sector. Overall, it's important for the government and the private sector to restore consumer confidence," said Sales Marques.

Echoing the sentiments, economist Albano Martins said the city's recovery remains unclear.

Martins stressed that the relief measures announced by the government for local small and medium-sized enterprises can only serve as short-term relief.

He believes that the situation will worsen for local companies if the crisis extends into the next

two months. He also said that nobody can be certain how long the crisis will last.

"The majority of these companies are not prepared as there is not [enough] cashflow to survive for the next two or three months without [government] support," he stressed.

"This time it is really tough because we can't see whether in a short while we will have people visiting again from China," added the economist. "We will have serious trouble if this situation persists. We may decrease this year as much as the decrease back in 2015."

RECOVERY AS EARLY AS MID-2020

Following an 87.8% fall in gross gaming revenue in February, at least some gaming analysts expect 2020 to post a double-digit revenue drop. CitiGroup, for example, has decided to lower its 2020 growth forecast from -12% year-on-year to -28% year-on-year.

But many analysts also expect a recovery to begin to take effect from as early as the second quarter.

Credit Suisse said this week that China would begin reissuing visas to Macau with a phased approach starting from "late April/May", while others believe restrictions to the Individual Visit Scheme will be lifted at once. Visitation from the mainland could return to normal levels by the fourth quarter, said Credit Suisse.

JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) expects the year-on-year decline in casino revenues to narrow to just 8% in the third quarter of 2020 and 5% in the fourth quarter, implying a general recovery around the year's mid-point.

According to a note seen by GGRAsia, JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) has described February's staggering plunge as "not meaningful" given the disruption to the inbound tourism market.

Gross gaming revenue fell 3.4% last year as Macau casinos struggled to adjust to a perfect storm of economic headwinds, 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.

Arts Festival becomes latest event canceled due to coronavirus

THE Covid-19 outbreak continues to disrupt major events in the Macau calendar, finding its latest victim in the 31st Macao Arts Festival.

The Macao Arts Festival organizer, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), has this week announced the event's postponement to next year.

With half of the program

performed by foreign companies or performers, the Arts Festival would face additional challenges in terms of logistics and rehearsal arrangements due to the outbreak spreading globally.

Moreover, local performers were due to commence rehearsals in February this year. With these being halted, there will be an impact on the quality of

shows, ultimately forcing the festival to be postponed.

The IC noted that the 31st Arts Festival would be rescheduled to 2021.

The Times previously reported that the IC had canceled Art Macao this year, a citywide integrated art event that premiered in 2019.

Furthermore, the 13th Global Gaming Expo (G2E)

Asia will be postponed to July this year. Previous G2E Asia events were all held in June, with the first debuting in Macau in 2007.

"Our top priority is ensuring a safe environment for employees, customers, and exhibitors at Global Gaming Expo Asia," the organizer of the casino-related event wrote in a statement. "In consultation

with our exhibitors and the Macau government, [...] we are postponing G2E Asia 2020."

However, after about a month's closure, the Macao Science Center has announced that it will reopen with limited capacity on March 9. The venue's convention center will remain closed.

Visits will be split into two sessions – one in the

morning and one in the afternoon – each accommodating 200 visitors at maximum capacity. Certain exhibition halls will remain closed and all presentations are canceled for the time being.

Its planetarium will screen only 2D movies to lower the risk of the spread of disease through sharing 3D goggles.

100,000 LETTERS UNDELIVERED DUE TO EPIDEMIC

Approximately 100,000 letters in Macau remain undelivered due to the Covid-19 epidemic, according to the government. The undelivered mail are mostly electricity bills, water bills, bank records, and notifications of lawsuits. The Macao Post and Telecommunication has planned have mailmen work weekends to dispatch the delayed mail. At present, the CTT delivers 100,000 items per day, most of which are official, commercial, and legal in nature. The bureau is considering adopting new technologies to assist in mail delivery services. The bureau has now over 60 mailmen, in addition to ten mailmen for express post. In a recent mail delivery exam, 25 applicants competed for a single job, which offers a salary of around 20,000 Macau patacas.

HEALTH BUREAU NOTES MACAU'S LOW MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE

The Health Bureau (SSM) has remarked on Macau's low death rate for maternal mortality and perinatal mortality. In a reply to lawmaker Agnes Lam's interpellation, the SSM said that since the establishment of the Macau SAR, the city has only recorded one death of a pregnant woman in 2016 and two deaths in 2018. In her interpellation, the lawmaker had claimed that both maternal and fetal deaths have been increasing in Macau. The SSM responded that Macau's maternal mortality rate has always been low and that reporting an increase with reference to one individual case is not scientific. In 2018, Macau registered an infant mortality rate of 3.4 deaths per 1,000 babies and a stillbirth rate of 2.4 per 1,000 births.

AIRPORT SAYS NORMAL FLIGHT SCHEDULE WILL TAKE TIME TO RETURN

Flight schedule recovery may take longer than anticipated after the epidemic has passed, the Macau International Airport Company Limited (CAM) said in a statement. The chairman of CAM, Deng Jun, said that the Epidemic Prevention Contingency Working Group had proposed preferential policies for airlines and tenants. He pointed out that the civil aviation market will generally recover starting with developed core markets and gradually extending into secondary markets. Macau tourism relies on the mainland and its surrounding short-haul markets, but some cities in the mainland, Japan, and South Korea have been severely affected by the epidemic, and these markets have seen many flight cancellations.



ANIMAL DISEASE PREVENTION LAW REQUIRES MACAU REPORT TO BEIJING

JULIE ZHU

MACAU must report any outbreak of animal diseases to the central government, according to lawmaker Ho Ion Sang, but Hong Kong does not have the same obligation.

Yesterday, government representatives met with members of the First Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) to discuss the animal disease prevention law, formerly approved in general terms.

After the meeting, Ho explained to the media that whenever an animal disease outbreak is identified in Macau, the local government must report it to mainland China's national health and hygiene authority, whereas the Hong Kong SAR is not required to report such an occurrence. This does not mean that Macau needs the central government's approval to confirm or announce an epidemic outbreak, but the local

government is obliged to inform the central government.

According to the lawmaker's interpretation, as Hong Kong has observer status at the World Health Organization (WHO), the city does not have mandatory reporting requirements of animal disease outbreaks to mainland China. As Macau is not an observer, it must report the situation to the central government.

The animal disease prevention law also recommends that, based on the principle of mutual benefit, the local government can voluntarily report animal epidemic outbreaks to other countries and regions.

Amid the outbreak of Covid-19, government representatives, including Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon, assured lawmakers that Macau's laws prevent the consumption of wild animals.

Currently, Macau has several regulations and laws related to

wild animals, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the city's food safety law. Both explicitly list banned wild animals.

"From import to sale, there are laws ensuring that wild animals are banned," said Ho.

After the outbreak of Covid-19, mainland China announced that the country would amend its laws to expand the crackdown on wild animal consumption. However, as of today, no further details have been revealed by the mainland government authority.

Ho said that once mainland China announces an amended version of the country's wild animal protection law, the local government will in turn review Macau's animal disease prevention bill.

According to the bill, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is responsible for assessing an animal epidemic outbreak and reporting

the situation to the Health Bureau (SSM) if necessary. The IAM is also responsible for ordinary epidemic prevention measures. The Chief Executive has the responsibility to declare which part of the city has become an area affected by animal disease. The Chief Executive can also establish a temporary animal epidemic prevention work team.

Parties which do not obey the IAM's request for specific measures to prevent animal disease will be charged with disobedience. For disobeying the Chief Executive's order, they will be charged with aggravated disobedience.

This bill does not propose compensation for losses incurred by culling animals as part of epidemic prevention measures.

Currently, Macau does not have live poultry farms. The local government is managing a slaughterhouse with an average daily throughput of over 100 pigs and nine cattle.

501 million patacas donated to mainland

JULIE ZHU

VARIOUS entities in Macau have donated a total of 501 million patacas to mainland China since the start of the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak, according to a report by Macao Daily News.

As of February 29, the Liaison Office in Macau has received donations

amounting to approximately MOP184.15 million and HKD104.47 million in cash.

The Liaison Office has transferred the donations to charities and departments owned or overseen by the Hubei provincial government.

Except for donations made out to specific parties, all money and medical supplies will be distri-

buted and used by Hubei province's Covid-19 epidemic prevention reserve. Various sectors in Macau have also donated medical supplies and money to mainland China.

Alvin Chau, chief executive officer and director of Suncity Group, donated MOP30 million, Polytec Asset Holdings Limited donated HKD20

million, Kiang Wu Hospital Charitable Association donated MOP6 million, members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference donated HKD5.6 million, and the Macao Chamber of Commerce donated MOP5.48 million. Employees of Banco Luso Internacional and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Macau) donated a total of MOP611,000.

Locally, some members of the public in Macau have experienced income reductions while

others have reportedly lost their jobs.

From February 17 to March 2, the DSAL assisted residents in 1,066 cases relating to employment services. Some 171 of these workers are occupational drivers.

The Liaison Office said that the department will continue to play the role of a bridge between Macau and the mainland in fighting the epidemic and will continue to support the local government and to work toward the long-term prosperity and stability of the Macau SAR.



WUHAN RESCUE MISSION

60 Macau residents to land tomorrow afternoon

RENATO MARQUES

TOMORROW, a group of about 60 Macau residents will be brought back to the SAR from Hubei province in a rescue operation organized by the local government with the support of local airline Air Macau.

The operation was announced by the government earlier this week after a long period in which local authorities said they were assessing the situation and preparing for the repatriation.

According to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, the local health authorities have shortlisted the first batch of around 60 Macau residents currently in the central Chinese province. The Macau residents expressed their wish to be brought into Macau due to several difficulties they are currently facing in the mainland province, the epicenter of the Covid-19 outbreak and the place most affected by the virus.

A charter flight operated by local flag carrier, Air Macau, will depart for Wuhan tomorrow morning, returning to Macau in the afternoon. The mission has been considered to be of "considerable risk" by the local health authorities, and will take place with the participation of seven staff members from the government and seven crew members from Air Macau. Among the se-

ven government members will be two doctors and three nurses from the Health Bureau (SSM) as well as two representatives from the Tourism Crisis Management Office.

Air Macau will assign three pilots and four cabin crew members to assist in the mission.

The mission is expected to bring back around 60 Macau ID holders located in and around Hubei's capital city Wuhan. However, SSM Director Lei Chin Ion has previously announced that the number of people to be repatriated might see last-minute changes depending on the actual health of individuals.

To qualify for the flight, the ID holders will need to arrange their connecting transport to the airport in Wuhan. Final verifications such as body temperature checks and assessment of physical symptoms will be conducted at Wuhan airport to ascertain the capability of the passengers to fly to Macau.

Protective kits, consisting of a facemask, hand sanitizer, protective wear, and a diaper, will also be distributed to the passengers as nobody will be allowed to leave their seat during the return flight.

Once the plane lands in Macau, the passengers will be transferred to pre-prepared vehicles waiting by the aircraft that will transport the passengers to a quarantine facility on Coloane

Alto. The repatriated residents will remain in the facility under observation for 14 days. Crew members that have direct contact with the passengers will also undergo the same quarantine measures.

According to the Macao Government Tourism Office, among the 60 qualified Macau residents are 19 minors, six of whom are under 5 years old and who have been temporarily deemed eligible to fly, as they will travel with their parents or guardians.

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

Macau's mission follows a high number of other repatriation missions performed by several countries and regions over the past few weeks to retrieve their nationals from the epicenter of the disease outbreak.

On March 4, the first batch of Hong Kong residents arrived in the neighboring region from Hubei.

Malaysia has already brought home two batches of its nationals, starting from February 4 until February 24.

The U.S. also commenced the repatriation of all Americans stranded in Wuhan from January 30, when a first flight carried about 200 people from the Chinese city back to American soil. A second mission successfully held on February 4 brought home another 178 American nationals.

Kazakhstan, Singapore, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Uzbekistan, New Zealand, Australia, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Korea,

Japan, Spain, Canada, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Thailand are also among the countries that have held repatriation missions. In some cases involving European Union (EU) countries, these missions were conducted in partnership with several countries, bringing home nationals from other EU member states such as Portugal.

Taiwan has also arranged for a repatriation mission for residents of the island stranded in Wuhan.

So far, nine African countries have also evacuated students from Wuhan, including Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritius, Mauritania, Morocco, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tunisia. According to several news sources, a group of other African nations will jointly repatriate their nationals from Wuhan. Uganda and Kenya are calling for the support of South African authorities to return home some 720 students who remain in the Chinese city.

STRANDED RESIDENT COMPLAINS ABOUT 7,000-YUAN TRIP TO WUHAN AIRPORT

JULIE ZHU

A Macau resident stranded in Hubei has asked the Macau government to help arrange travel to Wuhan airport, from where about 60 people are to be repatriated tomorrow.

The Macau SAR will deploy a chartered flight to the capital city of Hubei province to pick up Macau residents tomorrow morning. Those who wish to take the flight must arrange their own travel to the airport.

So far, 60 Macau residents qualify to take the flight to Macau and 57 of them have already advised the Macau government of arrangements for their own transportation to Wuhan airport.

However, one local resident, surnamed Wong,

complained yesterday of the difficulties his relatives are having in making it to the airport.

Wong's relatives, who are currently in Hubei, have been offered a chartered vehicle for the price of 7,000 yuan (about 8,100 patacas) per person. The vehicle will take approximately one hour from their current location to Wuhan airport.

Wong claimed that his relatives want to drive to the airport but, in order to pass through several checkpoints, his relatives must have medical clearance. At the same time, the mainland government has urged the public to avoid visiting hospitals.

Wong's relatives hope that both the Macau government and the Hubei government can help them find a solution.

AP PHOTO

CHINA'S FACTORIES TRY TO SHIELD WORKERS AS OUTPUT REVIVES



JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

To keep his 40 employees indoors and away from China's virus outbreak, the manager of an electronics factory in Dongguan, near Hong Kong, says he hired a cook and arranged dormitories for them.

Cjtouch Electronic Co., which makes smartphone touch screens, is one of thousands of manufacturers trying to protect employees while they gradually reopen after anti-virus controls shut down much of the world's second-largest economy.

"We have adopted strict prevention measures," said its general manager, Zhang Feng.

Trying to curb the soaring cost of anti-virus controls, the ruling Communist Party has told local officials in areas deemed at low disease risk to help reopen factories

that make the world's smartphones, toys and other consumer goods.

They were idled when Beijing extended the Lunar New Year holiday to keep workplaces empty in hopes of containing the virus that emerged in central China in December. Offices, restaurants, cinemas and shopping malls also were closed.

Officials have orders to prevent a spike in infections as millions of workers who returned to their hometowns for the holiday flow back to China's southeastern factory belt and big eastern cities.

Following government instructions, factory operators are buying face masks by the thousands and jugs of disinfectant. Employees are scrutinized for the virus's tell-tale fever.

Some manufacturers bar outsiders. Others remain closed due to

a lack of employees or raw materials.

Cjtouch is in Guangdong province, home to thousands of export-driven factories. It is back to 90% of normal production, Zhang said. In the three weeks since it reopened employees have used more than 3,000 masks, he said.

"We hired someone to cook for employees so they don't need to eat outside and persuaded them to stay in dormitories and not go out," Zhang said.

The government has told anyone who can work from home to stay there, but factories need employees on their assembly lines.

Some still are stranded in their hometowns by the suspension of bus and train service or curbs on leaving areas deemed at high disease risk.

Mingliang Electronics Co. in the eastern city of Weifang in

Shandong province resumed work this week with 20 of its 30 employees, said a manager who would give only her surname, Liu. The company makes circuit boards for U.S., European, South Korean and Japanese customers.

"The rest cannot make it due to restrictions on movement ordered by local authorities in the countryside," said Liu.

Those who are at work wear masks and are checked twice a day for fever, Liu said.

"We keep the place clean by disinfecting three times a day, mopping the floor and wiping computer screens with disinfectant," she said. "We ordered nearly 2,000 masks for employees."

The Yayuan Toy Factory, which makes plastic cars in the southeastern city of Yiwu, a hub for export manufacturers, still is shut down due to virus fears and the

difficulty of finding employees, according to its owner, Cui Ting.

Cui said his workforce of 12 went home to Shanxi province in western China and Guizhou in the southeast for the holiday and have yet to return.

"We haven't resumed production yet, because I still worry about the infection risk due to asking my employees to travel," said Cui.

Cui said he expects to get new orders in a few weeks but is in no hurry.

"Life matters more," said Cui.

Despite the renewed activity, forecasters say China's economic growth will be flat to negative for the three months ending in March, a marked decline from the previous quarter's 6% growth.

UBS estimates factory output expanded only 1.2% in January and February from a year earlier. UBS economists Ning Zhang and Tao Wang say exports probably fell 17%.

Travel disruptions also are raising costs for manufacturers that have to pay higher wages to get or keep scarce employees.

The government has promised tax breaks, low-interest loans and other aid, but it is unclear how many companies might shut down for good due to the burden of paying rent and other expenses with no revenue.

Yinhong Protective Product Co. in the city of Xiantao in Hubei, the province at the center of the outbreak, is paying "super high" wages of up to 1,800 yuan (\$250) a day to attract workers, said its sales manager, Chen Jihao.

Demand for masks, protective clothing and disinfectant is soaring, but producers aren't reaping a windfall. Chen said Yinhong's output has increased by 20% to 1.2 million masks per day, but the government pays below-market prices.

Cjtouch in Dongguan kept paying employees during the shutdown, Zhang said. AP

HONG KONG

Dogs, cats can't pass on coronavirus, but can test positive

PET cats and dogs cannot pass the new coronavirus on to humans, but they can test positive for low levels of the pathogen if they catch it from their owners.

That's the conclusion of Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department after a dog in quarantine tested weakly positive for the virus Feb. 27, Feb. 28 and March 2, using the canine's nasal and oral cavity samples.

A unidentified spokesman for the department was quoted in a news re-

lease as saying. "There is currently no evidence that pet animals can be a source of infection of COVID-19 or that they become sick."

Scientists suspect the virus known as SARS-CoV-2 that causes the disease originated in bats before passing it on to another species, possibly a small wild mammal, that passed it on to humans. However, experts from the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences of the City University of Hong

Kong and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) have unanimously agreed that the dog has a low-level of infection and it is "likely to be a case of human-to-animal transmission."

The dog, and another also in quarantine which has tested negative for the virus, will be tested again before being released. The department suggested any pets, including dogs and cats, from households where someone has tested positive for the virus should be put into quarantine.

In general, pet owners should maintain good hygiene, including washing hands before and after handling animals, their food and supplies and no kissing them. People who are sick should avoid contact with pets and a veterinarian's advice should be sought if changes in a pet's health conditions are detected.

"Apart from maintaining good hygiene practices, pet owners need not be overly concerned and under no circumstances should they abandon their pets," the spokesman said. AP



AP PHOTO

AARON FAVILA
& JIM GOMEZ, SAN PEDRO

PHILIPPINES

Police chief, seven others injured in chopper crash

A helicopter carrying the Philippine national police chief and seven other people crashed after hitting a power cable on takeoff yesterday, critically injuring two other generals on board.

Gen. Archie Francisco Gamboa and the others were pulled from the wreckage by police officers on a village road in San Pedro city in Laguna province, south of Manila. Gamboa was injured in the shoulder and right arm but flashed a thumbs-up and said, "I'm OK" while being wheeled to an ambulance.

In a video shown by the DZMM network, Gamboa later said from his hospital bed that he would report back to work on Monday and asked for prayers for those who remained hospitalized.

Two passengers — Maj. Gen. Mariel Magaway and Maj. Gen. Jose Ma. Victor Ramos — were in critical condition, while the rest, including the police spokesman and the police flight crew, were in stable condition, police Maj. Gen. Benigno Durana Jr. told reporters.

The aircraft took off from a

AP PHOTO



The site of a helicopter crash is cordoned off in San Pedro, Laguna province, south of Manila, yesterday

police compound in Laguna and hit a power cable before crashing onto a road near hou-

ses, witness Glenda Garcia said. "It was really loud and we ran away in fear because we thou-

ght the helicopter would move out of control in a circle and hit us," Garcia said, adding that

power in her village was cut due to the crash.

No one on the ground were hurt by the crash. Part of a rotor blade hit the roof of a house, Garcia and police officials said.

TV video showed the white Bell 429 helicopter resting on its left side, with men scrambling to put out a small fire in one part of the wreckage and pull out the passengers and flight crew. Gamboa sat on the right side of the chopper, police said.

The group had flown to the area to inspect vehicles seized by highway patrol officers for various violations. They were heading to a police camp for meetings when the helicopter crashed, police said.

Other police helicopters were grounded temporarily for inspections after the crash, police said.

Gamboa took over the national police force in October when his predecessor retired early after being linked to illegal drugs.

The 200,000-strong police force has enforced President Rodrigo Duterte's anti-drug crackdown, which has left thousands of mostly petty drug suspects dead in a campaign that has alarmed Western governments and human rights groups. AP



People line up to buy face masks to protect themselves from the new coronavirus outside Nonghyup Hanaro Mart in Seoul

KOREAS

Kim expresses condolences over virus in the South

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent a personal letter to South Korean President Moon Jae-in to express his condolences over a soaring viral outbreak, Seoul officials said yesterday.

It wasn't immediately clear if Kim's letter was an attempt to improve strained ties with South Korea amid a deadlock in broader nuclear diplomacy with the U.S. Earlier this week, Kim's sister issued insults against

Moon's presidential office in her first official statement.

In his letter to Moon on Wednesday, Kim conveyed a message of comfort to the South Korean people over the coronavirus outbreak that has infected more than 6,000 people and killed 37 others in the South, senior presidential official Yoon Do-han told reporters.

North Korea has repeatedly said there have been no cases of the virus on its soil, a claim that is question-

ed by many outside experts.

Kim said he was worried about Moon's health and expressed frustration that there wasn't much he could do to help South Korea at this moment, Yoon said.

Kim "underlined his unwavering friendship and trust toward President Moon and said that he will continue to quietly send his best wishes for President Moon to overcome" the outbreak, Yoon said.

Kim also expressed his "candid thoughts and opinions" about the current situation on the Korean Peninsula, Yoon said, without providing details.

Moon sent Kim back a letter yesterday conveying his gratitude to him, Yoon said.

Moon and Kim built personal ties in 2018 when they met three times and reached a series of agreements aimed at boosting exchanges and lowering military animosity. Moon, a liberal who espouses a negotiated settlement of the North Korean nuclear crisis, also facilitated Kim's first summit with U.S. President Donald Trump in Singapore in 2018.

But relations between the Koreas suffered a setback after a second summit between Kim and Trump in Vietnam in early 2019 ended without any deal on North Korea's nuclear program.

Some experts say North Korea is likely to reach out again to South Korea to receive help in reviving its troubled economy, since the U.S. has said it won't ease sanctions on the North unless it takes significant steps toward denuclearization. AP

INDIA RESTORES FULL INTERNET ACCESS IN KASHMIR FOR TWO WEEKS

INDIAN authorities yesterday temporarily revoked a ban on social media sites and restored full internet access in disputed Kashmir for two weeks, seven months after they stripped the restive region of its statehood and enforced a total communications blackout.

Internet access over mobile devices, however, will remain restricted to slow speed.

The restoration of the internet will remain in effect till March 17, a government order said. It gave no explanation of the time limit. A recent Supreme Court order had said the internet ban could not be indefinite.

The order issued by the region's home secretary, Shaleen Kabra, said internet access over fixed lines will be restricted to registered customers.

A.K. Srivastava, an official at state-run Bharat

Sanchar Nigam Ltd., the leading broadband service provider in Kashmir, said it has begun implementing the new government order.

When it imposed the internet ban in August, the government said it was necessary to head off anti-India protests and attacks by rebels who have fought for decades for Muslim-majority Kashmir's independence or unification with Pakistan, which administers the other part of Kashmir. Both countries claim the Himalayan region in its entirety.

Digital rights activists denounced the tight internet restrictions and said they represented a new level of government control over information allowing it to further restrict freedoms in Kashmir. They were also criticized by lawmakers in Europe and the U.S., who called on the government to end the curbs. AP

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Mixing finances with friendship is seldom a good idea, and that goes double for today! One of your most beloved people needs some money, but, unfortunately, they don't always know how to handle it responsibly.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Why are you trying to be everyone's friend? It's admirable that you want all people to like you, but it's simply impractical. Sometimes people get on your nerves, and sometimes (believe it or not) you get on theirs.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
If someone tries to win you over to their side by playing on your emotions today, ask them for facts and figures to back it up. Get a little bit more skeptical and you'll start going a lot further.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
When everyone contributes something to the event, then everyone feels like they're a part of something special. Get ready for some good laughs and a few surprises.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your feelings are definitely important to get a handle on, but you can't spend all your time in introspection. There are things you need to do, and you can't waste time figuring out what's in your heart right now.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
They don't think like you, they don't look like you, and they most certainly don't act like you. That's why you can learn so much from them. Expect at least one of your long-held beliefs to change.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Stepping outside your normal routine is a powerful way to remind yourself that your life is a path you choose to take. You're in control. You can change things up whenever you want.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You may have just won an amazing victory, but try not to celebrate too loudly or too long about it. You have to be careful not to irritate people whose help you may need in the very near future.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Let your emotions, alliances, and fears take a back seat right now. Just let your brain look at things more analytically. Once you do, you'll see that not everything someone told you was the truth.

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.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
If you hang out with unenthusiastic people today, you're definitely going to be bored. Too much of today's energy relies on the people you surround yourself with, so try to find the peppiest people possible!

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
What you saw as visual noise now becomes a beautiful symphony. Don't take this special kind of insight for granted. Tune in to it. It will lead you to a wonderful and exciting new idea.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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8	6							4
4			7					
			1	3				
					8			9
		1						
								5

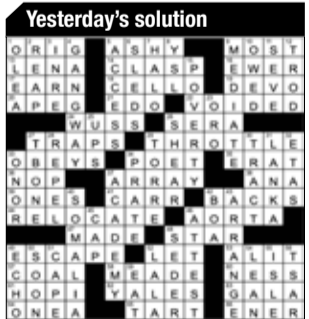
WEATHER

	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- Scorch; 5- Delighted; 9- Land map; 13- Architectural pier; 14- Lend ___; 15- Hindu music; 16- Nourishment; 17- Kama ___; 18- The wife of Geraint in Arthurian lore; 19- Spots; 21- Dip in liquid; 22- Injectable diazepam, in military lingo; 23- Bellicose god; 25- Campbell of "Scream"; 27- Synopsis; 31- Conundrum; 35- Vivacious; 36- Dosage abbr.; 38- Strange and mysterious; 39- "Xanadu" band; 40- Satisfies; 42- Alien's subj.; 43- Beast of Borden; 46- Rhythmic swing; 47- Eyeball; 48- "That ___ help"; 50- Antiseptic agent; 52- Lyric poems; 54- Matching; 55- Cad; 58- Clean air org.; 60- Virgin; 64- Raines of film; 65- Try; 67- Estimator's phrase; 68- Expel gas or odor; 69- Go into; 70- Drop of water expelled by the eye; 71- Prescribed amount; 72- Cheer (for); 73- 1998 Sarah McLachlan hit;

DOWN: 1- Securely confined; 2- Slaughter of baseball; 3- On; 4- Shining; 5- Bearded grazer; 6- Permits; 7- Biblical brother; 8- Dealer in cloth; 9- Go before; 10- Actress Turner; 11- Not "fer"; 12- I did it!; 14- Maintains; 20- Division of geologic time; 24- Agave fiber; 26- Go head to head; 27- Swiftness; 28- Big fiddle?; 29- Uneven; 30- Pertaining to the eye; 32- At the bottom of the barrel; 33- Hosiery thread; 34- Conger catcher; 37- Vends; 41- Vegetable appliance; 44- Set apart; 45- Wind up; 47- The tiniest bit; 49- Move unsteadily; 51- Doc's bloc; 53- Joe of "Hill Street Blues"; 55- Attention; 56- Ticklish doll; 57- New Haven students; 59- About; 61- Historic Scott; 62- Morales of "NYPD Blue"; 63- "A Doll's House" heroine; 66- Hanoi holiday;



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- 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
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- [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

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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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SAMUEL PETREQUIN, BRUSSELS **CYCLING**

AFTER the team of Tour de France champion Egan Bernal withdrew from all races over the next three weeks, Astana became the latest outfit to stop racing on Thursday because of the virus outbreak.

The team managed by Alexandre Vinokourov said it decided to withdraw from races for 15 days.

"With this measurement, we have chosen to protect the health of our riders and staff and to take our responsibility for the society in not further spreading the virus," Vinokourov said. "Of course, we would have preferred to participate in all upcoming races, but for now, it's safety first."

Team Ineos earlier said it notified cycling governing body UCI of its decision to "withdraw temporarily from all racing" until the Volta a Catalunya on March 23.

Ineos, the team of former Tour de France winners Chris Froome and Geraint Thomas, said it took the decision in the wake of sports director Nicolas Portal's death this week, and because of the "very uncertain situation with coronavirus."

Portal, a former rider who turned into a team official and helped guide four-time Tour champion Froome and Bernal to victory at the race, died suddenly at his home in Andorra on Tuesday.

Tour champ Bernal's team stops racing amid virus outbreak



Ineos riders were scheduled to compete at six races before March 23, including the prestigious Strade Bianche, the week-long Paris-Nice, and the famed one-day classic Milan-San Remo. Bernal was set to defend his Paris-Nice title from March 8.

"We are taking this decision to put a temporary pause on racing

today because of this unique set of circumstances we are facing," Ineos manager Dave Brailsford said. "It is right for the team given what has happened but I also believe it is in the best interests of both cycling and the wider public."

Race organizers ASO, who also own the Tour de France, said on

Thursday they still plan to go ahead with Paris-Nice.

In a sport involving constant traveling across the world with cyclists very close to spectators on open roads, the impact of the virus outbreak has been escalating. This week, Australian outfit Mitchelton-Scott decided to withdraw from racing until March 22,

and Dutch team Jumbo-Visma announced it would skip Saturday's Strade Bianche.

On Wednesday, the Ministry of Health in the United Arab Emirates announced that six more people with links to the UAE Tour that was cut short last week have been infected with the virus that started in China and has spread to 70 countries. They were all linked to two previous cases involving Italians, the ministry said.

The last two stages of the UAE Tour were canceled on Feb. 28 after two virus cases among team staff members.

Ineos said it has a duty to preserve the health of its staff and riders "in what is a very fast moving and challenging situation. We have taken the best medical advice and recognize that these are exceptional times for everyone -- beyond just cycling."

The UCI has so far stopped short of canceling this month's planned events, leaving authorities in the concerned countries with the decision. **AP**

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OPINION

Editorial

Paulo Coutinho



SMALL AIN'T PRETTY

The concept of the SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) in Macau should be used cautiously because over 80 percent of our incorporations are actually small or micro, and most of them depend of one sector: tourism. I mean, it is too large a category to mix medium and small companies together here because it leads to inaccurate assessment, and inappropriate and inadequate public policies.

In a crisis as deep as the financial debacle caused by the coronavirus epidemic, these "small and micro enterprises" (sme) fall like a castle of cards and their survival depends on vital emergency support.

The so-called "emergency" measures announced by the government to help SMEs so far, as exposed in a sequence of articles by the Times, are simply inefficient to really support our weak economy beyond gaming.

The interest-free or subsidized loans are not the answer to solve the problems of entrepreneurs that collapsed when China started sneezing. They need urgent support if they are to survive. Most of these small and micro ventures are dependent on the gaming sector - over 50% of GDP directly and 80% indirectly - or on the broader sector of tourism and entertainment.

Several voices have already come out in public to assert that the measures are "sands to our eyes" and in no way help entrepreneurs or companies in the harsh situation we are in.

Lawmaker Pereira Coutinho and economist Albano Martins are among those voices, and they both agree that exceptional times require exceptional measures. They both proposed, namely, a non-refundable one-off subsidy to help companies to pay salaries for two to three months. And they are right.

Macau is probably the first economy in the world to fall victim to the coronavirus outbreak.

Precisely because beyond gaming we have no sustainable businesses, and when revenue of the big-six fall 90% overnight, we are doomed.

Thousands of small and micro companies are collapsing - some have already filed for bankruptcy, others may be on the verge of it.

In this group of sme, we should include our trade, the newspapers. From Chinese to Portuguese and English-language news outlets, most of the publishing companies are small and short staffed.

And while we were one of the few groups of professionals to keep working throughout the health crisis along with the frontline workers, as is our duty, for seven weeks - seven long weeks - we basically saw no income, no ad money - which still pays the bills in our business model, and were put in dire financial straits in the process.

People's health - I couldn't agree more - comes first and, to be fair, the government has been doing a fairly good job in containing the contagion and treating the sick.

And lately, just this week, we are seeing signs of tenuous support from the government and the gaming concessionaires.

But it's too little. Let's hope it isn't too late.

Animal rights groups - including Anima Macau - are calling on the Portuguese government to ban greyhound racing in Portugal.

In an online petition with Italy's Pet Levrieri Onlus and GREY2K USA, the groups remarked that there has been an increase in the problems commonly associated with dog racing in jurisdictions where the practice is tolerated.

They noted that there was a greater number of abandoned dogs, an increase in the use of coercive and cruel training methods, and the spread of drugs.

According to the groups, greyhounds are now being treated as 'objects' for betting - used and abused, and then discarded. The groups say racing is a activity with purely economic interests at its core.

Albano Martins, president and CEO of Anima Macau, told the Times, "we are trying to have four organizations as leaders of the project. [These organizations] were involved in saving the greyhounds after the Macau Canidrome closed."

"There is only one formal track in Portugal. The others are informal races and greyhounds are being used for illegal gambling. They are then just dumped when these [people] are not interested in them anymore," he added.

There are twenty Portuguese racing kennels currently in existence. Macau's only greyhound racing track was closed in July 2018 following pressure from a sustained international campaign led by Anima Macau. LV

UK AIRLINE FLYBE COLLAPSES AS VIRUS HITS WEAKENED COMPANY



DANICA KIRKA, LONDON

The struggling British airline Flybe collapsed yesterday amid drops in demand caused by the new coronavirus, leaving passengers stranded and threatening the viability of regional airports across the country.

Flybe's fall highlights the damage that the virus outbreak has had on the airline industry, which has cut back on flights around the world as people avoid flying out of precaution.

The British regional airline narrowly avoided bankruptcy in January but had continued to lose money. Unions and opposition politicians attacked both the airline's owners and Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government for failing to act to save it.

"We're all a bit gutted - Flybe is a household name, we've been flying with them for 40 years and we really tried to do everything we could back at the turn of the year," Transport Secretary Grant Shapps told Sky News.

Shapps said that for "an already weak company," the virus made survival impossible.

The U.K. Civil Aviation Authority urged customers to make "their own alternative travel arrangements."

Airlines have struggled after a spike in new coronavirus cases were reported

in Italy, South Korea and Iran, spooking holidaymakers and sparking the cancellation of business trips.

The International Air Transport Association said January saw the slowest monthly year-over-year growth since April 2010 - and that was before the main impact of the virus outbreak. United Airlines said it will freeze hiring and ask employees to volunteer for unpaid leave as it struggles with weak demand. Finnair is enforcing temporary layoffs for some 6,000 staff.

The disruption is having the biggest effect on companies that were perceived as already weak financially. Norwegian Air Shuttle, which has struggled to maintain the costs of operating a low-budget business model on long-haul transatlantic flights, has seen its shares slide 55% since the start of the virus outbreak, including a 12% drop Thursday.

Flybe's network included more than half of British domestic flights outside of London. Europe's largest regional carrier, Flybe had a major presence at airports such as Aberdeen, Belfast City, Manchester and Southampton, and flew some 9 million passengers a year.

Its links to some difficult-to-reach spots in the

U.K. were a strong selling point for the government. But the government's efforts were dogged by allegations from competitors that it had provided state aid to Flybe.

"This is a sad day for U.K. aviation and we know that Flybe's decision to stop trading will be very distressing for all of its employees and customers," said the chief executive of the U.K. Civil Aviation Authority, Richard Moriarty.

A consortium of Virgin Atlantic, Stobart Group and Cyrus Capital bought Flybe in February 2019. Known as Connect Airways, it paid just 2.2 million pounds for Flybe's assets but pledged to inject cash into the airline to turn it around.

Flybe has struggled with a series of issues, including the weakening of the pound in light of Britain's pending departure from the European Union. The weaker pound hurts airlines like Flybe that have significant costs in dollars but take in revenue in pounds.

The airline also was struggling to pay its airline passenger duty, a tax on flights that many airline groups have long complained restricts growth.

It is the second U.K.-based airline in six months to fail after Thomas Cook went bust in September. AP



OPEC The oil-producing countries of the OPEC cartel are proposing a deep production cut of 1.5 million barrels per day to support prices that are sagging due to the spread of the coronavirus. Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh (pictured) said at yesterday's meeting in Vienna that the cut would be for the second quarter of this year, and would be "subject to the acceptance" of non-OPEC allies. Non-OPEC countries join the meeting today.



Mideast Iran says the new coronavirus has killed 107 people amid 3,513 confirmed cases across the Islamic Republic. Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour made the announcement yesterday. There are now over 3,150 cases of the virus across the Mideast. Of those outside Iran in the region, most link back to the Islamic Republic.

USA Facebook says it's temporarily closing an office in Seattle after a worker was diagnosed with the new virus. "A contractor based in our Stadium East office has been diagnosed with the COVID-19," the company said. "We've notified our employees and are following the advice of public health officials to prioritize everyone's health and safety."



Hollywood The release of the James Bond film "No Time To Die" has been pushed back several months because of global concerns about coronavirus. MGM, Universal and producers Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli announced on Twitter that the film would be pushed back from its April release to November 2020.