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THE GOV'T HAS TURNED DOWN A PROPOSAL BY LAWMAKER MAK SOI KUN TO INCLUDE 'THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA' ON LOCAL ID CARDS P2

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SIX HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ARE TO RESUME CLASSES STARTING APRIL 1, BUT LOCAL STUDENTS OVERSEAS NEED NOT RUSH HOME P5

AP PHOTO



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un acknowledged that his country lacks modern medical facilities and called for urgent improvements in a rare assessment of the North's health care system that comes amid worries about the coronavirus in the impoverished country. Outside experts say a coronavirus epidemic in the North could be devastating due to its chronic lack of medical supplies and outdated health care infrastructure. [More on p7](#)

AP PHOTO



Philippines lifted a deadline for thousands of foreign travelers to leave the northern third of the country, including the capital, after quarantining the region due to an increase in coronavirus infections, officials said yesterday. [More on p7](#)

AP PHOTO



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte declared a unilateral cease-fire with communist guerrillas to focus on fighting the coronavirus outbreak that prompted him to place the northern third of the country under quarantine. Duterte ordered the military and police to stop offensives against New People's Army guerrillas during the cease-fire, which is to start today and end April 15.

Iran reported its single biggest jump in deaths from the new coronavirus yesterday as another 147 people died, raising the country's overall death toll to 1,135. The nearly 15% spike in deaths — amid a total of 17,361 confirmed cases in Iran — marks the biggest 24-hour rise in fatalities since officials first acknowledged cases of the virus in Iran in mid-February.

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US-CHINA RELATIONS STRAINED BY PRESS SPAT

P4,6

AP PHOTO



NON-CHINESE FOREIGN WORKERS BARRED AS SEVEN NEW CASES SEEN IN LESS THAN ONE WEEK

AP PHOTO



P3

FIVE ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING

Four Hong Kong residents and one Macau local resident have been arrested for drug trafficking, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ). The five arrestees were involved in two cases. The four Hong Kong residents are aged between 21 and 28 years old. The police authority seized cocaine worth about 95,000 Macau patacas on the black market. The four Hong Kong residents said they committed the crime because they are in debt. The 51-year-old Macau woman was arrested in relation to a different case. Her drug trafficking activities involved cocaine worth about 55,000 Macau patacas. She has a 10-year-plus history of drug abuse. All five entered Macau via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, as this is currently the only open port between the two SARs.

NEW HENGQIN PORT JURISDICTION PARTIALLY TRANSFERRED TO MACAU

Yesterday at midnight, the Zhuhai government partially transferred jurisdiction over the new Hengqin port Macau facilities to the Macau SAR government. This is only the first phase of the new port transfer. The port includes an immigration checkpoint building, an entry-exit platform, and the main body of the lotus flower bridge, which used to be under the jurisdiction of mainland China. Yesterday, the mainland officially lent Macau 66,428 square meters in total. Macau will receive more facilities during the second and third phases of the transfer, including the permanent truck lanes, a bridge connection between the new Hengqin port and the University of Macau, as well as the area Macau's Light Rapid Transit will extend to.

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS BUREAU TO REPAINT SAN MA LOU BUILDINGS

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) will repaint several buildings starting from the end of this month. The affected buildings are around Senado Square, Largo do São Domingos, San Ma Lou and Rua do Almirante Sergio. World heritage sites and buildings that are cultural relics with architectural value are not included in this painting plan. The working period will last for approximately 75 workdays. The IAM believes this painting project will help the local government's industry polices and will immediately benefit Macau's local architecture companies and construction workers.

PEARL HORIZON PRE-BUYERS CHANGE STRATEGY TO VOICE OPINIONS

FORMER buyers of the failed Pearl Horizon project have not given up on fighting for their interests. They have continued to express their demands to the local government, but this time not by demonstrating or writing letters, but by submitting formal opinions to the authorities.

Yesterday, the Urban Planning Committee held its second plenary meeting of 2020 to discuss plans for a group of land plots. One of the plots is the Areia Preta reclamation P section, the former land plot of the never-developed Pearl Horizon residential project.

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

Earlier, the committee discussed the plan and the local government made relevant changes to it based on the committee's discussion. This plan has been available for the public to make comments on for three rounds of discussion.

Buyers of the former Pearl Horizon Project represent the majority of the total 62 opinions



RENATO MARQUES

submitted to the local government by members of the public, as of March 12.

These former Pearl Horizon buyers wrote that they want the government to design apartments the same size as those they bought from the original Pearl

Horizon development.

"It must be earthquake-proof, and typhoon-proof. There must be enough bathrooms. Windows must be big. The ceiling should not be lower than 3.2 meters," one person wrote. "The electrical wiring must be of good quality."

After introducing the bill during yesterday's meeting, the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) did not mention these opinions, which represent the majority of those submitted.

Instead, the DSSOPT referred to a type of opinion expressed by only a few people as "the major public opinion."

Based on information released by the DSSOPT, the other opinions were related to sewage treatment relocation, Areia Preta transportation facilities, road conditions, aged care facilities, and health centres, among others.

The publicly available opinions show that the majority of opinions submitted to the government are demands to have the new developments match the specifications of the Pearl Horizon apartments. **JZ**

'TROPICAL GARDEN' PLANNED FOR COTAI HOTEL PROJECT

SEVERAL members of the Urban Planning Committee were left confused yesterday after the urban plan draft released by the Land, Public Works and Transport (DSSOPT) showed that Sands Cotai Central will have a "tropical park" in future.

Members of the committee were specifically interested in the definition of "tropical park" and the size of the plants.

The property is currently being developed into

the Londoner Macao.

According to information earlier released by casino operator Sands China, the property development will include "grounds and gardens [...] modelled on the great London parks and gardens."

More than one committee member proposed that the local government should monitor the relevant concessionaire to ensure that a real "tropical park" is being designed. **JZ**

Gov't blocks proposal to add 'PRC feature' to Macau ID card

JULIE ZHU

THE Identification Department has declined a proposal to add "the People's Republic of China" to Macau identification cards.

This was expressed in the bureau's written reply to lawmaker Mak Soi Kun's interpellation. Mak's interpellation said that including "the People's Republic of China"

in Chinese characters on the Macau ID card will increase Macau residents' sense of identity as Chinese. Mak had previously voiced the proposal during Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary meetings.

However, the bureau did not approve of Mak's suggestion on the grounds of the Basic Law and Macau's ethnic diversity.

According to the bu-

reau's explanation, the Macau ID card is different from the Macau passport. The latter contains the Chinese characters "the People's Republic of China" because it reflects sovereignty and is issued to Macau permanent residents who are also Chinese nationals.

The bureau pointed out that in Macau, Macau ID holders include those who are Chinese, Portu-

guese, or of other ethnicities.

Adding the characters "the People's Republic of China" will indeed strengthen people's sense of identity as Chinese, but it will not for those who are not of Chinese ethnicity.

Information on the Macau ID card includes the holder's name in Chinese, name in Portuguese, sex, their digital image, identity card number,

date of birth, and date of registration. The bureau considers it inappropriate to include more information, as the ID card already has a logo that represents the PRC Macau SAR.

Lastly, the bureau said that the ID card is used only in one specific region. It is not an internationally recognized document, meaning that it is not a travel document for use outside Macau.

Despite not approving Mak's proposal, the bureau will still perform research on how national aspects can be highlighted on Macau ID cards in future.

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Seven new Covid-19 cases within this week

ANTHONY LAM

WITHIN this week, Macau has seen seven new confirmed cases of Covid-19, all imported from outside the territory, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center announced yesterday.

To cope with the swiftly changing situation, the shuttle service on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, colloquially called the Golden Bus, has enforced stricter measures. It has already cut its passenger intake on each bus service to half.

From 7 p.m. yesterday, it was conducting temperature monitoring on all passengers. Passengers with a body temperature over 37.3 degrees Celsius will be barred from taking the bus and will be sent to seek medical assistance. If more severe symptoms, such as respiratory symptoms, are spotted, the passenger will be sent directly to a medical facility.

Mask-wearing is mandatory, similar to local bus services. Additionally, all tickets sold are registered now. This means that passengers' names will be recorded and printed on their tickets. Seat assignment will also be conducted at ticket purchase.

After 40 days of silence, the new wave of infections erupted on March 15.

In the early hours of this morning, two new cases were suddenly reported.

The first case involves a 19-year-



A Chinese woman uses a plastic bag to cover her head while waiting inside an airport

-old female resident who studies in the United Kingdom. She traveled with four other people from London to Singapore and then onto Hong Kong before arriving in Macau via the bridge connecting the two territories. Three of her travel companions returned to Macau, while one has opted to remain in Hong Kong, the government informed.

The infected student underwent home quarantine after arriving in Macau on March 16, as per the relevant measures in force

at the time. On March 18, she went to the public hospital. Her positive test result was only confirmed in the early hours of this morning.

The 17th case is the 11-year-old son of the 14th case, a 42-year-old woman from Indonesia who is related to an Indonesian non-resident worker in Macau. The child was tested because of his proximity to the 14th case. He is presently without symptoms.

Meanwhile, a non-resident worker from the Philippines, the 31-year-old male who became the

15th case in the Special Administrative Region, works at a restaurant located within a hotel complex.

He was in Manila at home between January 27 and March 16, after which he took Hong Kong Airlines flight 782 to return to Macau via Hong Kong. He arrived at Hong Kong International Airport at around 9:30 a.m. March 16, before taking the Golden Bus to Macau. He then went home by taxi.

The next evening, he visited Kiang Wu Hospital reporting a

toothache and a rash, which was believed to be a reaction to antibiotics. The private hospital tested him during his consultation and allowed him to return home to wait for the test result, due to his medium-level risk. Yesterday afternoon, right before the health authority's daily press conference, he was diagnosed with Covid-19.

The patient told the Health Bureau (SSM) that on both March 16 and 18 he stayed home. On March 17, he briefly went out to buy masks in the morning. The authority disclosed that he lives in the building at 25B, Rua Padre Antonio Roliz. The block is located between Avenida do Ouvidor Arriaga and Avenida Horta e Costa.

Following on from this case, in future, those being tested for Covid-19 will not be allowed to leave medical facilities until the results are known, the authorities said during yesterday's daily briefing.

If Macau residents currently out of the territory desire to return to the city through Hong Kong, they should contact and register with the Tourism Crisis Management Center (GGCT), who will arrange connecting transportation between Hong Kong International Airport and Macau. The measure will be effective until March 31. An extension would require a consensus with the Hong Kong government, Macau's tourism authority said yesterday.

All government-retrieved returnees from Hubei province will finish their 14-day quarantine this Saturday.

Non-resident workers barred from entering Macau

THE latest border control measure from the government will restrict entry to the Macau SAR for all non-resident workers except those who are residents of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The measure means that non-resident workers, also known as blue-card holders, from countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and others outside of China will no longer be allowed to enter Macau. Non-Chinese non-resident workers account for about one-third of the more than 190,000 foreign workers in Macau.

Published yesterday in the Official Gazette under Chief Executive Order 73/2020, the measure builds on an earlier restriction to prevent all travelers from outside of the greater China region from stepping



foot in Macau. It took effect from midnight on March 19.

According to a statement issued last night by the government, the measure is designed "to prevent the importation of cases of

infection from abroad and to protect the health of Macau residents."

It comes after five new cases of the coronavirus have been detected this week, following a 40-day period without any new in-

fections. All of the five new cases are being treated as imported cases.

The Chief Executive Order also notes that, "for reasons of public interest" relating to the prevention, control or treatment of ill-

nesses or emergencies, the admittance of individuals other than residents of the greater China region may be allowed.

Earlier, the Macau SAR went into partial lockdown after Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng signed a dispatch stating that only Macau residents, non-resident workers, and travelers from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan were allowed to enter the city.

That earlier measure had overruled the policy at the start of the week when the government had merely required individuals who had been to high-risk countries to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

However, the decision was changed after the city started to record new instances of the coronavirus infection after a 40-day period without new cases.

Meanwhile, the government has announced it is temporarily using Golden Crown China Hotel as the second hotel designated as a venue for those who will undergo a 14-day medical observation.

The Macao Government Tourism Office announced in a statement that the hotel, which is located in front of the Macau International Airport, will be used as the first designated isolation center is about to reach full occupancy.

The Golden Crown China Hotel has 300 rooms in total.

Non-resident workers and non-Macau residents are required to pay 5,600 patacas to stay at Golden Crown China Hotel during their 14-day medical observation. This is the same rate as the Pousada Marina Infante. **DB**

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

EXPELLED AMERICAN REPORTERS BARRED FROM WORKING IN MACAU

CHINA said yesterday it will revoke the media credentials of all American journalists at three major U.S. news organizations, in effect expelling them from the country, in response to U.S. restrictions on Chinese state-controlled media.

Beijing made it clear that these journalists would not be permitted to work in either Macau or Hong Kong in a move that prompted criticism of interference with press freedoms. At least one observer has described the move as a threat to the 'one country, two systems' framework, under which the two regions are guaranteed a high degree of autonomy.

The foreign ministry said American citizens working for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post with credentials expiring before the end of the year must surrender their press cards within 10 days.

It is the latest in a series of tit-for-tat actions by the two governments as the Trump administration takes a more confrontational stance in dealing with China than his predecessors. The countries remain enmeshed in a trade war despite a recent truce and have traded angry words over the coronavirus pandemic that first emerged in China and has spread worldwide.

The inclusion of the two Special Administrative Regions in the ban comes despite the fact Hong Kong and Macau have separate powers of immigration and a higher degree of press freedom under their respective Basic Laws, which underpin the "one country, two systems" principle governing relations with Beijing.

Freedom of the press is enshrined in Macau's Basic Law under Article 27.

"Macau residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike," the article reads.

The matter is somewhat reaffirmed in Article 126, which states that "The Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on press and publication."

The Macau Portuguese and English Press Association (AIPIM) said it is highly concerned about the inclusion of Macau and Hong Kong in the Central Government's decision to ban American journalists from three U.S. media outlets from working in China.

AP PHOTO



In a statement, AIPIM called for clarification on the position of non-local journalists and media outlets and asked for a guarantee that press freedom will be upheld.

"AIPIM calls for a clarification on the activity of non-local journalists and media outlets in order to ease concerns and ensure that press freedom is fully upheld as enshrined in Article 27 of the Macau Basic Law. This applies not only to local journalists and media outlets but also to non-local journalists and news organizations with their headquarters outside of Macau, as mentioned in Article 9 of the Macau Press Law," the organization said.

"AIPIM is worried about the negative impact of the escalating tensions between the United States and China over press freedom and hopes that this situation can de-escalate and be reversed as soon as possible," it added.

A THREAT TO 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS'

Hong Kong's ability to determine its own immigration policy has been undermined steadily in the past few years. In 2018, the city denied a visa renewal for Financial Times journalist Victor Mallet after he hosted an event with a local independence activist at the Foreign Correspondents' Club.

More recently, Hong Kong denied entry to Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at the time that "allowing or not allowing the entry of certain people is China's sovereign right."

The Macau Portuguese and English Press Association said it is highly concerned about the inclusion of Macau in the Central Government's decision

The Foreign Correspondents' Club in Hong Kong yesterday questioned whether Hong Kong still had control of its immigration policy, saying in a statement that any change would mark "a serious erosion" of the one country, two systems principle.

"The Hong Kong government must immediately clarify the situation and must immediately and without reservation provide assurances that foreign journalists working in Hong Kong and those applying to work in Hong Kong will continue to be issued employment visas without inter-

ference from the Chinese government," the group said.

"Unless, it is a matter of foreign affairs, the central government should not have a role," added Fernando Cheung, a Hong Kong opposition lawmaker and frequent critic of Beijing, told Bloomberg. "By disallowing foreign journalists to work in Hong Kong, the Chinese central government has violated the Basic Law and the principles of 'one country, two systems.'"

Beijing's move targets some of the "most capable" journalists working in China, many of whom have a track record of exposing the country's human rights violations, said William Nee, a business and human rights analyst at Amnesty International's Hong Kong office. It's possible Beijing "learned a lesson" from previous incidents of kicking out journalists who went on to do great work from Hong Kong, he said.

"It's disturbing that the expelled journalists will not be able to report from Hong Kong," Nee said. "This egregious action poses a grave threat to the 'one country, two systems' framework and the human rights obligations that China and the Hong Kong government must protect under international law and the Basic Law."

MEDIA RETALIATION

The Chinese move comes after the Trump administration designated five Chinese media outlets as foreign missions and restricted the number of Chinese who could work for them in a de facto expulsion of about one-third of their Chinese staff.

China described its steps as "necessary and reciprocal countermeasures that China is compelled to take in response to the unreasonable oppression the Chinese media organizations experience in the U.S."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo disputed the comparison between the U.S. and Chinese actions, telling reporters in Washington that they enjoy press freedoms that don't exist in China.

"The individuals that we identified a few weeks back were not media that were acting here freely," he said. "They were part of Chinese propaganda outlets. We've identified these as foreign missions under American law. These aren't apples to apples, and I regret China's decision today to further foreclose the world's ability to conduct free press operations."

The People's Daily editorial said Chinese reporters in America have "always adhered to U.S. laws and regulations, journalistic ethics and the principles of objectivity, fairness, truth, and accuracy." **MDT/AGENCIES**

Universities to resume with final year students prioritized

RENATO MARQUES

SIX local higher education institutions are to resume classes on April 1, the head of the Department for Tertiary Education Institution Coordination of the Higher Education Bureau (DSES), Teng Sio Hong, has informed.

According to Teng, the higher education institutions will resume classes in phases, with priority given to the students in the final year of their programs.

"After a meeting we had with all institutions, we agreed that in the phase the most important is that assure that all finalist students can conclude their study programs so we do not harm those students' intentions to continue their studies or to access the job market," Teng said. The official noted that



MACAU PHOTO AGENCY VIA UNSPLASH

the higher education institutions had agreed that four kinds of students should be prioritized as classes resume: finalists, local students in courses which require internships, those with laboratory work or other classes that demand a physical presence, and finally those

that need to present a final dissertation or thesis.

For these students, classes should resume on April 1, Teng said, noting that the indicated date is the "earliest possible, being up to the institutions to decide on the concrete date for the resumption of each course."

The six institutions that will restart on April 1 are the Macao Polytechnic Institute, the Institute for Tourism Studies, the Macao Security Forces Training College, the University of Saint Joseph, the Kiang Wu Nursing College of Macau and the Macau Institute of Management.

The DSES representative also noted that the institutions would not all resume at the same time, remarking that students should wait for communication from the institution on the exact date, time and place that the classes will occur.

The official also warned students who are not currently in Macau, namely those that have returned home to the mainland, not to rush back to Macau without clear notification from their institution informing them that they should return for class.

LAWMAKER WANTS UPDATE ON WORK INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

LAWMAKER Ella Lei wrote an interpellation to the local government asking about the progress of regulations on work instructions during extreme weather.

She posed the question because the rainstorm and typhoon season is approaching.

The lawmaker urges the city's employees and employers to discuss and update the instructions before this year's typhoon season arrives.

In the past, the local community has complained about chaos caused by the city's education authority and weather authority.

Lei requested that the local government improve administrative efficiency and avoid making workers rush to offices during extreme weather while the roads are congested.

In September 2018, the former director of the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), Tam Vai

Man, who was and still is the director of Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), left the position and was replaced by the SMG deputy director at the time, Tang Iu Man. Leong Weng Kun then became the acting deputy director of SMG.

According to a dispatch published yesterday in the government's Official Gazette, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works has appointed Leong as the SMG director for one year. Tang has been appointed as deputy director.

In August 2017, Typhoon Hato killed 10 people in Macau. Former SMG head Fong Soi Kun was held accountable for complacency. The SAR government also suspended Fong's pension for a period of four years. Since Fong's departure from his position, the local government has appointed several different people to head the weather bureau. JZ

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CORONAVIRUS ROCKS ALREADY STRAINED TIES BETWEEN US AND CHINA

MATTHEW LEE, WASHINGTON

BADLY strained ties between the United States and China are deteriorating further with the two sides hurling harsh accusations and bitter name-calling over responsibility for the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The global pandemic is just one in a series of irritants that has rocked the relationship between Washington and Beijing since the Trump administration began to step up long-simmering confrontations on issues ranging from territory to trade to high-tech telecommunications.

The virus, however, has exposed an even deeper rift, one that widened yet again when China announced the expulsion of a number of American journalists. The move underscored the growing mutual mistrust and hostility between the world's two largest economies.

Since the virus has spread, President Donald Trump and his top aides, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have stepped up their criticism of China, noting consistently that the outbreak was first reported in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. They have referred to the virus as the "Wuhan virus" or the "Chinese virus" on multiple occasions, disregarding World Health Organization terminology that avoids identifying it by geography.

On Tuesday alone, Trump discussed the Chinese source of virus outbreak during at least two events and denied there was any stigma attached to the label. Yesterday, he tweeted at Americans who are facing economic hardship caused by the pandemic that "the onslaught of the Chinese Virus is not your fault."

At a State Department news conference, Pompeo referred six times to the virus as the "Wuhan virus" and suggested the Chinese are attempting to distract the world from the shortcomings of its initial response by highlighting its tough measures that have helped contain the outbreak. Pompeo also suggested that an "after action" report would corroborate his claim, indicating that the tensions are unlikely to end when the pandemic is over.

Experts are not unsympathetic to that position.

"They made some blunderous mistakes in the early six or seven weeks, and then they came down hard with a gargantuan quarantine," said J. Stephen Morrison, director of the Global Health Policy Center at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, referring to China.

"And they now control the narrative that this has been hu-

AP PHOTO



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks during a news conference at the State Department

gely successful and they suppress whatever additional dissident thoughts there may be on exactly what's going on," he told reporters in a conference call.

In a meeting with hotel executives at the White House, Trump took pains to make clear that the virus originated in China, asking pointed questions of Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson about where the impact was first felt.

"And this all started in China? That's where you first saw the problem and where you first got hit?" Trump asked.

"Absolutely," Sorenson replied. "Hopefully, you all heard that," Trump told reporters.

Pompeo has led a worldwide campaign to try to stop countries from allowing the Chinese high-tech giant Huawei to get access to next-generation wireless networks and repeatedly warned about the dangers of Chinese investment. On Tuesday, he spoke of a "special responsibility" that China had shirked when it discovered the virus outbreak in Wuhan.

"We know that the first government to be aware of the Wuhan virus was the Chinese government," Pompeo told reporters. "That imposes a special responsibility, to raise the flag to say: 'We have a problem, this is different and uni-

que and present risks.' And it took an awful long time for the world to become aware of this risk, that was sitting there, residing inside of China."

“Recently, some American politicians have linked the new coronavirus with China to stigmatize China.”

GENG SHUANG
FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY

Having already been targeted by Trump in a trade war and by Pompeo and others for repression of Muslim and other religious and ethnic minorities in western Xinjiang Province, the Chinese have taken particular offense to the constant repetition, complaining vociferously and suggesting that the U.S. military may have actually introduced the virus to Wuhan.

"Recently, some American politicians have linked the new coronavirus with China to stigmatize China. We express strong indignation and opposition to it," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said. "We urge the U.S. to immediately correct its mistakes and stop unwarranted accusations against China."

That, in turn, has prompted angry U.S. protests with the State Department hauling in China's ambassador to the United States to complain and Pompeo calling the top Chinese diplomat to re-register the anger.

"The disinformation campaign that they are waging is designed to shift responsibility," Pompeo said, before quickly adding that "now is not the time for recriminations."

Yet recriminations seem to be the order of the day.

"China was putting out information which was false — that our military gave this to them," Trump said. "That was false. And rather than having an argument I said I have to call it where it came from. It did come from China. So I think it's a very accurate term. But no, I didn't appreciate the fact that China was saying that our military gave it to them."

Shortly after Trump's comments, the Chinese foreign ministry announced the expulsion of American reporters from the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post. China said the move was a reciprocal response to the Trump administration's designation of five Chinese media outlets as foreign missions and restricting the num-

ber of Chinese who could work for them.

China described its steps as "necessary and reciprocal countermeasures that China is compelled to take in response to the unreasonable oppression the Chinese media organizations experience in the U.S."

Pompeo rejected that.

"I regret China's decision today to further foreclose the world's ability to conduct free press operations that frankly, would be really good, really good for the Chinese people in these incredibly challenging global times. Where more information, more transparency are what will save lives. This is unfortunate," he said. "I hope they will reconsider."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover. In mainland China, where the virus first exploded, more than 81,000 people have been diagnosed and more than 69,000 have recovered. **AP**

NORTH KOREA

Kim admits troubled medical system amid virus fears

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un acknowledged that his country lacks modern medical facilities and called for urgent improvements, state media said yesterday, in a rare assessment of the North's health care system that comes amid worries about the coronavirus in the impoverished country.

Outside experts say a coronavirus epidemic in the North could be devastating due its chronic lack of medical supplies and outdated health care infrastructure. Kim's comments were made during a ceremony Tuesday marking the start of construction on a new hospital.

North Korea has engaged in an intense campaign to guard against the new virus, though it has steadfastly maintained that no one has been sickened, a claim many foreign experts doubt.

During a groundbreaking ceremony for a "modern general hospital" in Pyongyang, the capital, Kim said it's "crucial" for the state's efforts to be directed "to prop up the field of public health," according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency, or KCNA. It cited Kim as saying the construction must be completed before October's 75th founding anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party.

Kim said the ruling party decided on building the hospital



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (center) attends the ground-breaking ceremony of a general hospital in Pyongyang in North Korea

during a key party meeting in late December and was working to have it finished "in the shortest time." In an unusual admission on a troubled state system, Kim also said, "Frankly speaking, our party ... criticized in a heart-aching manner the fact that there is not a modern medical and health care facility even in our capital city," according to KCNA.

Kim appears to be using the hospital construction to burnish his image as a leader caring about public livelihoods at a time when his country is grappling with international sanctions amid stalled nuclear diplomacy with the United States, said Ahn Kyung-su, head of the Seoul-based private Research Center of DPRK Health and Welfare.

He said North Korea has several modern general hospitals in Pyongyang but an analysis of construction drawings for the new hospital shown in KCNA photos suggested it would be the most sophisticated hospital in North Korea when it's built.

In a report to the World Health Organization, North Korea said it had 135 general and other major hospitals throughout the country as of 2017, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

Some observers said North Korea may have hurried the hospital's construction since China reported the first cases of the new disease in December.

While the new coronavirus can be deadly, particularly for the elderly and people with other health

problems, for most people it causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. Some feel no symptoms at all and the vast majority of people recover.

Kim's attendance at the hospital ceremony also confirmed that he returned to Pyongyang after supervising artillery firing exercises on North Korea's east coast. His visits to the rural coastal areas had prompted outside speculation that he may have been trying to avoid the virus.

"North Korea clearly stated the date for the groundbreaking ceremony was March 17, and that clearly showed Chairman Kim Jong Un is back to Pyongyang and is governing state affairs normally," said Kim Dong-yub, an

analyst at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies.

North Korea banned foreign tourists, delayed the school year and quarantined hundreds of foreigners and thousands of locals to avoid the virus that has spread worldwide. Last week, KCNA described authorities inspecting and disinfecting vehicles, vessels and goods at border areas and ports and said some imports remained sealed for 10 days before being handed over to recipients.

Groups that monitor North Korea from South Korea, say the country has had cases of infection with the new coronavirus as well as fatalities. Some experts say the Kim government considers public disclosure of those cases harmful to its tight grip on power.

The chief of the 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea said last week that he was fairly certain North Korea has not been spared from the virus. Army Gen. Robert Abrams noted that the North had halted military training for a month, essentially putting its troops in a lockdown, but has since resumed training exercises and flying.

Earlier this month, Kim Jong Un sent a letter to South Korea's president to express condolences over the soaring coronavirus outbreak in the South. Kim's letter was delivered a day after his powerful younger sister insulted and criticized Seoul. Some experts speculated that Kim was aiming to throw South Korea off balance before asking for coronavirus-related aid items such as test kits.

About 290 foreigners who were quarantined in North Korea have been released, including some diplomats who were flown to Vladivostok, Russia, on a special North Korean flight. It wasn't immediately known whether North Korea plans another flight. AP

PHILIPPINES

Officials lift deadline for foreigners to leave north

THE Philippines lifted a deadline for thousands of foreign travelers to leave the northern third of the country, including the capital, after quarantining the region due to an increase in coronavirus infections, officials said yesterday.

The monthlong quarantine declared by President Rodrigo Duterte requires people to stay mostly at home and restricts land, air and sea travel on Luzon, the main island in the archipelago of more than 100 million people. The restrictions caused confusion and traffic jams, and the suspension of public transport stranded many health



Residents step on measured tape placed outside a supermarket to practice social distancing as a precautionary measure against the spread of the new coronavirus in Manila

workers and emergency personnel.

Philippine officials initially asked foreign travelers,

including tourists, to leave Luzon within 72 hours because all flights from the region would eventually

be suspended. An inter-agency group dealing with the health crisis, however, said the deadline had been

lifted and foreigners could leave Luzon anytime.

"We don't want to give them pressure because it'll be more difficult for them, so we opened up," Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles told a late-evening news conference.

Foreign travelers in Luzon may face limited options for staying as mass transportation is suspended and more businesses decide to close. Some airlines have canceled international flights, complicating the problems of outbound travelers.

A medical student from India, Abhishek Mishari, said he and dozens of fellow

Indians wanted to go home but could not because of virus-related restrictions in India. "We're just stuck here ... we are just afraid of the coronavirus spreading over here," he said outside Manila's international airport.

The Philippines has reported 202 cases of the virus that causes COVID-19, according to the Department of Health, which confirmed Tuesday that one of its officials was among those sickened. Seventeen people have died, the most in Southeast Asia.

While the virus can be deadly, particularly for the elderly and people with other health problems, for most people it causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. Some feel no symptoms at all and the vast majority of people recover. AP

PANDEMIC

Traffic piles up in Europe as virus lockdowns close borders

DESPERATE travelers in cars and trucks choked European borders on Wednesday, creating traffic jams up to 17 miles long as they sought to get back home before borders slammed shut or deliver critical supplies to help nations cope with calamity of the quickly spreading coronavirus.

Hungary overnight opened its borders in phases, seeking to alleviate some of the pressure from eastern Europeans trying to return home. Bulgarian citizens were first allowed to cross the immigrant-phobic country in carefully controlled convoys, then Romanians had a turn.

But by yesterday on the Austrian side of the border, trucks were backed up for 28 kilometers and cars for 14 kilometers as rules allowing only Hungarians or transport trucks through the country's borders kicked back in.

European Union leaders have been working on how to make sure that food, medical supplies and other essential goods keep flowing but so far borders have been clogged. Looking ahead, they're also trying to figure out ways to allow seasonal agricultural workers, needed to keep the production of food going, to travel back and forth across essentially closed borders.

Nations around the world were facing the same issues, with the U.S. and Canada working on a mutual ban on nonessential travel between the two countries.

In Southeast Asia, the causeway between Malaysia and the financial hub of Singapore was eerily quiet after Malaysia shut its borders, while the Philippines backed down on an order giving foreigners 72 hours to leave from a large part of its main island.

President Donald Trump's administration was considering a plan to immediately return to Mexico all people who cross America's southern border illegally, according to two officials who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the plan hasn't been finalized.



Trucks are jammed in the early morning on Autobahn 12 in front of the German-Polish border crossing near Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, yesterday

The coronavirus that has infected nearly 200,000 people worldwide, killing 7,900 of them, is now present in every U.S. state after West Virginia reported an infection. In far-flung Hawaii, the governor encouraged travelers to postpone their island vacations for at least the next 30 days, while the governor of Nevada — home to Las Vegas — ordered a month-long closure of the state's casinos.

Increasingly worried about the economic fallout of the global shutdown, the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands announced rescue packages totaling hundreds of billions of dollars, while longtime International Monetary Fund critic Venezuela asked the institution for a \$5 billion loan.

Major Asian stock markets fell back yesterday early gains after Wall Street jumped on Trump's promise of aid.

In Brussels, Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission president, said there had been "a unanimous and united approach" to the decision to prohibit most foreigners from entering the EU for 30 days.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said European leaders agreed in a conference call to the commission's proposal for an entry ban to the bloc — along with Norway, Switzerland,

Iceland and Britain — with "very, very limited exceptions." Germany will implement the decision immediately.

But so far, EU efforts to smooth the transition have failed.

Yesterday, thousands of trucks remained backed up in Lithuania on roads into Poland, after Warsaw ordered strict measures that include testing every driver for Covid-19 symptoms. The line of trucks was 60 kilometers long on Tuesday night.

"The Polish and Lithuanian governments have opened a second crossing, but that did not help much," said border police spokesman Rokas Pukinsas.

Elsewhere, droves of Malaysians endured hours-long traffic jams as they sought to get into Singapore before the border closure. More than 300,000 people commute daily to Singapore to work and many have chosen to stay there during the lockdown.

Malaysia's restricted movement order came after a sharp spike in coronavirus cases to 673, making it the worst-affected country in Southeast Asia.

The self-governing island of Taiwan said Wednesday that it too would ban foreigners from entry and Taiwanese would have to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

In Thailand, Bangkok's notorious red light districts were due to go dark Wednesday after a government order closing bars, schools, movie theaters and many other venues.

Even tourists on Ecuador's iconic Galapagos islands — 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) off the South American mainland — have been affected. Canadian Jessy Lamontaine and her family were stuck on the island when flights were suspended and they missed the last trip out.

"I was in tears this morning," Lamontaine said. "I couldn't get any answers from the airline. I had no money and didn't know whether I was going to keep my job."

Galapagos Gov. Norman Wray said the 2,000 foreigners who remain on the archipelago in the next week may be able to leave on charter or government-approved flights.

"We feel totally helpless and devastated because my grandma spent her last week only with her husband and caretakers but no other relatives," Ruiz said.

Some bright spots emerged. Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the virus was first detected late last year and which has been under lockdown for weeks, reported just one new case for a second straight day yesterday. AP

this day in history



1970 WILLI AND WILLY MEET IN EAST GERMANY

The leaders of East and West Germany have met for the first time since the country was divided in 1949.

About 2,000 young East Germans greeted West Germany's Chancellor Willy Brandt when he arrived at 0930 at the East German town of Erfurt to meet Prime Minister Willi Stoph for talks on improving East-West relations.

As the two men crossed the square between the railway station and the Erfurt Hof Hotel, demonstrators shouted "Willy! Willy!".

Then they changed their chant to "Willy Brandt!" to make clear which leader they supported.

The large crowds surprised both Western journalists and the East German authorities who had made every effort to keep the area clear of spectators. They even kept children at school who would normally have had the afternoon off.

Demonstrators called for Mr Brandt to come to the hotel window. He did so for a brief moment before getting down to the serious business of talks with his East German counterpart.

This afternoon, Mr Brandt visited the Buchenwald concentration camp to lay a wreath in honour of the victims of the Nazi holocaust.

On his return to Erfurt he was met with a small counter-demonstration of people demanding international recognition of East Germany, echoing a demand made by East German officials.

During the talks, Mr Brandt suggested recognition of East Germany would come after a long process of negotiation.

He proposed a treaty to confirm the inviolability of East Germany's border and suggested the two countries join the United Nations.

But there was little hope the talks would lead to an easing of travel restrictions for East Germans, made worse by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

By the end of the day the two men agreed to meet again in the West German town of Kessel on 21 May.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Willy Brandt was the architect of "Ostpolitik", the policy of rapprochement with the Eastern Bloc.

By 1971 he had negotiated treaties with Russia, Poland, and East Germany and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

Two years later the Federal Republic of Germany (West) and the German Democratic Republic (East) were allowed to join the United Nations.

But in 1974 Mr Brandt was forced to resign after one of his leading aides, Gunter Guillaume, was exposed as an East German spy.

Prime Minister Willi Stoph, along with his cabinet, was forced to resign on 7 November 1989 after huge anti-government protests.

Two days later travel restrictions were eased and millions left the country as the Berlin Wall was knocked down. The two Germans were finally reunited on 3 October 1990.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
There could be a lot of emotions swirling around you today. It might seem like every time you walk into a room, someone is laughing, crying, or arguing.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
The game you've been playing is heating up, and you need to boost your competitiveness in order to stay in it. The good news is that you've got all the intensity you need.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Paying more attention to your health today could make a big difference tomorrow. It's time to think more proactively about your physical being in order to avoid bigger problems down the road.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
An invitation could come your way out of the blue, and it will probably throw you for a loop. Figuring out whether or not to accept it shouldn't take long, but it might.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
If you know something is wrong in one of your relationships, why aren't you paying more attention to it? It doesn't take more time or energy to look at these issues deeply. It just takes more honesty.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Let your intellectually curious side steer you straight to stimulation. If you take time to go the long way, to see all the sights and explore all the nooks and crannies, you won't be disappointed.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Your eye for beauty is in clear, strong focus now. You're going to be drawn to things that celebrate beauty in every sense of the word. You'll appreciate the most luxurious aesthetics in fine food.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
This is a very good time to make a clean sweep of things, whether that requires you to clean up a dirty room or clear up a touchy misunderstanding between you and a friend.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Parts of your circle may be breaking off into smaller units. You might not be aware of the magnitude of all the reshuffling, but that's only because you probably won't be affected by it.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
How are your juggling skills? Things may be getting busier than ever, and it could get tricky trying to keep everyone happy. There just aren't enough hours in the day!

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You may not be able to shake off your deep feelings, no matter how many distractions come your way. What's on your mind isn't going to go away until you deal with it head-on.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Just because someone you care about likes people to get along doesn't mean they're a doormat! Don't worry about how a friend or loved one is handling a tense situation.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	17	clear
Harbin	-3	6	sleet
Tianjin	8	17	clear
Urumqi	5	14	cloudy
Xi'an	5	25	clear
Lhasa	2	10	cloudy
Chengdu	12	25	clear
Chongqing	13	24	clear
Kunming	10	22	clear
Nanjing	10	18	cloudy
Shanghai	13	19	clear
Wuhan	9	22	cloudy
Hangzhou	12	24	cloudy
Taipei	18	20	moderate rain
Guangzhou	19	22	moderate rain
Hong Kong	20	24	shower
WORLD			
Moscow	4	6	drizzle
Frankfurt	6	18	clear
Paris	9	17	drizzle
London	7	14	drizzle
New York	1	8	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Rubberneck; 6- Breakfast brand; 10- Common article; 13- Hermit; 14- Flood survivor; 15- Outer garment; 16- Unpaid; 17- Medicine; 18- Horse solo; 19- Gyro bread; 20- Dancing party; 22- Meddle; 24- Hate; 28- Wide of the mark; 31- Conger catcher; 32- North American buffalo; 34- One of the Four Forest Cantons; 36- Hard to find; 37- Slippery swimmer; 38- Summons; 41- Boy king; 42- Inter ___; 44- Film director Lee; 45- Seraglio; 47- Ornamental coronet; 49- Add fizz; 51- Marsh plants; 53- Picks; 56- Like rushing water; 59- Mutual fund fee; 61- Light gas; 64- "___ grip!"; 65- Relish; 66- Unseat; 67- Metric unit of mass; 68- Academy award; 69- Monopoly quartet; Abbr.; 70- Quick sharp bark; 71- Noodles?;

DOWN: 1- Swill; 2- Namely; 3- Writer Loos; 4- Christens anew; 5- Unit of energy; 6- "Bewitched" witch; 7- Clotted blood; 8- Showy trinket; 9- 1977 George Burns film; 10- Rocky pinnacle; 11- Yes, in Yokohama; 12- Zeta follower; 15- Easy gallop; 20- Rupture; 21- Teensy; 23- No ___!; 25- Delight; 26- ___ cholesterol; 27- Waste allowance; 29- Elbow; 30- Numerical prefix; 32- Give a false impression of; 33- Greek epic poem; 35- Breathe in; 37- Vittles; 39- Kind of fingerprint; 40- Movable barrier; 43- Silvery white; 46- Person who lives in seclusion; 48- ___ Lingus; 50- Overhaul; 52- Soaked; 54- Puccini classic; 55- The devil; 57- Parched; 58- Romance lang.; 60- Actress Diana; 61- Hide-hair link; 62- Where it's at; 63- Old spy org.; 65- Lump;

Yesterday's solution

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>Pearl on the Lough Duplex, Taipa HK\$34,000,000 4,000 ft² 5 3 1</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>One Grantai Spacious Apartment, Cotai \$23,000/mth 2,122 ft² 3 3 3</p>	<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>[Macau] Jade Garden 4 3 3 3,180 ft² \$18,000,000 (ref: 19126002)</p> <p>[Macau] Seaview Garden 3 2 2 1,420 ft² \$11,800,000 (ref: 20016004)</p> <p>[Macau] Waterfront Duet Studio 1 1 469 ft² \$5,100,000 (ref: 20016001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nam Long 1 1 1 785 ft² \$4,780,000 (ref: 20016009)</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1 1 710 ft² \$10,000/mth (ref: n/a)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nam Long 2 1 1 645 ft² \$11,800/mth (ref: 19111001)</p> <p>[Macau] Vai Fung Triplex 2 2 2 1,065 ft² \$15,800/mth (ref: 19121001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Manhattan 4 2 2 2,305 ft² \$26,800/mth (ref: 19091003)</p>
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The Art of Giving

Lurdes de Sousa *



MODERN PHILANTHROPY AND THE GREAT DISRUPTION

WE are living in the times of great disruption. Yesterday the world was identifying a set of pressing global challenges such as climate change, reskilling, blockchain, A.I., and reducing inequalities. None would disagree with the addition of "pandemic" to this list in present times. Some might dispute the list by adding their own priorities and spreading controversy on social media and international platforms, but one word everyone would probably use is disruption.

With no international coordination, international organizations being ignored, and absence of a common response, a great disruption is occurring.

Covid-19, coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, HCoV-19 ... Such is the disruption that the world cannot even agree on the name of the disease the WHO declared a "pandemic" days ago. The most frequent words that are being used in the media and on social networks these days are most likely to be "war," "Spanish flu," "quarantine" and "armed forces." All of this to the sounds of (the most enchanting) Turandot aria "Nessun Dorma," "notte Tramontate, stelle Tramontate, stelle All'alba Vincerò Vincerà Vincerò." We shall overcome.

It's World War 3, some say. The Great Depression is far behind us and it's now the time of the Great Disruption. The times ahead will be difficult for governments that will lack financial, political and social responses, as well as institutions, businesses and individuals that will lack leadership. Leadership, solidarity, and a sense of community will dictate success in overcoming this tragic moment.

Amidst the seriousness of the situation, extraordinary signals have been sent to society as a direct or indirect result of the pandemic. Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, announced on March 13 that he would be stepping down from the company board of directors and relinquishing his post on the board of Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway company to devote himself to philanthropy.

Six months earlier, in this part of the world, China's richest man, Jack Ma, stepped down as chairman of Alibaba for the same reason. On March 15, the president of leading luxury group LVMH, Bernard Arnault, announced that the group was prepping its perfume and cosmetics production sites (Christian Dior and Givenchy) to manufacture hydroalcoholic gel. The gel will be used to produce hand sanitizer and the company will deliver the free disinfectant to French authorities and the Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, the largest hospital system in France. An extraordinary marketing operation, some will say. Well, what matters is that millions of bottles of hand sanitizer are going to be produced and delivered for free where it is most needed, possibly saving lives.

Everywhere across the world we are witnessing a resurgence of solidarity, from the Chinese medical team that first went to Italy with tons of medical equipment and precious advice, to anonymous people putting post-it notes in building elevators offering (and putting their lives at risk) to shop for groceries or go to pharmacies on behalf of the elderly who are advised not to go out.

In these difficult times, each one of us, from billionaires to corporations to neighbors, reveal our inner philanthropist spirit. It's the true Art of Giving.

Covid-19, more than ever before on a global scale, has brought philanthropy to the top of the agenda for years to come.

***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).



TIME SPENT STREAMING SPIKED 20% WORLDWIDE THIS PAST WEEKEND

LUCAS SHAW & OLGA KHARIF

FOR years, TV executives have fretted there is too much TV. Now, with the coronavirus looming large, they are worried there might not be enough.

Because of the pandemic, streaming surged this past weekend, according to Wurl Inc., a company that delivers video and advertising to connected TVs. The amount of time people spent streaming spiked by more than 20% worldwide, including more than 40% in Austria and Spain.

While streaming services haven't commented on any increases in traffic, researchers are seeing more activity in places like Netflix Inc.

and Twitch, the online gaming network owned by Amazon.com Inc. Installs of the Netflix app leaped 34% last week in Spain and 57% in Italy, according to SensorTower. Italy has the second-most coronavirus cases worldwide, after China.

"While video streaming is far from the most important thing on the world agenda, it is an industry that indirectly will see a major shift due to the crisis," said Sean Doherty, Wurl's chief executive officer.

Driving that growth is the collapse of many leisure and entertainment activities because of the virus, from restaurants and movie theaters to professional sports and concerts.

The swift expansion of streaming use comes with some challenges. Austrian regulators are considering suspending neutrality rules to let network operators throttle Netflix bandwidth, after a rise in data congestion complaints from people working at home, an

Austrian newspaper reported.

Media companies have torn up their normal strategies to satisfy growing demand for programming from people stuck at home. Universal Pictures, the studio division of cable giant Comcast Corp., will offer three movies for rental at home before they leave theaters, while Walt Disney Co. released "Frozen 2" on its streaming services months ahead of schedule.

Media companies have torn up their normal strategies to satisfy growing demand for programming from people stuck at home

While viewing of live TV is also on the rise thanks to 24/7 coverage of the virus outbreak and more people being stuck at home, production of most TV shows and movies has halted for the foreseeable future, creating a potential shortage of new programming.

Streaming services are in a good position because consumers look to them for their libraries of titles on demand - not a live feed - and they have already banked programs for release in the weeks ahead.

Traditional TV networks must be on the air 24 hours a day, and outlets such as CBS, Turner and ESPN have scrambled to replace the live sports that have gone on hiatus.

That's opened the door to unconventional forms of programming, from marble rolling to live in-home concerts. Singer John Legend performed from his home Tuesday, streaming live on Instagram for an audience that reached almost 100,000 people.

One industry that may face minimal disruption from the pandemic is video games, which participants have long enjoyed and played without being in the same place.

The audience at Twitch, which lets viewers see gamers compete via livestreams, has increased 10% in the past few days, according to Doron Nir, CEO of StreamElements, a provider of tools and services to the industry.

And YouTube Gaming is up 15%, he said.

"With more stay-at-home mandates being issued around the world and the entertainment industry finding new ways to migrate their offerings to livestreaming platforms, we expect to see

these numbers rise," he said in an email.

David Steinberg, who is 27 and streams himself playing video games, saw an influx of viewers in recent weeks as more people have been staying home.

"Now that sports are canceled - NBA, PGA - they are just out of stuff to watch," he said. "I am a one-man army here in my basement and I can still create content. And with so many people looking online - especially on Facebook, where they check how is their family is doing - it's been good."

An increase in viewers could translate into more revenue from advertisers or sponsors looking to reach that captive audience, unless, that is, those companies tighten their belts, too. Steinberg says his total audience across sites like Facebook and YouTube is 3.5 million.

"I've gotten thousands of messages from people," Steinberg said.

BLOOMBERG

TENNIS

Virus forces French Open delay; US Open switch 'possibility'

HOWARD FENDRICH

THE French Open was postponed for about four months because of the coronavirus pandemic, shifting from May to September and juggling the tennis calendar.

The French tennis federation said it will hold its 15-day clay-court event at Roland Garros in Paris from Sept. 20 to Oct. 4, instead of May 24 to June 7, "to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved in organizing the tournament."

In the statement announcing the move, federation President Bernard Giudicelli described it as "a difficult yet brave decision in this unprecedented situation." Later, in a conference call with reporters, Giudicelli acknowledged the other Grand Slam tournaments and the men's and women's professional tours were informed of the change — but not consulted.

"It's unthinkable for us to re-



move Roland Garros from the calendar. The only thing we had in mind is the interests of the tournament, of the players," Giudicelli said. "We looked at the fortnight that was least damaging for the other (tournaments)."

The French Open's new dates place it right after the hard-court U.S. Open, which currently is scheduled to be held in New York from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13. Having just one week between two major championships, played on diffe-

rent surfaces, would be unusually short.

The U.S. Tennis Association said yesterday it is considering "the possibility" of postponing the U.S. Open because of the outbreak.

In a not-so-veiled jab at the French federation, the USTA issued a statement saying that if there were a change in timing, "we recognize that such a decision should not be made unilaterally."

The USTA added that it would only move its major championship "in full consultation" with others, including Grand Slam organizers, the WTA and ATP tours and the International Tennis Federation.

The new timeline for the French Open also conflicts with several hard-court tournaments already slated for those two weeks, as well as the Laver Cup exhibition event in Boston.

"This is madness," tweeted Canadian pro Vasek Pospisil. "Major

announcement by Roland Garros changing the dates to one week after the US Open. No communication with the players or the ATP. we have ZERO say in this sport. It's time. #UniteThePlayers"

Laver Cup organizers said they were taken by surprise, and noted their event was already sold out.

"It raises many questions. At this time, we want our fans, sponsors, broadcasters, staff, volunteers, players and the great city of Boston to know that we intend to hold Laver Cup 2020 as currently scheduled," the organizers said in a statement.

This is the first instance of a Grand Slam tournament being affected by the virus that has spread around the world. The next major tennis championship on the calendar is Wimbledon, which is to start in late June in England.

After the French Open's postponement was announced, Richard Lewis, the chief executive of the All England Club, which runs Wimbledon, said his group was continuing to plan for that tournament "at this time."

He added: "It remains a continuously evolving situation and we will act responsibly, in the best interests of wider society."

Several tournaments in March and April already had been called off by the men's and women's tours as a result of COVID-19. **AP**

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OPINION

World Views

Conor Sen, Bloomberg

BIG BUSINESS HAS ALL THE ADVANTAGES IN THE PANDEMIC

Even if fiscal stimulus is successful in getting the U.S. economy back on stable ground after the Covid-19 crisis, the economy will inevitably be transformed. When it comes to the labor market, despite the best efforts of policy makers to help small businesses, we're likely to see employment shift to larger companies, accelerating a trend that's been in place for several years.

Although both small and large businesses increased their workforces coming out of the 2008-09 financial crisis, in recent years there's been a growing divergence between the two types of employers. Since the end of 2017, companies with up to 49 workers have seen employment grow by just 130,000. Meanwhile, companies employing at least 1,000 workers have added 2.6 million employees. A prime reason for this has been the tightening labor market for service workers, with bigger businesses having an easier time increasing pay and benefits to attract people in an intensifying fight for talent. Starbucks, with billions of dollars in profits, has an easier time offering high wages and paying for workers' college education than a local coffee shop with fewer economies of scale and where a stroke of bad luck could mean having to shut down.

The same size and profitability of large corporations that gave them an advantage in the tightening labor market will enable them to ride out this crisis in a way that smaller businesses might not. The first advantage is being able to withstand several weeks or months of lost or reduced sales, making do with lower profits, dipping into reserves or laying off workers. Smaller companies might not have that cushion to fall back on and - having fewer employees to begin with - layoffs might mean they can't stay open.

Access to capital in these crises is dramatically different as well. Publicly traded companies can still fund themselves with fresh debt or equity, even if the price is higher, or have good relationships with banks that let them draw down revolving credit lines to weather the storm. Smaller companies might not have those same banking relationships. Instead, many might have to rely on the owner's credit card, which can max out quickly.

There's also the reality that not all companies are losing business right now, with grocery stores and health-care providers in particular likely to increase hiring during the next few months. Kroger, for example, the U.S.'s largest supermarket chain, advertised during the weekend that it had immediate job openings it needed to fill to keep up with demand as consumers stock up for the pandemic. Amazon is also taking advantage of the surge and has announced plans to hire as many as 100,000 workers. Workers at struggling smaller businesses may jump at openings like these, exacerbating the challenge these companies are already confronting.

It's more difficult for small businesses to petition the government for help during a crisis, and more difficult for the government to quickly roll out programs that can provide relief to hundreds of thousands of small, diverse businesses, each with their own issues. A systemically important industry such as airlines, with only a handful of companies, is an easier fix in theory than countless family owned restaurants that may have been struggling even before consumers stopped eating out en masse.

Once the economy reaches the bottom of the slowdown, particularly if the recovery is swift, larger businesses will be able to make key investments to staff up and replenish inventories in anticipation of the revival of demand. Meanwhile, smaller companies may still be scrambling to work out concessions with landlords, key suppliers and customers.

The economy might also experience a surge of entrepreneurialism as new founders take advantage of the holes left behind by smaller businesses that couldn't survive a shakeout. A mix of widespread retirements, small business failures and displaced workers should lead to some interesting opportunities. But for the foreseeable future, look for bigger businesses to gobble up workers from their weaker, smaller peers. [Abridged]

Facebook said a bug in its anti-spam system temporarily blocked the publication of links to news stories about the coronavirus. Guy Rosen, Facebook's vice president of integrity, said on Twitter yesterday [Macau time] that the company was working on a fix for the problem.

Users complained that links to news stories about school closings and other information related to the virus outbreak were blocked by the company's automated system.

Later on Tuesday, Rosen tweeted that Facebook had restored all the incorrectly deleted posts, which also covered topics beyond

the coronavirus.

Rosen said the problems were unrelated to any changes in Facebook's content-moderator workforce. The company reportedly sent its human moderators home this week because of the coronavirus outbreak.

A representative for Facebook did not immediately respond to questions on the status of Facebook's content moderators, many of whom do not work directly for the company and are not always able to work from home.

SEX WORKERS FACE RUIN AMID VIRUS FEARS, BROTHEL CLOSURES



IT'S 7 p.m. on a Friday night, a time when Aurel Johannes Marx's three-room brothel on the edge of Berlin would normally be preparing for its first customers. Sex for sale has long been a staple part of the German capital's freewheeling nightlife. But amid concerns over the new coronavirus, even the world's supposedly oldest profession is suffering a sudden slump.

At the "Lankwitzer 7" brothel, with its soft red light and bawdy paintings on the wall, disinfectant dispensers had been installed next to the washbasins. Marx said he ordered staff to hot-wash all towels and sheets, and open the windows more often to let the warm, sticky air escape.

Still, customers just weren't showing up anymore.

"Over the past week, business has gone down by 50%," Marx said, blaming the decline on the general drop in nightlife that's occurred since the virus arrived in Berlin.

By Saturday, authorities had pulled the plug entirely, ordering the temporary closure of all entertainment venues, including brothels. The city has registered 332 confirmed cases of COVID-19 so far. Several dozens infections have been traced to bars and clubs.

Susanne Bleier Wilp, a German former sex worker and spokeswoman for the Association of Erotic and Sexual Services Providers, or BESD, said the virus has caused fear and uncertainty among the estimated 100,000 to 200,000 sex workers in Germany, where prostitution was largely legalized almost 20 years ago.

"There are those who are withdrawing from the business entirely at the moment for safety reasons," Bleier Wilp told The Associated Press. Others are requiring that customers disinfect themselves, she added — a measure that medical experts say is unlikely to effectively stop the spread of the virus during close physical contact.

For most people the virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for some, especially older adults and those with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of those who are infected recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

It wasn't clear how the closure of brothels would affect independent sex workers, and some have come under criticism for suggesting they will continue working.

Salome Balthus, a sex worker in Berlin, said that most of her colleagues would prefer to stay at home.

"But they know that nobody is going to compensate them for loss of income," she said on Twitter. "90% of all dates are being canceled anyway. As always, we're left to fend for ourselves."

"Many of us will face housing problems in three months at the latest," she added. "In which home should we stay then?"

Unlike regular employees, most sex workers won't benefit directly from the half-trillion-euro package of loans the German government is making available to companies facing ruin because of the coronavirus outbreak.

"Sex workers are usually self-employed, not employees," said Bleier Wilp. "That means, they bear all the risks themselves"

Some sex workers may be able to rely on savings for several weeks, she said. "But it becomes more difficult if the crisis lasts for longer. Then many, particularly those who do it full time, may have to seek help." AP

Italy A Christian evangelical group headed by the son of the late televangelist Billy Graham has sent a field hospital to northern Italy to tend to coronavirus patients, joining China in offering aid to Italy's overwhelmed health care system. The Defense Ministry said a DC8 belonging to Samaritan's Purse landed at the Verona airport yesterday. The group says it sent a 68-bed field hospital, including eight intensive care beds, 20 tons of medical equipment and 32 specialists.



South Africa became Africa's new coronavirus focus of concern yesterday as cases nearly doubled to 116 from two days before. The country with the most cases in sub-Saharan Africa said 14 of the new ones were from local transmission — and six were in children under 10. Though the pandemic is in its early days on the continent, health experts have warned that even facilities in Africa's richest nation could be overwhelmed by the virus' spread.



USA In a massive federal effort, President Donald Trump's proposed economic package alone could approach \$1 trillion, a rescue initiative not seen since the Great Recession. Among the measures, a cash handout would be sent out in checks to Americans but the amount is not yet disclosed. The White House said it liked GOP Sen. Mitt Romney's idea for \$1,000 checks, though not necessarily at that sum and not for wealthier people.



USA Bernie Sanders was trying to determine his next moves yesterday, after Joe Biden swept to victory in Florida, Illinois and Arizona and seized a commanding lead in a Democratic presidential race upended by the coronavirus. The Vermont senator's campaign manager, Faiz Shakir, said Sanders "is going to be having conversations with supporters to assess his campaign."