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**ANALYST SAYS MACAU  
GAMING RECOVERY NOT  
LIKELY THIS YEAR**

**TWO MORE PEOPLE WILL FACE  
CRIMINAL CHARGES AFTER THEY  
WERE FOUND TO HAVE BROKEN  
THEIR MANDATORY QUARANTINES**

**Australia** yesterday criticized China for formally charging a Chinese-Australian writer with espionage during the coronavirus pandemic. Yang Hengjun was taken into custody upon arriving in China from New York in January 2019 with his wife, Yuan Xiaoliang, and his 14-year-old stepdaughter. [More on p6](#)



**China** One in five companies surveyed by the American Chamber of Commerce in China expects delays in resuming normal business to last through the second half of this year. About one-fifth of the 199 companies surveyed March 13-18 said they are back to normal after the Communist Party declared victory over the coronavirus and began easing travel and other controls. Three-fifths expect to resume normal operations by the end of April.



**Australia** Athletics Australia has canceled its 2020 national track and field championships in a bid to help "flatten the curve" of the coronavirus pandemic. The decision comes a day after the Tokyo Olympics were postponed to 2021. Athletics Australia chief executive Darren Gocher says he hopes the cancellation gives athletes some certainty and, combined with the Olympics being delayed 12 months, "means that our athletes now have a new goal to work toward."

[More on backpage](#)

# MacauDaily Times



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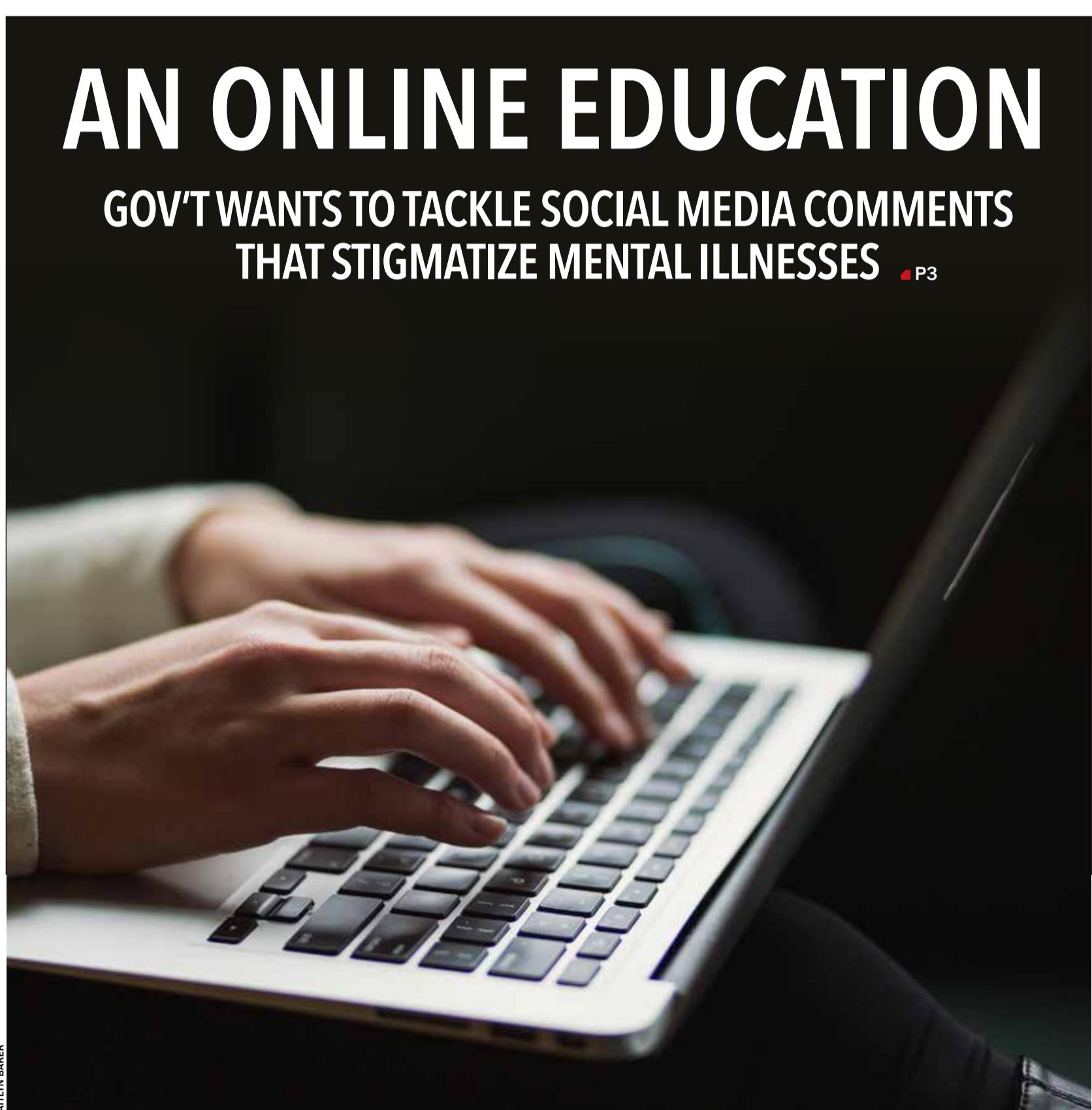
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## AN ONLINE EDUCATION GOV'T WANTS TO TACKLE SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS THAT STIGMATIZE MENTAL ILLNESSES

P3



KAITLYN BAKER

**FIVE NEW CASES  
DETECTED IN  
RETURNEES  
WITH 24-HOUR  
PERIOD**



P2

## LAWMAKER URGES COMPENSATION FOR OVERLAPPING HOLIDAY

Lawmaker Lei Chan U has urged the local government to expedite the final works on the new amendment to the Labor Relations Law. This law includes provisions regarding compensation for overlapping holidays, longer maternity leave, and paid paternity leave. Last July, the Legislative Assembly (AL) passed the law in general terms. An AL committee discussion was also held on the law's details. However, as of today, the bill has not yet been published. Lei accused the city's administrative procedures of being time-consuming and delaying the bill's publication. Lei described the bill's progress as "unbelievably slow".

## MACAU'S NON-RESIDENT MAINLAND WORKERS CAN JOIN ZHUHAI RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Mainland workers in Macau can now join the retirement scheme in Hengqin, according to mainland news reports. In mainland China, social welfare is linked to a person's hukou (or residency) at a city level. When a person pays for one city's social welfare scheme, they are only guaranteed access to the corresponding level of social welfare of that city. Previously, mainland workers working in Macau were not allowed to join Zhuhai's governmental retirement insurance scheme because they were not residents of Zhuhai. With Hengqin becoming an experimental region giving Macau's mainland workers access to Zhuhai's retirement insurance scheme, more than 100,000 of Macau's mainland workers can now pay to join Zhuhai's retirement insurance system.

## PRAÇA DE FERREIRA DO AMARAL ROADWORKS ENTER FINAL STAGE

As of today, roadworks at Praça de Ferreira do Amaral have entered their fourth and final stage. During this period, traffic lanes A and B at the bus stop will remain closed and the corresponding bus routes will temporarily stop at lanes C1, C2 and E. During the first three stages, some bus lanes were moved to other lanes or to nearby locations, and these changes will remain in place for the time being. Routes 3A, 8A, 10A, AA, 21A, 26A, 33, N1A, N2 will stop at lane C1. Routes 11, MT2, 50, 50B, 52, 71, and 73 will stop at lane C2. Routes 6B, 9, 91, 23, and 32 will stop at lane E.

AP PHOTO



# AUSTRALIAN TOURIST AMONG LATEST MACAU COVID-19 CASES

ANTHONY LAM

**M**ACAU has seen five more positive cases within a 24-hour period, bringing its total number of Covid-19 cases to 31, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has confirmed. The Center also pointed out that all of these cases have been imported.

The 31st case of Covid-19 is a male resident of Macau aged 27. He boarded a Cathay Pacific Airways flight departing from New York in the United States and arrived at the Hong Kong International Airport on March 25. He was transported to Macau via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB) in a vehicle arranged by the Tourism Crisis Management Office.

Due to the presentation of symptoms including a fever, he was immediately referred to the public hospital for a nasopharyngeal swab.

The test returned positive for the novel coronavirus in the early hours of this morning.

The patient is currently in the isolation ward of the public hospital. His clinical state is considered normal, according to the Center. More details will be released later.

The 30th case involves a

52-year-old Australian citizen. He travelled with his wife to San Francisco, between February 27 and March 4. They then travelled to Europe and remained in the U.K.'s capital, London, between March 4 and 15.

Afterwards, they took Virgin Atlantic flight 206 from Heathrow Airport, London, to Hong Kong, arriving on March 16. The man was seated in seat 66A during the flight. The couple travelled to Macau over the HKZMB by the Bridge's shuttle bus service immediately after their flight.

They stayed in Macau for the next four days until March 20 when they were forced to return to Macau as they could not enter Hong Kong for their flight back home.

During the four days in Macau, they stayed in accommodation at the Pousada de Coloane at Cheoc Van. They claimed that during that time they mostly kept within the hotel grounds or nearby.

On 19 March, they took a number 26A public bus to Cotai, particularly the Venetian resort. After being denied entry into the casino, as they had not brought along their passports, they returned to Coloane, as reported by the patient.

That evening, they had dinner at La Gondola, a restaurant in Cheoc Van.

The next day, after they were forced to return to Macau due to immigration restrictions in Hong Kong, they were sent to Grand Coloane Resort for monitored quarantine upon arrival in Macau.

On March 24, they each took an initial test for Covid-19 infection. The man was yesterday confirmed as positive for Covid-19, having displayed mild symptoms in the government hospital.

As his wife is classified as a close contact, she is now in the Public Health Clinical Center in Coloane for a 14-day period of medical observation.

Despite the couple's movements during their time in Macau, the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention believes the risks that they have posed to the local community are not serious and residents should not be excessively anxious.

A 15-year-old female local returnee, who studied in the U.K., is the city's 29th case. She returned to Macau from London via the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, and Hong Kong, where she spent a week before returning to Macau on March 24.

She was seated in seat 10K on her British Airways flight BA33 on March 16 and seat 5G on Malaysia Airlines flight MH78 on the next day. She was taken directly to be tested upon arrival in Macau.

The 28th case involves an 18-year-old male Macau resident who had been studying in the United Kingdom. On 22 March, he arrived at Macau International Airport. His infection was confirmed during his 14-day mandatory quarantine.

He took three flights on his way back home. On March 20, he boarded Emirates flight EK4 from London Heathrow to Dubai, in seat 61J. The next day, he took Emirates flight EK372 from Dubai to Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport in seat 25B, and then Air Macau flight NX881 to Macau in seat 14B. His journey was identical to that of the 26th case.

The city's 27th case is a 28-year-old male Macau resident who returned from the U.K. On 22 March, he took a Government-chartered coach to Macau from Hong Kong International Airport via the HKZMB.

He took one single flight back home, which was British Airways flight BA27 on March 20. He was seated in 71D.

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# Social Welfare Bureau working to de-stigmatize mental illness online

ANTHONY LAM

**O**NLINE tensions have become more pronounced in recent months, as people have spent more time indoors and online, according Tang Yuk Wa, acting vice director of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), who made the comment during yesterday's daily press briefing organized by the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center.

The acting vice director first revealed the fact that requests for emotional and family support have been on the rise during the fight against Covid-19, when many people have been forced into lengthy periods of close contact under one roof. Tang disclosed that some people could not find an outlet for their emotions and stress.

Social media platforms have been seeing more arguments and conflicts in recent months with some netizens making harsh comments and referring to other people as psychologically or psychiatrically ill. According to Tang, this can be categorized as stigmatizing people with mental illness.

The social work official believes nobody should accept such stigmatization. He suggested

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that if people see stigmatizing comments on social media, they should explain the stigmatization to their counterparts and help them approach the same topic from another's perspective.

Earlier during the press conference, when asked about discrimination possibly faced by recovered Covid-19 patients, the medical director at the govern-

ment hospital, Lo Iek Long, advised the public to accept these people, as they were completely healthy.

"After further conversation, we can help construct a correct image and wash away the stereotypes," the IAS acting vice director added. The official does not think stigmatizing others will benefit the control and prevention of the epidemic.

A representative from the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau also told the press conference that the bureau has undertaken a lot of work, including the development of a website to provide emotional support to help with de-stigmatization efforts.

While some social media users accuse returnees of raising the infection toll, and criticizing locals who cross the border for

exposing themselves to risks, Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which has done extensive work on de-stigmatization, reminded people to take time to think about others' intentions for doing certain things.

Some Hong Kong social media users are starting discussions about visiting Macau, as many high-end hotels are now being used for quarantine purposes. Some of them were unaware that they would need to pay for their stay, as they are not local residents.

Inês Chan, an official at the Macao Government Tourism Office, suggested that it was not a good idea, adding that "it is not their choice as to which hotel they will stay in. It is decided by the authorities upon their arrival."

Chan also provided an update about the price that non-residents will need to pay if they are quarantined at a designated hotel. The price for 14 days is MOP5,600. However, she did not rule out the possibility of any future change to the price.

Macau residents will have their bills paid by the government if they are required to undergo quarantine.

## Two more cases of people breaching quarantine

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE representative of the Public Security Police Force (PSP) at the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center advised that the PSP has detected two more cases of people under quarantine who have violated the quarantine rules in breach of the law.

The two new cases were reported yesterday during the daily press conference at the Center. The PSP official revealed that one of the cases is a local resident while the other is a non-resident worker (TNR) from Nepal.

According to the PSP spokesperson, the Macau resident breached the quarantine rules by leaving the house where he was placed under home quarantine.

In the case of the TNR,

the police said that he had provided a false declaration and information to the force, supplying a false home address where he was supposed to be in quarantine.

Both of them have already been located and detained by the police authorities. They will now face charges for breaching the provisions of the law of Prevention, Control and Treatment of Infectious Diseases and may be liable for a maximum penalty including a prison sentence of up to six months or a fine of up to 60 days according to the penal framework.

For the time being, it is not clear if the TNR will also face additional charges for providing false declarations to the authorities, which constitutes another crime punishable

by the Macau laws.

The two cases are in addition to another three reported on Tuesday. The earlier three comprised two other local residents and one TNR from Indonesia who also breached the quarantine rules by leaving their homes or the quarantine hotel.

All the cases are being processed and will be forwarded to the Public Prosecutions Office for further investigation.

The police force also added that of the five cases reported in the last two days, four have been sent to compulsory isolation in a government facility, while the other case is currently undergoing quarantine in the neighboring city of Zhuhai, where he had fled and has been detained with the help of Macau's Zhuhai counterparts.

## GRAND HARBOUR HOTEL BECOMES NINTH QUARANTINE VENUE

**T**HE Grand Harbour Hotel will now be used by the government as a medical observation and quarantine facility, increasing the total number of quarantine rooms to 2,272.

Grand Harbour Hotel is situated at Travessa de Lam Mau on the Macau peninsula and has a total of 90 rooms.

This is the fourth hotel that is being used by the government as a medical facility in the Peninsula after the Metropole Hotel, San Tung Fong Commercial Inn, South Wing and Grand Lapa Hotel.

According to the Macao Government Tourism Office, the government will continue to look for more hotels that can be converted into places of medical

observation.

At the same time, before approving a hotel for medical observation purposes, the health authority pledged that it would carry out a strict evaluation of the venue, which includes an on-site inspection of the hotel's ventilation system.

The SAR government has temporarily repurposed nine hotels for medical observation, including Pousada Marina Infante Hotel, Golden Crown China Hotel, Regency Art Hotel, Grand Coloane Resort, Metropole Hotel, Treasure Hotel, San Tung Fong Commercial Inn South Wing, Grand Lapa as well as Grand Harbour Hotel.

These designated hotels are mostly occupied by local residents returning to Macau.

"These designated hotels are committed to social responsibility, providing support and coordination with the SAR Government for implementation of the measure of medical observation," the MGTO said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng criticized Macau's six gaming concessionaires for their unwillingness to allow their integrated resorts to be used as quarantine hotels amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ho called on the casino operators to fulfill their corporate social responsibility obligations, noting that the government could not reach an agreement with a single integrated resort. LV

# LOCAL DESIGNER BRANCHES OUT WITH NEW BRAND

ANTHONY LAM

**NUNO** Lopes de Oliveira, a local fashion designer, has transitioned into the world of beauty and cosmetics with the launch of a new brand and debut eye shadow product.

He has lent his name to his brands – both fashion and cosmetics labels – which are called ‘Nuno Lopes.’ While his fashion brand has already drawn attention in both Macau and overseas, the designer said he wants to find new outlets to express his creativity.

“As an artist it is natural for me to find new mediums to express my creativity,” he said in an exclusive interview with the Times. “The cosmetic brand came very organically for the Nuno Lopes fashion brand.”

At present the beauty brand has a single product, the eye shadow palette. “The color story of this palette is very diverse, so no matter your gender, race or age, you will get great use out of this palette,” the designer advanced. “I even use some of the shades to contour and highlight myself.”

Claiming that his brand is the city’s first homemade beauty brand, the designer said he is also pleased about being able to incorporate his cosmetic products into his fashion shows.

“Now I am able to use my cosmetic products during my fashion shows, giving me ultimate control over the



Nuno Lopes de Oliveira

artist vision of the brand,” said the designer.

His fashion brand started off with everyday clothing, such as T-shirts and pants, but Oliveira later added underwear and swimwear to his collection. Oliveira believes beauty products are as necessary for people as

clothes and trousers.

Oliveira also disputed the stereotype of connecting cosmetics with femininity. “We believe anyone who wants to use this product can do so, [without] discriminating against a certain age group, race or gender,” the designer said.

# Television show may postpone episodes due to virus outbreak

**T**HE second season of the audience-focused Macau television show, The Felix Show, may postpone some of its episodes to avoid social gatherings amid the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

The Felix Show has been airing episodes in its second season every Wednesday at 9.30 p.m on TDM Chinese (Channel Ou Mun) since the beginning of January, starring host Felix Ferreira.

However, to comply with the government’s measure to deter the spread of the novel coronavirus, the show may not be able to fully complete its plan to air 26 episodes this year.

During the first season, the “Felix Show” aired a total of 41 episodes.

Speaking to the Times, Ferreira said that the show, which interviews Hong Kong and Macau celebri-



ties, aims to extend its airtime to 45 minutes. However, due to the limited timeslot in TDM, at present it can only run for up to 20 minutes.

“We finished the recordings [of 11 episodes] last year and it was all packed and full house. But now the [taping of the] show has been postponed because we worry about people si-

tting close to each other,” Ferreira told the Times.

“TDM suggested that the show should be postponed but we do have enough episodes to air for the meantime,” he added.

The weekly show explores an array of lifestyle topics including trends in Macau, fashion and a “paranormal” segment, and hands out prizes to au-

dience members.

According to Ferreira, it has proven challenging to find sponsorship for prize giveaways during this health crisis.

“It really depends on the sponsors. They supported the first season but I’m a bit worried that since we are on the second wave of the outbreak, it may be [difficult],” he said. LV

# CROSS-BORDER BUS SERVICE SUSPENDS OPERATION AMID NEW TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

**H**ONG Kong-Macau Express has suspended its express bus service between downtown Macau and downtown Hong Kong as of Wednesday midnight, the company announced in a statement.

The service suspension is a response to both the Macau and Hong Kong governments’ latest entry policies. No service recovery date has been advanced.

The service travels between downtown Macau and downtown Hong Kong, using the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. It transports passengers to popular Macau hotels and integrated resorts and to Mong Kok in Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, another bus operator offering services between the two special administrative regions said it has strengthened the health measures to ensure the safety of its passengers.

HZM Bus, which operates a bus service known to the public as “Golden Bus” because of the color of vehicles in its fleet, has promised to clean its buses regularly, disinfect them after every journey and only fill vehicles to half-capacity to aid passengers in maintaining social distance.

Currently, HZM Bus staff measure passengers’ body temperature at the ticket gate. Passengers with a body temperature under 37.3 degrees will be allowed to board the bus. When passengers record a body temperature of 37.3 degrees or higher, or refuse to allow their temperature to be taken, the company will contact relevant local government authorities.

Additionally, to allow Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macau government authorities to contact the passengers, all passengers need to complete the HZM Bus passenger information form before arriving at the ticket gate.

HZM Bus staff will check the information on the form at the ticket gates. Passengers are allowed to enter the boarding area once the form is verified as complete.

The form will be collected before boarding the bus. JZ

# DSAL TO FOLLOW UP ON CONSTRUCTION SITE VICTIMS

**T**HE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) says that it will follow up on compensation arrangements for the victims of the Galaxy construction site scaffolding collapse.

The scaffolding collapse happened around 4 p.m. on Tuesday while seven mainland workers were clearing an elevator shaft. Three mainland workers died and four others were injured in the accident.

The DSAL expressed its condolences to the victims, and said that it would assist the victims to claim compensation for injuries incurred while on duty.

After the accident, the DSAL advised the relevant contractors to suspend all works.

The bureau further stated that it would only allow the responsible contractor to resume construction works after it has submitted an investigation report on the accident and improved work safety measures.

In addition, the bureau plans to carry out a thorough investigation to learn about the causes of the accident.

Should the bureau discover any violation of the city’s construction safety and hygiene regulations, it will impose penalties on the relevant entities.

The bureau has also scheduled promotional and education programs for other workers at the site. JZ

## GAMING | ANALYSIS

# Macau recovery not on the cards this year says one analyst

DANIEL BEITLER

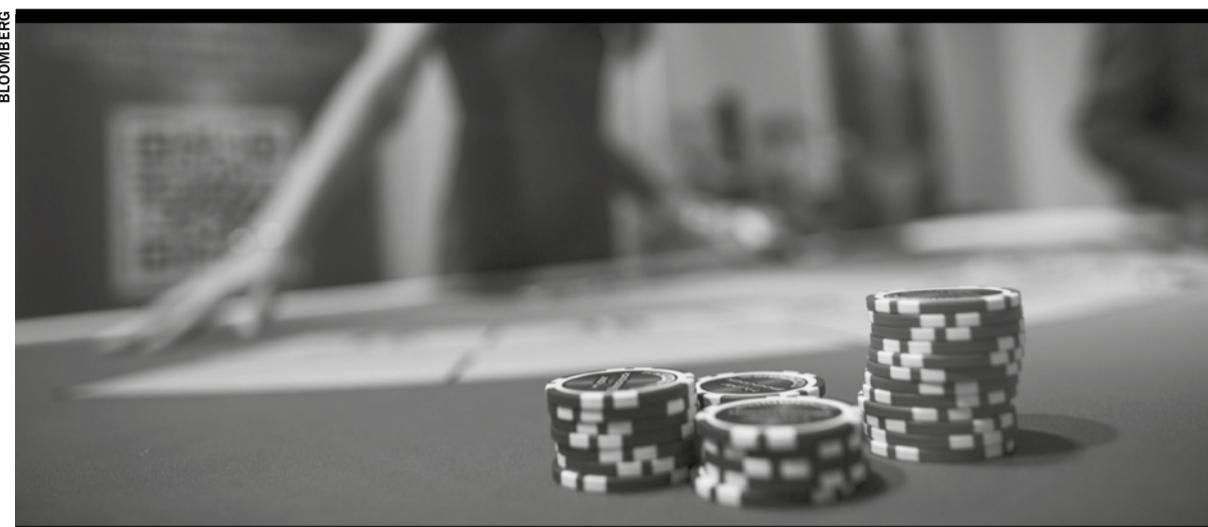
**M**ACAU should not expect a recovery in gross gaming revenue until at least next year, according to one gaming analyst.

Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, says that the fundamentals of the world economy have changed, with most major economies now going into lockdown. Lee predicts that pent-up demand for casino visits will not kick off in earnest until next year.

"This pandemic is totally unprecedented and so it is difficult to predict how and when we might recover to 2019 levels," said Lee. "Demand for Chinese goods have already been and will continue to be severely impacted by this worldwide calamity and it will be a long time, probably next year, before we can see better economic conditions leading to improved macros [macroeconomic conditions] for gaming in the region."

Earlier, the Times cited several gaming analysts whose recovery predictions had converged on the third or fourth quarter of this year. The prevailing view was that Chinese restrictions on entry permits to the Macau Special Administra-

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tive Region would be lifted within the first half of the year and pent-up demand for gambling would lead to a much healthier second half.

Gross gaming revenue recorded its steepest year-on-year revenue decline last month in the history of the Macau SAR. February revenue plummeted 87.8% to just 3.1 billion patacas on the back of a collapse in visitor arrivals caused by the Covid-19 coronavirus and an unprecedented decision to mandatorily suspend all casino activity for a period of 15 days.

As reported by the Times last month, gaming analysts expect Beijing to lift the suspension of the

Individual Visit Scheme in either April or May. There is some disagreement over whether the Scheme will be resumed in a phased approach or all at once.

Visitation to the SAR may also be influenced by the health of the mainland economy and whether Macau and its neighboring cities are able to sustain a low incidence of confirmed Covid-19 cases.

Stricter border crossing rules that took effect this week are also unfavorable for a tourism-led recovery, even while they exempt Macau's top visitor source market, mainland China. Mainland visitors typically account for about two-thirds of monthly arrivals.

Earlier this week, the brokerage arm of Jefferies Group lowered its forecast for Macau's 2020 revenue. Analysts at the firm now predict gross gaming will contract by as much as 45% in year-on-year terms, revised downward from an earlier prediction of a 16% slump for the whole year.

"We maintain our conservative stance with the sector currently loss-making as we believe recovery is predicated on visa/travel restrictions easing," said Jefferies analyst Anthony Lee.

Jefferies sees Macau rebounding next year with more than 30% growth off what will be a soft comparable year.

These workers are advised to get in touch with POLO in their host country if they are based abroad.

The Times contacted the Philippine Consulate General to Macau to enquire whether the office had received any requested assistance from non-resident Filipino workers who were fired from their workplaces. However, no reply was given by press time.

The number of local workers and overseas Filipino workers who were displaced reached a total of 111,780, many of them from nine regions in the Philippines that have imposed community quarantine.

The country's Luzon area is currently in an "enhanced community quarantine" to contain the spread of Covid-19 as the number of cases continues to rise daily.

As of yesterday, the country has recorded a total of 636 Covid-19 cases.

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT WORKER STEALS FROM SINKING FUND

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested a property management employee suspected of stealing from her company's sinking fund. The suspect is a 61-year-old Macau resident. She stole 75,000 patacas from the sinking fund of the building she was working for. The stolen funds had been collected between January and March. The woman admitted to her crime upon PJ investigation, claiming to have spent all the money on gambling. Last year, a 31-year-old male resident of Macau was also found to have misappropriated a total of 77,000 patacas from a sinking fund. The man had been working as manager of the same property management firm for six years.

## FORMER IPM HEAD SERVING AS SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRMAN

Former President of the Macao Polytechnic Institute (IPM) Lei Heong lok is now serving at the school as chairman of the school board. Yesterday, the Chief Executive appointed the members of the IPM school board. The director of Macao Daily News, Lok Po, serves as vice chairman of the IPM school board. The remaining seven members are Zhao Chaochen, Mak Soi Kun, Leong Su Sam, Ma Iao Hang, Lam Un Mui, Chui Sai Cheong, and Paula Ling Hsiao Yun. The IPM school board chairman receives a monthly salary equivalent to 550 points of the public workers' remuneration index, while the vice chairman's monthly salary is equal to 275 points of the public workers' remuneration index.

## CTM EXPECTS 5G SERVICES TO LAUNCH THIS YEAR

Telecommunications service provider CTM hopes to launch 5G services this year. In March, CTM launched the 5G network installation project, costing a total of approximately 600 million patacas. Its completion is expected this June. CTM hopes to cover the entirety of Macau with 5G signal within this year. CTM is evaluating the price of the city's 5G service given the high costs associated with this network. Later, CTM will set up four 5G experience zones in Taipa, NAPE, Praca das Orquideas, and Iao Hon.

# Displaced Filipino workers to receive assistance from Manila

LYNZY VALLES

A total of 795 Filipino workers in Macau working in manufacturing, hotel, restaurant and tourism-related sectors have been displaced as a result of the travel restrictions implemented to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

According to the Philippine's Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the number of overseas Filipino workers that are or were displaced in Macau was the largest figure among the listed regions.

Based on DOLE's Job Displacement Monitoring Report, released Monday, Qatar came next with 208 displaced Filipino workers, followed by Japan which



recorded 135 displaced workers. In Hong Kong, there are 53 displaced Filipino workers.

To assist these workers still stranded overseas, DOLE assured that workers who have been affected by the Covid-19 global pandemic will receive govern-

ment financial assistance through the bureau.

According to a statement issued by the bureau, its migrant workers will receive a one-time grant of PHP10,000 (around 1,600 patacas).

"To avail [themselves] of the program, overseas Fili-

pino workers must submit their certificate of employment issued by their agencies. Their application will be evaluated and processed by the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) or Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)," the bureau stated.

## AUSTRALIA CRITICIZES CHINA'S ESPIONAGE CASE AGAINST WRITER

**A**USTRALIA yesterday criticized China for formally charging a Chinese-Australian writer with espionage during the coronavirus pandemic.

Yang Hengjun was taken into custody upon arriving in China from New York in January 2019 with his wife, Yuan Xiaoliang, and his 14-year-old stepdaughter.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said her government "strongly objects" to news that China had formally charged the 54-year-old spy novelist and democracy advocate.

"Crises are a time for nations to pull together. It is not in the spirit of mutual respect and trust that our continued advocacy for Dr. Yang has not been acknowledged," Payne said in a statement.

The Chinese Embassy described Payne's statement as "deplorable."

"The Chinese relevant authorities are investigating the case in accordance with Chinese law," an embassy statement said. "We urge the Australian side to respect China's judicial sovereignty and refrain from interfering in the legal process in any form."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said Yang was "suspected of engaging in criminal activities that endangers the national security of the People's Republic of China."

Consular visits would be arranged "after the epidemic situation has improved," Geng said.

Payne said China had refused Australia consular access to Yang since Dec. 30 because of COVID-19 concerns. Australia had requested telephone or written contact instead but had been refused.

"This is unacceptable treatment of an Australian citizen," Payne said.

Yang's poor health made him especially vulnerable to COVID-19. Australia has appealed for humanitarian considerations to apply to Yang's situation, Payne said.

"We deeply regret that for over a year, our requests have not been taken up. Dr. Yang has had no access to legal representation and has been held in harsh conditions that have been detrimental to his physical and mental health," Payne said.

Australia called for Yang's immediate release and that he be allowed to leave China and travel to Australia with his wife.

"We have asked repeatedly that basic international standards of justice, procedural fairness and humane treatment apply," Payne said.

Some analysts suspect Yang has been detained because of Chinese anger over Australian legislation passed by Parliament in 2018 that outlaws covert foreign interference in Australian politics. AP

AP PHOTO



An aerial photo shows vehicles waiting to cross into Wuhan at a highway toll station in Wuhan

### WUHAN

# Beijing lifting last controls in Hubei at outbreak's center

JOE McDONALD, BEIJING

**T**RAINS carrying factory employees back to work after two months in locked-down cities rolled out of Hubei province, the center of China's virus outbreak, as the government yesterday began lifting the last of the controls that confined tens of millions of people to their homes.

Roadblocks on bridges and at expressway gates opened, allowing trucks and cars through for the first time in two months.

Residents of Wuhan, the provincial capital where the coronavirus emerged in December, are allowed out of the city but cannot leave Hubei until April 8. Restrictions that barred tens of millions of people from leaving other cities in Hubei since late February as China fought to contain the outbreak were lifted yesterday.

As the United States and European countries tighten their own controls, China's ruling Communist Party is relaxing restrictions to revive the economy after declaring victory over the outbreak.

Still, authorities have orders

to prevent a spike in infections as millions of people return to work in Hubei or migrate to other provinces. Travelers were checked for the virus's telltale fever and are required to use smartphone apps that keep track of their health reports and whether they have been to risky areas.

A train left the previously locked-down city of Huanggang on Tuesday night carrying 1,133 factory workers back to jobs in Guangdong province, the center of China's export-driven manufacturing industries in the southeast, according to People's Daily, the main Communist Party newspaper.

Physicians were aboard to monitor the passengers and the train was due to travel non-stop to Guangzhou, the Guangdong provincial capital, as a precaution. People's Daily said the workers would be met by buses to carry them directly to factories in Shenzhen and other cities.

"Resumption of labor and production is urgent!" the newspaper said.

Most access to Wuhan, a

manufacturing center of 11 million people, or 1 1/2 times the population of New York City, was shut down Feb. 23. The city is 700 kilometers west of Shanghai.

### Residents of Wuhan are allowed out of the city but cannot leave Hubei until April 8

Restrictions that would expand to become the most intensive anti-disease controls ever imposed spread to Huanggang and the nearby cities of Ezhou, Chibi, Qianjiang, Zhiyang, Jingmen, Xiantao, Xiaogan and Huangshi.

At the peak of China's restrictions, some 700 million people were in areas covered by orders or official requests to stay home and limit activity.

That left streets in Beijing and other major cities empty and eerily silent. Police stopped pedestrians and told them to go home.

Other governments including Italy, Spain and Malaysia have imposed similar controls, closing regions or national

borders, as the virus spread around the globe.

In Hubei, authorities began allowing factories, food processors and some other businesses that were deemed essential to reopen on March 11 in a sign of official confidence the disease was under control.

The shutdowns in Hubei, central China's manufacturing center, disrupted smartphone, auto and other major industries.

There is no word on when schools, which have been teaching online and through social media, might reopen in Hubei.

"We still feel it is not the right time to resume classes," said Li Zhen, a teacher at the Yingshan County Experimental School in Huanggang.

Once they reopen, teachers expect schools to screen visitors and "slow down the process of teaching a little bit to let the students catch up to the rhythm of study in the classroom after being away for months," Li said.

On the Laishui River, the 400-meter (quarter-mile) Hu-



## INDIA

# Police struggle to enforce sweeping virus lockdown

**ASHOK SHARMA &  
SHEIKH SAALIQ,  
NEW DELHI**

**I**NDIANS struggled to comply with the world's largest coronavirus lockdown yesterday as the government began the gargantuan task of keeping 1.3 billion people indoors.

Official assurances that essentials wouldn't run out clashed with people's fears that the disease toll could soon worsen, gutting food and other critical supplies.

In five days, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, has jumped from about 200 to 519, and experts say the real toll is likely to be much higher because of insufficient testing.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a three-week countrywide lockdown covering nearly one-fifth of the world's population "to save India and Indians."

He said the lockdown would be "total," but officials after his speech released advisories explaining that medical, law enforcement, media and other sectors were exempted and that stores selling food and other essentials would remain open.

Television images from many cities and towns showed shuttered markets and offices. Normally bustling railway stations stood empty. Joggers awkwardly avoided each other to maintain safe distances.

Still, Modi's speech triggered panic buying as online retailers Amazon and Big Basket, an Indian grocery delivery service, began canceling previously placed orders and said they had no delivery slots available. That spurred people to risk fines and other penalties for violating the lockdown by going out to shop at local stores.

Social distancing was forgotten at a grocery store in the Nizamuddin neighborhood of New Delhi as panicked residents swarmed inside and jostled with each other to get fast-disappearing supplies.

An elderly couple who waited to enter the shop for nearly 30 minutes eventually returned home empty-handed.

Employees were wearing masks and disinfecting the workplace, said the manager, Yin Shuang.

"It is absolutely not the time for us to remove the masks now," Yin said. AP

Drivers leaving Hubei were checked for fever and had to show a "green health code" on the tracking app, indicating they had avoided high-risk areas.

"You can breathe a little sigh of relief," the newspaper quoted a police officer, Tian Gang, as saying. It said he has been away from home for 50 days.

The owner of a private school in Xiangyang said he won't reopen until the outbreak is declared "completely under control." He said his 40-member staff have been teaching online but the school lost 500,000 yuan (\$70,000) over the past two months.

"I am not dreaming about getting aid, but I hope the government can help ordinary people," said the owner, who would give only his surname, Shi.

Shi, a 31-year-old father of two, said his students spent the lockdown indoors reading books and watching TV.

"I told them not to go outside because there was a monster out there," he said.

Most of the public cooperated with the res-

made provisions for people to leave their homes to buy food, TV news and social media showed police striking would-be shoppers in the streets with batons in the southern state of Kerala, the financial hub of Mumbai and New Delhi.

Alok Barman, a servant who works in several well-to-do south Delhi households, said he was beaten up by police when he ventured outside his home in the city's outskirts.

"Some homes that I work in paid me some money and I thought it was best to get some food in the house. But the police attacked us with sticks and beat us," he said. "Now we have nothing to eat."

Tarique Anwar, a former banker, said he went out to buy milk and vegetables at a grocery store in Delhi's Jamia Nagar neighborhood when he was confronted by a group of policemen who ordered him to go back. He only managed to get vegetables.

A video shot by a passerby showed a policeman using his baton to smash the interior of a meat shop in the capital's Zakir Nagar neighborhood. The shop's owner said police also beat him up and told him he shouldn't have opened his shop.

"They charged inside and started abusing and beating me," said Parvez, who uses only one name.

New Delhi police spokesman Anil Mittal denied that police were beating people.

Similar scenes occurred in India's northeast, an eight-state region where only two of the country's COVID-19 cases have been reported.

Others defied the shutdown order not to shop but to pray.

Yesterday was the start of the Hindu new year according to an ancient lunar calendar and the beginning of a nine-day holiday in which Hindus normally perform daily rituals at temples. The lockdown order, however, bans religious gatherings and instructs places of worship to close.

**Modi announced a three-week nationwide lockdown covering nearly one-fifth of the world's population 'to save India and Indians'**

Modi acknowledged in a tweet that "The celebrations will not be like they are usually but they will strengthen our resolve to overcome our circumstances."

"May we all come together to win the important battle that the nation faces against COVID-19," he said.

Some Indians, including a member of Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, defied the lockdown order, which also bans public gatherings of five or more, and attended temple ceremonies.

Yogi Adityanath, the chief

minister of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, prayed to a statue of Lord Ram at a makeshift temple in Ayodhya with about 100 other people.

Even as Adityanath ventured outside, Awanish Awasthi, an Uttar Pradesh government spokesman, told reporters in Lucknow that the lockdown was being strictly enforced in the state. He said cases had brought against 5,590 people for violating orders to stay at home, but denied allegations of police excesses.

In recent days, India had gradually expanded stay-at-home orders, banned international and domestic flights and suspended passenger service on its extensive rail system until March 31.

Meanwhile, medical personnel and airline crews complained that they faced discrimination from landlords and neighbors afraid they might transmit the virus.

State-run carrier Air India issued a statement appealing "to all, particularly the law enforcement agencies to ensure that Air India crew are treated with respect

and freedom that every citizen deserves, especially those who have been discharging their duties in selfless manner for return of fellow Indians."

A health ministry statement on Tuesday said multiple complaints had been received from doctors, paramedics and other health workers in New Delhi that their landlords were forcing them to leave their houses or apartments.

The ministry asked police and municipal authorities to take strict action against the landlords. AP



Policemen beat a curfew violator in Mumbai yesterday

AP PHOTO



**T**HE death toll in Spain from the coronavirus shot up by more than 700 yesterday, surpassing China and is now second only to Italy as the pandemic spread rapidly in Europe, with even Britain's Prince Charles testing positive for the virus.

In India, the world's largest democracy, the government put its 1.3 billion people on lockdown, while U.S. lawmakers finally agreed on a massive \$2 trillion domestic aid package, which buoyed stock markets around the world.

Spain recorded a record daily increase of 738 deaths, pushing it to 3,434 overall and past China's 3,285, the Ministry of Health said. The country's infections rose by 20% to 47,610, and more than 5,000 have recovered.

In usually bustling Barcelona, people walking around with blankets, mattresses or tents punctuated the eerie emptiness. Spain's homeless told The Associated Press they feel more abandoned than ever as everyone else hunkers down at home.

"It is as if there has been a nuclear explosion and (people) are all sheltering in the bunker. Only us, the homeless, are left outside," said 36-year-old Gana, who uses only one name.

Spain's health system is overwhelmed, and with hotels being converted into hospitals and a Madrid ice rink being used as a temporary morgue. Lawmakers were set to extend the country's lockdown for two more weeks, to April 12.

Charles, the 71-year-old heir to the British throne, is showing mild symptoms of COVID-19 and is self-isolating at a royal estate in Scotland, his office said, adding that his wife, Camilla,

#### PANDEMIC

# Spain's coronavirus deaths leap; Prince Charles now infected

has tested negative.

Charles "has been displaying mild symptoms but otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual," it said.

India, where the massive lockdown is underway, has only about 450 cases due to limited testing, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned that if he didn't act now, it could set the country back decades.

His unprecedented move is aimed at keeping the virus from overwhelming its fragile health care system, as it has done in parts of Europe and threatens to do in U.S. hotspots like New York. Everything but essential services like supermarkets were closed. Normally busy railway stations in New Delhi were deserted and streets were eerily silent.

"Delhi looks like a ghost town," said Nishank Gupta, a lawyer. "I have never seen the city so quiet before."

Italy has been the hardest-hit nation in Europe with more than 69,000 infections and 6,800 deaths. Authorities are investigating if a hotly contested Champions League soccer game in Milan in February poured rocket fuel on the crisis that is overwhelming Italian hospitals. Italian doctors are being forced

to choose who will receive desperately needed ventilators and who won't.

Germany's parliament was set to approve later in the day a series of measures that will allow the government to offer aid totaling more than 1 trillion euros (\$1.1 trillion) for the country of 83 million people.

In the United States, infections were climbing rapidly and had passed the 55,000 mark, with deaths at more than 800. Top White House aide Eric Ueland announced the massive economic agreement in a Capitol hallway shortly after midnight after days of haggling.

Relief that U.S. politicians have reached a deal on economic support pushed world stock markets up yesterday. Indexes in Europe and Asia rose a day after the Dow Jones Industrial Average had its best day since 1933.

With Americans' lives and livelihoods hanging in the balance, President Donald Trump said he "would love to have the country opened up and just raring to go by Easter," on April 12. But that statement sharply contradicted health officials' calls for stricter restrictions on public interactions. Scientists and other politicians in the U.S. have warned that the worst is yet to come.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said his state's infections are doubling every three days, threatening to swamp the city's intensive care units much quicker than experts had expected. The state has 26,000 infections and more than 200 deaths.

"One of the forecasters said to me: 'We were looking at a freight train coming across the country,'" the governor said. "We're now looking at a bullet train."

More than 428,000 people worldwide have been infected by the virus and more than 19,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. Overall, more than 109,000 have recovered.

Russia's prime minister ordered provincial governors to move more quickly to ready hospital beds for patients as the outbreak spreads across the vast country.

In New Zealand, the government declared an emergency before an unprecedented lockdown began.

"I have one simple message for New Zealanders today as we head into the next four weeks: Stay at home," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. "It will break the chain of transmission and it will save lives." AP

## this day in history



### 1981 'GANG OF FOUR' LAUNCHES NEW PARTY

The Social Democrats have launched their new political party pledging to "reconcile the nation" and "heal divisions between classes".

At a crowded press conference in London, signalling the start of a massive media campaign to recruit supporters, the party outlined its hopes of breaking the political mould and of making significant gains at the next General Election.

The Gang of Four, the nick-name of the four Labour defectors who set up the SDP, outlined their hopes of winning, with the Liberals, a majority in the Commons.

Roy Jenkins, former Labour cabinet minister, David Owen, William Rodgers and Shirley Williams published a 12-point document covering elections, education and international co-operation.

The party's proposals included calls to reform the political system, environmentally friendly policies, equality of opportunity for women and ethnic minorities, and a fairer distribution of wealth.

Mr Jenkins said formulating an incomes policy would be "one of the most difficult things we have to do".

The Gang of Four describe themselves as a left-of-centre party and is the first to be run in Britain with a one-member one-vote system for policies and selection.

Dr Owen said the party offered Britain a fresh start and he said recruits were coming from other parties all the time.

"We are going to be free: we will make decisions... But they will be your decisions," he told potential members.

He accused the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of having divided the country between the North, Scotland, Wales, and the still "relatively prosperous" South East.

The four left Labour citing major differences over European and defence policies as the party has taken a sharp turn to the left under leader Michael Foot.

The opposition leader has insisted they will win no support.

But with call centres waiting to hear from future supporters and an estimated £170,000 spent on regional journeys and advertising, the SDP is determined to win over MPs and then voters.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The party joined forces with the Liberal Party to create the Liberal-SDP Alliance in autumn 1981.

It enjoyed increasing support but by the 1987 general election the Alliance was weakened by high Labour support.

After the election, Liberal Party leader David Steel proposed an official merger with the SDP and while most of the SDP's membership voted in favour of the merger, its leader David Owen remained adamantly opposed to it.

He pledged to fight the now new Social and Liberal Democrat Party (SLD).

But by 1990, the party had lost a great deal of credibility and support and the SDP was folded.

**YOUR STARS****ARIES**

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

It's the perfect time to organize a group party online, and you won't need an excuse to get your people together. Everyone's in the mood to let loose, laugh, and have a good time.

**TAURUS**

Apr. 20-May. 20

If you mention some of your concerns, they might accuse you of being a party pooper, but you owe it to yourself to call it like you see it, and you owe it to them to alert them to the potential problems you see.

**GEMINI**

May. 21-Jun. 21

Whatever it is, it's going to radically change your opinion of this person and inspire you to move outside your own comfort zone a little bit, just to see what happens.

**CANCER**

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Today, you've got to concentrate on building a real relationship that's about two people and all their complexities. Attraction is nice, but it doesn't always last long.

**LEO**

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You pride yourself on being in touch with the latest fashions, celebrity gossip, and cool music, but how well versed are you on politics, world events, and literature? It's time to diversify your interests.

**VIRGO**

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

For a great big dose of inspiration and fun, perform an experiment in your life. Try doing something in a new way and see how it works out.

**SCORPIO**

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Thinking on your feet awakens a whole different kind of energy, and it's the kind of energy that makes you feel alive. You're about to enter a very sweet time in your life.

**CAPRICORN**

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

And let's face it, it's those last-minute opportunities that are usually full of the most promise! Keep your plans loose and be open to the fact that they could change at any moment. You can adapt.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

It won't take you long to convert the most antisocial person into one of your biggest fans! The most important part of communication is listening, and you understand that.

**AQUARIUS**

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You don't have to waste time trying to find a solution that will make every single person happy. All you need to do is find the solution that works for most people. Everyone else will fall right into line.

**PISCES**

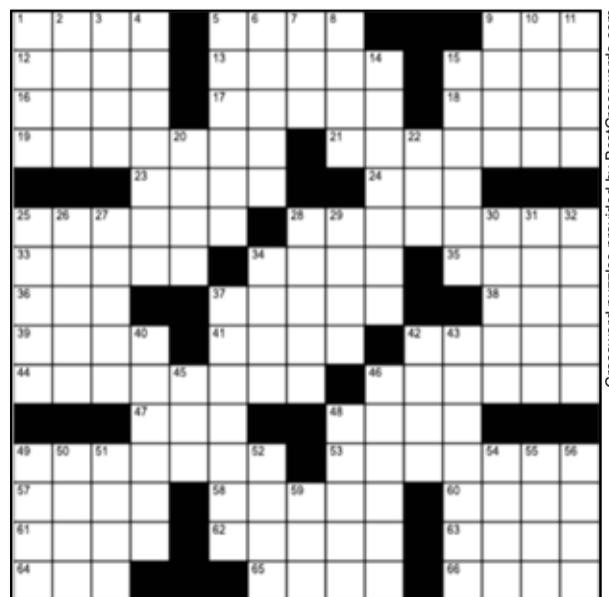
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Just when you think some major plans were set in stone, they go flying back up into the air. You'll have to be open to this change to be able to work past it.

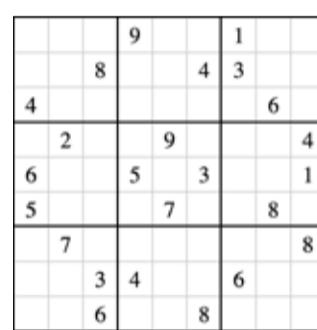
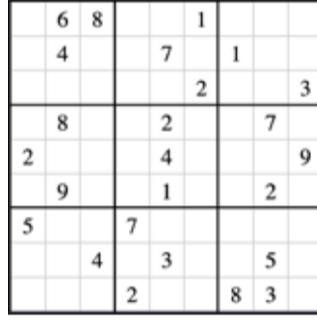
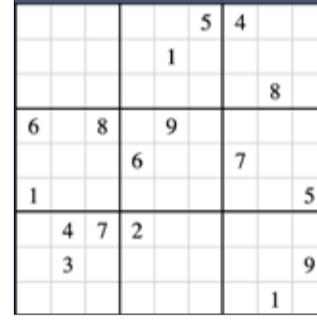
**CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS:** 1- Composition in verse; 5- Mamie's predecessor; 9- Georgia, once: Abbr.: 12- "The Time Machine" race; 13- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 15- Boy or man; 16- Outer covering; 17- Where the Styx flows; 18- Make \_\_\_ for it; 19- As an alternative; 21- Danced at Oktoberfest, perhaps; 23- Gutter site; 24- Bee follower; 25- Disinclined; 28- Novel; 33- Infected; 34- Bailiwick; 35- Duration; 36- \_\_\_ fix; 37- Pertaining to punishment; 38- Rice or Curry; 39- Overdue; 41- Coil; 42- Freight; 44- Articulate; 46- Large terrestrial monkey; 47- Born in the \_\_\_; 48- Member of the Conservative Party; 49- Kind or sort; 53- "Old Ironsides" was one; 57- Baking chamber; 58- Conger catcher; 60- Kind of wrestling; 61- Carry; 62- Old hat; 63- Sigher's word; 64- Chemical ending; 65- Fast fliers; 66- Like some excuses;

**DOWN:** 1- Gilpin of "Frasier"; 2- Actress Lena; 3- Seemingly forever; 4- Partway through period; 5- Act properly; 6- Elude; 7- Caesar of comedy; 8- Pace; 9- Poet Teasdale; 10- Swerve sharply; 11- Rip apart; 14- Reclusive; 15- Succeed; 20- New Orleans is The Big \_\_\_; 22- Human limb, section of a journey; 25- Like a ballerina; 26- Corruptible; 27- Sister of Thalia; 28- Ready \_\_\_; 29- Get as a result; 30- Part of TNT; 31- Uruguayan friend; 32- Yellowish citrus fruit; 34- Long time; 37- Plicate; 40- Resembling a horse; 42- "The Alienist" author; 43- Between the bathyal and hadal zones; 45- Application; 46- Planks; 48- Chirp; 49- Cast a ballot; 50- Calling company?; 51- Network of nerves; 52- Some votes; 54- Dance that tells a story; 55- Mosque leader; 56- Prepare to be shot; 59- Mil. officers;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom****SUDOKU****EASY****EASY+****MEDIUM****HARD****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

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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



**FOR SALE**

Manhattan High Floor Apartment, Taipa  
HK\$17,980,000 2,305 ft<sup>2</sup> 4 1/2 2

**FOR RENT**

Vai Fung Triplex, Macau  
\$15,800/mth 1,065 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1/2 2

**FOR SALE**

[Macau] Apartment in Historical Centre 2 1/2 1 840 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,580,000 (ref: 20016003)

[Taipa] Hoi Wan Garden 2 1/2 1 900 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,900,000 (ref: 19106003)

[Coloane] Beautiful Apartment 1 1/2 2 1 1,665 ft<sup>2</sup> \$7,200,000 (ref: 19070001)

[Macau] Unique G/F Loft 2 1/2 2 2,200 ft<sup>2</sup> \$9,990,000 (ref: 15115464)

**FOR RENT**

[Taipa] One Grantai 1 1/2 n/a ft<sup>2</sup> \$2,500/mth (ref: 19091005)

[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1/2 1 710 ft<sup>2</sup> \$10,000/mth (ref: n/a)

[Taipa] Nam Long 2 1/2 1 645 ft<sup>2</sup> \$11,800/mth (ref: 19111001)

[Taipa] Manhattan 4 1/2 2 2,305 ft<sup>2</sup> \$22,000/mth (ref: 19091003)

**AD**

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# SINGAPORE BAR, CINEMA CLOSURES RUB 'SALT IN WOUND' FOR ECONOMY

**SINGAPORE'S** closure of bars and entertainment venues to contain the spread of coronavirus is another gut punch to the city-state's economy already suffering from widespread disruptions to trade and tourism.

Authorities are scrambling to curb the spread of the virus after a recent spike in confirmed virus cases, now at more than 550, mainly from residents returning from overseas trips. For Singapore's small open economy, the new restrictions will hurt consumer spending and push the nation closer to a recession.

"Tourism demand is already gone. This will rub salt into the wound of the entertainment industry given that the latest set of measures will erase domestic demand, which has already been weakened due to the outbreak," said Irvin Seah, senior economist at DBS Group Holdings Ltd. in Singapore.

Although necessary to contain the spread of the virus, "every additional set of restrictive measures will add more pain on the economy," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister Heng

BLOOMBERG



Swee Keat is set to unveil a second package of virus-related measures in Parliament today, just over a month after he delivered SGD6.4 billion (\$4.4 billion) in support for healthcare, businesses and households in the annual budget. The central bank has also brought forward its policy decision to March 30, with analysts expecting it to ease policy.

Seah said his team is sticking to a forecast for a 0.5% contraction in gross domestic product this

year, while warning of "significant downside risks" to that figure if the outbreak worsens.

The government's latest projection, published in February, was for growth of around 0.5%, the midpoint of its forecast range. That's likely to be revised Thursday with the release of advance first-quarter growth figures. GDP probably contracted an annualized 7.2% this quarter, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of eight economists.

Business groups including the Singapore Hotel Association are calling for more financial assistance to retain workers.

"Hopefully tomorrow's announcement of a sizable second stimulus package can help mitigate some of the downside risks, particularly to bolster consumer confidence, assist liquidity and short term survival of companies - especially SMEs - and enhance job and income security of displaced workers, including self-employed

and gig workers," said Selena Ling, head of research and strategy at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. in Singapore.

Ling sees Singapore's latest measures to shutter bars and entertainment centers providing "another hit" to private consumption, with weaker retail sales, education services, and food and beverage receipts.

"Even the billion-dollar private tuition industry in Singapore is not as recession-proof as initially thought," she said.

Ling recently downgraded her forecast for Singapore's economic growth this year to a range of -1% to 0%, with both manufacturing and services sectors likely to contract. Further suspensions of economic activity would heighten the risk of a technical recession, she said.

The government moved Tuesday evening to shutter bars, cinemas, and entertainment venues, with the new regulations to be enforced as of 11:59 p.m. Thursday.

While officials so far have resisted imposing widespread lockdowns, the latest measures are the strictest yet and include limiting gatherings outside work or school to a maximum 10 people, the Ministry of Health said in a statement. The measures will remain in place until at least April 30, it said.

MDT/BLOOMBERG

AD

13<sup>TH</sup>  
JUNE

@STARWORLD SAVE the DATE

PRESENTED BY

銀河娛樂集團  
Galaxy Entertainment Group



# Tokyo's delayed Olympics: Who pays bills for another year?

**W**ITH the Tokyo Olympics postponed until 2021, now comes the multi-billion-dollar question: Who pays the bills for the delay, and how large will they be?

The most likely answer is—primarily Japanese taxpayers.

"Of course there will be costs," organizing committee CEO Toshiro Muto said when the postponement was announced. "As for how much, we have no figures with us right now. As for who will shoulder these costs? Needless to say, they are not going to be easy discussions, so we are not sure how long they will take."

The Japanese financial newspaper Nikkei put the added cost at \$2.7 billion, citing an estimate from local organizers.

Tokyo organizers will have to renegotiate new leases on venues, pay for maintenance at arenas, and maybe find different fields of play. They will also have to deal with real estate developers who are already selling off thousands of apartments at what will be the Athletes Village. The organizing

AP PHOTO



committee also employs 3,500 staff members, and some may lose their jobs to cost cutting.

Tokyo, driven by advertising giant Dentsu Inc., has sold \$3.3 billion in local sponsorships, more than twice any previous Olympics. Those brands will be clamoring to know what they get for their money. Refunds? Make-good deals? New contracts?

And nothing much can be done until new dates are set to replace what was to be this year's Olympics: July 24 through Aug. 9, 2020.

"The general target is summer of next year," said Yoshiro Mori, president of the organizing committee and a former Japanese Prime Minister. "We have to go through scheduling, international events. Many things will have to be

adjusted before we come up with a certain time frame."

Of course, all of the rescheduling problems are compounded by the uncertain spread of the virus and the recent downturn in the economy.

Muto acknowledged tough talks are ahead with the International Olympic Committee, which controls the games but leaves the

host country to pick up most of the costs.

First, some Tokyo Olympic financing basics.

Local organizers and Japanese government bodies say they are spending \$12.6 billion to put on the Olympics. However, a national government audit report in December put costs at \$28 billion. There is always debate about what are—and are not—Olympic costs, and creative accounting is not unknown.

When Tokyo won the Olympic bid in 2013, it said the total cost would be \$7.3 billion.

Private-sector money makes up \$5.6 billion of today's total budget. The rest—whatever the grand total—is public money.

Tokyo has spent almost \$7 billion on temporary and permanent venues—about 85% from public funds. The most expensive venue is the new national stadium, a national government project billed at \$1.43 billion.

For its part, the Switzerland-based IOC has contributed \$1.3 billion to finance the Tokyo Olympics, a small fraction of the total cost. The IOC had income of \$5.7 billion for the last four-year Olympic cycle (2013-2016). Almost three-quarters of the income is from selling broadcasting rights, with another 18% from sponsors.

The IOC also has a reserve fund of about \$2 billion, and insurance to cover losses. AP

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## OPINION

### World Views

Alex Webb, Bloomberg

### CORONAVIRUS HAS TURNED THE FACEBOOK NARRATIVE

The tension between the media and technology industries has long been characterized as a fight for users' attention. The more of it they have, the greater the opportunity to sell new products and services.

The advertising technology giants Facebook Inc. and Google have turned that into a \$200 billion-a-year business. Now that millions of people are stuck at home trying to isolate themselves from the coronavirus, there should be greater opportunity to secure their attention. Facebook's particular vector for securing users' attention is connecting them with others, and in the era of self-isolation digital connections have become a lifeline.

The hitch is that when brands hit a rough patch, advertising budgets are the first things they cut. Broadcasters are already feeling the impact: NBC parent Comcast Inc. has warned of the negative effects on its business, while Britain's ITV Plc. abandoned its 2020 revenue outlook and dividend as advertisers cut spending. Twitter Inc. has also scrapped its earnings outlook for the first quarter.

So Facebook's announcement this week that its business was being "adversely affected" because of a "weakening in our ads business" shouldn't have come as a big surprise. Significantly, however, the Menlo Park, California-based company stopped short of altering its (admittedly rather vague) existing first-quarter guidance, which anticipates revenue growth that will "decelerate by low to mid-single digit percentage points" compared with the end of 2019.

For the Silicon Valley companies, the difficulties are relative. Sure, they might be enduring some bumps, but their problems aren't as severe as those of the TV industry — the advertising market overall will still expand this year. Cowen & Co. analysts still expect the U.S. ads market to grow 7%, albeit down from an earlier estimate of 11%. If previous years are any guide, Facebook and Google will hoover up most of that growth.

Shutdowns also seem to be forming new habits that benefit the social media platforms. More time at home seems to mean more time in front of a screen. I've posted more on Instagram in the past week than in the previous two months. Facebook itself has revealed a significant jump in engagement: 50% more messaging in countries most affected by the virus; a doubling of voice and video calling on WhatsApp and Messenger; in Italy, people are spending 70% more time across Facebook's products.

People seem to be setting aside the justifiable concerns about the firm's data practices, which have tempered engagement in recent quarters. Efforts to ensure that accurate messaging from governments and health authorities secures prominent placement on its platforms may be securing Facebook some true good will.

If even a fraction of the new engagement trends are sustained beyond the crisis, then a few quarters of slower advertising growth won't be a concern for Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg — it's unlikely even that he'll have to touch the firm's \$44 billion net cash position. He has managed consistently to increase average revenue per user because Facebook has significant power to increase the cost of ads, as does Google. The moment the advertising market returns — and it surely will, whether in three, nine or 12 months — he could well find himself with more active users.

More active users will mean more attention. And ultimately, that means more money.

### CORONAVIRUS: 250 THOUSAND VOLUNTEER IN UK TO HELP WITH VULNERABLE

Some 250,000 people have signed up in a single day to volunteer with the National Health Services (NHS) after a recruitment drive to help the vulnerable amid the coronavirus crisis, BBC reported yesterday.

The helpers are needed for delivering food and medicines, driving patients to appointments and phoning the isolated.

The scheme is one of a number aimed at relieving pressure on the NHS.

About 11,000 former medics have also agreed to return to the

health service and more than 24,000 final year student nurses and medics will join them.

Stephen Powis, NHS England medical director, said there had been "outbreaks of altruism" and he was "bowled over" by the medics returning to the front line and the response from volunteers.

This comes as it was confirmed Prince Charles, the 71-year-old heir to the throne, tested positive for coronavirus after displaying mild symptoms.



**Indians** struggled to comply with the world's largest coronavirus lockdown yesterday as the government began the gargantuan task of keeping 1.3 billion people indoors. Official assurances that essentials wouldn't run out clashed with people's fears that the disease toll could soon worsen, gutting food and other critical supplies. [More on p7](#)

**G7** officials plan to coordinate weekly on the implementation of various support efforts and they vow they are ready to take further action. They pledged to do "whatever is necessary" to restore economic growth and protect jobs and the financial system in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of Seven major industrial countries - the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada - said that they were committed to delivering government support to help their countries rapidly from the widespread shutdowns that have occurred.



**Russian** President Vladimir Putin has postponed a nationwide vote on proposed constitutional amendments that include allowing him to seek another term in power. Putin didn't set a new date for the vote originally scheduled for April 22, saying it would depend on how the new coronavirus pandemic develops. "Health, life and safety of the people is an absolute priority for us," Putin said.

**UK** One of the scientists advising the government on the coronavirus pandemic says the outbreak will likely peak in Britain in about three weeks. Imperial College London epidemiologist Neil Ferguson says he's "reasonably confident" the country's health system can cope. Ferguson says without the lockdown measures imposed by the government this week, the demand for intensive care hospital beds would have exceeded the supply threefold.

### PHILIPPINE REBELS DECLARE CEASE-FIRE TO HEED UN CHIEF'S CALL

**COMMUNIST guerrillas** in the Philippines said they would observe a cease-fire in compliance with the U.N. chief's call for a global halt in armed clashes during the coronavirus pandemic.

New People's Army guerrillas have been ordered to stop assaults and shift to a defensive position from today to April 15, the Communist Party of the Philippines said in a statement.

The rebels said the cease-fire is a "direct response to the call of U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for a global cease-fire between warring parties for the common purpose of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic."

Guterres issued the call earlier this week, saying, "It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives."

The communist insurgency has raged mostly in the Philippine countryside for more than half a century in one of Asia's longest-running rebellions. The military estimates about 3,500 armed guerrillas remain after battle setbacks, infighting and surrenders have reduced their forces in decades of fighting although the rebels claim they have more fighters.

The rebels said their cease-fire is unrelated to a similar move by the military and



Communist Party of the Philippines leader Jose Maria Sison

police but that it could possibly foster preliminary talks to resume long-stalled negotiations.

President Rodrigo Duterte declared a unilateral cease-fire with communist guerrillas last week to focus on fighting the coronavirus outbreak that prompted him to place the northern third of the country under a strict quarantine. The rebels are active in the northern region, home to more than 50 million people.

Sidney Jones, a Jakarta-based analyst with the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, said the fight against the global pandemic offers a rare common cause for governments and insurgents.

Jones cited how the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami helped bring about a 2005 peace deal between rebels and the government in Indonesia's Aceh province "when both sides realized it was more

important to rebuild than to keep fighting."

If governments and insurgents heed the U.N. chief's call, that would bring "some relief to vulnerable communities and maybe a brief moment, even in the midst of a pandemic, to consider what life without violence would be like," she told The Associated Press.

Duterte launched peace talks with the rebels when he took office in mid-2016. But the negotiations, brokered by the Netherlands, eventually bogged down with both sides accusing the other of continuing to carry out attacks.

Although he has often lashed out at the rebels, Duterte has repeatedly signaled he is open to resuming negotiations with them. In December, he sent an envoy to meet self-exiled communist rebel leaders in Europe to discuss the prospects of resuming talks. **AP**

### THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Nardus Engelbrecht



Stay home. A billboard is installed on an apartment building in Cape Town, South Africa yesterday before the country of 57 million people, will go into a nationwide lockdown for 21 days from today.