

12 YEARS
A-CHANGIN'

Double Down!
ADVERTISING HERE
+853 287 160 81

MacauDaily 澳門每日時報® Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

Greater Bay Plan
\$158 / 6GB
Data Increase Again

CTM

N.º 3506 THURSDAY T. 17°/ 20° Air Quality Good
02 Apr 2020

"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

MOP 8.00
HKD 10.00 2305 4271

GOVERNMENT TO EVALUATE
CENTRALIZATION OF RESOURCES
FOR QUARANTINE HOTELS TO
EASE MANAGEMENT P3

GAMING REVENUE
TUMBLES NEARLY 80%,
SIXTH MONTH DOWN P2

THE PANDEMIC HAS FROZEN THE
CHINESE GOLD MARKET, TORPEDOING
DEMAND AT A TIME WHEN INVESTORS
ARE CLAMORING FOR BULLION SAFETY P10



Chinese officials say dry conditions, high temperatures and a sudden change in wind direction all contributed to the deaths of 19 people in a forest fire in mountainous southwestern China. Thousands of firefighters were still battling the blaze near the city of Xichng in Sichuan province. Another three people were in stable condition after going missing early Monday with the 18 firefighters and their guide whose bodies were later found.

Nepal Stranded tourists from Australia and New Zealand have boarded a chartered flight out of Nepal. The Nepal Airlines flight had 222 Australians and 28 New Zealand nationals and permanent residents aboard and is scheduled to arrive in Brisbane today. Passengers will face a 14-day quarantine upon arrival. Nepal's government has imposed a lockdown until April 7 halting flights, ordering vehicles off the roads, shutting down businesses and shuttering major markets.



Philippines Police have arrested 21 slum dwellers who were demanding government food aid for staging an "unauthorized protest" during the lockdown to fight the coronavirus. Those arrested in suburban Quezon City included six women. Police Brig. Gen. Ronnie Montejo said they will face criminal charges of violating a new law that requires millions of people to stay home under quarantine. The residents ignored an appeal by the police to return home.

More on backpage

BUDGET EMERGENCY

LAWMAKERS CALL GOV'T TO HASTEN APPROVAL P5



MASS TESTING, EMPTY ICUS: GERMANY SCORES EARLY AGAINST VIRUS

P8

DSEJ CLAIMS EFFORTS TO HELP TEACHERS

The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) asserted that it has launched a series of policies to reduce the workload of the city's teachers. In a reply to lawmaker Sulu Sou's interpellation, the department used the example of one subsidy program to show that the bureau has encouraged private schools to hire additional teachers in order to reduce overall workload. DSEJ said that in the academic year of 2019/2020, teachers in kindergarten, primary school and secondary schools taught 20.8 classes, 16.2 classes, and 14.3 classes on average, respectively, corresponding to a 9 to 14% decrease compared to 2011/2012. The bureau also used the "School Development Plan" as an example to show that the SAR government sponsors the hiring of consultants in local schools.

ASSOCIATION PROPOSES SMES GET MORE SUBSIDIES

A local commerce association has suggested that the local government should distribute more subsidies to larger SMEs. Yesterday, Lei Cheok Kuan, President of the Industry and Commerce Federation of Macau Central and Southern District, said that his association had proposed that the local government give 100,000 patacas to companies with one to ten employees, 250,000 patacas to companies with 11 to 25 employees, 350,000 patacas to companies with 26 to 35 employees, and a maximum of 500,000 patacas to companies with more than 36 workers. In addition, Lei hopes that, this time, the government's subsidies can, at a minimum, double the value of the subsidies launched after typhoon Hato.

APARTMENT OF EIGHT PEOPLE CAUGHT FIRE

An apartment housing eight people caught fire earlier this week. No one was injured in the accident. When the fire broke out, only one person was inside the apartment. All people living in the apartment are non-local workers. 12 residents in the same building evacuated during the fire and also woke the only woman sleeping inside the apartment at the time. Some beds, electrical appliances and daily products were damaged in the fire. The Macau United Citizens Association hopes relevant government departments can improve the fire services' promotional campaign for non-local workers because many non-local workers share one apartment, sometimes with more than 10 occupants, and their apartments are normally at high risk of electrical short circuits.



GGR tumbles nearly 80%, sixth month down

THE Macau SAR's gaming revenue dropped for the sixth consecutive month in March, down nearly 80% from a year earlier, according to data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau.

Gross Gaming Revenue was 5.26 billion patacas (USD658.7 million) last month as casinos were slammed again by quarantines and border restrictions in China that kept gamblers away during

the coronavirus pandemic.

The tumble in the city's GGR was in line with the median analyst estimate of a 79.5% fall, after the 88% decline in February.

Following the 15-day closure of casinos in the city in February, only a total of 3,100 gaming tables immediately resumed operations, representing 46% of the total number of tables.

The shutdown also came after the world's biggest gambling

hub had already been battered by months of protests in Hong Kong and a two-year-long trade war.

By mid-March 80% of the gaming tables had reopened.

However, even since reopening the facilities, gaming floors have seen little rebound as China continues its halt on individual and group visas to Macau in a protracted fight against the virus, while the SAR has barred non-residents outside China from entering the

city from March 18.

Meanwhile, the slow recovery has also been hobbled by a 14-day quarantine rule initiated by China's Guangdong province last week, which brokerage JP Morgan Stanley said in a March 27 note was "effectively the same as the casino shut-down" for Macau.

With few flights in, almost every visitor to enter Macau does so through the land border with Guangdong.

The government had already halved its 2020 gross gaming revenue forecast to 130 billion patacas in March before the announcement of the new quarantine rule that has considerably worsened the short-term outlook for casinos.

Analysts at JP Morgan have further reduced its estimates for the city's GGR this year to -35%.

In its February industry report, it had cut its 2020 GGR estimates by 18 percentage points and earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortization by 32%.

"With Covid-19 spreading globally and travel restrictions tightening, we are cutting our estimates further. [...] We cut our GGR estimates for the industry to -35 percent for 2020" said analysts Praveen Choudhary, Gareth Leung and Thomas Allen, as cited in a note seen by GGRAsia.

"In terms of quarterly impact, we expect GGR to decline by 60% year-on-year and 56% in the first quarter and second quarter [respectively], due to continued weakness in visitation amidst quarantine rules," the team added. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

No free bottles of booze in Taipa Bar: April Fools'

THE story "Bottles of spirits, wine free at Taipa bar," published yesterday in the Times (p12) was our April Fools' joke.

The fictional Taipa Bar is not offering bottles of booze - though some fine and genuine establishments do have excellent happy hours and treats (but avoid crowding). Even in this time of global crisis, we didn't want to break with this centuries' old ritual.

The "bottles for free" prank created a lot of buzz on our Facebook page, with some readers spotting the joke right away and commenting with wisecracks, while others were very supportive of the idea. A few netizens said that they were organizing teams to find the "treasure bar" - Taipa is small "it won't be that hard to find it," noted one. Attention bars!

We appreciate your sense of humor, in harsh

times.

April Fools' Day - also named All Fools' Day - is celebrated every year on the first day of April as a day when people play practical jokes and hoaxes on each other. The jokes and their victims are known as "April fools." The press has followed the tradition by publishing a hoax on this day, before retracting it over the subsequent days. Popular since the 19th century,

the day is not a national holiday in any country, but is well known in Europe, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, the Philippines and the United States.

This year the tradition took a turn. Google announced that it wouldn't participate with their usually grandiose pranks because of the pandemic, while countries like India and Thailand threatened jail sentences for April Fools' jokes related to the virus.

In Korea, a K-Pop mega-star went too far. Kim Jaejoong revealed yesterday to his 1.9 million followers on Instagram that he had contrac-

ted Covid-19 and was currently hospitalized seeking treatment.

Kim Jaejoong told fans he was ill with coronavirus in an Instagram post which he has since deleted.

Fifty minutes later, he updated a caption on the image to state that it was a joke to "raise awareness."

He said that while he "did go too far for April Fool's Day," he has family and friends who "are getting sick...and dying."

The New York Times reported that the social media account was deactivated due to a deluge of criticism. **PC**

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+18,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
MANAGING EDITOR Daniel Beitler daniel@macaudailytimes.com
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

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

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

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com

For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

GOV'T TO EVALUATE CENTRALIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR 'QUARANTINE HOTELS'

RENATO MARQUES

THE government will research the possibility of centralizing the designated hotel resources for quarantine within fewer or even just one hotel, Inês Chan, the representative of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said yesterday during the daily press conference of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center.

In response to questions from the media, Chan acknowledged that in the next few weeks the number of people admitted to quarantine should fall drastically since the channel that allowed for the transfer of local residents from Hong Kong airport has been closed. She advised that the authorities will re-evaluate and consider a solution for the 12 hotel units currently designated for quarantine.

"We currently have 12 hotels [designated for quarantine] and we know that people are completing the isolation [period] and according to the developing situation we will reevaluate the hotel choice because we will still need the hotels but we will need to weigh the possibilities to find a solution to use them in a rational way," Chan said. "We know that after the 14-days many people will leave the hotels but the evolution of the epidemic is also very fast so we can't give a very clear reply now [on what the decision will be]."

The official also noted that to centralize resources within just one

RENATO MARQUES



hotel is what the authorities would prefer since "management [of the venue and staff resources] would be easier."

The Sheraton Grand Macao was identified as the best candidate to take on the role with only 500 rooms in use for a total of 2,000 made available, according to the information provided.

Despite expressing the desire to centralize these resources, Chan noted that the decision cannot be

based on the ease of managing the space alone, but must prioritize the evaluation by the Health Bureau of the safety of the conditions.

With the recent enforcement of restrictive measures from several countries and regions, including the border restrictions imposed on Macau residents by Hong Kong and the Guangdong province, it is almost impossible for more Macau residents to travel and return from abroad.

Returnees still account for the vast majority of the 2,627 people that are currently under quarantine and medical observation in isolation at the 12 hotel facilities made available by the government.

GOV'T RECEIVES REQUEST FOR QUARANTINE EXPENSES EXEMPTION

The government has received a request from a non-resident worker (TNR) to be exempted

from payment of the quarantine expenses due to their financial inability to meet the costs, Chan said in reply to the media.

According to the MGTO representative, the case refers to a blue card holder initially placed under home quarantine who later requested to be transferred to a hotel unit due to an inability to properly isolate at his home.

The official clarified that all non-residents, including TNRs and tourists undergoing the mandatory 14-day quarantine at local hotels, must pay the pre-established fee of 5,600 patacas.

"The only case in which non-residents are exempt from paying for the hotel stay is when the quarantine is requested to occur at a hotel by the Health Bureau itself, after evaluating that a person does not have the proper circumstances to complete the quarantine period in their own house," Chan remarked.

The same official also revealed that the Tourism Crisis Management Office had also received a few requests over the phone calling for information from Macau residents who are abroad about the possibility of returning to Macau. However, Chan said that in none of these cases was any formal or emergency help solicited.

The request that involved the most people was from a group of eight that is currently on the Island of Bali in Indonesia, but Chan said that they are well and at home and have no urgent need to return to Macau. The MGTO representative also noted four other requests from people in Myanmar, two in the UK and one each in the USA and New Zealand.

EIGHTH ROUND OF MASK DISTRIBUTION STARTS TODAY

THE Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center has advised that from today, a new round of face mask distribution organized by the government will start.

Doctor Lo Iek Long advised that the distribution will be done in the same manner as the previous rounds with masks available at 84 distribution points that include pharmacies and local associations.

In a new move, Lo noted that this is the first time that the work related to the mask distribution will be done with the help of a large group of volunteers.

The volunteer team will be composed of 500 students from secondary schools who registered to help with the tasks of packing and distributing the masks, Lo said highlighting that all the positions made available were filled in less than 12 hours.

"The students want to contribute to society and help in these tasks and this is very good," said Lo noting that the students will be supervised by professional staff who will ensure the quality and safety of the process.

According to Lo, the government has already granted that the masks distribution scheme will continue at least until the tenth round.

The same official said that in the last round, around 6 million masks were sold and that in aggregate from the first to the seventh round, a total of 40 million have



been sold and distributed.

Asked how the government will ensure that the large number of people currently finishing their quarantine periods in hotels and at home do not present a risk to the community, Lo said, "We urge them to avoid unprotected contact with other people for another seven days [after they complete the mandatory quarantine]. We have also established some guidelines for them to measure their body temperature twice a day and we will do follow-up calls to monitor the status of their health."

As the physician noted, the main point is

to avoid any unnecessary contact, warning, "If reports of local transmission cases arise, then we will take mandatory measures. For the time being, we are counting on the help and good sense of the people [in following the guidelines]."

As a piece of advice, Lo recommended people look at everyone as potentially infected and act accordingly.

"Self-protection is essential. It is far more effective than testing people in the community. Many tests won't help and will overload the system," he concluded. **RM**

LOCAL SECONDARY STUDENT HOLDS DEBUT PAINTING EXHIBITION

Local young painter, Wong Si Kei, will hold her debut exhibition at the Art Exhibition Pavilion for The Youth, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau announced. The exhibition will feature acrylic paintings, canvas paintings and 3D art pieces. According to the bureau, Wong employs an "approach to imagery which illustrates her own thoughts." The exhibition will run from April 7 to 19 at the venue, which is located beside the Tap Seac Square. The young painter is currently a student of the graduating class at Hou Kong Middle School. Viewers are reminded to wear facemasks while visiting the exhibition. A health declaration is also required to enter the exhibition venue.

MUST WINS DEBATE COMPETITION FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

The debate team of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has won the annual debating competition organized by the home institution on March 28 for the third consecutive year. The event was held online to comply with government measures to combat the outbreak of Covid-19. In the final round, MUST and City University of Macau teams debated the idea of accepting unrighteous acts of kindness. As the team for the affirmative, the MUST team stated that the result of discarding goodness by means of injustice is a kind of sacrifice and accepting unrighteous acts will create good for everyone. The victorious team was rebutted by arguments which included the importance of procedural justice. The MUST team triumphed by 5 to 0.

FOUR TYPES OF VEHICLES ALLOWED TO CROSS MACAU-ZHUHAI BORDER

The Guangdong authorities have recently tightened measures governing arrivals from around the world, resulting in cross-border vehicles not being allowed to enter Zhuhai from Macau by land. During the early phase of the border measures, only vehicles crucial to the daily operations of Macau were permitted across the border. Other business owners and operators were not given the same access. The mainland authorities have recently clarified that only trucks, emergency vehicles, funeral vehicles, as well as single-plated vehicles accessing Hengqin and the Cross-border Industrial Area are allowed to depart Macau for Zhuhai. Passengers should alight to proceed through border control at the immigration hall. The authorities did not announce length of time the measures would be in effect.

BLOOMBERG



MELCO RECORDS 10% GROWTH IN 2019 PROFIT

MELCO International Development Limited, the gambling concession holder owned by Lawrence Ho, achieved 10% growth in both net revenues and profit last year, reaching HKD45 and HKD1.8 billion respectively.

Owner of integrated resorts the City of Dreams, Macau and the Macau Studio City, in addition to the Altira hotel and eight slot machine halls under the brand Mocha, Melco's report on last year's performance shows an adjusted EBITDA at HKD12.5

billion. That equates to a 15.1% increase.

With the support from the relatively good results, the board of the enterprise has also announced that a final dividend of HKD0.301 per share will be paid to shareholders.

Ho showed his approval of the results made in a bumpy year with the trade war and the retreat of the Chinese market. He attributed the results to his enterprise's exploration of new markets and development of

new products.

Meanwhile, in his opinion, his newest product, the Morpheus hotel, has injected a lot of synergy into the company's development.

Previously, the entrepreneur has expressed his interest in bidding for a Japanese integrated resort concession and expanding into the East Asian country. Currently, the enterprise has similar projects in Manila already in operation, and in Cyprus.

"We've got our Japan team

to plan on bringing to Yokohama [Japan] the best integrated resort the world has ever seen," Ho revealed, noting that an official application was submitted to the city's government last December.

Last month, the government of the Japanese city unveiled its blueprints for integrated resort projects to both its city council and the public. There has been no update since.

Finally, to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic, Melco has "reassessed [its] non-core investments to preserve capital for core assets."

"We expect our commitment [...] will see us through the challenging times in the near future," Ho forecast. **AL**

FOLLOWING MACAU

Casinos in Vietnam, Cambodia close to slow Covid-19 spread

SOME casino operators in Vietnam have heeded the government's call for a shutdown to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

As of yesterday, the country had recorded a total of 218 Covid-19 cases.

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc ordered a 15-day period of isolation nationwide, which began yesterday.

According to a statement on the government's website, residents are obliged to stay at home and may only go outside for essentials such as food, medicines, urgent medical services or to go to work at companies permitted by the government to remain

BLOOMBERG



open. The government has also prohibited gatherings of more than two people in public areas other than schools, hospitals or workplaces.

Both Corona Casino and Aristo Internatio-

nal Hotel will halt their gaming operations in response to the government's initiative.

Corona Casino has also closed indoor and outdoor activities until April 15.

Casino closures in Vietnam also occurred after Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen said that all casinos across the region will be shut, a call that could cost the jobs of about 20,000

Cambodian workers in the sector.

According to the official, "This is just temporary closure and when the situation becomes normal, they can resume their business."

Recently, casinos in Australia were also directed to shut due to the sharp rise in the number of Covid-19 cases.

Wynn Resorts Ltd's Encore Boston Harbor, MGM Springfield and Penn National Gaming's Plainridge Park Casino also closed their doors to the public; while Las Vegas Sands has also closed its Venetian and Palazzo resorts in Las Vegas. In Macau, casino operators underwent an unprecedented closure for 15 days from February 5, recording the longest closure on record and only the second such instance, after a typhoon in 2018 forced a 33-hour shutdown. **LV**

Lawmakers express urgency in approving amended 2020 budget

JULIE ZHU

THE Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) has agreed that the 10 billion pataca fund, which will be offered to local residents and businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, should not be included in the revised 2020 budget.

However, the lawmakers did not disclose any details yet on how the community relief fund would be used.

The lawmakers yesterday stated that the 2020 budget, which was generally passed on Friday, should be concluded as soon as possible because the subsidies are needed urgently.

The lawmakers plan to first approve the amended 2020 budget in order to allow the local government to work on the 10-billion pataca fund for an extended time and to submit the bill to AL later.

Yesterday's AL discussion was only among lawmakers.

Government representatives did not join the meeting.

No details were disclosed on how the fund would operate and who would be eligible for this new support measure, with the government leaving such information for a future

ANTHONY LAM



announcement once the fund is established.

In the press conference after the meeting, lawmaker Chan Chak Mo expressed to the media his personal view on the government's relief proposal.

In Chan's opinion, the government will probably use these

10 billion patacas to help more local residents who have not yet been included in the government's current financial support schemes.

Such individuals may be self-employed individuals, for instance, private sector doctors or taxi drivers. However,

the SAR government is still processing a detailed plan to make use of the community relief fund, and more public opinion will be needed as well, suggests Chan.

Earlier this week, the government decided on the creation of the fund, which will be ma-

naged and distributed via the Macao Foundation.

The government said that the fund comes as an emergency response in light of the enforcement of stricter border controls adopted by Hong Kong as well as Guangdong Province.

Meanwhile, next Tuesday, government representatives will meet with the committee to discuss the budget in more detail. Lawmakers want government answers on the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund, including answers for how the government will help local SMEs access more business and operational improvements.

The government should also explain the budget for the cultural and film industry.

The budget provides 37 million patacas for the SAR government to help local film and art production. The SAR government plans to help entities within these sectors pay rent, as well as encourage them to make more promotional films for the local government to use to attract overseas tourists in the future.

However, the committee members doubted whether it is the right time for these sectors to shoot films amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Philippine Consulate reportedly offering relief goods to citizens on unpaid leave

LYNZY VALLES

THE Philippine Consulate General in Macau is allegedly offering relief goods to Filipino nationals who can provide a declaration that they are on unpaid leave.

According to a post circulating on social media, the relief package includes a pack of rice and canned goods among other items.

The Times contacted the Philippine Consulate General to confirm whether it is providing relief packs to its nationals, but no reply was given by press time.

As reported last week, a total of 795 Filipino workers in Macau working in manufacturing, hotel, restaurant and tourism-

LYNZY VALLES



-related sectors have been displaced as a result of travel restrictions implemented to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The Philippine Consulate General in Macau told the Times that they had not received requests for assistance from any of these

displaced workers.

"Requests for assistance addressed to the consulate from the members of the community in Macau SAR

mostly came from tourists who have been stranded in the city," said consul general Lilybeth Deapera.

To assist these workers still stranded overseas, the Philippine government assured that workers who have been affected by the Covid-19 global pandemic will receive a one-time grant of PHP10,000 (around 1,600 patacas). Meanwhile, asked whether the authorities are working with any airlines to respond to the community's request for a chartered flight, Deapera replied, "there are still no instructions yet to negotiate with any

airlines to bring the stranded Filipino in the city to the Philippines."

Currently, there are still dozens of Filipino tourists stranded in the city hoping for its government to provide a second chartered flight.

There are still no flights from Macau to Manila as Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific Air and AirAsia, the three airlines who fly the routes, have not resumed operations as yet.

On March 6, a total of 163 Filipinos who were stranded in Macau due to the suspension of direct flights between the SAR and Manila arrived in the Philippine capital after a chartered flight was arranged by the Philippine government.

The repatriates underwent medical examinations that were carried out by the Philippine Bureau of Quarantine upon their arrival.

China reveals 1,541 symptom-free virus cases under pressure

CHINA said that it's put 1,541 people infected with the novel coronavirus but who don't have symptoms under observation as of March 30, a much-anticipated announcement which helps provide a deeper picture of the scale of the country's epidemic.

It was unclear from the statement if that number was only of people currently in medical quarantine or if it included those who were symptom-free but have since recovered and been released. Of the cases, 205 were found among people entering China from overseas, according to a statement on China's National Health Commission website.

China's total count of confirmed Covid-19 infections stands at more than 81,000, but the vast majority have recovered and been released. The country still has 2,161 cases in hospital as of March 30, according to health commission data.

The publication of the number of asymptomatic infections comes a day after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang urged local officials to prioritize efforts to track and expand the screening of symptom-free carriers amid a growing chorus of domestic and international criticism of China's data on the outbreak.

In China, people who test positive for the virus but don't have any symptoms are not classified as confirmed cases. This runs counter to the practice in countries like South Korea, Japan and Singapore, where all patients who test positive are included in official tallies of total cases, regardless of whether they have symptoms such as a fever or cough.

China says it tracks and quarantines asymptomatic cases and reclassifies them as confirmed cases if and when they develop symptoms. But concern over China's refusal to disclose the number of symptom-free carriers

has grown as researchers have found that these patients can play an outsized role in spreading the pathogen to others, since there's no easy way to tell they're sick.

Asymptomatic cases are typically found only if people are tested because they've been in close contact with confirmed cases, in cluster infections and through contact tracing. Countries with limited testing capacity are more likely to not track symptom-free cases as testing is usually reserved for those with obvious symptoms.

Cases of asymptomatic virus infections are still being found even after China said its daily confirmed case tally hit zero for the first time two weeks ago, local magazine Caixin reported. It's fueled doubt over whether the epidemic that broke out in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December is truly over.

While it's unclear what proportion of infected people do not display symptoms, early signs are that it could be a substantial number and that these stealthy carriers are still infectious -- a key reason why the pandemic has spread so widely across the world in a short time.

As many as a third of the people in China who test positive show delayed symptoms or none at all, the South China Morning Post reported earlier this month, citing classified data from the Chinese government. About 20% of those who tested positive for the virus in South Korea end up showing no symptoms at all during their hospital stays, according to the country's CDC chief, Jung Eun-kyeong.

Stepping up control of asymptomatic cases will help reduce loopholes in the country's epidemic control efforts, according to an earlier statement released on the website of the State Council, China's top administrative body. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

Fake news or the truth

DARIA LITVINOVA,
MOSCOW

TWO weeks ago, an opposition-leaning radio station in Russia interviewed political analyst Valery Solovei, who alleged the government was lying when it said no one had died in the country from the coronavirus.

Solovei told radio station Echo Moskvy at least 1,600 people might have died since mid-January. Russia's media and internet watchdog, Roscomnadzor, quickly pressured the station to delete the interview from its website.

The demand was part of a widespread government campaign against what authorities called "fake news" about the pandemic.

Yesterday [Macau time], Russian lawmakers began putting some teeth behind the campaign, approving fines of up to \$25,000 and prison terms of up to five years for anyone who spreads what is deemed to be false information. Media outlets will be fined up to \$127,000 if they disseminate disinformation about the outbreak.

Lawmakers rushed the bill through all three readings in just one day after President Vladimir Putin spoke about the need to counter "provocations, stupid gossip and malicious lies" about the outbreak.

The crusade began about a month ago, when Russia's caseload was still in the single digits. The Kremlin's stance of "everything is under control" prompted speculation that authorities might be hiding or underreporting the scale of the outbreak in line with Soviet-era traditions of covering up embarrassing truths.

A broad set of measures was outlined and a special "fake news" division in the government's coronavirus task force was created. A group within Russia's Investigative Committee was put together to chase down alleged disinformation.

Social media users who doubted the official numbers and news outlets questioning the government response became targets for law enforcement seeking to weed out anything that didn't correspond with the official data.



"In crises, those in power try very hard to control the information and push their own agenda. And, of course, it makes sense to suppress alternative points of view," Solovei told The Associated Press.

The AP found at least nine cases against ordinary Russians accused of spreading "untrue information" on social media and via messenger apps, with at least three of them receiving significant fines.

Police statements offered few details but clearly indicated those involved were merely sharing opinions or rumors, rather than deliberately spreading misinformation.

The crusade began about a month ago, when Russia's caseload was still in the single digits

A 32-year-old woman was fined \$380 — a significant sum in a country with an average monthly salary of about \$550 — for posting on social media something she heard on a bus about the virus in her region. A 26-year-old man was fined a similar amount for a comment he made under a news report claiming a woman died of the virus in a hospital. Another woman faces a fine of about \$380-\$1,200 for posting about virus cases in her

region where no infections were officially reported.

Asked whether the punishments fit these crimes, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said they were "absolutely justified."

"It stirs up unwarranted tensions, and in this situation it needs to be punished in accordance with the law," he said.

The crackdown on free speech fits a recent pattern. In the past five years, hundreds of people have been prosecuted on charges of extremism for posting, liking or sharing information on social media on sensitive topics like corruption, the conflict with Ukraine, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the role of the Russian Orthodox Church. Dozens received prison sentences.

In 2018, Putin acknowledged that prosecuting social media users sometimes turns into "idiocy and absurdity," and he eased the regulations. Such online hunts have since fizzled out, said Damir Gainutdinov, an internet freedom lawyer with Agora, Russia's prominent legal aid group.

But the void is quickly filling again with a crackdown on those who insult officials or spread so-called "fake news" online — misdemeanors that parliament put on the books last year.

"I think in the nearest future, we will see a rapid



Workers wearing face masks and carrying disinfectant sprayers walk along a street in Beijing

? Russia cracks down on virus postings



growth (of cases) related to fakes as the authorities are trying to suppress any nonofficial information about the coronavirus,"

Gainutdinov told AP.

On Monday, Hungary's parliament also passed a law setting prison terms of up to five years

for those convicted of spreading false information about the pandemic. Rights groups said the law allows the government to crack

down on press freedom.

The effort to curb alleged disinformation at home came as Russia is once again being accused of spreading it abroad. The European Union recently identified nearly 80 instances of virus-related disinformation in the past two months.

This also follows accusations by U.S. intelligence services that Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election by spreading false information online — a charge that the Kremlin has steadfastly denied.

Waging disinformation campaigns in the West stems from the same desire to control the narrative, said Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert at the Royal United Services Institute.

To the Kremlin, "there is no such thing as an objective narrative. So given that it is going to be someone's narrative that triumphs, of course, you want it to be your narrative rather than someone else's," Galeotti told the AP.

Kremlin critics argue that its effort to stifle alternative voices during the pandemic is unlikely to succeed.

Dr. Anastasia Vasilyeva, who works with opposition figure Alexei Navalny and leads the Alliance of Doctors union, made headlines in recent weeks exposing Russia's underfunded, teetering health care system. She told the AP she was contacted by police about spreading false information in her YouTube blog.

"They will have to prove that I lied, so let them prove it," Vasilyeva said. "They want to scare me in order to stop the others ... the truth won't change because of it."

Even as Russia moved to control the narrative during the outbreak, some embarrassing news has still slipped out.

Dr. Denis Protsenko, head of Moscow's top hospital for coronavirus patients, was reported to have the virus. That came only a week after Putin visited the hospital and was photographed shaking hands with Protsenko.

Peskov sought to assure the country that Putin was fine.

"He's being tested regularly. It's all right," Peskov was quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency as saying. **AP**

EXCEPTIONAL TIMES

Volunteers fill gaps amid UK pandemic lockdown

THE Rev. April Keech knocked on the door of an apartment in east London, took three giant steps back and made way for other volunteers to lay a bag of groceries on the threshold.

The jovial Anglican priest seemed to want to hug the resident, Peter Kraus, when he came to the door, but restrained herself to abide by social distancing requirements for slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

"Hello, Pete! That's your bag," Keech told the 68-year-old retired merchant seaman, who lives alone. "I hope you're OK!"

Keech and her team of volunteers have spent the past two weeks buying groceries, filling prescriptions and making deliveries to residents in east London who are at risk of serious illness or death from the COVID-19 disease. The U.K. has reported more than 25,000 confirmed cases, and 1,789 virus-related deaths among those hospitalized.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes



The Rev. April Keech, an Anglican priest, who organizes food deliveries to old and vulnerable people, gestures after dropping off food to a woman in London

mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Britain is in the process of mobilizing around 750,000 volunteers to help vulnerable people after

the government ordered a nationwide lockdown. So many individuals have offered to help — three times more than requested — that the government put recruitment on hold until it could process the number who had already come forward.

Since the government initiative is just starting, people like Keech have stepped into the breach

to assist those who need help now — not in a week or two.

"Kindness now and compassion for what other people are going through is crucial to help us understand one another, and connect to one another," said Keech, an associate priest at St. Paul Old Ford Church. "And I think about what is going on here [...] and what is

to come. We're not even at the peak of this in London."

Kraus is grateful. He recently had a stomach operation, so it is risky for him to go outside and move around the city.

"It's very kind of them to do that," he said of the weekly deliveries of canned beans, bread and other groceries at his door. "It saves us from going down to the supermarket."

Keech organized a handful of volunteers after a local doctor asked her to help make sure at-risk patients got their medication days before the lockdown took effect a week ago. Many of those who need assistance are elderly people who have a high risk of respiratory complications, don't hear well or are a bit baffled by the new invisible enemy. Some sought help just because they were afraid to be alone.

The government is counting on citizens to pitch in and help stretch the resources of local authorities, first responders and

the National Health Service like previous generations did during World War II. While attitudes and technology have changed since the 1940s and many people no longer know their neighbors, officials organizing the national effort are encouraged by the outpouring of volunteers.

"We have been absolutely overwhelmed by the response and cannot thank the public enough," Royal Voluntary Service CEO Catherine Johnstone said. "As history shows, it is often in times of crisis that we pull together and become our best selves."

Keech has found herself buying lots of beans and white bread for older people, some of whom remember the rationing of the war years. Then there's the occasional request for something super specific: Can she find boneless, skinless sardines packed with red pepper or olives?

"We are not just here for ourselves, but for others," she said. "As they heal and receive hope, so do we." **AP**



Mass testing, empty ICUs: Germany scores early against virus

FRANK JORDANS,
BERLIN

LATE last year — long before most people had heard of the new coronavirus now sweeping the globe — scientists in Germany sprang into action to develop a test for the virus that was causing an unusual respiratory disease in central China.

They had one by mid-January — and labs around the country were ready to start using it just weeks later, around the same time that Europe's most populous country registered its first case.

"It was clear that if the epidemic swept over here from China, then we had to start testing," said Hendrik Borucki, a spokesman for Bioscientia Healthcare, which operates 19 labs in Germany.

That quick work stands in stark contrast to delays and missteps in other countries. Coupled with Germany's large number of intensive care beds and its early social distancing measures, it could explain one of the most interesting puzzles of the COVID-19 pandemic: Why are people with the virus in Germany currently dying at much lower rates than in neighboring countries?

The numbers are remarkable: As confirmed

cases in Germany passed 71,000, the death toll yesterday was 775, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University. In contrast, Italy has reported almost 106,000 infections and more than 12,400 deaths, while Spain has more than 102,000 cases with over 9,000 deaths.

France has four times as many virus deaths as Germany and Britain has twice as many, even though both countries have fewer reported infections.

There may be many factors at play, but experts said early on that fast and widespread testing gave Germany an edge.

"The reason why we in Germany have so few deaths at the moment compared to the number of infected can be largely explained by the fact that we are doing an extremely large number of lab diagnoses," said virologist Dr. Christian Drosten, whose team developed the first test for the new virus at Berlin's Charité hospital — established over 300 years ago to treat plague victims.

He estimated that Germany is now capable of conducting up to 500,000 tests a week.

Spain, meanwhile, tests between 105,000 and 140,000 people each week, about 20% to 30% what Germany is capable of. Italy did around 200,000 tests over the past week, but that reflects a significant recent

ramp-up.

Early access to the test from Drosten's team is only part of the reason for Germany's head start. Before the country even registered its first case, authorities agreed the tests would be covered by its universal insurance system, and be available to everyone with symptoms and either recent travel to virus hotspots or close contact with a confirmed case.

Still, Germany may not be as much of an anomaly as it seems. The fact that Spain and Italy — which have seen much more intense outbreaks — are doing fewer tests indicates they are missing many mild or asymptomatic cases. That makes their fatality rates look worse than they are. But Germany, too, is likely missing cases, and experts say that all figures worldwide undercount the extent of the pandemic.

Limited testing also means the true spread of the virus is hidden in those countries — further fueling the outbreak.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. But for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness and lead to death.

Ensuring those severely ill patients can be treated properly is key to managing

the outbreak — and preventing deaths.

And there again, Germany has an advantage.

Italy had 8.6 intensive care unit beds per 100,000 people before the outbreak, according to the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development. By comparison, Germany's most recent available figure is 33.9 per 100,000, or about 28,000 in total, a number the government wants to double.

"We are well prepared today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow," said Dr. Uwe Janssens, who heads Germany's Interdisciplinary Association for Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine.

Hospitals in the hardest-hit areas of Italy, are now buckling under the weight of treating so many ill patients at once, contributing the country's death toll — the highest in the world.

In the rare position of having beds to spare, German hospitals have taken in dozens of patients from Italy and France. While that will allow German doctors and nurses to learn how to treat severely ill COVID-19 patients, it also reflects a remarkable confidence in the country's ability to manage its outbreak at a time when many others are shutting their borders.

The Robert Koch Institute, Germany's disease control center, has suggested that strong measures imposed almost three weeks ago, including closing schools and restaurants, and later barring more than two people from gathering outside, seem to have slowed the rate of new infections.

Experts have bemoaned that many countries took similar steps too late.

Scientists advising the British government say major social distancing measures are necessary before there are 0.2 deaths per 100,000 people. According to the, albeit imperfect, data available, Italy imposed its lockdown four days after hitting that threshold but Germany's came a week before that level was reached.

Officials stress Germany is still in an early stage of its outbreak. But Dr. Sebastian Johnston, a professor of respiratory medicine at Imperial College London, said countries that intervene early with aggressive measures should theoretically be able to avoid the tsunami of cases seen in Italy and Spain. **AP**

this day in history



1986 BOMB TEARS HOLE IN AIRLINER OVER GREECE

Four people, including an eight-month old baby, have been sucked out of a TWA passenger jet after an explosion ripped a hole in its side.

The Boeing 727 was flying at 11,000 feet (3,350 metres) over Greece, on its way to Athens, when the bomb went off.

It blew a hole six feet by three feet (2m x 1m) wide under a window in front of the starboard wing.

It is believed the explosion happened at floor level in the passenger compartment itself.

The four bodies of the victims were retrieved from a site 87 miles (140 km) southwest of Athens.

Three were from the same Greek-American family, believed to have been a grandmother, her daughter and her granddaughter.

Police also found the body of a male passenger identified as a Colombian-born American, sucked out of the plane with his seat.

The remaining 118 passengers and crew survived. The pilot, Captain Richard Petersen, made an emergency landing, telling Athens control tower that the pressurisation in the cabin was failing.

He is being hailed as a hero. "We are proud of him," said a TWA source.

Just seven passengers were taken to hospital, and only three were kept in for treatment.

One was Ibrahim al-Nami, from Saudi Arabia, who said he had been sitting next to the man who was sucked out with his seat.

"We heard a big bang outside the window," he said, "and then I saw the man next to me disappear and I felt myself being pulled out."

He avoided sharing the same fate by clinging on to his wife's seat.

Another passenger escaped because she left her seat only minutes earlier to go to the lavatory.

Florentia Haniotakis, a Greek-American from Ohio, praised the crew and said they had comforted passengers during the emergency landing.

The airliner, TWA flight 840, was on the same Rome-Cairo route as a similar TWA plane hijacked by Shia Muslim gunmen in June 1985 after leaving Athens for Rome.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

It emerged that the bomb had been planted under seat number 10F, probably inside a lifejacket.

A group calling itself the Ezzedine Kassam Unit of the Arab Revolutionary Cells said it was responsible, and said it was acting in retaliation for US bombing raids against Libya the previous month.

Police initially identified a Lebanon-born Palestinian woman, Mai Elias Mansur, a suspected terrorist connected with the Abu Nidal extremist group, involved in an abortive attempt to bomb a Pan American airliner in 1983.

She had travelled in seat 10F on an earlier flight of the same Boeing 727.

Ms Mansur strenuously denied any involvement. After two years of fruitless investigation, the US State Department said it considered she had carried out the bombing, operating on the orders of known Palestinian terrorist Colonel Hawari.

Nobody has ever been convicted of carrying out the bombing. TWA filed for bankruptcy in 2001 and was taken over by American Airlines.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Putting restrictions on yourself isn't fun, but it's a heck of a great way to strengthen your values. Make sure that your actions are following your principles today. You have to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Even though patience doesn't always come easy for you, you'll find that you'll get more and more comfortable cooling your heels while other people try to catch up as the day goes on.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
But all of this kindness has been helping you rack up some serious karma points. Do beware of getting stuck in this system. It's time to transition out of being friendly to everyone.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
How would you describe your relationship with food? Are you a junk food junkie? Someone who claims to be allergic to vegetables? If so, no wonder you feel tired all the time!

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Sometimes it's easier to forget than forgive, so if you're struggling with someone who wronged you, it might be time for you to move on without them in your life.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Your mind could be sharper than ever today, which means that you'll be able to pick up anything quickly. All you have to do is take one glance at the instructions and you'll be good to go!

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You can't always choose the most entertaining option, but you can always try to make something boring into something a lot more interesting. All it takes is a positive attitude and a little creativity.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Today, everyone could be looking to you to get things started. You might not be used to being the person who initiates the big plan, but you'll have to step up to it this time.

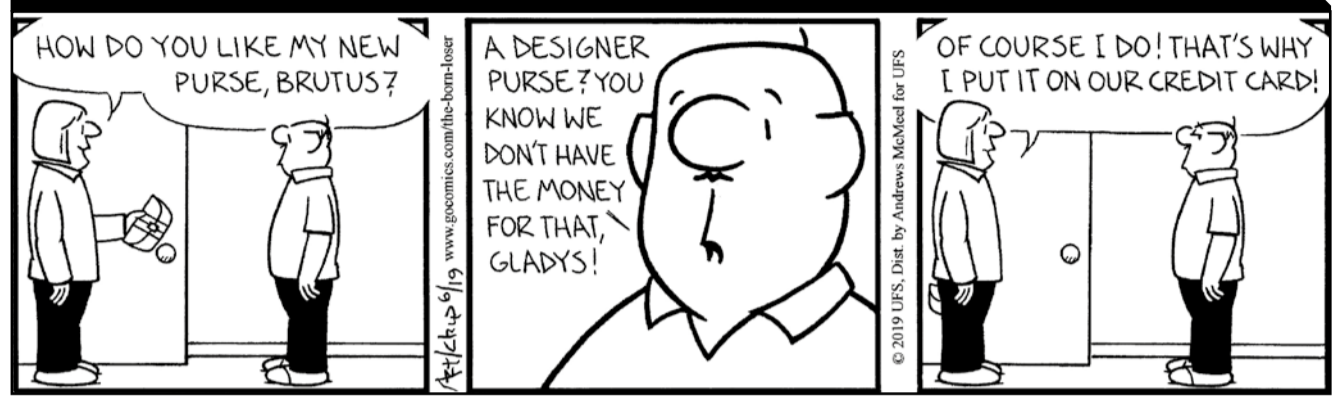
VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
It's a great day for working on plans, especially if they're related to travel in any way. Go ahead and plan your itinerary or sign paperwork that needs to be signed. You're ready to go, so get this show on the road!

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
If you're involved in any kind of competition today, be advised that your opponent may be a stronger force than you. This isn't a fun fact to contemplate, but it's one you must consider as you map out your day.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
The more time you can spend with children or teenagers today the better. Younger people understand that anything is possible, and that is an attitude that you need to have right now.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
But you have the wonderful combination of compassion and honesty necessary to be helpful without being hurtful. Trust yourself. You know what to say.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	3	20	clear
Harbin	-1	14	clear
Tianjin	8	19	cloudy
Urumqi	5	16	clear
Xi'an	8	12	drizzle
Lhasa	2	16	cloudy
Chengdu	0	15	overcast
Chongqing	15	18	drizzle
Kunming	13	27	clear
Nanjing	8	16	cloudy
Shanghai	10	17	overcast
Wuhan	9	17	drizzle
Hangzhou	8	18	cloudy
Taipei	17	20	drizzle
Guangzhou	16	19	thundershower
Hong Kong	20	23	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	3	6	drizzle
Frankfurt	0	9	clear
Paris	2	11	clear
London	4	9	drizzle
New York	1	10	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Hill toy; 5- Nightclub of song; 9- Russian fighter; 12- Arrived; 13- Butler's love; 15- Arp's art movement; 16- Omnium-gatherum; 17- Tears down; 18- "A Death in the Family" author James; 19- Soldier; 21- Reclusive; 23- Endoskeletal component; 24- Drop the ball; 25- Eye membrane; 28- Addictive substance; 33- Main artery; 34- Sensitivity; 35- "Peter Pan" pooch; 36- This ___ stickup!; 37- Scruffs; 38- Sprinted; 39- Ailing; 41- Mountain range in central Europe; 42- Danny's daughter; 44- Doorway; 46- Sock pattern; 47- Question; 48- Busy as ___; 49- Quick visual inspection; 53- Atheistic; 57- "Judith" composer; 58- Newsboy's cry; 60- Zeno's home; 61- Intend; 62- More current; 63- Search; 64- Awfully long time; 65- Like some dorms; 66- Cong. meeting;

DOWN: 1- Garbage boat; 2- In ___ land; 3- Islamic ruler; 4- Re-enter the atmosphere; 5- Crownlike object; 6- Chicago's airport; 7- La ___. Bolivia; 8- Geographical expanse; 9- Biblical gift bearers; 10- Thought; 11- Scottish Celt; 14- Maintains; 15- Brand of polyester fiber; 20- New Rochelle college; 22- Tolkien ogre; 25- Worker's reward; 26- Red fluorescent dye; 27- Area of land; 28- One of the two equal sections of a cone; 29- Breezes through; 30- Loiter; 31- Total; 32- Boat often made of birchbark, canvas, or fiberglass; 34- Apply powder to oneself; 37- Durable yellow fabric; 40- Mythical sea monster; 42- TV horse; 43- Eternal; 45- Nitwit; 46- On deck, perhaps; 48- Give consent; 49- Gammy; 50- Hydrox rival; 51- ___ even keel; 52- Corp. VIP, briefly; 54- Gen. Robert ___; 55- Goes out with; 56- Fifth Avenue store; 59- Tango need;

Yesterday's solution

S	N	A	P	M	I	C	A	G	E	T				
T	E	A	R	E	N	A	C	T	O					
E	E	R	O	D	A	R	E	R	H	O				
P	R	E	V	A	I	L	S	O	M	A	L	I	A	
O	P	A	L	W	A	S								
A	R	I	S	E	N	D	E	E	P	E	N	E	D	
C	A	S	T	S	J	O	W	L	D	E	A	R		
M	I	A	R	A	G	E	S							
E	S	A	V	E	R	O	S	L	A	D	E	N		
S	E	C	R	E	T	L	I	V	F	A	C	I	L	E
E	R	R	A	T	I	C								
T	I	C	O	N	A	S								
R	A	T	E											
E	S	S												
S	O	N	S											
T	I	K	E	S										

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>Nova City Apartment, Taipa HK\$12,880,000 1,494 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>Vai Fung Triplex, Macau \$15,800/mth 1,065 ft² 2 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>[Taipa] Va Fat Apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2 725 ft² \$4,380,000 (ref: 18115566)</p> <p>[Taipa] Taipa Village Apartment 1 1/2 1 1/2 785 ft² \$4,780,000 (ref: 20016009)</p> <p>[Coloane] Man Fai Apartment 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,390 ft² \$7,380,000 (ref: 190650105T)</p> <p>[Taipa] Taipa Village Apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2 1,404 ft² \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>[Taipa] Loft Style Unit 1 1/2 1 1/2 890 ft² \$12,000/mth (ref: n/a)</p> <p>[Coloane] Hellene Garden 1 1/2 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,663 ft² \$14,000/mth (ref: 20021003)</p> <p>[Taipa] Manhattan 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,626 ft² \$20,800/mth (ref: n/a)</p> <p>[Taipa] Manhattan 4 1/2 2 1/2 2,305 ft² \$22,000/mth (ref: 19091003)</p>	<p>jml property 卓雅物業 Since 1994</p> <p>(853) 2835 2699 hello@jmlproperty.com www.jmlproperty.com</p> <p>f jmlmacau @ jmlproperty</p>
---	--	---	---	--

The Art of Giving

Lurdes de Sousa *



MODERN PHILANTHROPY: THERE IS SUCH A THING AS SOCIETY

HALF the world is in lockdown. For those who are healthy it is a good time to catch up on some new reading or to go back to classics of literature.

"East of Eden", John Steinbeck's passionate 1952 epic, re-creates the seminal stories of Genesis through the intertwined lives of two American families, the Hamiltons and the Trasks. A brilliant novel of ideas, East of Eden is far-reaching in its effort to explain the most fundamental trials of mankind. Brutally realistic - and sometimes fatalistic - about people's ability to harm themselves and those around them, it is also a celebration of perseverance, enduring love, and the noble yearning to better oneself. It is a work of profound optimism about the capacity of humans to triumph over adversity.

Although Steinbeck's East of Eden focuses on the Trask family reenacting the saga of Cain and Abel, one of the novel's most significant characters is Lee, the family's Chinese servant. Steinbeck uses Lee as a character to expose the idea of wisdom with quotes of Confucius to help move the plot along. Lee first enters the novel unceremoniously as a "pigtailed Chinese cook" who speaks pidgin and hovers on the periphery of the story to develop as a character of profound humanity.

As the novel unfolds, the reader discovers a philosophical man. Lee fools everyone at first by speaking in pidgin but the reader comes to learn that Lee was actually born in the United States, and is highly educated to the point that he even learned to speak Hebrew. Lee frequently gives voice to the novel's themes, including the crucial idea of "timshel" תמשל, the word that God utters to Cain when exiling him to the lands east of Eden. In Lee's crucial voice of wisdom "The word timshel - 'Thou mayest' - that gives a choice. It might be the most important word in the world".

Everyone has a choice. A choice to act or not to act. A choice to choose the right or wrong thing to do. A choice to delay or not delay decisions. Timshel is certainly, in dramatic times, the most important word in the world.

Every government has had its own approach to the spread of the pandemic with different strategies for COVID-19 driven by the dilemma in the choice of mitigating the economic impact, in other words the choice between economics and society. Macau, one of the most densely populated places on earth, exhibited a track record of 10 cases over a month with no registered new cases before numbers started to increase with imported cases. The local government made an unprecedented decision with a 15 day casino closure to protect its population, in a significant move representing about \$100 million being lost each day by the gaming industry, which directly employs the majority of Macau's labor force and provides the government with over 80% of its tax revenue. It was a choice lead by the sense of community for which Macau government must be praised.

For those who have made the choice of economics first, the financial burden of reconstructing the social fabric of their own societies will be an even heavier price to pay on the path to economic recovery.

A European head of government, currently in self isolation, just this week posted a video praising the hundreds of volunteers who made the choice to stand up to help the national healthcare service. What the crisis will reveal when this is over is that, in his own words, "there is such thing as society".

*President, Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau)
國際博愛協會 (澳門)
president@artofgiving.org.mo

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

WORLD'S TOP GOLD MARKET FREEZES AS CHINESE SHOPPERS STAY AWAY



A man stands outside of a jewelry store in a shopping district in Macau

THE coronavirus pandemic has frozen the Chinese gold market, torpedoing demand at a time when investors elsewhere in the world are clamoring for the safety of bullion.

China is the biggest buyer of gold bars, coins and jewelry, but the national shutdown to contain the virus has emptied malls, while the premium charged to buy the metal in China has evaporated. It leaves the industry staring down a long road to recovery, even as Beijing tries to jump-start broader consumption with a campaign to get shoppers out and about.

The market's struggles in China may present a headwind for prices, which last month topped \$1,700 an ounce for the first time in seven years. The traditional haven also faces a drag from slower retail consumption in India, Europe and the U.S., as well as Russia's surprise decision to halt purchases by its central bank. Last year, Chinese consumers accounted for about a fifth of total gold demand of 4,356 tons, according to the World Gold Council.

"Domestic demand for gold will recover very slowly," said Zhang Yongtao, chief executive officer of the China Gold Association. "Even after processors resume production, one major issue is that there are no orders," he said.

China's retail sales of gold, silver and jewelry plunged 41% in the first two months of the year. Zhang estimated that the amount of gold jewelry sold in the first quarter will have fallen by at least half, setting up a significant decline for the whole year. "Consumers won't return to buy gold jewelry until the pandemic ends, and Chinese investors are also unwilling to purchase gold with their deposits at the moment," he said.

Most of the group's customer visits to shops in Hong Kong and Macau [in March] were still sparse

The trepidation contrasts with a flurry of activity on the global market last week, which saw gold refineries shut and aircraft grounded, creating a massive squeeze on gold futures in New York as traders scrambled to get enough physical metal to meet their commitments.

It also comes as the Chinese economy inches back to normality and new infections slow to a trickle. The nation was about 90% back to work at the end of last week, according to Bloom-

berg Economics. Still, consumers remain hesitant after weeks of government warnings about the dangers of mingling with others, and as financial pressures mount amid rising unemployment.

Jewelry retailers have felt the heat in particular. Luk Fook Holdings International Ltd. issued a profit warning in March after sales on the mainland tumbled 37% in the first two months.

"Most of the group's shops in mainland China reopened in March with improved store traffic, while customer visits to shops in Hong Kong and Macau were still sparse," said Deputy Chief Executive Officer Nancy Wong. "It's expected that it'll take some time for the business to return to normal."

Gold price premiums in China "have collapsed to negative levels not observed since the Great Financial Crisis," Citigroup Inc. said in a note this week. The bank said that suggests jewelry consumption could hit lows not seen in a decade or more.

The market remains concerned over the constraints around delivering bullion, which is contributing to price volatility, said Haywood Cheung, president of the Chinese Gold & Silver Exchange Society, which trades physical gold and silver in Hong Kong. **BLOOMBERG**

After Tokyo move, swimming looks for new worlds dates

ANDREW DAMPF

AFTER new dates were announced for the Tokyo Olympics, the swimming's governing body is going back to the drawing board to figure out when to hold its next world championships.

The biennial aquatics event was scheduled for Fukuoka, Japan, from July 16-Aug. 1, 2021. But on Monday, the Tokyo Games were pushed back a full year because of the coronavirus pandemic and moved to the same period — July 23-Aug. 8, 2021.

That likely leaves FINA, swimming's governing body, with two options for its biggest event: A move to the end of September and the beginning of October 2021; or May-June 2022.

Postponing for a full year would be complicated because of the already full schedule of aquatics events in July and August 2022, which includes the Commonwealth Games, European swimming and water polo championships and the Pan Pacific swimming championships, plus the Asian Games in September.

Holding the worlds before the games is undesirable because

AP PHOTO



it would conflict with national Olympic trials around the globe.

"I need to see the information from Fukuoka, from the partners, from television, from everybody. And then we can have a conclusion," FINA executive director Cornel Marculescu told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

While Marculescu was adamant last week against a

move to 2022, that now seems like a possibility.

"For that reason I don't want to have any opinion, because it doesn't reflect the reality," Marculescu said when asked about his previous comments.

World Athletics has already announced that its world championships in Eugene, Oregon, will be pushed back to 2022 but

has not selected dates.

Marculescu said FINA "probably needs another two weeks" before making its decision.

Both options FINA is considering have drawbacks.

Holding the worlds — which, in addition to swimming, also includes diving, water polo, artistic swimming, open-water swimming and the non-Olympic sport

of high diving — two months after the Olympics would mean risking that many top athletes might not come.

That's because elite swimmers often take a break after a four-year Olympic cycle; and since this will be an unprecedented five-year cycle, the desire to step away from the training-based sport could be even greater.

Another issue in late September or early October could be the weather in Fukuoka, which is about 1,100 kilometers southwest of Tokyo on the island of Kyushu.

While open water swimmers would welcome cooler temperatures, high divers might be shivering in their swimsuits if a breeze comes along up on their 27- and 20-meter platforms for men and women, respectively.

For the May-June 2022 option, the biggest problem is going up against more high-profile sports in the United States and Europe — NBA playoffs, European soccer, tennis, golf, cycling and more.

Then there's the purely political aspect. FINA's elections usually coincide with its world championships and the 2021 vote is slated to decide the successor to the organization's 84-year-old president, Julio Maglione.

Keeping Maglione in power until he's 86 might not be the best way forward for the sport.

"Everything," the 78-year-old Marculescu said, "needs to be considered." AP

AD

MAKE-UP
FOR ALL OCCASIONS

- BRIDAL / WEDDINGS • PHOTO SHOTS • PARTY •
- GRADUATION • SPECIAL EVENTS •

MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!

TEL / WHATSAPP: (853) 6685 3323 | WECHAT: MISSJ_23
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/JULIANAC.MAKEUPARTIST



新 陽 光 清潔服務有限公司
NEW SUNSHINE CLEANING SERVICES LTD.



Clean Kitchen



Grease Box

Urgent!! Call Now!! Tel: 28833008

Member of General Association of Macao Cleaning Service Industry

MACAU INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
聲音與影像大比拼 澳門國際短片影展

2020

MACAU INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CURTAS DE MACAU

現正徵件

SHORTS
獎金總額達
MOP 74,000
短片比賽 劇情 / 紀錄片 / 動畫
交件日期 2020年3月16日至6月16日
sic@creativemacau.org.mo

VOLUME
獎金
MOP 10,000
音樂影片比賽
交件日期 2020年3月16日至7月20日
www.soundandimagechallenge.com



Organizers 主辦單位: CREATIVE MACAU, LUSA, TIPPYS, PORSI, BNU, macaulink

Main Sponsor 主要贊助單位: 澳門基金會, INSTITUTO CULTURAL DO GOVERNO DA RAEM, Macau

Venue Support 場地支持: 澳門國際影視發展研究中心

Media Partner 媒體支持: 澳門日報, 澳門電台, 澳門廣播電視, 澳門新聞網, 澳門電訊, 澳門電訊電視, 澳門電訊網絡, 澳門電訊網絡, 澳門電訊網絡

OPINION

World Views

Tim Culpan, Bloomberg

EVEN FOOD DELIVERY IS GETTING HIT IN VIRUS SIEGE

The various levels of lockdown and quarantine across China haven't proven a golden opportunity for the biggest food delivery and bookings company, a warning for on-demand service providers elsewhere as more of the world stays at home to avoid the coronavirus.

Meituan Dianping says it will post a loss for the first quarter ending Tuesday following a decline in revenue. The Beijing-based company's business consists of three main divisions — food delivery, restaurant and travel bookings, and other services such as car hailing, bike rental and groceries.

Bookings, which account for around 23% of revenue, took the biggest hit. That was predictable. Consumers aren't keen to take a seat at a restaurant or a night at a hotel amid a deadly disease outbreak, and widespread travel curbs meant moving around China wasn't an option.

Food was more of a surprise. Two months ago amid the Lunar New Year break, I theorized that such deliveries — at 56% of Meituan's revenue — might bounce back quickly as customers opted to stay in rather than eat out. I was wrong.

Thousands of vendors on Meituan's platform were forced to close either voluntarily or by mandate, and thus couldn't provide meals. Those who did stay open were often met with fear and complications on the demand side.

Many customers had concerns not only over the safety of meals coming from restaurants, but the drivers who delivered them. Those still willing to order online were met with layers of challenges as local governments, neighborhoods and buildings exercised strict controls over who could come and go. There was no supply bottleneck for drivers; Meituan noted plenty of capacity on hand.

Three weeks ago, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. said that its own courier and food delivery services, Cainiao and ele.me, were back to full staffing. But the food business was still down because many restaurants remained closed.

An upside has been grocery delivery. Meituan's two services, self-operated and marketplace, have seen strong growth during the crisis, a trend that echoes what Alibaba experienced with its Freshippo service. In many cities, consumers either cannot or prefer not to step out to shop. They're apparently less afraid of groceries brought to their door than fresh-cooked meals.

Even as China returns to a certain level of normalcy, food delivery may struggle for another few months. Most companies are maintaining degrees of isolation, such as working from home or rotating shifts. Taking lunches to places of business is normally an important part of the consumption scenario.

As investors start to ponder the outlook for Delivery Hero SE, Just Eat Takeaway, and GrubHub Inc., they'd do well to look at how their China peers have fared during the virus battle. Collectively, these companies get most of their revenue from Western markets that are now imposing lockdowns to battle the pandemic. They're implementing contact-free and non-cash deliveries to make customers feel safe.

That may not be enough. While it's true that people still have to eat, China's experience shows that this doesn't mean consumers will necessarily order delivery or that restaurants can supply them.

Major social media companies are taking aim at Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's dismissal of social distancing, joining others in the country who have lined up against his controversial stance regarding the new coronavirus.

Facebook and Instagram removed posts by the far-right leader this week that showed Bolsonaro walking around outside capital Brasilia on Sunday and mingling with groups. It was yet another affront to World Health Organization recommendations to self-isolate as a means to contain the pandemic. The companies' move came one day after Twitter also removed some Bolsonaro posts.

Facebook, which owns Instagram, said in a statement that it removes content "that violates our community standards, which do not allow disinformation that might cause real damage to people."

Twitter justified its decision by saying in a statement that its rules prohibit content that runs "against public health information given by official sources and can put people at greater risk of transmitting COVID-19."

Bolsonaro is one of few world leaders who say the virus itself will cause less harm than shutting down the economy.

REGANMIAN

WUHAN'S FAVORITE NOODLES ARE BACK AS VIRUS-HIT CITY RECOVERS

AP PHOTO



Owners of a store selling a local favorite "reganmian," or "hot dry noodles," prepare takeaway orders in Wuhan

THE noodles smothered in peanut sauce are as much a trademark of Wuhan as deep-dish pizza in Chicago or spaghetti in Rome. Zhou Guoqiong still isn't allowed to serve customers inside her shop, but the stream of eager customers now lining up outside to take away those noodles testifies to the powerful desire to savor the familiar again after the easing of months of strict lockdown.

Despite radically falling numbers of coronavirus infections, officials emphasize that Wuhan and the rest of China still have a long way to go. But the reappearance of Wuhan's favorite breakfast noodles is a tasty sign that life is slowly beginning to transition to normal in the Chinese city that served as the original epicenter of the global outbreak, first detected in December.

Five days after reopening, Zhou and her husband now sell several hundred bags of "reganmian," or "hot dry noodles," every day — less than before the outbreak, but more than enough to keep them busy.

"I'm happy as long as there is business," Zhou said.

Wuhan has recorded 2,548 deaths from the coronavirus and reported more than 50,000 cases, and the city essentially shut down starting Jan. 23.

The head of the National Health Commission, Ma Xiaowei, said earlier this week that the "most dangerous, most critical stage" of the domestic outbreak

appears to have passed. But he was insistent that strict quarantines on travelers and other restrictions such as school closures will be lifted only gradually and very, very carefully.

"At present, the epidemic situation in China is not over," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a daily briefing.

China says almost all of its coronavirus cases are now brought into the country by travelers from abroad, and Wuhan has not recorded any new confirmed or suspected cases in a week. Officials have said it must go a full 14 consecutive days without new cases before they lift draconian travel restrictions and social distancing demands.

That can't come soon enough for Mr. Xiao, who runs a small butcher shop and tries to be guardedly optimistic about the future. He said his stock can last 10 days at the most and he needs to see a big jump in business.

"I estimate in the next several months, I can sell half a cow every day," said Xiao, who declined to give his full name.

Much still hangs in the balance: Will his three partners rejoin the business? And with no other work skills, what will he do if sales don't pick up?

Along Yanzhi Road in Wuhan's Wuchang district, shops are doing a brisk business in staples such as meat and noodles, their loud-

speakers blaring to attract customers.

Outside a food market, a long line formed of mostly elderly customers, all keeping their distance from each other and wearing the required masks, with some adding rubber gloves and hats.

The market operates from only 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and admits just 30 customers at a time, for a maximum of 20 minutes each. One of those in line, 70-year-old retired civil servant Xiao Yuxia, said she lives by herself and planned to eat fish for the first time in two months.

While many Chinese ordered what they needed using phone apps, 75-year-old retired worker Wang Haitao said he found that too confusing, and he and his wife are finding fewer choices on the list of options provided by community volunteers.

Along with meat, fresh vegetables appeared to be in good supply, though not with much variety. The food boxes delivered by volunteers to low-rise compounds typical of older neighborhoods such as Yanzhi Street were loaded mainly with carrots and cabbages.

The variety may be slightly better at the vegetable stalls set up around residential compounds, but social distancing is largely ignored at those: Customers and sellers gather in groups with little distance between them, bargaining and exchanging cash. AP

AP PHOTO



Covid-19 Some pregnant women fear giving birth with no loved ones by their side. Others worry about getting sick with Covid-19 and not being able to hold their newborns. The coronavirus pandemic has injected anxiety and uncertainty to an already stressful time and while science about risks is mostly reassuring, doctors want clearer answers too.

AP PHOTO



US The captain of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier facing a growing outbreak of the coronavirus is asking for permission to isolate the bulk of his roughly 5,000 crew members on shore, which would take the warship out of duty in an effort to save lives. In a memo to Navy leaders, the captain of the USS Theodore Roosevelt said that the spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating and that removing all but 10% of the crew is a "necessary risk" in order to stop the spread of the virus. The ship is docked in Guam.

AP PHOTO



Europe Facing intense surges in the need for hospital ICU beds, European nations are on a building and hiring spree, throwing together makeshift hospitals and shipping coronavirus patients out of overwhelmed cities via high-speed trains and military jets. The key question is whether they will be able to find enough healthy medical staff to make it all work.

Hungary's government wants to strip autonomy from mayors across the country by tying their decisions to approval by appointed administrators. The proposal is part of an extensive draft bill on changes in public administration. It came a day after Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government gained powers to rule during the coronavirus crisis.