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DELAYED BY RED TAPE, HK'S CASH HANDOUT MIGHT ARRIVE TOO LATE TO UNDO THE ECONOMIC DAMAGE CAUSED FIRST BY PROTESTS AND THEN CORONAVIRUS

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China Wang Quanzhang, a well-known Chinese rights lawyer, was released from prison yesterday after being held for more than four years, his wife said. It was unclear whether he would be allowed to return to Beijing, where he practiced and lived with his wife and young son.



OPEC Saudi Arabia sharply criticized Russia over what it described as Moscow blaming the kingdom for the collapse in global energy prices, showing the tensions ahead of an emergency meeting of OPEC and other oil producers. Oil prices sharply fell after the so-called OPEC+ group of countries including Russia failed to agree to production cuts in early March.

Sri Lanka Nearly 2,900 prisoners have been released from overcrowded prisons in Sri Lanka as the Indian ocean island nation has stepped up its efforts to contain the spreading of the new coronavirus. Sri Lanka has been under a countrywide curfew since March 20.



Africa The coronavirus pandemic could narrow one gaping inequality in Africa, where some heads of state and other elite jet off to Europe or Asia for health care unavailable in their nations. As countries across the continent impose dramatic travel restrictions, they might have to take their chances at home. [More on p8](#)

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NOWHERE TO GO

THE SUSPENSION OF GOLDEN BUS SERVICES ON THE DELTA BRIDGE LEAVES NO REMAINING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION LINKS TO NEIGHBORING HONG KONG

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MACAU ANSWERS NATIONWIDE CALL FOR THREE-MINUTE SILENCE

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MACAU MOURNS COVID-19 VICTIMS IN NATIONAL THREE-MINUTE SILENCE

ANTHONY LAM

MACAU joined the rest of the country on Saturday to observe three minutes of silence in commemoration of the victims of Covid-19. The city's national and regional flags flew at half-mast at all public premises, and the government advised public recreational activities not to go ahead.

The commemoration, which was deemed by the central government in Beijing to be the National Mourning Day, also comes on the traditional Qingming festival, when Chinese people would normally visit the graves of their ancestors. Mainland officials have banned such observances this year to avoid large gatherings that might contribute to a feared second wave of infections.

On Saturday morning, at 10 a.m., the national government declared a nationwide moment of silence, encouraging people to pay tribute to the Covid-19 victims with three minutes of silence. This was especially for medical staff who succumbed to the disease as they carried out their duties.

During the moment of silence, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, led government officials to stand for the three-minute silence, in tribute to the Covid-19 victims in China, a note from the Government Information Bureau reads.



Macau Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, together with the Chief-of-Office of the Chief Executive's Office and the five policy secretaries, stand in silent tribute for a three minute to mourn those who died in the fight against the novel coronavirus disease outbreak

According to the mainland directive, the instruction was applied to all government buildings, buildings of legislative and judicial bodies, and at representative offices abroad. School premises and public facilities also took part in the vigil.

Offices of mainland authorities in Macau, namely the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the SAR, the Foreign Mi-

nistry's SAR office and the People's Liberation Army's SAR Camps also held a moment of silence to commemorate the victims. Flags at these offices were lowered to half-mast as part of the vigil.

Other non-government entities also joined, including the Macau Chamber of Commerce, the Neighborhood Association, the Women's Federation, Kiang Wu Hospital and the Macao Federation of

Trade Unions (FAOM).

The national and SAR flags flew at half-mast at the Chamber of Commerce's headquarters located at Porto Exterior. Ma Iao Lai, president of the Chamber of Commerce, led the moment of silence vigil.

Besides, he also encouraged members of the public to remain vigilant and stay home as much as possible to help con-

trol the outbreak.

At the Women's Federation, president Ho Teng Iat, together with lawmaker and deputy director-general Wong Kit Cheng and other management members, honored the moment of silence at the organization's headquarters on Rau do Barca.

President Ho Sut Heng and Director-General Lei Chong Cheng of the FAOM, led the three-minute moment of silence at the Federation of Trade Unions headquarters. In the meantime, the vigil was also conducted at the Federation's offices in Toi San, in Areia Preta, on Rua do Campo and in Taipa.

The public in Macau also observed the three-minute silence, "in order for the Macau community as a whole to express its condolences regarding those who lost their lives amid the Covid-19 pandemic," according to the government.

Alongside the moment of silence, public recreational activities, and of any events intended to be of either a celebratory or festive nature scheduled on Saturday were due to be suspended as suggested in the State Council notice.

Though the moment was observed across the entire country, some media outlets reported it was particularly poignant in Wuhan, the central Chinese industrial city where the virus was first detected in December.

RENATO MARQUES

DOCTOR Lo Iek Long of the Conde de São Januário Hospital said yesterday that, for the time being, patients who are infected with Covid-19 and have been discharged or are undergoing treatment have a low risk of developing permanent lung damage due to pneumonia.

Lo's information came in response to a question from the media on the topic during the daily press conference at the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center.

Explaining in more detail, the physician said, "At the moment, there is a large number of patients in Macau that are still in treatment, so we are still a

Macau patients have low risk of permanent lung damage, says health official

long way from knowing if they will have any after-effects."

"[However], analyzing in general terms, only in serious cases of pneumonia that lasted for a long period can some secondary effects arise. If the patients do not develop pneumonia and only have symptoms of the virus infection, the probability of developing secondary effects is lower," Lo said.

"We are analyzing the data from other countries and what we have realized is that only in the cases of



serious pneumonia which require the use of ventilators is the probability of after-effects higher."

According to the statistics released, from the 44 Covid-19 cases reported in

Macau, the large majority developed only light or mild symptoms of the disease and only one patient, the 18th case of the infection, has been considered a serious case requiring

the use of a ventilator.

The case refers to a 50-year-old woman who returned to Macau from the U.S. with her son, who is also a patient (case 19). Her health worsened between March 24 and 29.

Meanwhile, questioned on whether Macau would consider the recommendation from the central government to use traditional Chinese medicine as a treatment for the disease, Lo said that such an option has not been excluded, noting that there are several medical op-

tions on the table.

The physician also noted that according to the recommendations, more than two kinds of medicines should not be used to treat each patient. For the time being, Macau is considering the health situation of each patient as well as the experience gathered by other regions to decide.

The official stressed that Macau would prioritize using medicines "that have proven to be more effective and that have [recorded] the best results worldwide."

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RENATO MARQUES

THE health authorities announced yesterday the first reduction in the number of hotels designated to be used as isolation and quarantine facilities. The Metropole Hotel in central Macau was the first to be discharged from such duties, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) representative, Inês Chan, announced during the daily press conference at the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center.

With the announcement, the number of hotel units designated as quarantine venues has been lowered from 12 to 11.

"The Metropole Hotel was already vacated and today [yesterday], the Health Bureau went to the hotel to proceed with the cleaning and disinfection work that is happening now," Chan said. "After the cleaning work is finished, the Metropole Hotel will stop being a hotel unit designated for quarantine."

The official noted that it is likely that other hotels which have been in use as quarantine facilities will be also discharged from such duties in the upcoming days, but such information will be provided as it happens, case by case.

"Regarding the hotels that will be vacated, the first condition is that all the people in quarantine get discharged [from the venue]. Then, we will analyze the need for the rooms and after everyone gets discharged, we will proceed with a deep cleaning and disinfection and only after that, the hotel can be released [from the duties of quarantine]," Chan explained.

During an update on the cur-



Gov't discharges first quarantine hotel, more expected to follow

rent number of people quarantined in local hotels, the same official said that there is currently a total of 1,818 people, of which 1,605 are Macau residents.

Chan also announced that from today, the release of the figures related to the number of Macau residents in Hubei province will be suspended. This is due to the halt in enforcement of restrictive measures which had the province under lockdown.

Chan said that with the travel restrictions now easing, Macau residents have the possibility, "if

they wish to," to travel to other cities or even to return to Macau by their own means.

On the topic of Macau residents that are currently in Hong Kong, the official noted that the best advice is that they should remain where they are at the moment, if they are not in a situation that requires emergency action.

"The restrictive measures imposed by all parties on the borders have the purpose to reduce the traffic and circulation of people among different places, countries, and regions. In light of that

and to respect those measures, we recommend [these people] to stay in the place so they don't account for a higher flux of people that can represent risks for them and to others," Chan said.

However, "if there is an exceptional case or a special need, we will consider it [separately], but we try to minimize the risks and not to turn all general cases into exceptions," added Chan.

The same official also noted that during the 15 days from the middle to the end of March, the local authorities assisted 2,160

people stranded in Hong Kong to return to Macau via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge using chartered vehicles that departed from Hong Kong's airport. Such an arrangement is no longer offered by the Macau government.

For those Macau residents now not able to return, Chan said, "we urge these people to take good care of themselves and pay attention to all information. If they need any assistance they can, through the MSAR passport, request assistance at China's consular missions."

Macau couple tests positive for Covid-19 in Guangzhou

THE Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center confirmed over the weekend that a married couple from Macau has recently been diagnosed with Covid-19 in Guangzhou, the provincial capital of neighboring Guangdong Province.

The news was announced by Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during the government's daily press conference. A notification was issued earlier by the National Health Commission (NHC) of the People's Republic of China with regards to the patients.

The two Macau residents are both in their 50's. The wife is 57 years old and the husband is 56 years old. They departed from New York, U.S., on March 17 and arrived at Guangzhou's Baiyun International Airport two days later, on March 19, after transiting in Tokyo during their journey. They were finally bound for the Macau SAR.

However, at that time, the mainland health measures required them to undergo mandatory quarantine, during which time they were diagnosed with the disease.

A statement from the Macau Special Admi-

nistrative Region government did not disclose if they had developed symptoms.

Their border crossing records showed that they have not been in China for the past month, implying a high possibility that they contracted the virus while they were in North America.

The SAR government has already offered the hotline numbers for the Coordination Center and the Tourism Crisis Management Office to the couple. It will remain in constant communication with the NHC to keep track of the patients' health conditions. **AL**

RICE WHOLESALERS ASSURE GOVERNMENT OF AMPLE SUPPLY

THE local government has said that rice wholesalers in the city have guaranteed the supply of rice after reports of shortages began to surface online over the weekend.

The Economic Services Bureau (DSE) assured the public of the availability of rice stock, saying that government representatives had met with local rice wholesalers regarding the supply situation.

Pictures showing supermarket shelves emptied by panic buyers went viral online over the weekend, with several social media users confirming they had seen the bare shelves.

It is unclear whether the meeting between the government and the who-

lesalers was held in response to the panic buying, but the Economic Services Bureau was assured about the ample supply of the commodity at the meeting.

The wholesalers told the bureau representatives that current supply of rice in Macau is stable and ample. They also assured the government that they will try other sources to further expand the supply.

As noted in the statement, the wholesalers have information that there are sufficient stocks of rice in the mainland, which will be brought to Macau as the situation demands.

The Ministry of Commerce of the mainland has

also guaranteed the supply of rice to Macau. Where necessary, such supply will be expanded.

Looking at the city's stock, there are about 1.1 million kilograms of rice in Macau, with an extra 500,000 kilograms to be arriving in the next few weeks.

Wholesalers also have the option to source the foodstuff from other rice-producing countries, such as Cambodia.

Restocking at retailers may be delayed due to the lack of workers under the current situation. The price of rice, on the other hand, may fluctuate especially in response to changes in the exchange rate of the U.S. dollar. **AL**

LAST METHOD OF HK-MACAU PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION HALTED

THE shuttle bus service between Macau and Hong Kong known as the 'Golden Bus' service is halted from today until further notice, the operator of the bus has announced. The decision removes the last method of public transportation between the two Special Administrative Regions.

The authorities of the three places – the two SARs and Zhuhai – have decided to further tighten the already strict immigration measures enacted on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB).

Commonly known as the Golden Bus due to the color of the company vehicles, the shuttle bus deployed its final service before the suspension at 8 p.m. last night. It is unclear when the service will resume.

Usually, the Golden Bus runs 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Last year, when a typhoon hit Macau



and Hong Kong, the shuttle service was still in operation, despite public bus services being called off in Macau.

Despite the suspension of buses, private means of transportation, such as private cars with dual license plates, are still allowed to cross the bridge to Hong Kong, not considering the quarantine and other immigration re-

quirements imposed by the Hong Kong side.

However, the vehicle border control lanes at the Macau border control area of the HKZMB will see their operation hours tightened. Before the new measures, the lanes were open 24 hours a day for vehicles. From yesterday, the lanes are only open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day.

The operation hours of the Macau border control building connecting Zhuhai was also shortened starting yesterday. It now operates from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., a total of 10 hours per day. At the same time, the border control area for travelers between Macau and Hong Kong now operates between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

The East Car Park on the Macau border control island of the HKZMB is also closed from today. The car park was built for Hong Kong vehicles that do not have Macau license plates.

Ferry services between the two SARs, operated separately by Sands China's Cotai Water Jet and Shun Tak's Turbo Jet, were suspended two months ago, following the sudden closure of Hong Kong's ferry terminals.

Also due to the closure, Shun Tak's Sky Shuttle, the public helicopter service between the two SARs, was halted simultaneously. **AL**

CAR CRASHES INTO CULTURAL AFFAIRS BUREAU HQ

A car crashed into the sidewall of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) Headquarters Building, located in Tap Seac Square, in the early hours of Friday morning. The accident resulted in some damage to one of the decorative pillars of the historical building, which the IC said it would promptly repair.

According to a statement from the bureau, the IC sent personnel to investigate the situation once it was informed about the accident.

After a preliminary inspection, the IC staff concluded that the pillar, located on the sidewall facing Estrada do Cemitério, had suffered only slight damage. The building's main structure was not affected by the accident.

The building is part of the classified real estate under the record for "Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida, no. 89-95G."

The bureau also noted that it is currently in discussion with the police authorities on the matter, and will start the repair work as soon as possible to reinstate the building to its original form. **RM**

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TOP COURT SIDES WITH POLITICAL SCIENTIST

DANIEL BEITLER

MACAU'S top court has ruled in favor of an appeal filed by a political scientist who says he was unfairly dismissed from his position at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) in 2014.

Political scientist Eric Sautedé says he was unfairly dismissed from the USJ for expressing his political views. The university has said that the decision not to renew Sautedé's contract with the university was an internal decision and that there were various reasons for his dismissal.

The case was thrown out of the first and second courts, hence the appeal filed by Sautedé at the Court of Final Instance (TUI) in February 2019.

On Friday, the TUI announced that it had sided with the appellant. The details of the TUI decision had not been released at the time of print and so it is not yet known if the case will return

to court.

"This is not only good for me, but good for the rule of law in Macau," Sautedé said in brief remarks to the Times yesterday. "Until now, [my case] was simply dismissed in the first and second instance [courts]. It gives a glimmer of hope that my case might finally be heard after six years."

Sautedé is seeking 1.3 million patacas in compensation from the USJ, comprised of 800,000 patacas for material damages and the remainder for damage to his reputation.

Sautedé's lawyer, Miguel Quental, declined to comment, saying that he would await the details of the court's decision. Lawyer Filipe Figueiredo, who represents the University of Saint Joseph, was not immediately reachable yesterday.

In a 2014 interview with Portuguese-language newspaper Ponto Final, former USJ rector Peter Stilwell admitted that political com-



mentary was behind the decision. "There is a principle in the church, which is of non-intervention in local political debates," Stilwell told the paper.

The USJ announced last month the appointment of Stephen Morgan as its next rector. Morgan is expected to officially take the helm at the university in July.

NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS INCLUDED IN WORK SUBSIDY

The SAR government is including non-permanent residents into this year's work income temporary subsidy. Applications for the subsidy remain the same. Qualified residents can get a maximum of 5,000 patacas per month. The subsidies are applicable to the period starting from January this year. The applicants can submit the application in April, July, and October and in January next year. The SAR government launched the subsidy 12 years ago, in 2008. The local government believes that the subsidy is helpful for low-income residents, including people with disabilities.

RADIO TAXI BETTER ABLE TO MEET CALLS DEMAND AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, Macao Radio Taxi has been able to meet a higher proportion of all calls received by the company. When the company was first established, back in November 2015, the company completed approximately 6,000 orders on a daily basis, but this number represented only 30% to 40% of the total calls received by the company. In 2019, the company put more vehicles on the roads, and raised the percentage up to 60%. Nevertheless, since the Covid-19 outbreak, an even better response rate of 80% to all orders has been recorded. On average, the number of calls dropped by 50%, with 2,000 orders being completed during this period. The company claimed it would not fire any drivers because of the reduction in its business.

3 IN 4 INTERNET HOUSEHOLDS NOW HAVE FIBER OPTIC BROADBAND

The number of households using the internet last year increased by 6,900 to a total of 182,300, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service, widening the scope of internet coverage to 92.3% of all households. At the same time, the number of households using fiber optic broadband connection continued to rise, up by 18.1% last year to 138,800, and accounting for more than three-quarters of the total households using the internet. The proportion of households using mobile broadband to access the Internet (178,500) grew by 3.3 percentage points to 97.9%, indicating that only a small number of households never use mobile broadband at home.

UM TO RESUME POSTGRADUATE ORAL DEFENSES ON MAY 4

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Higher Education Bureau and considering the actual circumstances of the University of Macau (UM), the university said it will resume PhD and master's oral defenses on May 4. Students of PhD, master's, and postgraduate certificate/diploma programs at coursework stage will continue with distance learning until the end of this semester, according to the UM. Master's and PhD students who are at research stage and need to return to the campus for special reasons, such as for their laboratory work and research, should seek approval from the university in advance. The UM stressed that students must not return to the campus in general without first acquiring approval from the education institution.

Affordable housing scheme to retain age requirement at 18 for family applicants

THE SAR government has decided to retain entry age policies concerning family applications for affordable houses at a minimum of 18 years old.

This morning, the First Standing Committee had a discussion regarding the latest affordable housing bill together with government representatives, including the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo Arrais do Rosário.

The chairman of the committee, lawmaker Ho Ion Sang, reported to the media that the government has accepted the lawmakers' suggestion to keep the entry age at 18 years for family applicants.

The minimum age for individual applican-



ts is also reduced from the previously proposed 25 years of age down to 23 years.

The local government adjusted the age policies after considering that affordable housing is in high demand and not every university graduate has

the need to buy a house immediately after finishing school.

Some of the lawmakers still think that the minimum age for individual applications should also go down to 18 years of age.

The local government said that it would

consider the proposal.

Secretary Rosário said that in April or May this year, the local government will start a public tender procedure for the foundation work of three land plots for affordable houses on New Urban Zone A.

The land plots are

related to the most recent affordable housing application. The application will end on April 27, which is already one month later than the original application period.

Rosário is aware that the society has demands for extending the application period and the local government is still reviewing it.

After the committee discussion, lawmaker Sulu Sou expressed his disappointment at the latest draft of the bill.

He was particularly disappointed with the part that said that young people between 18 and 23 years old are not qualified to apply for affordable houses as individual applicants in spite of meeting all other requirements. JZ

HONG KONG FACES DELAY IN GIVING CASH AWAY

ERIC LAM, ENDA CURRAN & JINSHAN HONG

HONG Kong was ahead of most of the world when in February it announced a handout of almost \$1,300 to residents suffering from a recession worsened by the coronavirus. By the time the money arrives, it may be too late to undo the damage.

While the U.S. plans to send checks to individuals as soon as this month as part of a \$2 trillion relief package and other countries roll out payouts, Hong Kong's cash drop isn't expected until the end of the third quarter or even later.

Virus control measures are shuttering more businesses and accelerating job losses in the Asian financial hub, with the latest regulations involving a two-week closure of bars intended to curb a second wave of the outbreak locally. This comes after the economy slid into recession last year, battered by months of anti-government protests.

While once there was talk of how the payment could support discretionary spending at Hong Kong's restaurants and shops, now it's looking more like a form of basic income support.

There had been "a lot of excitement around the Hong Kong cash handout," said Rory Green, an economist at TS Lombard. "We view it as more of a tax break, and one that will come too late to support the economy through virus-related disruption."

For Jason Lam, a 32-year-old chef in Tsim Sha Tsui who has been asked to take repeated unpaid leave over the past two months, the cash can't come soon enough.

"That HKD10,000 will be very helpful because I don't have enough income to cover my spending," he said. Lam signed up for a savings plan last year and is now struggling to make the monthly payments. "This has bothered me to death. I don't know what will happen in April now with the new social-distancing rules further dragging down our business."

The escalating global pandemic is the latest blow to Hong Kong's economy. It is forecast to struggle in a range of -1.5% to +0.5% growth this year, Financial Secretary Paul Chan forecast in the budget released in late February.

On paper, Hong Kong has the right mix of circumstances to make such a cash drop work, which is a reason why the city was one of the first in the world to announce a general payout in the current crisis. The government has plenty of cash on hand given a fiscal reserve of more than HKD1 trillion, and experience with past handouts.

But amid a broader economic support plan worth HKD120

AP PHOTO



billion, the Hong Kong government says the direct payment needs technical and legal work, and that is moving more slowly than the epidemic.

"It takes time to carry out the required preparatory work," the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau said in a March 24 email. "Our current target is to strive to commence registration in early July and start making payment during summer vacation."

There are plenty of boxes that still need to be checked off, including spending approval from the Legislative Council for the wider budget, which is not expected before the end of April. While officials are waiting, they have begun developing computer systems to handle the program, discussions with partners such as banks on details and formulating a publicity plan, the department said.

An April 3 brief from the Legislative Council Secretariat, which provides support to council mem-

bers and the public, raised several concerns about the handout including the amount of time it will take compared with other programs in Macau and Singapore based on past experience, high administrative costs and the non-targeted nature of eligibility.

"It is not clear whether the cash can reach the needy soon enough to soothe their plight," the report said.

Aside from the U.S. program to send out checks, other countries are planning or have discussed direct cash payments to citizens, though many are running into complications of their own.

Thailand opened registration at the end of March for a handout program to cover about 9 million people. However a third of Thailand's population, or some 22.9 million people, have already signed up, meaning many will be disappointed.

Japan's ruling party has proposed spending more than 10 trillion yen (\$92.1 billion) on handouts

to the public in a combination of cash, subsidies and coupons. A decision on the handout format is complicated by concern over repeating the perceived failure of direct payments made during the global financial crisis.

Italy is preparing an emergency handout for workers in the country's underground economy, while Peru has begun distributing cash to the country's 2.7 million poorest families. Singapore also is moving slightly faster than Hong Kong, having announced a one-time payment in March that's due to land in August.

Hong Kong distributed checks of HKD6,000 to the populace in 2011, though that occurred when the economy was booming and the need for the money less urgent. The plan was announced in March, with registration beginning at the end of August and payments by early November, according to the government. The plan ultimately took about 21 months to make payments to

6 million people, the LegCo brief said.

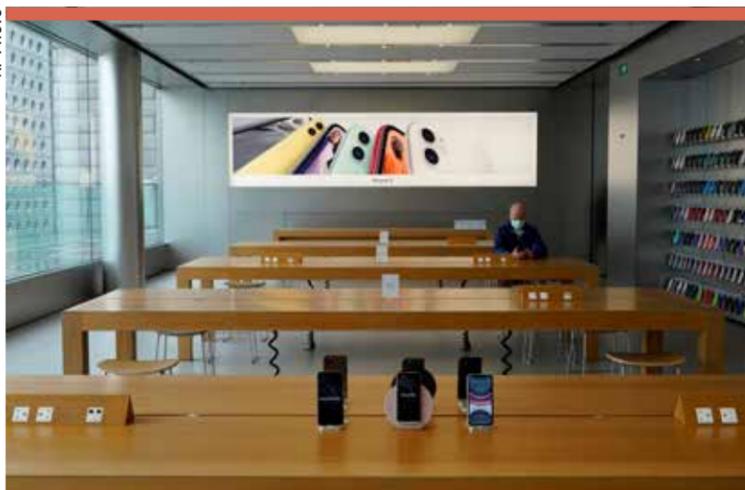
Now, "the cash handout is more a social insurance in the crisis rather than fiscal stimulus," said Aries Wong, lecturer at Hong Kong Baptist University's School of Business. "Its effect depends on the portion of cash that would be re-spent by households."

In an interview with Bloomberg TV in early March, Financial Secretary Chan said he hoped residents would support Hong Kong by spending, and encouraged businesses to come up with incentives for them to do so.

Vivian Leung, a 33-year-old teacher in Hong Kong, said her family and friends are thinking about using the money to buy goods such as face masks, sanitizer and cleaning equipment to fight the coronavirus.

"All those things, for the past two to three months, pretty much makes up HKD10,000," she said. "Are we excited? It's better than nothing." **BLOOMBERG**

AP PHOTO



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

ADVERTORIAL



Spain virus cases pass Italy, where daily deaths are falling

SPAIN'S Covid-19 cases surpassed Italy as Europe's two main epicenters continue to struggle to curtail the virus, with Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announcing plans to extend the country's lockdown until April 25.

As of last night, confirmed cases in Spain had risen to over 130,759, while deaths rose to 12,418. Total cases are now higher than Italy's 128,948. In France, the total number of fatalities rose to 7,560 and the U.K. reported one of its deadliest days yesterday as fatalities climbed to 4,934.

The virus has crippled Europe at different times with most countries now in some form of lockdown, even as nations like Sweden and the U.K. were more reluctant to take drastic measures earlier. Governments and policy-makers are scrambling to find ways to mitigate the damage with entire economies headed into deep recession and a common approach still elusive.

As attention shifts to Spain, Italy has signaled the situation, while still grave, is improving. Angelo Borrelli, the head of the country's civil protection agency, said the number of patients in intensive care has dropped by 74, the first fall since the country went into a state of emergency.

In Spain, a slower pace of fatalities and new cases is also offering some hope that the outbreak may be moving toward a peak. Health Minister Salvador Illa said on Friday that the goal of slowing the epidemic was "within reach."

The government in Madrid has imposed some of the most restrictive lockdown measures in Europe, shuttering most businesses and forcing people to stay in their homes except to buy groceries and seek healthcare.

Containment measures across the continent have cut off border crossings and limited air travel, while countries have announced trillions of euros in aid to support businesses and individuals.

In Germany the number of coronavirus deaths and confirmed cases climbed further, a day after Robert Koch Institute President Lothar Wieler warned the country might require further intensive-care space. Germany has boosted capacity by more than 40% since the outbreak began.

The death rate in Europe's largest economy has been well below the levels seen in Italy and Spain, but government officials and healthcare experts insist it's too early to ease social distancing rules and transport restrictions.

SWEDISH QUESTION

There are signs in turn that the death rate in Sweden is growing faster than elsewhere in Scandinavia, raising pressure on the government to abandon its controversial hands-off approach - schools, restaurants and cafes remain open - in tackling Covid-19.

The number of Swedish deaths from the virus rose to 373 on Saturday, up 12% from Friday. That brings the rate per million in Scandinavia's biggest economy to 36, compared with 29 in Denmark and 9 in Norway, where much tougher lockdowns are in place.

Prime Minister Stefan Lofven warned that Sweden may now be facing "thousands" of deaths, and said the crisis is likely to drag on for months rather than weeks.

EQUIPMENT TENSIONS

Meanwhile another dispute emerged over emergency medical equipment with Madrid accusing Ankara of retaining a shipment of respirators bought by two regional Spanish governments from a Turkish company.

Turkey cited the risk of a shortage at home in holding onto the ventilators, Spain's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Spain would insist on reimbursement if the equipment was not released, it added. There was no immediate comment from the Turkish government. **MDT/AP**

Create A Better
TOMORROW TODAY
今天開創明天

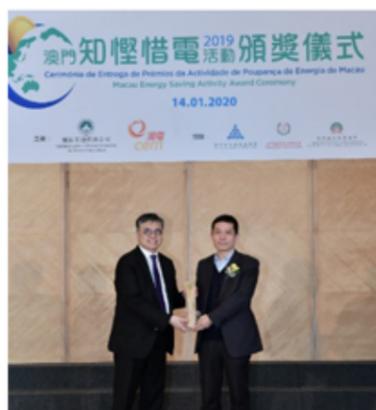


MGM's Outstanding Energy Saving Performance Marked by Second ISO 50001 Certification

MGM recently hit another milestone in environmental protection with the attainment of ISO 50001:2018 certification by MGM COTAI, an acknowledgement of the property's effective energy management system. This is a proud addition to another ISO 50001 certification obtained by MGM Macau in 2016, which made MGM the first integrated resort operator in Macau to receive such recognition. ISO 50001 is the international standard for Energy Management System created by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which is considered the most ideal energy management standard in the world.



Grant Bowie, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said, "MGM believes an environmentally responsible business is always a better business. With all of our properties now ISO 50001 certified, we have demonstrated our commitment to promoting a more sustainable travel and tourism industry in the region. While our Facility Management Team has strived to reduce energy consumption of our properties, our entire staff have also contributed to this achievement by making small green changes one at a time, including simple yet effective practices such as switching off unused lights and computers."



Continuous Effort in Energy Conservation

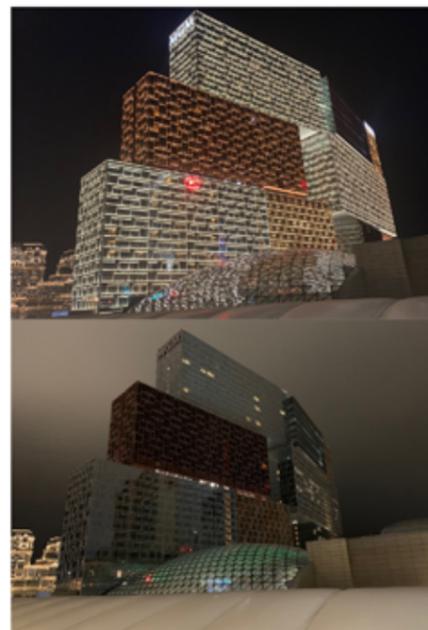
Although MGM continues to grow its business which inevitably leads to some form of environmental impact, the Company also exerts itself to mitigate the effects, including the amount of energy consumed. In 2019, MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI achieved a normalized energy saving of 7.8% and 4.7% respectively as compared to 2018, contributing to the goal of reducing MGM's annual total normalized energy consumption against the baseline by 13% by 2025.

At the Macau Energy Saving Activity Award Ceremony co-organized by CEM and the Office for the Development of Energy Sector earlier this year, MGM COTAI won the "Energy Saving Concept Award" while MGM MACAU received "Hotel B Category - Excellence Award".

Keen Supporter of Earth Hour

MGM's dedication to energy saving is also manifested by its persistent support for the annual "Earth Hour" campaign organized by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to raise public awareness of climate change. On March 28 this year, MGM joined forces with over 7,000 cities across 162 countries and turned off the exterior illuminations of MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI for an hour. The two properties together saved about 12,928 kWh of electricity, which would have generated 10,407 kg CO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions. Based on the supposition that each person in Macau uses an average of 8,283 kWh of electricity in a year, the electricity saved by two MGM properties can satisfy a person's need for 1.5 years.

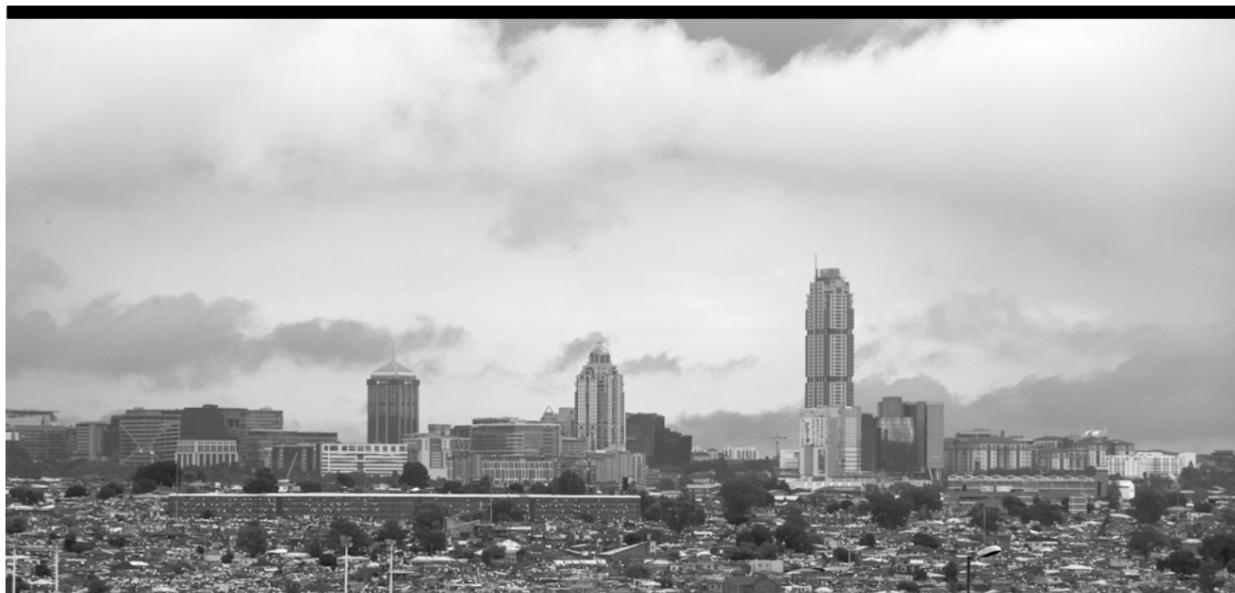
Since April 2013, MGM has also been an avid supporter of the "Earth Hour, Every Month" campaign in Macau, a combined effort of the city's resorts and hotels to stop and reverse climate change. Through keeping the lighting of its properties to a minimum for an hour every month, MGM helped reduce consumption of electricity by 155,136 kWh in 2019, which was sufficient to satisfy the needs of an individual for 18.73 years.



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AP PHOTO



Alexandra township with Sandton skyline, in Johannesburg, South Africa

Africa braces for 'complete collapse of economies'

SOME of Uganda's poorest people used to work here, on the streets of Kampala, as fruit sellers sitting on the pavement or as peddlers of everything from handkerchiefs to roasted peanuts.

Now they're gone and no one knows when they will return, victims of a global economic crisis linked to the coronavirus that could wipe out jobs for millions across the African continent, many who live hand-to-mouth with zero savings.

"We've been through a lot on the continent. Ebola, yes, African governments took a hit, but we have not seen anything like this before," Ahunna Eziakonwa, the United Nations Development Program regional director for Africa, told The Associated Press. "The African labor market is driven by imports and exports and with the lockdown everywhere in the world, it means basically that the economy is frozen in place.

"And with that, of course, all the jobs are gone."

More than half of Africa's 54 countries have imposed lockdowns, curfews, travel bans or other measures in a bid to prevent local transmission of the virus. They range from South Africa, where inequality and crime plague Africa's most developed country, to places like Uganda, where the informal sector accounts

for more than 50% of the country's gross domestic product.

The deserted streets in downtown Kampala, Uganda's capital, underscore the challenge facing authorities across the world's poorest continent, home to 1.3 billion people: how to look after millions of people stuck at home for weeks or even months of lockdown.

With some governments saying they're unable to offer direct support, the fate of Africa's large informal sector could be a powerful example of what experts predict will be unprecedented damage to economies in the developing world. Among the millions made jobless are casual laborers, petty traders, street vendors, mechanics, taxi operators and conductors, housekeepers and waitresses, and dealers in everything from used clothes to construction hardware.

Unless the virus' spread can be controlled, up to 50% of all projected job growth in Africa will be lost as aviation, services, exports, mining, agriculture and the informal sector all take a hit, Eziakonwa said.

"We will see a complete collapse of economies and livelihoods. Livelihoods will be wiped out in a way we have never seen before," she warned.

The U.N. Economic Commission for Africa has said the pandemic could seriously dent al-

ready stagnant growth in many countries, with oil-exporting nations like Nigeria and Angola losing up to \$65 billion in revenue as prices fall.

Economies in sub-Saharan Africa are seen as especially vulnerable because many are heavily indebted and some struggle just to implement their budgets under less stressful circumstances.

Now the continent might need up to \$10.6 billion in unanticipated increases in health spending, and revenue losses could lead to debt becoming unsustainable, UNECA chief Vera Songwe said in March.

Urgent calls for an economic stimulus package have followed. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has spoken of an "existential threat" to Africa's economies while seeking up to \$150 billion from G20 nations. A meeting of African finance ministers agreed that the continent needs a stimulus package of up to \$100 billion, including a waiver of up to \$44 billion in interest payments.

The International Monetary Fund on March 25 said it had received requests for emergency financing from close to 20 African countries, with requests from another 10 or more likely to follow. The IMF has since approved credit facilities for at least two West African nations — Guinea and Senegal — facing virus-related eco-

nomical disruption.

Further challenges exist. Rampant corruption in many African countries feeds inequality, and poor or non-existent public services stoke public anger that sometimes escalates into street protests and deadly violence. Measures to control the spread of COVID-19 could make that worse as people trapped at home go hungry.

UNECA has called for emergency actions to protect 30 million jobs immediately at risk across Africa, particularly in the tourism and airline sectors, saying the continent will be hit harder than others with an economic toll that will exacerbate "current fragilities."

After Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni announced that food markets could remain open under orders to decongest crowded areas, some fruit vendors were assaulted by armed men and had goods confiscated, drawing an apology from the army commander. Museveni later announced an effective lockdown, closing public transport and all but essential businesses.

"What am I going to eat if he stops us from working? Museveni cannot do that," said Marius Kamusiime, who operates a passenger motorcycle. "We may have to go back to the village if this corona becomes serious." **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1994 RWANDA PRESIDENTS' PLANE 'SHOT DOWN'

The presidents of the African states of Rwanda and Burundi have been killed in a plane crash near the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Burundi's Cyprien Ntaryamira were among 10 people on the aircraft which some reports say was brought down by rocket fire.

The two presidents were returning from a meeting of east and central African leaders in Tanzania at which they discussed ways to end the ethnic violence in Burundi and Rwanda.

Bloody feuding between the majority Hutu tribe and the minority Tutsis has plagued both tiny central African states for centuries.

It has been particularly bad in Burundi where up to 100,000 people have been killed since the assassination of the country's first democratically-elected president - a Hutu - last October.

In Rwanda, President Habyarimana's Hutu coalition reached a peace accord last August with Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels, made up mainly of Tutsis, but they have failed to agree on a transitional government.

The deaths of the presidents, both Hutus, looks likely to make the situation in both states worse.

Heavy fighting has already been reported around the presidential palace in Rwanda after news of the deaths spread.

News agencies in Kigali said explosions have been rocking the city but it was not immediately clear who was involved in the fighting.

Rwanda's ambassador to the United Nations, Jean Damasene Bizimana, said the presidents' deaths had been an "assassination".

Members of the UN Security Council held a minute's silence for the presidents and later appealed for calm while the crash was investigated.

From 1890 until 1962 Rwanda and Burundi were one nation, Ruanda-Urundi.

It was under the control of first Germany and later Belgium.

The Belgians supported Tutsi kings' rule over the Hutu majority - worsening the bad feeling between the tribes.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The deaths of the presidents led to more ethnic conflict in both states but it was especially savage in Rwanda.

By June 1994 the Rwandan military - helped by Hutu civilians - had massacred at least 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

After the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front victory captured Kigali in July, two million Hutus fled into neighbouring Zaire (later the Democratic Republic of Congo)

Many were too afraid of retribution to return in spite of the formation of a multi-ethnic government with a Hutu as president.

In 1995 a UN-appointed international tribunal began trying some of the people behind the atrocities in Rwanda.

But by the end of 2001 the tribunal had judged just nine cases, handing down eight convictions and one acquittal.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Today's going to start off as a very calm day, with nary a ripple on the proverbial water's surface. But as the day goes on, there will be lots of activity right under that surface.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Why pressure yourself into taking it all in when grabbing one small detail can be so rewarding? Right now, you need to focus on one aspect of your life. How can you improve it?

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 It's tough not to blame them for judging you, but they're just doing their best to understand you. Talk to them and explain that you're not doing what you're doing to hurt them.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You don't want to end up with your foot in your mouth. It's a very unappetizing snack. Even if you're tactful, your thoughts might be misinterpreted by someone who is eager to react emotionally.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 The best lesson you learn today won't be found in the same old place. You're going to have to move as far outside your comfort zone as you can stand to go in order to get the nutritious input that your brain is hungry for.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Getting sidetracked or lured away by promises of more time or more money is not a good option, so avoid veering off in any new direction. Your extra efforts will pay off handsomely today.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You can feel free to turn a deaf ear to anyone who is telling you to introduce more discipline and structure into your life. They're projecting their own life choices onto you, and they really don't have any right to do so.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 If a blur of social obligations is working on your last nerve, get some alone time today. Treat yourself to a quiet dinner out, or rent your favorite movie and just chill. It's not selfish to want to be by yourself.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Ask a few questions and get to the bottom of their newfound generosity. You'll soon see that the responsibilities laid out in front of you are ones you could really sink your teeth into.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Get ready to be invited into the inner circle, either through a social or work-related invitation. The nature of your time with these people isn't as important as the length of time you will have with them.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Try to organize an informal activity (a pizza dinner at your place, maybe?) where you can check in with your fan club and send some love back their way.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Put social obligations and romantic endeavors on hold for a little while. They aren't going anywhere any time soon! Today, your brain is wired for wheeling and dealing!

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	6	23	cloudy
Harbin	-3	12	cloudy
Tianjin	11	22	cloudy
Urumqi	8	22	clear
Xi'an	10	21	cloudy
Lhasa	1	12	cloudy
Chengdu	11	17	overcast
Chongqing	12	18	overcast
Kunming	11	21	shower
Nanjing	7	14	cloudy
Shanghai	10	16	overcast
Wuhan	11	22	clear
Hangzhou	9	17	overcast
Taipei	16	19	drizzle
Guangzhou	14	16	heavy rain
Hong Kong	17	19	shower
WORLD			
Moscow	2	4	drizzle
Frankfurt	6	16	moderate rain
Paris	5	14	drizzle
London	5	13	drizzle
New York	0	4	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Headland; 5- The Younger and The Elder; 10- Household; 14- Western writer Wister; 15- Papal garment; 16- Wading bird; 17- Stimulate; 18- Female horses; 19- It smells; 20- Actress Singer; 21- Cuts off; 23- Portable bed; 25- ___ culpa; 26- Rulers; 31- Bronze medalist's place; 35- Armed conflict; 36- Light ___; 38- Scoff; 40- "The Time Machine" race; 42- Computer key; 44- Blind as ___; 45- Halts; 47- Borge's countrymen; 49- Malt beverage; 50- In conflict with, with "of"; 52- Defensive mounds; 54- Floor covering; 56- Grab a bite; 57- Directly; 62- Some DVD players; 66- Trigonometric function; 67- Capital on the Red River; 68- The life of Riley; 69- Wrinkle remover; 70- ___ Gay; 71- Parody; 72- Architect Saarinen; 73- Kidney-related; 74- Dick Tracy's love;

DOWN: 1- Monk's hood; 2- Horton Hears ___; 3- Jury member; 4- Tempt; 5- Torpid; 6- Composer Khachaturian; 7- Diamond cover; 8- Fuming sulphuric acid; 9- Stanza of six lines; 10- Trace; 11- Clarinet cousin; 12- Fail to hit; 13- Linguistic suffix; 22- Contented sighs; 24- ... ___ mouse?; 26- More than one female sheep; 27- Mediterranean island; 28- Validation; 29- Monetary unit of South Africa; 30- Lute of India; 32- One ___ million; 33- Rod used to reinforce concrete; 34- Distributed cards; 37- Actress Sofer; 39- Hwys.; 41- Wall St. debut; 43- Kind of measures; 46- Bottom-line numbers; 48- Pampering place; 51- Suds; 53- Still; 55- Macbeth, for one; 57- Send packing; 58- Are you ___ out?; 59- City in Western Nevada; 60- Presently; 61- Vincent Lopez's theme song; 63- Birthday treat; 64- Garage sale sign; 65- Hardens; 66- Sprechen ___ Deutsch?;

Friday's solution

A	N	I	E	L	A	S	H	O	C	T	E	T
H	E	N	R	I	S	T	E	N	O	I	R	E
E	S	C	A	L	A	T	O	R	E	A	T	I
M	T	A	I	O	W	A	I	S	L	E	S	
S	C	R	A	S	P							
S	C	R	A	W	L							
A	R	A	B	L	E							
P	E	R	I									
W	E	D	D	I	N	G						
A	C	R	I	D								
H	A	U	T	E								
A	L	B	E	N								
B	E	A	R	D								

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>Ocean Gardens Fragrant Court, Taipa HK\$24,000,000 3,500 ft² 4 1/2 3 1/2</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>Manhattan Apartment, Taipa \$20,800/mth 1,626 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p>FOR SALE</p> <p>[Macau] Apartment w/ balcony 2 1/2 1 1/2 840 ft² \$4,580,000 (ref: 20016003)</p> <p>[Macau] Waterfront Duet Studio Apartment 1 1/2 469 ft² \$4,980,000 (ref: 20016001)</p> <p>[Coloane] Hoi Wan Garden Apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2 900 ft² \$4,900,000 (ref: 19106003)</p> <p>[Macau] Nova City Apartment 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,515 ft² \$11,500,000 (ref: 19106001)</p>	<p>FOR RENT</p> <p>[Macau] Vai Fung Triplex, Macau 2 1/2 2 1/2 1,065 ft² \$15,800/mth (ref: 19121001)</p> <p>[Coloane] Ocean Garden 4 1/2 4 1/2 3,700 ft² \$35,000/mth (ref: 18040674)</p> <p>[Taipa] Manhattan 3 1/2 2 1/2 1,626 ft² \$20,800/mth (ref: n/a)</p> <p>[Taipa] Buckingham 2 1/2 1 1/2 1,100 ft² \$15,900/mth (ref: 20031002)</p>
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Property of the Week



Ocean Gardens Fragrant Court, Taipa

HK\$24,000,000 3,500 ft² 4 3



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A rare opportunity to purchase one of Macau's original premier apartments. These are apartments have a fabulous layout with wonderful balconies at the front and rear of the property, allowing a fresh breeze to blow through the apartment all year round. Four bedrooms, all doubles with 3 bathrooms. Large kitchen with adjacent balcony for laundry as well as housekeepers quarters and separate entrance. Viewing by appointment only.

Property Hotlist



Two Shops Downtown, Macau

\$20,800,000
1,404 ft²



SCAN ME



Hellene Gardens, Coloane

\$8,200,000
1,663 ft²
3 2 1



SCAN ME



Manhattan Apartment, Taipa

\$20,800/mth
1,626 ft²
3 2



SCAN ME



Vai Fung Triplex, Macau

\$14,000/mth
1,065 ft²
2 2



SCAN ME

More Listings

For Sale

- [Macau] Apartment w/ balcony 2 1 840 ft² **\$4,580,000** (ref: 20016003)
- [Macau] Waterfront Duet Studio Apartment 1 469 ft² **\$4,980,000** (ref: 20016001)
- [Coloane] Hoi Wan Garden Apartment 2 1 900 ft² **\$4,900,000** (ref: 19106003)
- [Macau] Nova City Apartment 3 2 1,515 ft² **\$11,500,000** (ref: 19106001)
- [Macau] One Central Stylish 2 2 1,349 ft² **\$14,839,000** (ref: 19096004)

For Rent

- [Taipa] Buckingham Apartment 2 1 1,100 ft² **\$15,900/mth** (ref: 20031002)
- [Taipa] Ocean Garden 4 4 3,700 ft² **\$35,000/mth** (ref: 18040674)

Recent Movements

Sold Hellene Garden, 3 beds, Coloane

Rented Loft Style Unit, Taipa, 1 bed

Rented Buckingham Apartment, Taipa, 2 beds



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL

Union: 30% pay cut for EPL players would harm health service

ENGLISH Premier League players failed to reach an agreement on Saturday with clubs to take 30% pay cuts during the coronavirus pandemic, escalating a bitter public row as their union claimed the government would lose out on more than 200 million pounds (around \$245 million) in tax.

"This would be detrimental to our NHS [National Health Service] and other government-funded services," the Professional Footballers' Association said in a statement.

Taking on the Premier League as a whole, the PFA said the 20 million pounds being given to the NHS by the world's richest soccer competition was "welcome, but we believe it could be far bigger."

The union's strident stance came after further talks Saturday involving clubs and the league as Liverpool became the latest Premier League side defying political anger by using a government bailout scheme to furlough some non-playing staff.

The government said it was "concerned" by the standoff between players and their clubs.

"People do not want to see infighting in our national sport at a time of crisis," tweeted Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, whose cabinet brief covers sports. "Football must play its part to show that the sport understands

the pressures its lower paid staff, communities and fans face."

Liverpool, which leads the league by 25 points, followed fellow 2019 Champions League finalist Tottenham, Bournemouth, Newcastle and Norwich in furloughing staff.

Under a job retention scheme implemented to help businesses survive the national lockdown, staff can be put on furlough and receive 80% of their salaries from the government, up to a maximum of 2,500 pounds (\$3,000) a month.

Liverpool said it would top up salaries to ensure staff still received the full amount but that still means using public funds to pay some staff. Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher called that a "poor" move, saying "respect and goodwill is lost" by the club.

The European champions have been owned for a decade by John Henry's Fenway Sports Group, which also features the Boston Red Sox. Liverpool made



Liverpool's goalkeeper Adrian reacts during a Champions League match at Anfield stadium in Liverpool

a pre-tax profit of 42 million pounds on a turnover of 533 million pounds last year and it said "complex" talks continue with players about savings on salaries.

A meeting of Premier League clubs on Friday had ended with

agreement on the need to ask players to see 30% of their pay cut or deferred. But the standoff between the players' union and clubs continues.

"The players are mindful that [...] the combined tax on their salaries is a significant contribu-

tion to funding essential public services — which are especially critical at this time," the PFA said in a statement. "Taking a 30% salary deduction will cost the Exchequer [treasury] substantial sums."

"What effect does this loss of earning to the government mean for the NHS?" the PFA statement continued. "Was this considered in the Premier League proposal and did the health secretary, Matt Hancock, factor this in when asking players to take a salary cut?"

The PFA said players would still like "precise details of our commitment" settled, recognizing a need to help their clubs, non-playing staff, lower-league sides and the health service.

"However, to achieve a collective position for all Premier League players — of which there are many different financial and contractual circumstances from club-to-club — will take a bit more time," the union said. **MDT/AP**

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Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

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OPINION

World Views

Chris Bryant, Bloomberg

WHAT I LEARNED FROM TRYING TO CUT MY OWN HAIR

Writing to shareholders this week, BlackRock Inc.'s chief executive officer Larry Fink ruminated on how business and society will be reshaped by the searing experience of the new coronavirus: "People worldwide are fundamentally rethinking the way we work, shop, travel and gather. When we exit this crisis, the world will be different. Investors' psychology will change. Business will change. Consumption will change. And we will be more deeply reliant on our families and each other to stay safe."

I had a similar epiphany this week while trying to cut my own hair — it turns out my regular \$30 haircut isn't as essential as I'd thought. Preparing a meal for my family later that evening made me think that eating out or getting dinner delivered isn't as rewarding as home cooking. Right now the do-it-yourself version also feels a whole lot safer, and probably will do for a while.

Compared to the courage shown by medical workers and those in other essential functions, and the devastation wrought by coronavirus on already vulnerable communities, many of us in the western world have it easy. We're asked to do no more than stay home. But in between worrying about our jobs, our parents and how to entertain or home-school children, we're reevaluating priorities. What will we do differently when this is over? What will we prize more and what will we give up?

Once the immediate battle to protect employees and remain solvent has passed, the business world will have to confront these questions too.

Two themes stand out: Instead of visiting far-flung places and seeking out mass entertainment, I'm sure there will be a bias toward more modest, local activities. And where the coronavirus has exposed dependency or vulnerability, as with the business world's complex cross-border supply chains, we'll seek more security and resilience.

Looming above all of this is the damage that the lockdowns are inflicting on people's incomes. The longer the economic shutdown lasts, the more reluctant the world's consumers will be to spend, period. With more than 10 million Americans filing new unemployment claims in the past fortnight, the omens aren't good.

In the worst-affected sectors such as travel, hospitality and leisure, businesses are already facing a bleaker future. Increased consumer awareness about the negative environmental and social impact of mass tourism has now been compounded by the realization that people on planes and pleasure boats carried the virus around the globe. Lufthansa AG's boss, Carsten Spohr, thinks the German airline will have to shrink because the economy will be smaller than before. Easyjet Plc's founder, Stelios Haji-Ioannou, said similar this week when calling on the carrier to cancel a big order from Airbus SE.

Until coronavirus came along, the tech world seemed hell-bent on taking agency away from individuals and consigning ownership to the dustbin. Why learn to cook when you can have food delivered in 30 minutes? Why own a car when you can take an Uber? Why look after your gadgets, when those nice people at Apple will fix them for you. But as my colleague Adam Minter pointed out this week, it's only in a crisis that you discover the drawbacks of not being able to repair your own phone.

Coronavirus has exposed our vulnerability and it won't be the last crisis. Our planet-warming emissions mean more pain is preordained. Faced with uncertainty or disaster, humans respond by trying to strengthen their communities. We'll also seek more control over our lives. For societies, that means equipping our health services, paying key workers properly and securing supplies. As individuals, it means out-sourcing fewer decisions and mastering things for ourselves. [Abridged]

Cooled up at her Bronx home with her daughter and a niece because of the coronavirus pandemic, Mexican writer Valeria Luiselli says she has lowered the "volume and speed" of her life. She is arranging books in alphabetical order, planting legumes on her balcony and listening to old recordings from Argentinian author Julio Cortázar.

Her rhythm has slowed but not the accolades and awards for her latest novel, "Lost Children Archive," which last week was honored with the British Rathbone Folio Prize. The book, Luiselli's third novel, is part fiction part documentary: A family's American road trip mixed

with the stories of migrant children along the Mexico-U.S. border.

Luiselli accepted the prize at a ceremony held online because of the global coronavirus outbreak. "The fact that the literary community is still in full swing, even from their homes, and behind their screens, is moving and encouraging," she said, speaking in Spanish.

"I think it is my duty, and the duty of every writer, whether a science-fiction writer, a journalist, a poet, each at their own pace and within their own capacities, to document this moment," she said.

"We are going to need this narrative fabric, some sort of fabric for us to lay down once we overcome this."

ASIAN AMERICANS MOBILIZE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO FACE OFF ATTACKS

KYLE Navarro was kneeling down to unlock his bicycle when he noticed an older white man staring at him. Navarro, who is Filipino, tried to ignore him, but that soon became impossible.

The man walked by, looked back and called Navarro a racial slur. He "spat in my direction, and kept walking," Navarro said.

Navarro, a school nurse in San Francisco, already had anxiety about racism related to the coronavirus, which emerged in China and has Asian people facing unfounded blame and attacks as it's spread worldwide. Now, he was outraged.

"My first instinct was to yell back at him in anger. But, after taking a breath, I realized that would have put me in danger," Navarro said.

Instead, he took to Twitter last week to turn the ugly moment into an opportunity for a conversation about racism, generating thousands of sympathetic comments.

Asian Americans are using social media to organize and fight back against racially motivated attacks during the pandemic, which the FBI predicts will increase as infections grow. A string of racist run-ins in the last two weeks has given rise to hashtags — #WashTheHate, #IAmNotCOVID19 — and online forums to report incidents. Critics say President Donald Trump made things worse by calling Covid-19 the "Chinese virus."

For a group with a history of being scapegoated — from Japanese Americans detained during World War II to a Chinese American man killed by autoworkers angry about Japanese competition in the '80s — there's urgency to drown out both bigotry and apathy.

To that end, the California-based groups Chinese for Affirmative Action and the Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council set up a hate reporting center last



Kyle Navarro poses in San Francisco

month. New York's attorney general also launched a hotline.

"We kind of just knew from history this was going to snowball," said Cynthia Choi, co-executive director of Chinese for Affirmative Action. "With the rising stress and anxiety, we knew we'd see a rise in hate incidents."

The center has fielded more than 1,000 reports from across the U.S., ranging from people spitting to throwing bottles from cars. An FBI report distributed to local law enforcement predicts the attacks will surge and pointed to the stabbing of an Asian American man and his two children at a Sam's Club in Texas last month, ABC News reported. According to the report, the 19-year-old suspect said he thought they were "infecting people." The victims have recovered.

Amid the explosive climate, former Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang drew backlash for urging fellow Asian Americans to display more "American-ness." In a Washington Post editorial Wednesday, he called on them to avoid confrontation and do acts of goodwill like volunteering and helping neighbors.

"Being 'the good Asian'

has not fared well for Asian Americans," Choi said. "We don't have to prove our worth and that we belong, that we're exceptional. And we certainly don't have to believe that this is something that we should ignore."

Meanwhile, Trump has walked back on calling Covid-19 the Chinese virus, saying at a media briefing and on Twitter last week that Asian Americans should not be blamed "in any way, shape or form."

Democrats in the U.S. Senate and House worry the damage has been done and have introduced resolutions to condemn anti-Asian racism.

Some of the reports received by the advocacy groups describe harassment that appears to parrot Trump, Choi said.

The president's words also drew some Asian Americans in entertainment and fashion to the #WashTheHate social media campaign last month. Celia Au, star of the Netflix show "Wu Assassins," and others posted videos showing them washing their hands and talking about the effect of racism. "It comes from the top down at the end of the day," Au said. "Our top leader is not doing the job, so it's time for us to step up."

MDT/AP

South Africa says part of a hospital in the city of Durban has been shut down after 11 coronavirus cases were confirmed among patients and staffers. Those include three patients at St. Augustine's Hospital who died. More on p8

Ukraine A forest fire is burning in the evacuated area around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and is causing elevated radiation levels, authorities said yesterday. The emergency services ministry said 130 firefighters and two planes were laboring to put out the fire. It said radiation levels had increased at the fire's center.



Italy's virus-ravaged Lombardy region is now requiring residents to wear a protective mask when they go outside in a bid to further trim infections. The ordinance from Lombardy Gov. Attilio Fontana went into effect yesterday and lasts through April 13.



France A man wielding a knife attacked residents of a French town while they ventured out to shop amid a nationwide coronavirus lockdown Saturday, killing two people and wounding five others in an act that led authorities to open a terrorism inquiry. France's counter-terrorism prosecutor's office said the assailant was arrested near the scene of the attack in the town of Romans-sur-Isère, south of Lyon, as he was kneeling on the sidewalk praying in Arabic.

US Americans braced for what the nation's top doctor warned yesterday would be "the hardest and saddest week" of their lives. "This is going to be our Pearl Harbor moment, our 9/11 moment," U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams told Fox News Sunday.