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**Japan** Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared a monthlong state of emergency for Tokyo and six other prefectures yesterday to ramp up defenses against the spread of the coronavirus as the number of infections surges. But the move came in the form of a stay-at-home request — not an order — and violators will not be penalized.

**Belgian** health officials want to perform more COVID-19 screening tests in the general population and at nursing homes. That comes after the number of new hospitalized patients across the country went down for a fifth consecutive day. Most tests have been done on seriously ill people. Emmanuel Andre, a scientist and spokesman at the COVID-19 crisis center, says 314 people were hospitalized on Monday in Belgium, the lowest tally since March 25.



**UK** A pandemic forcing everyone to stay home could be the perfect moment for online grocery services. In practice, they've been struggling to keep up with a surge in orders, highlighting their limited ability to respond to an unprecedented onslaught of demand. After panic buying left store shelves stripped of staples like pasta, canned goods and toilet paper, many shoppers quickly found online grocery delivery slots almost impossible to come by, too.

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# THE FIRST DAY

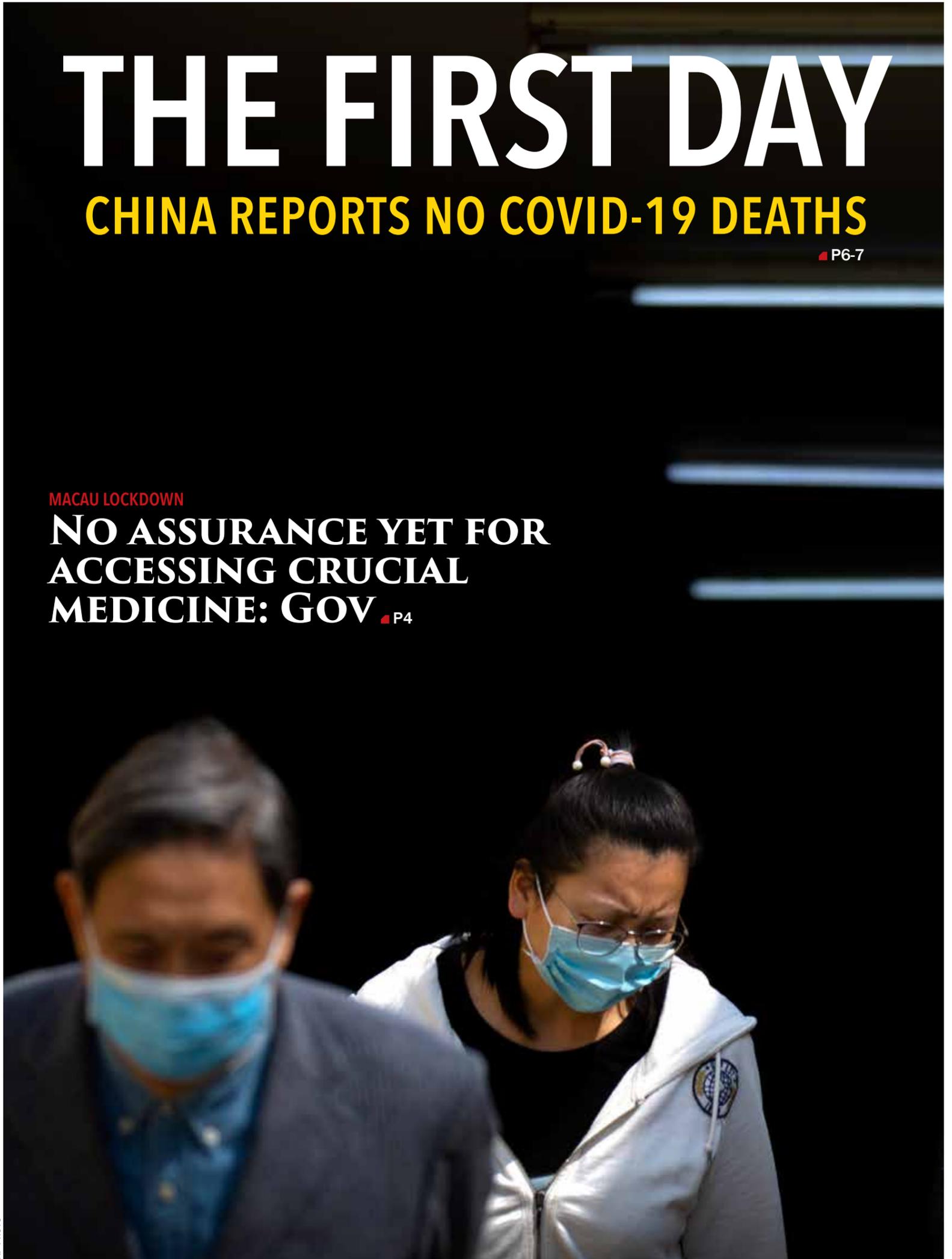
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## NO ASSURANCE YET FOR ACCESSING CRUCIAL MEDICINE: GOV

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AP PHOTO

# ATFPM PROPOSES 'EXTRA SALARY' AND 'HARDSHIP ALLOWANCE' FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macau Civil Servants Association (ATFPM) met yesterday with the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng, proposing that an extra salary be granted to all frontline workers that have been involved in the battle against Covid-19 and treatment of infected patients, among other proposals.

The CE is currently touring several associations to collect ideas and suggestions ahead of the presentation of the new government policy address.

The association, led by the lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho, took the opportunity to propose to the CE the enforcement of several measures related to the livelihood of civil servants and in connection with the current situation of the outbreak of Covid-19.

Regarding the exceptional extra payment for frontline workers, the president of the ATFPM said that it would work as an acknowledgment of the workers' sacrifice and the risks taken, as well as an encouragement and recognition of their courage.

The association also took the opportunity to revive an old ambition from its directly elected lawmakers, who have expressed the need for the creation of a "hardship allowance" for civil servants involved in high-risk duties, such as medical staff and security forces, at the Legislative Assembly on several occasions.

The idea, which has been aired several times, namely during the occurrence of natural catastrophes, such as typhoons, is gaining new strength with the



Representatives from ATFPM with lawmaker Pereira Coutinho (center)

Covid-19 outbreak, with the association calling for a special subsidy as well as a reinforced insurance plan for all workers dealing with epidemic situations.

"We propose the creation of a hardship allowance for some professions, as the current epidemic situation has highlighted the need to create this form of subsidy as well as life insurance for an added number of workers, such as the one in place for the members of the Public Security Police Force Tactical Intervention Unit," Pereira Coutinho noted.

Coutinho also said that the ATFPM thinks that the civil ser-

vants on the frontline of the battle against the disease should be considered as a group to be targeted with screening tests for Covid-19 as has happened previously with hotel and casinos shuttle bus drivers.

## SURVEY ON UNEMPLOYMENT NEEDED

Besides the topics relating to the rights of civil servants, the ATFPM also brought to the attention of the CE other topics related to resident workers and the impacts of Covid-19 on local job conditions.

The association called for a survey to identify the real num-

ber of residents who are currently unemployed or at the risk of losing their jobs so they may be immediately repositioned into other job openings in the short to mid-term.

For Pereira Coutinho, is important to ascertain how many people were rendered unemployed by the pandemic and also list people who are unemployed and classify them into two groups: those who have concluded university studies and those without training or academic qualifications.

The association also noted that it is important to survey how many people are currently enrolled in training in the healthcare

field so that when their training finishes, they will be able to immediately serve as reinforcements within the healthcare field.

Also regarding unemployment and lay-off situations caused by the Covid-19 outbreak, the ATFPM called on the CE to promote changes and reform to public administration to ban any dismissals during periods of extreme crisis and to create a temporary social emergency unemployment allowance for all the workers that have been dismissed due to the effects of the pandemic.

The association also proposed that all housing rental contracts that expire during the period of the pandemic be automatically extended until after the pandemic is considered finished, to avoid situations in which people are forced to move house and find another house during a time at which they supposed to avoid going out as much as possible, among other issues.

Questioned by the Times on the feedback received by the CE on the topics in discussion, the president of the ATFPM said that the CE "was receptive to all our proposals. He said he will think about them," adding, "Our proposals are good but a little hard to take [by the higher-ranked officials] as they are not used to watching out for the most vulnerable."

The CE will continue visiting several civil society associations in the upcoming days, ahead of the final presentation of the Policy Address for this year, which is expected to happen later this month at the Legislative Assembly.

# MGTO: Tourism fund not to be used to subsidize tour guides

**T**HE local government has no plan to use the city's tourism fund as means to subsidize tour guides' income, according to Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO).

Yesterday, the tourism boss told local media that the tourism fund is mainly being used to

rent quarantine hotels, to arrange special transportation between Hong Kong and Macau, and to transport people from ports to medical examination centers. The local government is using the majority of the fund to cover expenses related to Covid-19 operations at different stages, including preparation for the

tourism industry's recovery post Covid-19.

Yesterday morning, a group of tour guides submitted a petition of suggestion to the government headquarters urging the local government to distribute cash support for five months, in addition to their paid training programs. They say the money should come from the recently announ-

ced government's economic relief fund of 10 billion patacas.

The group claimed that Macau has over 6,000 tour guides, of whom nearly 1,000 are "frontline tour guides". The group is complaining about having "barely any income" since mid-2019.

The representatives hope that the local government

can provide temporary jobs for tour guides, such as arranging for them to work inside quarantine hotels. The association accuses the local government's existing financial support of not including tour guides.

The tourism director expressed her understanding of the work situation and revealed that the local government has invited tour

guides to work in quarantine hotels, with more than ten of them accepting the invitation.

However, highlighting the tourism fund, Fernandes stated that she believes there are alternative support programs available for the group's income. She hopes that, when the pandemic is over, the city's tourism can relate more to healthcare. JZ

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**Times**

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JULIE ZHU

**H**UNDREDS of the Macau SAR government's own properties are being left unused, with lawmakers being given an "unacceptable" explanation of the situation.

Yesterday, the Follow-up Committee of Public Administration Affairs of the Legislative Assembly (AL) met with government representatives for a discussion about government-owned properties as well as the government's property rental expenditure.

Currently, several government departments have been leaving some of their own properties empty, without either being occupied by the departments themselves or rented to other people.

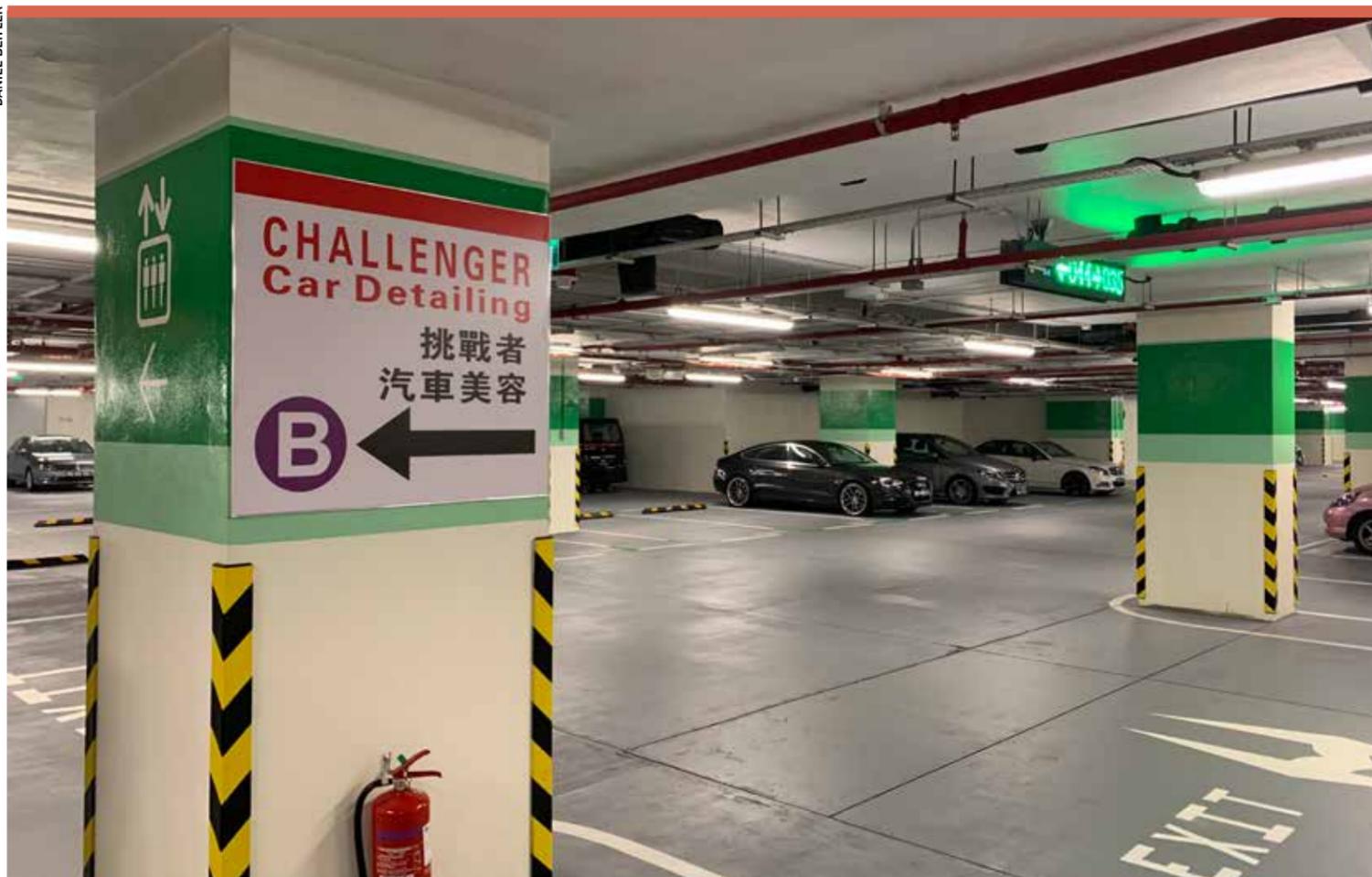
The Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) and the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) have the biggest number of unused properties, 103 of which are parking spaces. Government representatives explained to the lawmakers that these parking lots were far away from the offices of relevant departments, making it difficult for the bureau's workers to use them. The government representatives also resorted to other claims, such as saying that parking lots are located in various places and are not gathered together, making it difficult for the bureau to utilize them. However, these reasons, in the opinion of the lawmakers, are unacceptable because the bureau could have rented such parking spaces to other people.

According to Mak Soi Kun, some of these parking lots have not been used in ten years.

In addition, at the Pac On multifunctional government building, approximately 200 recently built parking lots are unused because

# 'Unacceptable' explanation over gov't's unused properties

DANIEL BEITLER



it was inconvenient to rent them to non-government parties, as the surrounding facilities are used to store government-owned items.

However, public departments are offering their own properties at a below-market charge to their own workers, such as the DSF, which is charging only 700 patacas per parking space. These cheap parking spaces are rented to civil

servants working for the relevant department. Lawmakers hope that these departments will consider increasing the price.

Aside from the unused properties, the SAR government spent, on average, over 800 million patacas per year from 2017 to 2019 renting offices, parking spaces and storage facilities.

Among all government depart-

ments, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and DSF have the largest area of rented storage facilities. The Health Bureau and IC are paying the largest amount of money to rent storage facilities compared to other government departments.

Regarding parking spaces, the Public Security Police Force and CTT have more than other government departments. The parking

spaces of the Macao Foundation and the The Protocol, Public Relations and External Affairs Office were priced the highest per square meter.

The Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau is paying a total of 4.95 million patacas per month to rent offices. This amount is the largest among all public departments.

## TSI DISMISSES APPEALS ON SIX EXPIRED LAND CONCESSIONS

**T**HE Court of Second Instance (TSI) has dismissed the appeals filed with the court in a case in which the government declared the expiration of a land concession, as well as five others cases in which the executive ordered evictions from the land plots, the Office of the President of the Court of Final Appeal said in a statement.

The first case relates to the land concession of a plot located at Avenida de Kwong Tung, in Taipa, and referenced as BT12.

The land was contracted to "Companhia de Investimento Predial Hoi Sun, Limitada" for a period of 42 months, which

expired on June 16, 2003. On May 15, 2015, the Chief Executive issued an order declaring the expiration of the land concession due to the non-use of the land under the conditions contractually defined and by motives that are accountable to the concessionaire.

Regarding the five cases relating to land eviction, they refer to plots located in the Nam Vam area, referenced as plot 3 from Zone A, plot 1 and plot 3 from Zone C, and plot 9 and plot 4 from Zone A.

On May 3, 2018, the concessions of the five above-mentioned plots of land were declared expired and about two months la-

ter the Secretary for Transport and Public Works issued an order ordering the voluntary vacancy of the plots within 60 days, saying that otherwise they would proceed with an eviction.

In the six cases, the concessionaires appealed the respective orders to the TSI where the panel of judges that compose the court, after analyzing the appeals, decided to dismiss all of them, upholding the government decisions.

At stake are a total of almost 17,000 square meters of land, of which the government is preparing to regain possession. **RM**

## LAWMAKER URGES TEMPORARY VISA EXTENSION FOR NON-LOCAL WORKERS

**L**AWMAKER Wong Kit Cheng is calling on the local government to consider benevolent measures for non-local workers who face problems with their visas and lodging.

The lawmaker hopes that the local government will extend visa permits for some of the non-local workers whose visas have expired, or arrange accommodation for them while they remain in the city unemployed.

Currently, Macau's immigration policies do not restrict non-local workers from leaving the territory. However, both mainland China and countries that neighbor Macau have im-

plemented strict entry policies due to the spread of Covid-19, making it difficult for Macau's non-local workers to return to their home countries.

In February, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong said that the local government cares about non-local workers' accommodation in Macau. The secretary urged employment associations and employers to arrange proper shelter for non-local workers.

Separately, the Women's General Association of Macau hopes that the local government can escalate promotional campaigns aimed at non-local workers

regarding Macau's law, with campaigns made available in multiple languages.

The Think Tank of United Citizens wants the local government to further contact property management organizations in Macau because a large number of non-local workers are living in the local community. The association believes that the local government should communicate more with foreign groups in order to comprehend and collect more accurate statistics relating to the nationality and employment types of foreign workers, and also that it should explain the details of Macau's law to such workers. **JZ**

ANTHONY LAM

# SSM GIVES NO ASSURANCE TO ACCESS CRUCIAL MEDICINE

A shortage of essential medications is expected to gradually affect local patients as both sea and land public passenger transports between the two Special Administrative Regions have been halted.

Lo Iek Long, medical director of the Conde São Januário Hospital (CHCSJ), did not give a direct response to a question about the existence of a mechanism facilitating access of life-saving medicine not available in Macau.

Some local patients have been on medications crucial to their therapy prescribed by doctors in other places that are not accessible in Macau. The current Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to stricter immigration control, will likely present a challenge to these patients.

The Times has recently learned from a reader that his parent's medication is running out. The medication, which is not available in Macau, is a crucial part of an ongoing targeted therapy.

According to the reader, the CHCSJ is aware of the therapy. The hospital has been monitoring the condition of the patient, although the patient was not delivered to Hong Kong through the formal government scheme of outsourced medical assistance.

Under the aforementioned scheme, patients with urgent medical needs that are beyond the capability of the local medical system to address will be sent to neighboring cities, in most cases Hong Kong, for assistance.

However, there are some criteria that the patients must meet in order to become eligible for the scheme. One of the criteria is that the illness must be life-threatening.

The reader is not confident that his parent's case would be categorized as such a case, but at least the medication has been working on the patient.

In previous press conferences, the government has stressed the importance of respecting the immigration policies

ANTHONY LAM



in place in other places and warned against bringing further infection risks to the city by traveling. People are now in search of ways to gain access to the medicines without visiting Hong Kong.

Despite the lack of reference to an actual mechanism in Lo's answer, the medical doctor acknowledged the needs of these patients by "putting himself in these patients' shoes."

"Indeed, when they're in certain therapy, they do hope to carry on with the therapy," Lo said. "But of course, the current border control measures may make it difficult for them to achieve that."

The medical director pledged that the Health Bureau (SSM) would offer help to these patients with full effort. He

also noted that needs have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

"I believe we need to consider it case-by-case: what type of medication they are on and whether this medication is really inaccessible in Macau; as well as whether we have other appropriate substitute plans," Lo explained. "All these factors need to be analyzed along with the patients."

He also recommended two ways that these patients can help ease their problems. Either they can contact the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center to file an inquiry, which will then be referred to a concerned specialist department; or in an emergency situation, they can approach the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department

of the CHCSJ for help. The doctor stressed that the A&E Department is open 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

There was no mention, however, of how the Health Bureau will help source the crucial medicine absent in Macau.

## ONE MORE HOTEL WRAPPING UP MISSION

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), represented by official Inês Chan, announced yesterday that another designated hotel has accomplished its mission hosting quarantined guests. It is the Treasure Hotel, located on mid-hill opposite the airport.

Now that the hotel has completed its mission, there are currently nine hotels hosting

guests undergoing 14 days of monitored quarantine. Chan disclosed that a total of 1,469 people are now under quarantine at the designated hotels. Among them, 1,208 are Macau residents, while the remaining 261 are non-resident workers or tourists.

At the legislative session yesterday morning, a representative from the Tourism Fund disclosed that the quarantine hotel mission would likely cost the government about 50 million patacas. Chan added some comments to the information given at the daily press conference yesterday. She said that the amount is subject to change as the pandemic is still going on. Any change to the situation may bring about the need for more or fewer quarantine facilities.

## Gov't to start accepting applications for salary subsidy today

THE application period for the salary subsidy scheme administered by the government for the first quarter of 2020, subsidizing employees over age 40, among other criteria, begins today and will run until May 4. This year's scheme has been

expanded to cover non-permanent residents as well.

A criterion is that the applicant must be an employee holding a Macau permanent or non-permanent resident identity card obtained on or before December 31 last year. To estab-

lish employment status, payments to the Social Security Fund should be current.

Furthermore, applicants who work in manufacturing or in the export of textiles, clothing or leather goods must have worked for at least 128 hours per month

during the first quarter of the year. Applicants from other industries must have worked for at least 152 hours per month during that period.

Registrants who are residents with a special needs status with the Social Welfare Bureau are eligible for the scheme

if they have also been registered as employed with the Social Security Fund, hold a Macau ID issued on or by December 31, 2019, and have worked for at least 128 hours per month in the first quarter, regardless of their industry.

Application forms can

be obtained at the Financial Services Bureau and a number of government public service centers. Additionally, the Macao Federation of Trade Unions and the Macau Neighborhood Association are distributing forms at some of their offices. **AL**

# Developer of The 13 requests a 'standstill' for being unable to pay debt

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE developer and promoter of the troubled The 13 Hotel has requested a standstill from its bank to avoid the enforcement of security and liquidation of the company, after the bank required the firm to make an immediate payment of HKD2.48 billion.

The amount includes the entire principal amount with interest and follows the amount of HKD470 million, which was supposed to be paid to the bank on March 31.

South Shore Holdings issued a statement this week admitting that the firm could not repay the debt, noting that neither "the borrowing entity nor the company can repay it at this time."

It revealed that it has applied for a standstill to the bank and that it is "in essence seeking assurances from the bank that it will not take imminent steps either to enforce its security over The 13 Hotel or to liquidate the company, and envisages working closely with the bank to achieve



an orderly divestment of the company's interests in The 13 Hotel."

The company also stated that it has reached an agreement with the prospective buyers of the 50% stake in hotel to extend the long-

vstop date from April 14, 2020 to June 14, 2020.

The move was made in order to ensure fulfillment of certain conditions under the Sale and Purchase Agreement.

However, it noted that the re-

cent delays were due to the "severe adverse effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the state of the market, in Macau and generally."

In October last year, South Shore announced that it had an agreement that could lead to the

disposal of a 40% interest in the subsidiary that owns the hotel project in southern Cotai.

The stake was valued at HKD750 million.

In August last year, South Shore revealed that it was in discussions regarding the disposal of a 60% stake in the subsidiary with an associate of a substantial shareholder of the company. The 13 Hotel held a partial opening in late August of 2018 without a casino. The troubled property was originally scheduled to open by the end of the first quarter of 2017, but the operating firm postponed its opening several times.

Touted as the "world's most luxurious hotel," the hotel partially opened in August of 2018, when 200 duplex suites and villas became available.

The hotel complex had already been a huge drain on South Shore Holdings. The company previously announced that in the six months prior to their September 30, 2018 filing that they had lost USD55.38 million. This loss was 18 times more than their loss at the previous point in 2017.

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# Virus puts world in intensive care; state of emergency

LORI HINNANT  
& DANICA KIRKA, LONDON

**B**RITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson was in intensive care yesterday fighting the coronavirus, while authorities in New York and elsewhere in Europe hoped that an apparent plateau of deaths and new hospitalizations signaled that key epicenters in the global pandemic had turned a corner.

The 55-year-old Johnson, the world's first known head of government to fall ill with the virus, was conscious in a London hospital and needed oxygen overnight but was not on a ventilator, Cabinet minister Michael Gove said. Britain's foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, has been designated to take over with Johnson sidelined by an illness that can be debilitating even for those with access to the world's best medical care.

Japan's prime minister declared a monthlong state of emergency for Tokyo and six other prefectures after a spike in infections there but it came in the form of a stay-at-home request — not an order — and violators will not be penalized. Japan has the world's oldest population, a worrying target for a virus that has been killing the elderly at much higher rates than other age groups.

In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the first, faint



Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Dominic Raab, arrives at 10 Downing Street to lead the cabinet



Hyde



Det

signs the outbreak there may be nearing its peak but said it's not time yet to relax social distancing restrictions.

"The numbers look like it may be turning," Cuomo said.

The state has averaged just un-

der 600 deaths daily for the past four days. Though horrific, the somewhat steady daily totals were seen as a positive sign. Cuomo also reported that the number of new people entering New York hospitals daily has dropped, as has

the number of critically ill patients needing ventilators. But he said the strains on the state's health care workers were still at unsustainable levels.

The nation's top infectious disease specialist, Dr. Anthony

Fauci, was cautiously optimistic, saying that in New York, "what we have been doing has been working."

China, the first country to go into lockdown and among the strictest, reported no new deaths

## Boris Johnson spends night in ICU not on ventilator

**B**RITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson spent the night in the intensive care unit of a London hospital with the new coronavirus, but is not on a ventilator, a senior government minister said yesterday, as pressure grew on the government to release more details of Johnson's condition.

Johnson was admitted to St. Thomas' Hospital late Sunday, 10 days after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, the first major world leader to be confirmed to have the virus. He was moved to the ICU Monday after his condition deteriorated.

Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove said Johnson is being given oxygen but "the prime minister is not on a ventilator."

He said he did not know whether the prime minister had pneumonia, which often develops in patients hit hardest by the coronavirus.

Gove said Johnson is "receiving the very, very best care from the team at St

Thomas' and our hopes and prayers are with him and with his family."

"We're desperately hoping that Boris can make the speediest possible recovery," said Gove, who is in isolation at home after a family member showed mild coronavirus symptoms.

Johnson's fiancée, Carrie Symonds, who is pregnant, is herself recovering from coronavirus symptoms.

Britain has no official post of deputy prime minister, but Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has been designated to take over temporarily.

"The government's business will continue," Raab said late Monday. He said Johnson had asked him "to deputize for him where needed in driving forward the government's plans to defeat coronavirus."

The deterioration of Johnson's health took many in Britain by surprise. On Monday afternoon he tweeted that he was in good spirits and thanked the National



Health Service for taking care of him and others with the disease.

The government was facing calls Tuesday to be more transparent about Johnson's condition amid claims they had underplayed its seriousness.

It's not common for the health details of British prime ministers to be made public, except at times of crisis. Even then, information has sometimes been scanty. When Winston Churchill suffered a debilitating stroke in

1953, the government kept it secret until Churchill recovered.

Johnson had been quarantined in his Downing Street residence since being diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 26.

He continued to work throughout his illness, to the concern of some of his colleagues. With the U.K. still approaching the peak of the coronavirus outbreak, and the government facing accusations that it did not act soon enough to put

the country into lockdown, Johnson and his ministers are under intense pressure.

Johnson chaired daily meetings on the outbreak until Sunday. He released several video messages during his 10 days in isolation urging Britons to stay home and observe social distancing measures to help slow the spread of the virus.

Concerns had been growing about Johnson's welfare ever since he posted a message Friday in which he appeared red-eyed and flushed, saying that he was feeling better, though was still feverish.

Johnson's former communications director, Will Walden, said the prime minister tended to try to soldier on through illness rather than taking a break.

"He's pretty stoic and can be a bit bloody-minded about that kind of thing," Walden told the BBC.

News that Johnson had been transferred to intensive care drew an outpouring

of support from around the world.

U.S. President Donald Trump said "Americans are all praying for his recovery."

"He's been a really good friend," Trump said during a White House press briefing. "He's been really something very special — strong, resolute, doesn't quit, doesn't give up."

Trump said he asked two "leading companies" to contact officials in London about therapeutics that could be of help. He did not identify the companies, but said "we have contacted all of Boris's doctors, and we'll see what's going to take place, but they are ready to go."

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a tweet that he was sending his support to Johnson, his family and "the British people at this difficult time. I wish him well."

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a telegram wishing Johnson a full and quick recovery, the Kremlin

# Emergency



Raab, India



Detroit, US

however, have been skeptical of the figures coming out of China.

New coronavirus cases were also dropping in the European hotspots of Italy and Spain. In France, although daily deaths spiked to a record of 833, the rate of new intensive care hospitalizations has slowed dramatically.

The final travel restrictions on residents in Wuhan are due to be lifted Wednesday and Denmark said it planned to reopen schools next week for students up to age 11 — a development that feels impossibly distant elsewhere in the world.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte promised residents that they will soon “reap the fruit of these sacrifices” in personal liberties, though he declined to say when a nationwide lockdown would be lifted. Italy has the world's highest death toll — over 16,500 — but intensive care units in the north are no longer airlifting patients to other regions.

Worldwide, more than 1.3 million people have been confirmed infected and nearly 75,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. The true numbers are certainly much higher, because of limited testing, different ways nations count the dead and deliberate underreporting by some governments. Deaths in the U.S. neared 11,000, with more than 368,000 confirmed infections.

For most people, the virus causes mild to moderate symptoms such as fever and cough. But for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and lead to death. More than 285,000 people have recovered worldwide.

Stocks jumped on Wall Street and around the world on hopes that the pandemic could be slowing. Global shares were up yesterday, as well as Dow futures, after the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained more than 1,600 points, or nearly 8%, on Monday.

The latest data suggests social distancing appears to be working in some countries, and better than expected.

One of the main models on the outbreak, the University of Washington's, is now projecting about 82,000 U.S. deaths through early August, or 12% fewer

than previously forecast, with the highest number of daily deaths occurring on April 16. The model relies on much more robust data from Italy and Spain and from hospitals.

One unusual lockdown exception was Wisconsin, which was asking hundreds of thousands of voters yesterday to ignore a stay-at-home order in the midst of a pandemic to participate in its presidential primary.

South Korea said it will soon announce guidelines for hospitals on experimental coronavirus treatments using donated blood from patients who survived. Kwon Jun-wook from South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the guide will be drawn from the country's experience with similar treatments on MERS virus patients in 2015.

In further restrictions, China and Russia decided to close their land border and river port near Vladivostok following the discovery of 59 confirmed cases.

But as effective as the lockdowns may be, they come at a steep toll, especially for the poor.

In a housing complex in the Moroccan city of Sale, over 900 people live in crowded rooms without running water or incomes. While the North African country entered total lockdown in mid-March, self-isolation and social distancing are a luxury that few families in this complex can afford.

In Sale, children hang around the communal courtyard and run through narrow alleyways. Families share one room where they wash clothes and fill buckets of water at public fountains. Warda, a mother of three at the complex, knows the risks but sees no alternatives.

“I am scared for my children. I have to lock them indoors and stay with them, but how am I supposed to feed them?” she asked.

In a move to boost spirits in New Zealand, the prime minister clarified the definition of who is considered essential workers.

“You will be pleased to know that we do consider both the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny to be essential workers,” Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said just a few days before Easter Sunday. AP

AP PHOTO



## WUHAN

# FARMERS STRUGGLE AS CROPS WITHER FROM TRAVEL LIMITS

SAM MCNEIL, HUANGPI

**STUCK** in the same bind as many other Chinese farmers whose crops are rotting in their fields, Jiang Yuwu is preparing to throw out a 500-ton harvest of lotus root because anti-coronavirus controls are preventing traders from getting to his farm near Wuhan, where the global pandemic started.

Chinese leaders are eager to revive the economy, but the bleak situation in Huangpi in Wuhan's outskirts highlights the damage to farmers struggling to stay afloat after the country shut down for two months.

Authorities are easing travel controls after declaring victory over the virus, but flowers and some other crops deemed nonessential are withering while farmers wait for permission to move them to market.

Most transportation in and around Wuhan, a city of 11 million people in central China's Hubei province, was suspended Jan. 23 to fight the coronavirus. Trucks carrying food supplies deemed essential were allowed through.

Jiang's lotus roots, a starchy, popular ingredient in Chinese cooking, and some other crops were not included.

“Vendors wanted to come and buy lotus roots but couldn't make it,” said Jiang, 57, dressed in blue overalls and knee-high ru-

bber boots. “If we don't do our best, in the second half of the year, we will barely survive.”

The final restrictions on residents of Wuhan leaving the city are due to be lifted Wednesday, but farmers and companies still are working to restore supply chains that carry food to crowded cities and raw materials to factories.

The official China News Service reported that Hubei will create “green channels” to get production supplies to farmers and crops to market. Jiang and his neighbors in this area about 30 kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Wuhan's city center said they still were waiting for clearance.

Guo Changqi, who raises flowers for sale in Wuhan, said officials visited to ask vegetable farmers about their losses. Not him.

Guo said he has thrown away more than 20,000 pots of flowers, which usually sell for 5 to 6 yuan (70 to 85 cents) each at his in a wholesale market in Wuhan. The market has reopened, but there are few customers, he said.

“We live on flowers,” said Guo, dressed in a wide-brimmed straw hat as he walked past rows of pots of dead flowers. “If we have no way to sell them, life will get harder.”

Farmers are hoping for government help.

“We can do nothing about the epidemic,” said

Jiang. “If the government could find a way to sell lotus roots, it could minimize our losses, but so far they haven't done anything.”

The lotus roots grow under knee-deep water in Jiang's 20 football field-size ponds. Traders who supply markets as far away as Shenzhen, adjacent to Hong Kong in the southeast, usually pay 0.90 to 1 yuan (12 to 14 cents) per 500 grams (per pound).

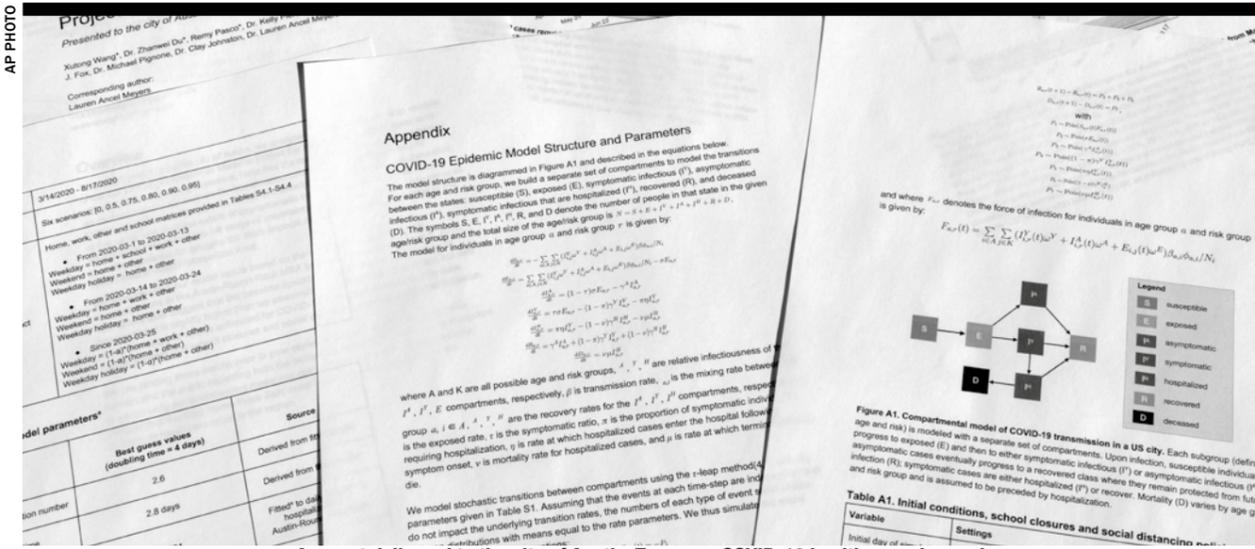
Some farmers are finding temporary outlets for sales through volunteers in Wuhan helping the elderly and other vulnerable people get food supplies. They buy direct from farmers and arrange delivery to apartment complexes.

Online grocery orders surged in Wuhan and other cities after families were ordered to stay home. The government also arranged food deliveries. But some residents had no access to websites and smartphone apps.

“Especially for empty-nesters, they didn't know how to buy food from this channel even though they had money,” said volunteer Luo Hao.

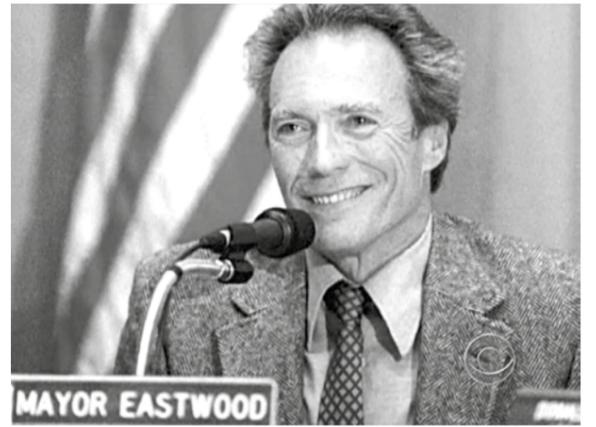
Jiang's neighbor Dong Yumei, who raises cabbages, said her sales have fallen by 80%. Most of her business now is with the volunteer network in Wuhan.

“The farmers here are so nice and the vegetables are cheaper,” said Luo. “They're also fresh from the farm.” AP



A report delivered to the city of Austin, Texas, on COVID-19 health care demand

this day in history



1986 EASTWOOD VOTED MAYOR BY LANDSLIDE

Residents of the Californian town of Carmel have overwhelmingly voted for actor Clint Eastwood as their mayor.

The turnout was double the norm in the picturesque seaside town, 80 miles (128 kilometres) south of San Francisco.

The 55-year-old Hollywood star got nearly three-quarters of the vote.

He polled 2,166 against the 799 votes cast for current mayor Charlotte Townsend, a former librarian.

Two of Clint Eastwood's supporters were also elected on to Carmel's local council, giving him control of the five-member body.

Mr Eastwood, a resident of Carmel for 14 years, decided to run for mayor after a series of clashes with the council.

After being refused planning permission to renovate his restaurant, the movie star took legal action and had the decision overturned.

His campaign centred on relaxing the strict controls on business in the town of 4,000 residents.

His famous Dirty Harry movie catchphrase "Make my day" was put to good use on bumper-stickers and T-shirts urging voters to back him.

The millionaire actor spent more than \$40,000 on his campaign compared to the \$3,000 spent by Mrs Townsend who has been the town's mayor for four years.

After his victory, Clint Eastwood said his first priority would be to restructure some of the "punitive" by-laws in the town, such as those against fast-food restaurants and frisbee throwing.

But he said he was not aiming to emulate Ronald Reagan and make the transition from acting to US president.

Mr Eastwood said being mayor of Carmel was his highest priority.

"I'm taking a two year hiatus from films. This is one politician who doesn't have ambitions to leave Carmel. This is where I belong," he said.

Clint Eastwood takes over as mayor on Tuesday.

The monthly \$200 (£133) salary is a big pay cut from the \$6m per movie he usually commands.

Courtesy BBC News

Modeling coronavirus: 'Uncertainty is the only certainty'

SETH BORENSTEIN & CARLA K. JOHNSON

A statistical model cited by the White House generated a slightly less grim figure yesterday [Macau time] for a first wave of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. — a projection designed to help officials plan for the worst, including having enough hospital staff, beds and ventilators.

The only problem with this bit of relatively good news? It's almost certainly wrong. All models are wrong. Some are just less wrong than others — and those are the ones that public health officials rely on.

Welcome to the grimace-and-bear-it world of modeling.

"The key thing is that you want to know what's happening in the future," said NASA top climate modeler Gavin Schmidt. "Absent a time machine you're going to have to use a model."

Weather forecasters use models. Climate scientists use them. Supermarkets use them.

As leaders try to get a handle on the coronavirus outbreak, they are turning to numerous mathematical models to help them figure out what might — key word, might — happen next and what they should try to do now to contain and prepare for the spread.

The model updated this week by the Univer-

sity of Washington — the one most often mentioned by U.S. health officials at White House briefings — predicts daily deaths in the U.S. will hit a peak in mid-April then decline through the summer.

Their latest projection shows that anywhere from 49,431 to 136,401 Americans will die in the first wave, which will last into the summer. That's a huge range of 87,000. But only a few days earlier the same team had a range of nearly 138,000, with 177,866 as the top number of deaths. Officials credit social distancing.

The latest calculations are based on better data on how the virus acts, more information on how people act and more cities as examples. For example, new data from Italy and Spain suggest social distancing is working even better than expected to stop the spread of the virus.

The time it took for the epidemic to peak — that is, for those deaths to start declining — was shorter in those Italian and Spanish cities than it was Wuhan, China, said Dr. Christopher Murray of the University of Washington, who developed the model.

So how does modeling work? Take everything we know about how the coronavirus is spreading, when it's deadly and when it's not, when symptoms show and when they don't.

Then factor in everything we know about how

people are reacting, social distancing, stay-at-home orders and other squishy human factors.

Now add everything we know about testing, treating the disease and equipment shortages. Finally, mix in large dollops of uncertainty at every level.

Squeeze all those thousands of data points into incredibly complex mathematical equations and voila, here's what's going to happen next with the pandemic. Except, remember, there's a huge margin of error: For the prediction of U.S. deaths, the range is larger than the population of Wilmington, Delaware.

"No model is perfect, but most models are somewhat useful," said John Allen Paulos, a professor of math at Temple University and author of several books about math and everyday life. "But we can't confuse the model with reality."

One challenge for modelers is dealing with seeing death totals from overburdened public health departments. A state's data might show big swings in deaths — but only because a backlog of reports showed up all at once. The tremendous leaps in deaths in a single day could throw off predictions.

Another problem, said University of Texas disease modeler Lauren Meyer, is that most of the pandemic models, including hers, are based on how influenza acts, and that is different

from this new coronavirus.

Most models use calculus to factor in "things you can't predict," Meyer said. To her, they are simple equations, ones that a person who knows advanced calculus can figure out. To the rest of the world, it's Greek. Literally full of sigmas, phis, omegas and other symbols.

Even with all of the uncertainty, "it's much better than shooting from the hip," said Meyer, who is churning out iterations of what she calls a "workhorse model" of COVID-19 for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Data-driven models are the best evidence we have."

Because of the large fudge factor, it's smart not to look at one single number — the minimum number of deaths, or the maximum for that matter — but instead at the range of confidence, where there's a 95% chance reality will fall, mathematician Paulos said. For the University of Washington model, that's from 50,000 to 136,000 deaths.

Uncertainty will shrink with time, but never really go away — just like in hurricane forecasts, when the cone of uncertainty shrinks as the storm gets closer to making landfall, but remains large.

"Uncertainty is the only certainty there is," Paulos said. "And knowing how to live with insecurity is the only security." AP

IN CONTEXT

In spite of a promise to devote himself full-time to Carmel, Clint Eastwood made two films while serving as the town's mayor. He decided not to run for a second term and stepped down in 1988. Other US celebrities to enter public office since Ronald Reagan include former singer Sonny Bono who became a congressman in 1994 and movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger who was elected governor of California in 2003.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
You might not be feeling all that great at the start of the day, but other people sure think you're looking great! This confirmation of your attractiveness will do wonders for your physical and mental health.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
This could be a politically delicate situation, and they have to have their say. Let them feel like they're doing something, and then continue down your planned path.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
A nice surprise toward the afternoon will remind you of how much you're loved by the friends you've chosen to be in your life. You're on the right track, and you totally know it.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Put the blinders on if you have to, because you need to stay focused on what is ahead of you. Resist anyone's invitation to "try something a little bit different" today.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
It's time to shift your focus and start dealing with the opposite end of the spectrum. If you're obsessed with celebrities and gossip websites, check out a news source and get informed about current issues.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Just smile and thank them for their interest, but make it clear to them that you're in charge of your life, and, right or wrong, your decisions are the ones that will guide your life.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Solitude can reignite your individualism and remind you that, ultimately, you're the only person who can take you where you want to go in life. Get back in touch with the things you (and only you) want for yourself.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Today, you might have to watch yourself when you're exposed to your greatest temptation. If it's cookies or cake, you should preemptively fill up on vegetables so you won't weaken.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Are you hungry for a new adventure? Of course you are! There is so much in life to discover, and today is just as good as any other day to start exploring! Travel is a great idea...

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
There will be plenty of time in the coming days to go off on your own and think or relax. For now, you will need to try to find happiness in the energy generated when you're the center of attention.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Propose that things go their way this time and your way next time. You don't have to roll over and let them walk all over you, but you could give a little bit more.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Ask a few penetrating questions, and you'll love what you hear. The effort you make today can yield exciting results, so be ready to respond at a moment's notice.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

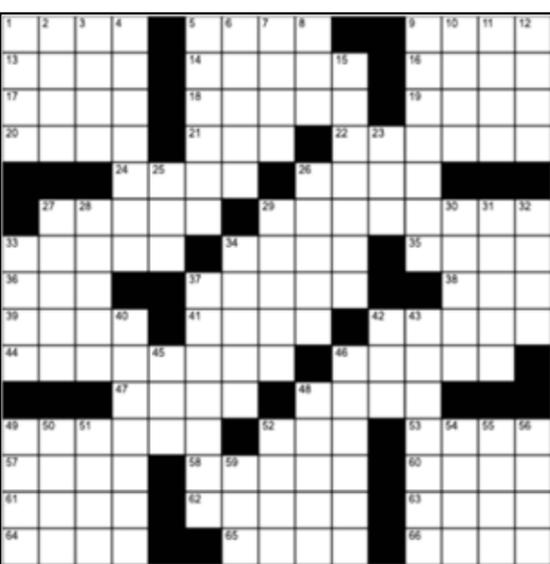
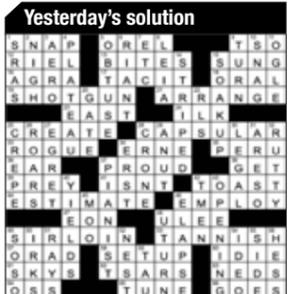
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-5	8	clear
Harbin	-21	-9	clear
Tianjin	-5	6	clear
Urumqi	-8	-1	clear
Xi'an	-4	10	clear
Lhasa	-3	14	clear
Chengdu	3	13	cloudy
Chongqing	4	14	cloudy
Kunming	3	11	drizzle
Nanjing	-3	8	clear
Shanghai	0	8	clear
Wuhan	-3	12	cloudy
Hangzhou	-2	9	clear
Taipei	9	12	cloudy
Guangzhou	6	15	cloudy
Hong Kong	10	16	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
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- Belgrade native; 5- Nile biters; 9- School orgs.; 13- Olive genus; 14- Cursed; 16- Type of tomato; 17- Monetary unit of Cambodia; 18- "Amadeus" director Forman; 19- The Emerald Isle; 20- Baby powder; 21- Mil. address; 22- Exam taker; 24- Shrek, e.g.; 26- "Star Trek" role; 27- Capital city of Yemen; 29- Unable to hear and speak; 33- Antiknock fluid; 34- Wedding cake feature; 35- Slips up; 36- Cleaning agent; 37- Dawdle; 38- Blast; 39- Woeful word; 41- Fixes illegally; 42- Glove material; 44- Tonic; 46- Swarm; 47- Final, ultimate; 48- Zingy taste; 49- Lying on the back; 52- Male cat; 53- This, in Tijuana; 57- Long poem, such as those attributed to Homer; 58- Reef material; 60- Dweeb; 61- \_\_\_ Bell; 62- That group; 63- Manitoba Indigenous People; 64- \_\_\_ impasse; 65- Mongrel dog; 66- Tibetan oxen;

**DOWN:** 1- Kind; 2- Charles Lamb's nom de plume; 3- Film spool; 4- Gallery in a theater; 5- Capital of Eritrea; 6- Steal; 7- Ralph Lauren brand; 8- Hit sign; 9- Be unwarrantably bold; 10- Legal wrong; 11- French friend; 12- All there; 15- Tidal river; 23- Pixie; 25- Guy's partner; 26- Prophets; 27- Elegance; 28- In the future; 29- Sad song; 30- Exhorted; 31- Commerce; 32- "\_\_\_ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 33- Jack of "Rio Lobo"; 34- Spoil; 37- Divide into three parts; 40- Nonmetallic element; 42- Junior; 43- Insistence; 45- Metal container; 46- Small village; 48- Browned sliced bread; 49- Stiff bristle; 50- \_\_\_ the crack of dawn; 51- Size of type; 52- Drop \_\_\_ (moon); 54- Lab fluids; 55- Arduous journey; 56- Citrus drinks; 59- Bit of resistance;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



**FOR SALE**

**Ocean Gardens Fragrant Court, Taipa**  
HK\$24,000,000 3,500 ft<sup>2</sup> 4 1/2 3

**FOR RENT**

**Manhattan Apartment, Taipa**  
\$20,800/mth 1,626 ft<sup>2</sup> 3 1/2 2 1/2

**FOR SALE**

- [Macau] Apartment w/ balcony 2 1/2 1 1/2  
840 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,580,000 (ref: 20016003)
- [Macau] Waterfront Duet Studio Apartment 1 1/2  
469 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,980,000 (ref: 20016001)
- [Coloane] Hoi Wan Garden Apartment 2 1/2 1 1/2  
900 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,900,000 (ref: 19106003)
- [Macau] Nova City Apartment 3 1/2 2 1/2  
1,515 ft<sup>2</sup> \$11,500,000 (ref: 19106001)

**FOR RENT**

- [Macau] Vai Fung Triplex, Macau 2 1/2 2 1/2  
1,065 ft<sup>2</sup> \$15,800/mth (ref: 19121001)
- [Coloane] Ocean Garden 4 1/2 4 1/2  
3,700 ft<sup>2</sup> \$35,000/mth (ref: 18040674)
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 1/2 2 1/2  
1,626 ft<sup>2</sup> \$20,800/mth (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Buckingham 2 1/2 1 1/2  
1,100 ft<sup>2</sup> \$15,900/mth (ref: 20031002)

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# CHINA'S CORPORATES ARE GEARING UP IN EUROPE FOR M&A BARGAINS

**C**HINESE firms are getting ready for discount deals in Europe, where the coronavirus pandemic has sent companies scrambling for cash to stay in business.

Bankers have recently seen a spike in requests from Chinese firms and funds for proposals on targets in Europe, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the discussions are private. Many of the potential acquirers are state-owned enterprises, they said. These preliminary talks come as listed company valuations have tumbled along with the MSCI Europe Index, which tracks the continent's developed market performance. The index slumped 23% this year in the worst rout since the global financial crisis.

Deals led by Chinese firms, particularly those owned or backed by the state, risk setting up clashes with European governments, who have signaled their willingness to defend strate-



gic sectors.

In Europe, industries from airlines and hoteliers to soccer leagues are seeking funding aid as the business halt brought by the pandemic leads to cash-flow issues. In anticipation of potential hostile suitors, including Chinese firms, some of the corporates in Europe are dusting off their defense strategy, the people said. Bankers have been asked to help in defending against potential takeovers, they said.

While the pandemic and global travel restrictions mean deals might not be sealed anytime soon,

Chinese suitors are keen to explore as they see less competition from foreign counterparts who are busy handling the outbreak, the people said.

Any sizable overseas deal would signal a comeback of China Inc. to the global stage after Beijing cracked down on what it termed "irrational" international expansion by some privately-owned corporates such as HNA Group Co. Chinese outbound deals plunged to \$11.3 billion in the first quarter, the worst since the first three months of 2013, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

State-owned enterprises often hunt for acquisitions in industries seen as a national strategic priority for China, such as automobiles, energy, infrastructure and technology. CNIC Corp., a state-backed investment fund, is considering buying about a 10% stake in Greenko Group, one of India's largest renewable energy companies, Bloomberg News reported recently.

Private Chinese enterprises are also starting to hunt for targets. Fosun International Ltd. last month said in a statement that the Chinese conglomerate will seek out investment opportunities around the world as the "once-in-a-century" coronavirus pandemic sparks an asset-price downturn. Shanghai Yuyuan Tourist Mart Group Co., a Fosun unit listed in Shanghai, recently announced an acquisition of a 55.4% stake in French jewelry brand Djula for 210 million yuan (\$30 million).  
**MDT/BLOOMBERG**

## CORPORATE BITS

### MGM donates to Macau Holy House of Mercy's Welfare Shop



MGM recently donated MOP300,000 to the Macau Holy House of Mercy's Welfare Shop project for the 8th consecutive year in support of its food hamper distribution to over 360 local underprivileged families.

The gaming operator noted in a statement that up to date, the company had already donated a total of MOP2.3 million which has benefitted about 7,900 people.

This year, the food hampers contained hand sanitizers on top of foodstuff and daily

necessities. Meanwhile, the gaming operator donated 5,000 masks to Our Lady of Mercy Home for the Elderly in March to support their anti-pandemic measures.

The company donated 400 hand sanitizers for putting into the food hampers distributed by Holy House of Mercy, which also contained rice, noodles, canned food, oatmeal, cooking oil as well as some daily necessities as in previous years.

These hampers were given out to underprivileged families.

AD

PRESENTED BY

銀河娛樂集團  
Galaxy Entertainment Group

**MOTORING ON TO 2021**

BRITCHAM MACAO'S PEACE 'N' LOVE BALL

Make it a date  
12th June 2021

DOUG FERGUSON

GOLF

# British canceled, Masters to November in major rescheduling

**T**HE Masters goes from that annual rite of spring to two weeks before Thanksgiving. The U.S. Open now is scheduled in September for the first time since amateur Francis Ouimet took down Britain's best at Brookline in 1913 to put golf on the map in America.

And the oldest championship of them all won't even be played.

Golf organizations tried to salvage a season unlike any other yesterday [Macau time] with a series of changes, starting with the British Open being canceled for the first time since 1945. The PGA Championship, which last year moved to May, would go back to August. That would be followed by the PGA Tour's postseason, the U.S. Open and Ryder Cup in consecutive weeks, and then the Masters on Nov. 12-15.

"Any Masters is better than no Masters," Augusta native Charles Howell III said.

Still to be determined was when — or even if — golf could resume because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has shut down sports worldwide.

Augusta National Chairman Fred Ridley said the Masters identified November as "intended dates." CEO Seth Waugh said the PGA of America was "holding" Aug. 6-9 as dates for the PGA



AP PHOTO

Championship at Harding Park in San Francisco. USGA chief Mike Davis said moving from June to September was the best chance to mitigate health and safety concerns — Winged Foot is 5 miles from New Rochelle, New York, a virus hot spot — to have "the best opportunity" of staging the U.S. Open.

The British Open effectively is pushing its schedule back one year, saying the 149th Open still

is set for Royal St. George's on July 15-18, leaving the 150th Open for St. Andrews the following year.

"I can assure everyone that we have explored every option for playing The Open this year, but it is not going to be possible," R&A chief Martin Slumbers said.

Golf's major organizations, starting with the PGA Tour and its calendar filled with tournaments, have been trying to piece together a puzzle for the last three weeks.

Each agreed to announce their plans together in a show of collaboration.

Still missing is the starting line, along with some details on what could be the most hectic pace golf has ever known.

"We hope the anticipation of staging the Masters Tournament in the fall brings a moment of joy to the Augusta community and all those who love the sport," Ridley said.

Augusta National closed early this year because of the coronavirus and does not open until October. The bloom of dogwoods and azaleas will give way to fall foliage. Instead of being the second full week in April, it will compete against football.

The PGA Tour has tentatively planned to complete its FedEx Cup season close to schedule, with the Tour Championship finishing on Labor Day. It is contemplating putting tournaments in dates that previously belonged to the U.S. Open, British Open and Olympics.

"It's a complex situation, and

we want to balance the commitments to our various partners with playing opportunities for our members — while providing compelling competition to our fans," PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said. "But all of that must be done while navigating the unprecedented global crisis that is impacting every single one of us." **AP**

## THE NEW SCHEDULE

- Aug. 6-9: PGA Championship.
- Aug. 13-16: End of PGA Tour regular season at Wyndham Championship.
- Aug. 20-23: Start of FedEx Cup playoffs at The Northern Trust.
- Aug. 27-30: BMW Championship, second playoff event.
- Sept. 4-7: Tour Championship for the FedEx Cup.
- Sept. 17-20: U.S. Open at Winged Foot.
- Sept. 25-27: Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits.

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**OPINION**

**World Views**

David Fickling, Bloomberg

**CHINA IS REOPENING ITS WET MARKETS. THAT'S GOOD**

Here's one more issue to add to the bonfire of tensions with China brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. The country is reportedly reopening its wet markets, the fresh produce stalls associated with Covid-19's early spread in Wuhan.

It's understandable that countries now in the grip of the first wave of infection might be outraged. Many blame wet markets for starting the outbreak in the first place. Opening them again, at a moment when thousands are dying overseas, seems emblematic of Beijing's increasingly chauvinistic approach to world affairs.

Animals in wet markets are penned and slaughtered or sold live right next to stalls selling fruit and vegetables. Conditions, as my colleague Adam Minter has written, are often less than hygienic.

Places where a range of common and exotic animals mix together while bodily fluids flow freely may seem a fertile breeding ground for the virulent novel diseases that cross the species barrier to humans and occasionally become pandemics.

At the same time, let's put the outrage on pause. Wet markets are increasingly losing ground to supermarkets in China.

The attraction of wet markets isn't so different from that of farmers' markets in Western countries. In contrast to a supermarket model where multiple layers of retailers, wholesalers and logistics companies stand in between the consumer and the grower, wet markets offer a personal and direct connection between shopper, stallholder and farmer.

That helps explain how wet markets have managed to hold their own in spite of the growth of store-based retail in recent years. Supermarkets now account for about half of all grocery spending in China, up from about 36% in 1995, according to Euromonitor International. Add in convenience stores and the like and so-called modern grocery has about 68% of China's retail wallet, giving wet markets less than a third.

Still, that store-based spending is overwhelmingly concentrated in packaged, rather than fresh produce. Foreign retailers that once hoped to dominate China's staple goods sector such as Carrefour SA and Metro AG have struggled and sold out of local ventures — but wet markets are still going strong.

The evidence suggests this consumer loyalty isn't misplaced. One 2015 study for the World Health Organization compared the number of years of life lost per 100,000 people due to food-borne sickness, disability and death.

What about Covid-19 itself, though? There's good evidence that the virus has genetic characteristics from another pathogen found in pangolins, an exotic mammal sometimes sold in Chinese markets. And it circulated extensively around one of Wuhan's seafood and meat markets last December, although the earliest infections don't seem to have been connected to the site.

Only a small minority of wet markets sell such exotica, though, so you can close down the wild animal trade without shutting the places where most Chinese people get their daily sustenance. And don't overlook the possibility that a key ingredient in Covid-19's genetic cocktail isn't wild game, but domesticated livestock. The high-density conditions on farms are far more conducive to cooking up novel diseases, as we've written — and even pangolins are farmed in China these days.

To the extent that the mix of the raw and the cooked in Asia's wet markets is a health problem, it can easily be mitigated by better building design (such as separating meat, vegetable and livestock areas and keeping markets fully enclosed), plus the sort of mandated cleaning regulations found in places like Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea.

There's plenty to complain about in the way that China downplayed and hushed up the initial outbreak until it was all but inevitable it would become a worldwide pandemic. Closing all wet markets, though, isn't the solution.

[Abridged]

Hong Kong will continue to be closed to foreigners, extending the initial two-week entry restrictions on non-residents indefinitely.

Non-residents coming from overseas to Hong Kong by plane will be denied entry, and those coming from mainland China, Macau and Taiwan will be barred from entering if they have been overseas in the past 14 days.

The move to continue shutting out foreigners was announced by the government this week, and comes as the number of COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong rose to 915. Hong Kong has seen a rise in the

number of imported cases in the city, and its confirmed cases has more than doubled in the last two weeks.

On Sunday, Hong Kong's airport saw only 813 arrivals, a drop of close to 82% compared to before the restrictions were put in place on March 24.

Hong Kong's entry restrictions exempt certain groups, including aircraft crew, government officials on duty, spouses and minor children of Hong Kong residents as well as personnel engaged by the government in anti-epidemic work.

**WHITE HOUSE PUSHES UNPROVEN DRUG FOR VIRUS, BUT DOCTORS WARY**



**PRESIDENT** Donald Trump and his administration kept up their out-sized promotion of an anti-malaria drug not yet officially approved for fighting the new coronavirus, even though scientists say more testing is needed before it's proven safe and effective against COVID-19.

Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro championed hydroxychloroquine in television interviews a day after the president publicly put his faith in the medication to lessen the toll of the coronavirus pandemic.

"What do I know, I'm not a doctor," Trump said Sunday. "But I have common sense." In promoting the drug's possibilities, the president has often stated, "What have you got to lose?"

Trump held out promise for the drug as he grasps for ways to sound hopeful in the face of a mounting death toll and with the worst weeks yet to come for the U.S. The virus has killed more than 10,000 in the U.S., and measures meant to contain its spread have taken a painful economic toll and all but frozen life in large swaths of the country.

But medical officials warn that it's dangerous to be hawking unproven remedies, and even Trump's own experts have cautioned against it.

The American Medical Association's president, Dr. Patrice Harris, said she personally would not prescribe the drug for a coronavirus patient, saying the risks of severe side effects were

"great and too significant to downplay" without large studies showing the drug is safe and effective for such use.

Harris pointed to the drug's high risk of causing heart rhythm problems.

"People have their health to lose," she said. "Your heart could stop."

In a heated Situation Room meeting of the White House's coronavirus task force Saturday, Navarro challenged the top U.S. infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, over his concerns about recommending the drug based only on unscientific anecdotal evidence.

Navarro, who has no formal medical training, erupted at Fauci, raising his voice and claiming the reports of studies he had collected were enough to recommend the drug widely, according to a person familiar with the exchange who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the blow-up.

Fauci has repeatedly said current studies provide only anecdotal findings that the drug works. In response, Navarro told CNN on Monday, "I would have two words for you: 'second opinion.'"

Hydroxychloroquine is officially approved for treating malaria, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, not COVID-19. Small, preliminary studies have suggested it might help prevent the new coronavirus from entering cells and possibly help patients clear the virus sooner. But those have shown mixed results.

Doctors are already prescribing the malaria drug to patients with COVID-19, a

practice known as off-label prescribing. Research studies are now beginning to test if the drugs truly help COVID-19 patients, and the Food and Drug Administration has allowed the medication into the national stockpile as an option for doctors to consider for patients who cannot get into one of the studies.

But the drug has major potential side effects, especially for the heart, and Fauci has said more testing is needed before it's clear that the drug works against the virus and is safe for such use.

Navarro told Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" that doctors in New York hospitals are already distributing the drug to COVID-19 patients and that health care workers are taking it in hopes of being protected from infection.

Researchers in China, for instance, reported that cough, pneumonia and fever seemed to improve sooner among 31 patients given hydroxychloroquine compared with 31 others who did not get the drug, but fewer people in the comparison group had cough or fevers to start with.

Many questions have been raised about another study in France. Some of the 26 people given hydroxychloroquine in that test were not counted in the final results, including three who worsened and were sent to intensive care, one who died a day after later testing negative for the virus and one who stopped treatment because of nausea. **MDT/AP**

**Mideast** Across the Middle East and parts of South Asia, bereaved families have faced traumatic restrictions on burying their dead amid the pandemic. Religion and customs that require speedy burials in the largely Muslim region have clashed with fears of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, and government-mandated lockdowns. As the regional death toll surpasses 4,500, ancient rituals are being disrupted by the growing outbreak.



**USA** Civil rights icon and Georgia Rep. John Lewis (pictured) is backing Joe Biden for president, giving the prospective Democratic nominee perhaps his biggest symbolic endorsement among the many veteran black lawmakers who back his candidacy. "We need his voice," the 80-year-old Lewis told reporters ahead of the campaign's announcement. He described the 77-year-old Biden as "a man of courage, a man of great conscience, a man of faith."



**Australia** Cardinal George Pell welcomed Australia's highest court clearing him of child sex crimes yesterday and said his trial had not been a referendum on the Catholic Church's handling of the clergy abuse crisis. Pell, Pope Francis' former finance minister, had been the most senior Catholic found guilty of sexually abusing children and spent 13 months in prison before seven High Court judges unanimously dismissed his convictions.

**Australia** A shark fatally mauled a young Australian wildlife worker on the Great Barrier Reef, officials said yesterday. Queensland state Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said the 23-year-old victim worked for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.