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**TOURISM PRICES IN Q1 LARGELY RESISTED THE COLLAPSE IN VISITOR NUMBERS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC**

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**SULU SOU SAYS 'NO' TO HIGHER AGE THRESHOLD FOR GOV'T HOUSING APPLICANTS**

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**CHILDREN STARTING KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION THIS YEAR WILL HAVE THEIR ADMISSION INTERVIEWS BETWEEN MAY 2 AND JUNE 7**

▲ P4

AP PHOTO



**China-US** The U.S. ambassador to China said he doesn't believe Beijing is deliberately blocking exports of masks and other medical supplies to fight the coronavirus, and that the shipment of 1,200 tons of such products to the U.S. could not have been possible without Chinese support. Ambassador Terry Branstad (pictured) also says the U.S. has concerns about how China initially handled the virus outbreak in the central city of Wuhan, but that such issues should be addressed after the pandemic has been brought under control.

AP PHOTO



**Hong Kong** Arrivals in Hong Kong plunged to a new low of 82,000 in March, a 99% drop from the same time last year as the city banned the entry of foreigners to curb the spread of the virus. The indefinite ban on incoming travelers was imposed March 25.

AP PHOTO



**Thailand** has extended through April 30 a ban on international passenger flights to help control the coronavirus. The ban was initially ordered April 4 after chaos broke out at Bangkok's international airport when more than 100 returning Thais reportedly refused to go directly to state-run quarantine centers. The original three-day ban has already been extended once.

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**GAMING REVENUE TO FALL UP TO 95% THIS MONTH: ANALYSTS**

BLOOMBERG



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# LAWMAKER SAYS NO TO HIGHER AGE THRESHOLD FOR GOV'T HOUSING APPLICANTS

ANTHONY LAM

**L**AWMAKER and New Macau Association member, Sulu Sou, submitted three recommendations to the Chief Executive yesterday regarding the proposed amendments to the Economic Housing Law. The amendments, which are currently under detailed discussion by the concerned Legislative Assembly Committee, include a controversial measure that would raise the minimum age of applicants.

In the draft amendments, the government has proposed to raise the age limit of an applicant from 18 years old to 25 years old. After stirring up objections across society, the government later changed the proposed minimum to 23 years old.

This proposed age minimum only concerns individual applicants. For applications made as a family unit, the age floor, which



only applies to the lead of the unit, has no change proposed and will likely remain at 18 years of age.

Sou has been taking an opposing stand on this particular amendment. He thinks it will entail unfair treatment of different

people. He also pointed out that in the public consultation process for the law amendment, he did not see any such recommendations made public, either by the general public or the government.

Even though the housing needs

of younger residents have been relatively weak, they should not be deprived of the right to apply for the government's subsidized housing, Sou claims.

Regarding some residents' worries that these younger people may strengthen competition between applications, the lawmaker pointed out that this would be very unlikely. He cited the figure from previous applications, which shows that only five out of 10,000 young applicants of ages between 18 and 24 have won a chance to purchase a subsidized housing apartment.

The lawmaker also worries about potential social division caused by the government's proposal on the change of the minimum age.

In his second recommendation, the lawmaker encourages the government to restrict the number of permanent residents within a family unit to not lower

than 50% of members of an applying family unit.

Sou cited the case in neighboring Hong Kong, in which applicants must not only be permanent Hong Kong residents, they must also regularly reside in the territory. He thinks it is a good step to protect the rights to housing of local permanent residents.

Currently, the government only proposes to make the proportion of permanent residents in a family unit as a scoring criterion for applications submitted as a family unit.

His last recommendation concerns the continuation of the queuing system. Applications submitted before 2011 will remain active for future housing draws.

Sou thinks the continuation of a queue system gives residents greater hope and better opportunity for life planning.

JULIE ZHU

**I**N response to public concerns regarding the government's decision to proceed with the New Urban Zone plan before the city's urban master plan is complete, a representative of the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) has defended that work on the New Urban Zone had been expedited precisely because of society's demands.

The Macau urban master plan is expected to be available for public consultation sometime this year, about six years after the urban planning law came into effect in March 2014.

On the sidelines of yesterday's Urban Planning Committee plenary meeting, DSSOPT director Chan Pou Ha commented on the master plan.

Chan, who was appointed director at the start of this year, defended the local government in endeavoring to establish the master plan, including constantly disclosing information to the public as well as holding interdepartmental discussions on the matter.

"We have been working day and night for it," said Chan, who could still not name a more precise date for the public consultation process to begin.

## Urban master plan will undergo public consultation later this year

Within the land and public works departments, concerned parties have reached a consensus on the master plan draft.

Members of the Macau public have been doubting the government's measures in prioritizing the New Urban Zone plan before there is an urban master plan.

However, Chan claimed that it was the society's demand to speed up the New Urban Zone plan and that the local government has also accomplished multiple public consultation processes for the New Urban Zone.

In 2018, the DSSOPT tendered the contract to Arup Group to draft the Macau urban master plan for a payment of 11 million patacas. With more than one year gone by, the draft has already been completed by the company and is currently under review by the relevant government department. Once the review is completed, the draft will be ready for public consultation.

At the beginning of April, the Macau government signed



DSSOPT director Chan Pou Ha

a contract with the same company, which was promised 1.95 million patacas to present, promote and consult with the public on the draft.

The second contract's service period is 114 days, meaning that the public consultation period should take place by July at the latest.

Also during yesterday's Urban Planning Committee meeting, the members approved two plans related to a state-owned land plot.

The premise of a spare estab-

lishment located at the Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro is expected to serve cultural purposes in the future. The plot belongs to the Macau SAR government and is not involved in any land concession. Macau's cultural heritage protection law also protects the area.

Complying with the opinions of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, both the rooftop and the external side of the building should be preserved in their current state, said the Urban Planning Committee.

## IMF PREDICTS MACAU ECONOMY WILL CONTRACT 30%

**T**HE International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that Macau's economy will shrink by 30% in real terms this year.

The institution's latest World Economic Outlook report expects Macau's 2020 gross domestic product to contract by 29.6% because of the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, it also forecasts a strong rebound next year with real growth of 32%. This suggests that the economic fundamentals of Macau remain strong and that the city will quickly recover once the coronavirus outbreak is fully contained.

Macau entered technical recession last year after recording two consecutive quarters of negative growth. The local economy contracted by 4.7% in real terms in 2019, according to the assessment made in the World Economic Outlook report.

Meanwhile, the world economy will suffer a recession of about 3% this year, the IMF said. **DB**

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## BERNSTEIN PREDICTS GAMING REVENUE TO FALL UP TO 95% THIS MONTH

**B**ROKERAGE Sanford C. Bernstein is expecting Macau's gross gaming revenue to plunge as much as 95% year-on-year in April.

According to the analysts, the city recorded some 850 million patacas of gaming revenue in the first 13 days of April, with a month-to-date average daily rate of 66 million patacas.

Last April, the city's gross gaming revenue amounted to approximately 23.6 billion patacas.

"Month-to-date average daily rate is down 92 percent compared to April 2019," said analysts Vitaly Umansky, Eunice Lee and Kelsey Zhu, as cited in a note seen by GGRAsia.

The current pandemic outbreak and border restrictions between Macau and its neighboring cities have brought about a negative impact on gaming revenue.

"We estimate VIP has been stronger than mass, with revenue driven by a very small number of players, with lower than normal hold in VIP and significant volatility," the brokerage added.

For the eight-day period

ending April 13, the daily average was estimated to be just 44 million patacas.

During the Easter break weekend, tourist arrivals hit a record low as the city recorded only 810 arrivals, plunging 99.8% compared to the same holiday period in 2019.

Meanwhile, according to Sanford Bernstein's analysts, gaming operators and other Macau-based contacts to which it had spoken "do not see any clarity on the timing of recovery [for improvement of the visa situation]."

"We expect [gross gaming revenue] to pick up again in May/June with loosening travel restrictions, but any strong near-term recovery is unlikely," said the team.

The SAR continues to face a decline in its tourist arrivals as visitors from its number one source market are mostly prevented from traveling to the region due to the Central Government's suspension of the individual visit scheme and Guangdong's requirement that all arrivals, even its own residents, must undergo a 14-day quarantine. **LV**



## Tourism prices held up even as visitors disappeared last quarter

DANIEL BEITLER

**T**OURISM prices in the first quarter largely resisted the collapse in visitor numbers brought about by the onset of the pandemic.

A price index of goods and services purchased by tourists dropped only marginally in the first quarter, even as the number of visitors more than halved over the first two months of the year.

According to data released yesterday by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the Tourism Price Index (TPI) fell 1.05% in year-on-year terms to 136.47 in the first quarter of 2020. In comparison with the fourth quarter of

2019, TPI dropped by 2.17%.

DSEC attributed the minor dip to lower hotel room rates and the falling prices of handbags and ladies' clothing. At the same time, rising charges for restaurant services and dearer prices of jewelry offset part of the decrease.

Among the various sections of goods and services, the price index of clothing and footwear dropped 13.5% in the first quarter while that of accommodation fell 5.8%. The price index for food, alcoholic beverages and tobacco rose 4% in year-on-year terms, while that of transport and communications rose 4.4%.

The Times reported yesterday that many clothing and footwear

retailers across the SAR are offering high discounts this month, ahead of the government's e-voucher launch on May 1.

Even so, the official data indicates that tourism prices in the first quarter are not reflective of the collapse in visitor numbers observed in Macau since the start of the year.

Visitor arrivals in the first two months of 2020 dropped 57% to 3 million, according to figures provided by the Public Security Police Force, which oversees immigration matters. The data for March, when more stringent border restrictions were introduced in Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China, shows that the number of daily tourists declined to near-zero levels.

AD

**DISEASE CONTROL GUIDE**

### OVERVIEW OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS PNEUMONIA (NCP)

- SOURCE OF INFECTION** Source of infection are mainly patients of NCP. Asymptomatic patients are also a likely source.
- MODE OF TRANSMISSION** Direct or indirect contact of respiratory droplets via the eyes, nose or mouth; the most common form of indirect contact is the touching of eyes, nose or mouth with dirty hands.
- INCUBATION PERIOD** 1-14 days (usually 3-7 days)
- CLINICAL FEATURES** Fever, tiredness, dry cough; some patients may also develop symptoms like nasal obstruction, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea.
- MANAGEMENT AND PROGNOSIS** Treatment is mainly supportive. Some cases are severe; fatal cases have been reported. Older patients and people with chronic diseases are at a higher risk of developing severe complications.

**NCP IS TREATABLE IF DETECTED EARLY**

Please scan this code to visit our special webpage on epidemics. Please stay tuned for the latest government information on the epidemic.

新聞局 Gabinete de Comunicação Social

澳門特別行政區政府衛生局  
Serviços de Saúde do Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau

**Public Notice No. 001/SS/GPCT/2020**

Owing to the unsuccessful attempts to notify the interested party by letter, telephone or other means, which were intended to achieve the effect of prosecution against the relevant illegal act in accordance with the stipulations of article 10, article 58, item b) of article 68, and paragraph 1 of article 72 in the "Administrative Procedure Code" approved by Decree-Law no. 57/99/M dated 11<sup>th</sup> October, pursuant to paragraph 2 of article 11 of Decree-Law no. 52/99/M dated 4<sup>th</sup> October as well as paragraph 2 of article 72 of the "Administrative Procedure Code", notification is hereby given to the interested party in the form of public notice regarding the following:

The below-named interested party has violated the regulation of subsection 7) in article 4 of Law no. 5/2011 - "Regime of Tobacco Prevention and Control" as amended by Law no. 9/2017, with the fact of offence documented in the written report of Coloane Prison of Correctional Services Bureau; hence, pursuant to subsection 1), section 1 in article 23 of the same law, the interested party is penalized with a fine of one thousand and five hundred patacas (MOP1,500).

Name of Interested Party	Sex	Identity Document Type and No.	Fact Record No. and Date	File No. and Prosecution Notice No.
ISHNAMJIL SUKHBAT a.k.a. SUKHBAT ISHNAMJIL	M	Mongolian passport E1058XXX	Fact record no. 00194-AU/V1 DSC/2018 dated 16 July 2018	File no.: SA-15/2018 Prosecution Notice no.: 0111-A/GPCT/2019

Under sections 1 and 3 of article 32 of the same law, the interested party may, within fifteen (15) days from the day after which this notice is published, settle the fine voluntarily or submit a written justification; also, the interested party may access the captioned file in person at Tobacco Prevention and Control Office (Address: Avenida da Amizada No. 918, World Trade Center Building, 15 Andar) during service hours. If the fine is settled voluntarily at Tobacco Prevention and Control Office within the stated period of fifteen (15) days, the interested party is obliged to pay only half of the fine.

In the event that no written justification is submitted within the above-stated period, the interested party will be considered as waiving the relevant right, without prejudice to the decision of punishment made by the Health Bureau in accordance with law.

For inquiries, the interested party may call (853) 2855 6789 or visit the Tobacco Prevention and Control Office in person.

19 March 2020,

Lei Chin Ion  
Director of Health Bureau

### POLICE VIGILANT ON POSSIBLE RISE IN CRIME CAUSED BY RECESSION

The security sector of the government remains on guard against any change in public security conditions that may be caused by economic decline, a Public Security Police Force (PSP) officer told yesterday's daily press conference. Ma Chio Hong, head of the PSP's Division for Action and Communication, who made that comment, also argued that based on the available data at present, the public security condition of the city has not deteriorated. Studies have shown that periods of economic decline often coincide with a rising crime rate. But according to the official, the crime rate this year has dropped compared to last year. Ma added that under the coordination of the Unitary Police Service, all public security departments will make strategic efforts to safeguard the city's public security. Such actions will include deploying sufficient officers. The official appealed to residents to remain calm.

### YOUTH TOBACCO CONSUMPTION SURVEY PLANNED FOR 2020

Sometime this year, the Health Bureau (SSM) will carry out a survey on Macau youth's tobacco consumption. This survey is to serve as a response to the World Health Organization's fifth appeal for studies on youth tobacco consumption habits. Since the city's latest tobacco control law came into effect on January 1, 2018, until November 2019, the SSM recorded 27 e-cigarettes smoking cases involving the youth. In that time, the SSM recorded 4,600 cases where tobacco products evaded excise duty, including 120 kilograms of e-cigarette products. The survey is conducted once every five years. According to the survey results in 2015, 6.1% of Macau youth between the ages of 13 and 15 have had at least some experience in smoking.

### UM ALLOWS FREE ACCESS TO TRANSLATION PLATFORM TO SUPPORT SMES

In order to support small- and medium-sized enterprises in Macau during the epidemic, the University of Macau (UM) now allows free access to its UM-CAT, an online Chinese-Portuguese-English computer-aided translation platform. The platform can produce professional and smart full-text translation with a high degree of accuracy and is suitable for handling a large amount of translation projects involving Chinese, English, and Portuguese to improve translation efficiency. Developed by UM's Natural Language Processing & Portuguese-Chinese Machine Translation Laboratory, UM-CAT has multiple built-in functions, such as smart translation, translation memory, glossary management, and creating terminology databases. The system can also automatically identify previously used texts. It is suitable for individuals, government departments, and companies who need to handle a large amount of multilingual translation tasks in their daily work and will help to improve translation efficiency.



## DATES FOR KINDERGARTEN ADMISSION INTERVIEWS ANNOUNCED

ANTHONY LAM

**C**HILDREN starting kindergarten education this year will participate in their admission interviews between May 2 and June 7, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) announced yesterday at the government's daily press conference. Parents should be aware of their children's interview appointments, which will be announced by schools between April 24 and 27.

The DSEJ, represented by Wong Ka Ki, Chief of the Department of Education, yesterday reminded parents to become familiar with the rules and regulations issued by the schools to which they have applied. They are also reminded to bring along all required documents to the interview at the correct time and date.

Admission results will be announced on June 15. Parents must confirm admission between June 15 and 17. Registrations for official intakes will be conducted from June 18 to 20. Those for stand-by intakes will take place from June 22 to July 4. From June 24, parents can apply for other kindergartens.

The education regulator re-

quires all stakeholders at the interview to wear a facemask for health reasons. Children doing the interviews are also included in this requirement. Some experts have reportedly opposed requiring kids under the age of three to wear facemasks as it may cause suffocation.

When asked whether schools have the right to refuse an interview if kids are not wearing a mask, the education official said that details on that arrangement would be announced later.

Many parents are concerned with the time and arrangements in place for school resumption. When asked about the matter, the education official said that the bureau is planning ahead. Once the plan is ready, details will be announced.

He was also asked whether cross-boundary students should return to Macau as no precise date for school resumption has been announced so far. He said that the arrangement is part of the bureau's contingency, which is now being planned. Details will be announced once ready.

He noted that in the course of communications, parent representatives have been kept in the loop. However, he did not disclose how many parent re-

presentatives there are.

A journalist disclosed that Pui Ching Middle School has announced that no refunds for tuition fees covering the school suspension period would be offered to parents of its students. The education official was asked for the number of schools that have refused to refund their students.

The education official noted that only non-network schools, which are schools not covered by government's free-education scheme, will have such a problem, but did not disclose an exact number.

### ONE MORE PATIENT RECOVERS

As the city marked its seventh day without a new Covid-19 infection yesterday, the Health Bureau announced the 16th recovered patient of the city.

The recovered patient is the city's 28th case of Covid-19 infection. He is an 18-year-old local resident who departed from his studies in the U.K. on March 20 and arrived in Macau two days later. Following the health measure in force at that time, he was sent to the Treasure Hotel for quarantine.

On March 24, he tested posi-

tive for Covid-19. With pneumonia diagnosed on March 25, his diagnosis was confirmed.

He was hospitalized for 23 days and was discharged yesterday, under the condition of three separate negative tests conducted on April 10, 12 and 14. Like previous recovered patients, he is now undergoing a recovery quarantine period at the Public Health Clinical Center.

### RESIDENTS RETURN IN TIME FOR E-VOUCHERS

On Tuesday, 7,200 Macau residents entered the city, with 6,700 exiting. Compared with the previous day, both figures rose, the former by 10.9% and the latter by 16.1%.

It was the first day for e-voucher collection. The scheme is effective for local residents only. Despite the increase in entry by local residents, the Public Security Police Force, which handles border controls for the city, did not make an explicit connection between the circumstances.

On the other hand, the new flight boarding requirements announced by the government on Tuesday covers Macau residents trying to fly back in, the Health Bureau clarified.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



## MELCO: STANDING TOGETHER WITH THE MACAU COMMUNITY THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

**A**S communities around the world grapple to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, Melco Resorts & Entertainment has been throwing weight behind efforts to proactively support the community of Macau.

Since late January, the Company has continued to execute its series of supportive measures for the local community in both the immediate and long term, including the donation of MOP 28 million to the Chinese government and local NGOs to help curb the spread of the virus and the direct financial or health support of affected persons, as well as raising awareness for the prevention of the virus within the community.

### COMMITMENT TO MACAU RESIDENTS

Forming part of Melco's long-term commitment to local people, the Company recently hired 100 local resident construction workers whose livelihoods have been impacted by the coronavirus. A recruitment fair was effectively conducted with support from Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM). Offered with one-year employment contracts, successful applicants have since began working at Melco, with on-the-job training to enhance not only technical skills for personal growth, but also help contribute to the sustainable future of Macau.

Mr. Lawrence Ho, Chairman & CEO of Melco, said,

"Melco has long been committed to the sustainable development of Macau, as well as promoting Whole Person Development for local residents. At this challenging and unprecedented time, we stand with the people and the Macao SAR Government in our fight against the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. The recruitment project looks to support the needs of the local community through the effective creation of job opportunities and the sense of togetherness, as a show of Melco's care and concern for one of the local groups most affected by recent events."

### MINIMIZING SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

Aside from offering aid to those in the construction industry, Melco has reached out to other impacted local groups through its community partners like the FAOM and Women's General Association of Macau.

Together with FOAM, Melco set up the Special Aid Fund for Workers in Need with a donation of MOP 5 million to take care of local self-employed persons, workers and families impacted by the virus. Melco worked closely with FAOM to identify 1,500 beneficiaries consisting of affected persons such as taxi drivers, coach drivers, tour guides and their families.

To further support the fight against the spread of COVID-19, Melco donated 500,000 surgical masks to the Macao SAR Government and to the local commu-

nity, with 200,000 such masks being donated directly to designated operating NGOs under Social Affairs Bureau. The masks will go to help vulnerable groups in the community, such as the elderly, single families, long-term patients, and medical patient support staff.

Melco also donated MOP 3 million to its long-term community partner, Women's General Association of Macau, for the purchase of surgical face masks, with the aim to help reduce risk of infection. The donation provides for an allowance scheme to help families impacted by the new strain of Coronavirus, in particular single mothers and those with children with special needs.

### PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Never has it been more important to be mindful of personal hygiene and wellbeing. To help the government publicize its Coronavirus prevention appeal among the wider community, Melco is supporting Macao Daily News' extensive online video series titled 'Healthy Macao: Essential Tips for Combatting Illness'. The videos cover topical information on issues such as ways to identify symptoms of COVID-19, how to wear tie-on surgical masks safely and effectively, best bathroom hygiene practices, how to choose household disinfectants, and do-at-home stretches for maintaining physical health.



# HIS WARNS BIOSECURITY MUST HAVE A PLACE IN NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION

DANIEL BEITLER

**C**HIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng said yesterday that the novel coronavirus had shown that biosecurity matters can leave a lasting impact on the livelihoods of the population and therefore needed to be included within Macau's national security framework.

"The country's general security is directly related to the stability of residents' lives and the future development of Macau," said Ho, according to the prepared remarks released by the Macau government.

"Biosecurity is also crucially associated with the life and health of the people," added Ho.

He said that the arrival of the novel coronavirus had bought "great challenges" to the Macau government and its residents in terms of defending the general security of the state. However, "despite the influences of [Covid-19], Macau will not continue its steps this year in terms of raising awareness and education on national security."

The Chief Executive also said that the Covid-19 pandemic had demonstrated that biosecurity issues can have a profound and lasting effect on the stability and security of the city. Accordingly, the country has decided to integrate biosecurity into the national security framework and will study the



In this file photo, Macau students participate in a flag raising ceremony under guidance from the People's Liberation Army Macau Garrison

relevant institutions, systems and mechanism, to address future biosecurity matters.

"In the face of this public health crisis, the most important thing is to ensure the health and safety of the residents' lives," he said.

"National security issues are constantly changing, which is why the work to implement national security is endless," added the Chief Executive.

Ho said that the defense of national security is a duty and responsibility on the part of the entire Special Administrative Region and all residents of Macau. The city must work to reinforce national security educa-

tion, especially among certain groups, including the youth.

"It is necessary to reinforce the level of residents' awareness of national security, especially among the body of civil servants and young people," he said, adding that these two groups of people must attain a solid grasp and understanding of the 'one country, two systems' policy framework.

Ho made the comments in a speech yesterday to mark National Security Education Day on April 15. The date was declared National Security Education Day in 2015 by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's

top legislative body.

Since 2018, the Macau government has developed publicity

and educational campaigns on national security to help educate the public on the matter.

According to Chinese President Xi Jinping, national security promotion involves co-opting the civilian population to fulfill their patriotic duty and be on the lookout for anything that could undermine the country's stability. The president previously outlined that "national security is of paramount importance for the people to live and work in peace and for realizing the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation."

Ho said yesterday that his government has "studied and seriously reflected" on the words and spirit of Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Macau in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the handover, which had also underlined the importance of national security.

## MEANWHILE IN HONG KONG

**HONG KONG** Chief Executive Carrie Lam and Beijing's Liaison Office also issued statements yesterday to calling for more patriotic education in Hong Kong. In the neighboring SAR, national security education has become a controversial subject that has ignited protests in the past amid concerns over China's growing influence over the city. "Safeguarding national security is a fundamental interest in safeguarding Hong

Kong, but Hong Kong's system for safeguarding national security hasn't been fully perfected, and many people's sense towards national security is relatively weak," said Luo Huining, the Liaison Office's recently appointed chief. "In the nearly 23 years since Hong Kong's return to China, national security has been a prominent shortcoming. This shortcoming could be a fatal, hidden danger during a critical time."

## Mutual recognition of coronavirus-free certificates sparks concern

**T**HE mutual recognition of medical certificates from Macau, Hong Kong and Zhuhai declaring individuals free of Covid-19 infections has sparked some concerns among parts of the Macau public.

Earlier this week, Zhuhai's health authority said that people traveling on a daily basis between Zhuhai and Macau need to carry a medical document certifying that they are not infected with Covid-19. According to the health authority, each document is valid for a period of seven days.

The health authority said that the three bridge-linked cities of Zhuhai, Hong Kong and Macau would recognize such

certificates issued by certain medical institutions in each of the other cities.

According to Macau's recent policies, it is understood that Macau has previously recognized some medical certificates concerning Covid-19 issued by the mainland.

Previously, mainland tourists were allowed to enter Macau provided they presented a medical document confirming they were free of Covid-19. The document had to be issued by a "reputable" health authority in mainland China.

The mutual recognition has raised concerns among some in the Macau public about the veracity of such documents issued across the border.

In Zhuhai, seven hospitals are recognized as able to provide Covid-19 tests and issue the documents. The Macau SAR government said it is inclined to accept these as they are "reputable medical organizations."

Currently, Zhuhai demands such proofs from all mainland residents who enter Zhuhai from Macau. Some Macau local residents are exempt from the policy following communication between the SAR and Zhuhai governments.

Regarding critical frontline workers, the seven-day lifespan of the document is regarded as sufficient for their frequent travel needs between the two cities. **JZ**

## ZHUHAI PROPOSES FINE HIKE FOR THOSE FOUND EATING WILD ANIMALS

**ZHUHAI** has become the latest mainland city to propose heavier fines for the consumption of restricted animals.

According to a protocol publicized by the Zhuhai government, starting from May 2020, consuming banned wild animals will be subject to a maximum fine equivalent to 30 times of the value of the concerned animals.

Mainland China's wild animal protection law bans the consumption or hunting of endangered wild animals, but not common wild animals.

The outbreak of

Covid-19 brought up once again the concerns of Chinese residents over the consumption of wild animals.

In response, the administration in Beijing has announced an outline aiming to ban the consumption of wild animals. According to state media, this is a behavior regarded by the majority of Chinese nationals, as well as by Chinese leader Xi Jinping, as a "corrupt custom."

The Zhuhai protocol does not clearly define the term 'wild animals', nor is it explicitly stated or men-

tioned that domestic animals, including cats and dogs, are not allowed to be eaten.

The protocol lists three conditions for the kinds of animals legally consumable: that they are included in mainland China's livestock and live poultry list; that they are legally approved for consumption; and that they have passed relevant examination.

China's consumable livestock and live poultry list does not include cats and dogs, leaving some to suspect mainland China will soon ban their consumption. **JZ**



# China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for six key days

**I**N the six days after top Chinese officials secretly determined they likely were facing a pandemic from a new coronavirus, the city of Wuhan at the epicenter of the disease hosted a mass banquet for tens of thousands of people; millions began traveling through for Lunar New Year celebrations.

President Xi Jinping warned the public on the seventh day, Jan. 20. But by then, more than 3,000 people had been infected during almost a week of public silence, according to internal documents obtained by The Associated Press and estimates based on retrospective infection data.

The delay from Jan. 14 to Jan. 20 was neither the first mistake made by Chinese officials at all levels in confronting the outbreak, nor the longest lag, as governments around the world have dragged their feet for weeks and even months in addressing the virus.

But the delay by the first country to face the new coronavirus came at a critical time — the beginning of the outbreak. China's attempt to walk a line between alerting the public and avoiding panic set the stage for a pandemic that has infected almost 2 million people and taken more than 126,000 lives.

"This is tremendous," said Zuo-Feng Zhang, an epidemiologist at the University of California, Los Angeles. "If they took action six days earlier, there would have been much fewer patients and medical facilities would have been sufficient."

However, another epidemiologist, Benjamin Cowley at the University of Hong Kong, noted that it may have been a tricky call. If health officials raise the alarm prematurely, it can damage their credibility — "like crying wolf" — and may cripple their ability to mobilize the public, he said.

The six-day delay by China's leaders in Beijing came on top of almost two weeks during which the national Center for Disease Control did not register any new cases, internal bulletins obtained by the AP confirmed. Yet during that time, from Jan. 5 to Jan. 17, hundreds of patients were appearing in hospitals not just in Wuhan — which finally reopened last week — but across the country.

China's rigid controls on information, bureaucratic hurdles and a reluctance to send bad news up the chain of command muffled early warnings, experts said. Without these internal reports, it took the first case outside China, in Thailand on Jan. 13, to galvanize leaders in Beijing into recognizing the possible pandemic before them.

The Chinese government has repeatedly denied suppressing information in the early days, saying it immediately reported the outbreak to the World Health Organization.

"Allegations of a cover-up or lack of transparency in China are groundless," said foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian at a press conference last week.

The documents show that the head of China's National Health Commission, Ma Xiaowei, laid

out a grim assessment of the situation in a confidential Jan. 14 teleconference with provincial health officials. A memo states that the teleconference was held to convey instructions on the coronavirus from President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and Vice Premier Sun Chunlan, but does not specify what those instructions were.

"The epidemic situation is still severe and complex, the most severe challenge since SARS in 2003, and is likely to develop into

**"This is tremendous! If they took action six days earlier, there would have been much fewer patients and medical facilities would have been sufficient."**

ZUO-FENG ZHANG  
EPIDEMIOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

a major public health event," the memo cites Ma as saying.

In a faxed statement, the National Health Commission said China had published information on the outbreak in an "open, transparent, responsible and timely manner," in accordance with "important instructions" repeatedly issued by President Xi.

The documents come from an anonymous source in the medical field who did not want to be named for fear of retribution. The AP confirmed the contents with two other sources in public health fa-

miliar with the teleconference.

Under a section titled "sober understanding of the situation," the memo singled out the case in Thailand, saying that the situation had "changed significantly" because of the possible spread of the virus abroad.

"All localities must prepare for and respond to a pandemic," it said.

The National Health Commission distributed a 63-page set of instructions to provincial health officials, obtained by the AP. The

instructions, marked "not to be publicly disclosed," ordered health officials nationwide to identify suspected cases, hospitals to open fever clinics, and doctors and nurses to don protec-

tive gear.

In public, however, officials continued to downplay the threat.

"The risk of sustained human-to-human transmission is low," Li Qun, the head of the China CDC's emergency center, told Chinese state television on Jan. 15.

Under the new orders, on Jan. 16 officials in Wuhan and elsewhere finally got CDC-approved testing kits and a green light to start confirming new cases. Across the country, dozens of reported cases then began to surface, in some cases among patients

who were infected earlier but had not yet been tested.

On Jan. 20, President Xi issued his first public comments on the virus, saying the outbreak "must be taken seriously". A leading Chinese epidemiologist, Zhong Nanshan, announced for the first time that the virus was transmissible from person to person on national television.

The delay may support accusations by U.S. President Donald Trump that the Chinese government's secrecy held back the world's response to the virus. However, even the public announcement on Jan. 20 left the U.S. nearly two months to prepare for the pandemic — time that the U.S. squandered.

Some health experts said Beijing took decisive action given the information available to them.

"They may not have said the right thing, but they were doing the right thing," said Ray Yip, the retired founding head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's office in China. "On the 20th, they sounded the alarm for the whole country, which is not an unreasonable delay."

But others say an earlier warning would have saved lives. If the public had been warned a week earlier to practice social distancing, wear masks and cut back on travel, cases could have been cut by up to two-thirds, one paper later found.

"The earlier you act," said Los Angeles epidemiologist Zhang, "the easier you can control the disease." **AP**

# Trump ends US aid to WHO, says not enough done to stop virus

**P**RESIDENT Donald Trump said he was cutting off U.S. payments to the World Health Organization during the coronavirus pandemic, accusing the organization of failing to do enough to stop the virus from spreading when it first surfaced in China.

Trump, who had telegraphed his intentions last week, claimed the outbreak could have been contained at its source and that lives could have been saved had the U.N. health agency done a better job investigating the early reports coming out of China.

"The WHO failed in its basic duty and must be held accountable," Trump said at a briefing yesterday [Macau time]. He said the U.S. would be reviewing the WHO's actions to stop the virus before making any decision on resuming aid.

There was no immediate comment from the Geneva-based organization on Trump's announcement. But when asked about possible U.S. funding cuts during a regular U.N. briefing earlier, WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris responded, "Regardless of any issues, our work will go on."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres responded to Trump's announcement by saying now is not the time to end support for the World Health Organization, calling the WHO "absolutely critical" to the global effort to combat COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Guterres said that it is possible that different entities read the facts differently but that the appropriate time for a review is "once we have finally turned the page on this pandemic."

"But now is not that time," he said, adding that it also is not the time to reduce resources for operations at the WHO or any other humanitarian group that is working to combat the virus.

The United States contributed nearly \$900 million to the WHO's budget for 2018-19, according to information on the agency's website.



President Donald Trump arrives to speak about the coronavirus in the Rose Garden of the White House

That represents one-fifth of its total \$4.4 billion budget for those years. The U.S. gave nearly three-fourths of the funds in "specified voluntary contributions" and the rest in "assessed" funding as part of Washington's commitment to U.N. institutions.

A more detailed WHO budget document provided by the U.S. mission in Geneva showed that in 2019, the United States provided \$452 million, including nearly \$119 million in assessed funding. In its most recent budget proposal from February, the Trump administration called for slashing the U.S. assessed funding contribution to the WHO to \$57.9 million.

More than 125,000 deaths worldwide, including more than 25,000 in the U.S., have been blamed on the coronavirus, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Last week, Trump blasted the WHO for being "China-centric" and alleging that it had "criticized" his ban on travel from China as the COVID-19 outbreak was spreading from the city of Wuhan. The WHO generally takes care not to criticize countries on their national policies, and it was not immediately clear what specific criticism Trump was alluding to.

The American Medical Association immediately called on Trump to reconsider his decision.

"During the worst public health crisis in a century, halting funding to the World Health Organization is a dangerous step in the wrong direction that will not make defeating COVID-19 easier,"

AMA President Patrice A. Harris said in a statement.

Harris said international cooperation is needed to fight the virus, along with science and data.

"Cutting funding to the WHO, rather than focusing on solutions, is a dangerous move at a precarious moment for the world," she said. **AP**

## EU BLASTS FUNDING CUT, FEARS IT WORSENS PANDEMIC

**N**ATIONS around the world reacted with alarm yesterday after President Donald Trump announced a halt to the sizable funding the United States sends to the World Health Organization. Health experts warned the move could jeopardize global efforts to stop the coronavirus pandemic.

The European Union said Trump has "no reason" to freeze WHO funding at this critical stage and called for measures to promote unity instead of division. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the 27-nation bloc "deeply" regrets the suspension of funds and added that the U.N. health agency is now "needed more than ever" to combat the pandemic.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he sympathized with some of Trump's criticisms of WHO and China but that Australia would continue to fund the U.N. health agency.

"We work closely with them so that we're not going to throw the baby out with the bathwater here," Morrison told Perth Radio 6PR. "But they're also not immune from criticism."

Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, pushed back at Trump's announcement.

"Placing blame doesn't help," he wrote on Twitter. "The virus knows no borders. We must work closely against COVID-19. Strengthening the U.N., in particular the underfunded WHO, is a better investment, for example, to develop and distribute tests and vaccines."

In Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian says the country is "seriously concerned" about the U.S. government's decision to suspend funding.

"As the most authoritative and professional international institution in the field of global public health security, the WHO plays an irreplaceable role in responding to the global public health crisis," he told reporters yesterday.

The WHO did not respond to repeated requests from The Associated Press for comment, but its Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and other top WHO officials were expected to attend a news conference on the pandemic today [Macau time]. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history



### 1964 'GREAT TRAIN ROBBERS' GET 300 YEARS

Some of the longest sentences in British criminal history have been imposed on men involved in the so-called "Great Train Robbery".

Sentences totalling 307 years were passed on 12 men who stole £2.6m in used bank notes after holding up the night mail train travelling from Glasgow to London last August.

The judge at Buckinghamshire Assizes in Aylesbury, Mr Justice Edmund Davies, said it would be "positively evil" if he showed leniency.

The robbery was the biggest-ever carried out in Britain.

The scale and style of the theft led to comparisons with rail robberies of the Wild West and the hunt for the perpetrators captured the public imagination.

But the judge said the robbers' crime had in no way been "romantic" and was obviously motivated by greed.

The attack on train driver Jack Mills was proof of their violent tendencies, he added.

"Anybody who has seen that nerve-shattered engine driver can have no doubt of the terrifying effect on law-abiding citizens of a concerted assault by armed robbers," the judge said.

Seven of the defendants - Ronald Biggs, Charles Wilson, Douglas Goody, Thomas Wisbey, Robert Welch, James Hussey and Roy James - were jailed for 30 years each.

Four were sent to prison for terms of between 20 and 25 years.

Another defendant, solicitor John Wheeler, 41, was sent to prison for three years.

Wheeler obtained the robbers hide-out - Leatherslade Farm in Bedfordshire.

Judge Davies said Wheeler had no knowledge of the robbery until after it had been committed but should then have informed the police.

"I realise the consequences of your conviction are disastrous, professionally and personally," the judge told Wheeler.

Three men involved in the robbery are still at large including the man said to be the ringleader, Bruce Reynolds.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

All the three remaining gang members were eventually caught.

In 1969 the robbery's mastermind, Bruce Reynolds, was sentenced to 10 years in jail.

In the meantime two gang members had made dramatic escapes from prison.

One of them, Charlie Wilson, was recaptured in Canada in 1968.

The other, Ronnie Biggs, was free for nearly 40 years before he returned voluntarily to Britain from Brazil.

An impoverished Biggs, 71, came back to the UK in 2001 to receive free medical treatment after having suffered a series of strokes.

He was immediately taken to a top-security prison to serve the remaining 28 years of his sentence.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**



**ARIES**

**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

Turning to friends and family members for comfort is always a good idea, but ultimately, you'll find the right answers deep inside of yourself. Right now, you are the best person for the job of taking care of you.



**TAURUS**

**Apr. 20-May. 20**

Things are uncertain right now, so if you're feeling tentative, you'll be in for a glacial pace. Small energy bursts might pop up here and there, but overall it could be snoozy.



**GEMINI**

**May. 21-Jun. 21**

Unless you draw up a road map, some people could get lost, and quite a few tempers could blow. You're in a very adaptable phase right now, so you might have to set the example for all the others to follow.



**CANCER**

**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

Step out of your "official" mode and get down to real feelings and honest interaction. Timid conversations will leave you yawning. You need debate, vulnerability, and revelations today!



**LEO**

**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

You have excellent self-control right now, but are you using it for the right reasons? Resisting temptation is a good way to use this strength you have, but subjugating your emotions is not.



**VIRGO**

**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

It's time to wise up to your power and flex your muscles a little bit more aggressively. Don't feel intimidated by the authority figures around you. Just talk to them like normal people and they'll respond favorably.



**LIBRA**

**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

Someone who has a strong drive for success has a very narrow focus on their life right now, although it's temporary. If you're feeling left behind in a cloud of dust as they zoom ahead of you, don't worry.



**SCORPIO**

**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

It's all about imagination today! Revert back to your childhood days of making up the world around you, because imagining something in a new form is the first step toward making real improvements.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

Your fiery enthusiasm for what you believe in is powerful. You can always make things happen with your emotional conviction, but today, rein in that power and keep it to yourself.



**CAPRICORN**

**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

Avoid the urge to consult too many people about what you should do. Getting input is fine, but if you ask too many people the same questions over and over, you might come off as insecure.



**AQUARIUS**

**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

Despite the fact that having a routine in your life might get boring from time to time, you'll find a great deal of comfort in knowing just what's going on in your daily life for the next few days.



**PISCES**

**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

Your talkative tendencies will come in extremely handy today! Whether on the phone or face to face, you can make some amazing changes happen with just a few suggestions.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

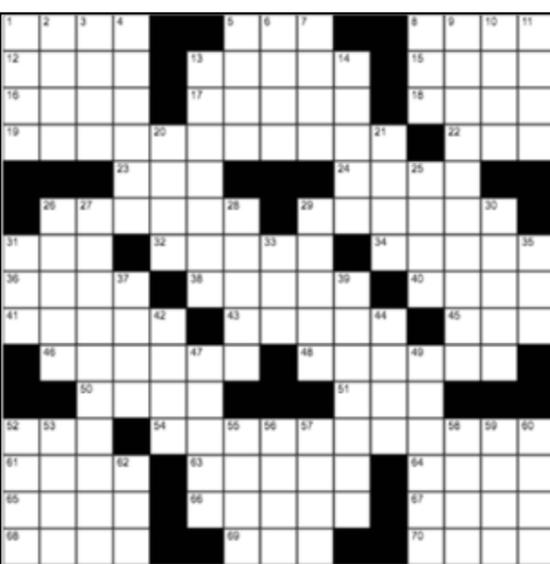
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	11	22	blowing dust
Harbin	3	16	cloudy
Tianjin	9	19	drizzle
Urumqi	9	17	drizzle
Xi'an	12	25	clear
Lhasa	3	15	overcast
Chengdu	16	28	overcast
Chongqing	19	29	cloudy
Kunming	10	28	clear
Nanjing	15	29	cloudy
Shanghai	16	27	overcast
Wuhan	15	29	cloudy
Hangzhou	12	29	cloudy
Taipei	16	24	cloudy
Guangzhou	16	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	27	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	1	8	drizzle
Frankfurt	0	8	cloudy
Paris	2	10	clear
London	5	13	cloudy
New York	3	10	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS: 1- Swiss river; 5- Hair goop; 8- Calf-length skirt; 12- Extended family unit; 13- Biological subdivision; 15- Biting; 16- Throw; 17- Inactive; 18- Basic unit of heredity; 19- Large self-service retail store; 22- Feather scarf; 23- Backboard attachment; 24- Large jug or pitcher; 26- Amorous relationship; 29- Caught; 31- Orch. section; 32- Hound's trail; 34- Flies high; 36- Melodramatic cry; 38- Use a prie-dieu; 40- \_\_\_-Ball; 41- Walked back and forth; 43- Giver; 45- Cornerstone abbr.; 46- Emphasis; 48- Furry swimmers; 50- \_\_\_ first you don't...; 51- 1980's movie starring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore; 52- \_\_\_-mo; 54- Relaxed; 61- The \_\_\_ Ranger rode a horse called Silver; 63- Mum's mate; 64- Teheran's country; 65- Track; 66- Stony gray; 67- Fine and delicate; 68- Ringing instrument; 69- Wind dir.; 70- Zeno's home;

DOWN: 1- Plays are divided up into these; 2- Baseball family name; 3- Coarse file, angry tone of voice; 4- Place in bondage; 5- Actress Rowlands; 6- Cabinet dept.; 7- Hide in the shadows; 8- Periodical, briefly; 9- Opening remark to ease tension; 10- Pebble's pet; 11- Notion; 13- Stunt; 14- Dutch painter Jan; 20- Narrow inlets; 21- "\_\_\_ the night before Christmas..."; 25- Archer of myth; 26- Geographical reference; 27- Insignificant; 28- Tears; 29- Pad user; 30- Apparel; 31- Dupe; 33- "The Matrix" hero; 35- Prepared; 37- Drudge; 39- Method of raising money; 42- Distribute cards; 44- Hwys.; 47- Halts; 49- Preserve, as fodder; 52- Pig; 53- Deep affection; 55- Fabric ridge; 56- School orgs.; 57- Network of nerves; 58- River to the Caspian Sea; 59- Speed contest; 60- "Only Time" singer; 62- Former measure of length;



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



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 Simplex Apartment w/ Outdoor Terraces  
**HK\$18,800,000** 4,080 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1/2 3 1/2

**FOR RENT**

**Ocean Garden, Taipa- Sakura Court**  
**\$35,000/mth** 3,700 ft<sup>2</sup> 4 1/2 4 1/2

**FOR SALE**

- [Taipa] Nam Long 1 1/2 1 1/2  
785 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$4,780,000** (ref: 20016009)
- [Coloane] Beautiful apartment 1 3 1/2 1 1/2  
1,665 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$7,380,000** (ref: 19070001)
- [Taipa] Taipa Village- two connected 4 1/2 2 1/2  
1,404 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$8,380,000** (ref: 19096006)
- [Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 1/2 2 1/2  
1,344 ft<sup>2</sup> **\$11,000,000** (ref: 19126001)

**FOR RENT**

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

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# BYTEDANCE LAUNCHES GLOBAL HIRING SPREE WITH 10,000 NEW JOBS

ZHEPING HUANG

**B**YTEDANCE Inc. just kicked off a wave of hiring it envisions hitting 40,000 new jobs in 2020, hoping to match Alibaba's headcount at a time technology corporations across the globe are furloughing or reducing staff.

The world's largest startup is recruiting people for 10,000 open positions, of which about a third are high-level research or software coding jobs, according to an internal website provided to staff for candidate referrals and shared with Bloomberg. A ByteDance representative didn't respond to an emailed request for comment.

New hires around the globe will support the Chinese company's universe of apps from video platform TikTok to news aggregator Toutiao, while strengthening its operations in new arenas such as e-commerce and gaming. It's the first salvo of ByteDance's goal to reach 100,000 staff globally by the end of the year, outlined by Chief Executive Officer Zhang Yiming in an internal memo



last month. Once complete, the company will boast roughly the same number of employees as tech giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

ByteDance is seeking to consolidate its social media strongholds in China and the U.S. while spurring expansions in new markets. Its hiring spree contrasts with other startups, including SoftBank-backed

Oyo Hotels & Homes, Zume Pizza Inc. and Brandless Inc., that have been cutting jobs or shutting down altogether. As part of the recruitment drive launched last week, ByteDance is seeking to fill more than 100 vacancies in Mountain View - Google's home turf - from a summer software intern to a lead engineer for augmented reality and Apple iOS developer.

Like rival Tencent Holdings Ltd, ByteDance's social media channels have seen usage spike after the Covid-19 pandemic confined millions of people to their homes. Now, as life in China begins to return to normal, the employee referral program is looking to find candidates for some 9,900 positions, according to the website viewed by Bloomberg. Just over 1,100 of

those openings were for interns as of midday Tuesday.

The job listings offer a rare window into how the eight-year-old internet giant is investing in future growth. For example, it's seeking dozens of online tutors to capture China's online education boom during the virus outbreak, while acquiring talent for music licensing in places from Miami to Mumbai. The Chinese app factory is also orchestrating forays into gaming, live-streaming commerce and even enterprise software, taking on deeper-pocketed rivals like Tencent and Alibaba.

Overall, ByteDance is filling some 3,000 coding, engineering and research roles, and about as many positions in products and operations, according to calculations by Bloomberg. Beyond China, it's looking to boost headcount by adding more than 100 posts per location in London, Los Angeles, Mountain View and Singapore.

ByteDance, last valued at \$75 billion according to CB Insights, is one of China's most ambitious tech outfits. It has more than 1.5 billion monthly active users across its portfolio of products from Toutiao to mini-video platform Douyin, TikTok's Chinese twin app. **BLOOMBERG**

AD

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curso . course

## After Effects

nível II . level II

monitor: **José Nyogeri**      ≥ 12 anos/years old

**Sextas/Fridays**  
19h00 - 21h00

total: 20 horas/hours  
10 sessões/sessions

início/starts: 17/04/2020  
fim/finishes: 26/06/2020

propina/fee: **MOP 600 \***

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língua/language: Português e Inglês/Portuguese and English \*\*    patrocínio/sponsor: **Fundação Macau**

local/venue:  
Avenida do Dr. Francisco Vieira Machado nº431-487 Edf. Industrial Nam Fung 14º andar A, sala 3, Macau

número máximo de participantes/maximum number of participants:  
10 (Será respeitada a ordem de inscrição sendo esta efetiva mediante o pagamento de propina).  
10 (The registration order will be respected and registration is considered when payment is done).

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BOOK IT

# A fiddle in a chaotic world

ROB MERRILL

**S**IMON the Fiddler is the origin story of Simon Boudlin, a traveling musician who appears in Paulette Jiles' 2016 novel, the National Book Award finalist "News of the World."

When we meet the 23-year-old — "5-foot-5 and 120 pounds" — he is recently conscripted into the Confederate army. Combining

Don Quixote's romance with the down-to-earth nature of his traveling companion Sancho, Simon is an indefatigable character who makes you want to root for him. "(The fiddle) was all he had against a chaotic world and the mindlessness of a losing war, against corruption, thievery, cowardice, incompetence, cactus, gunsmoke, and hominy," writes Ms. Jiles.

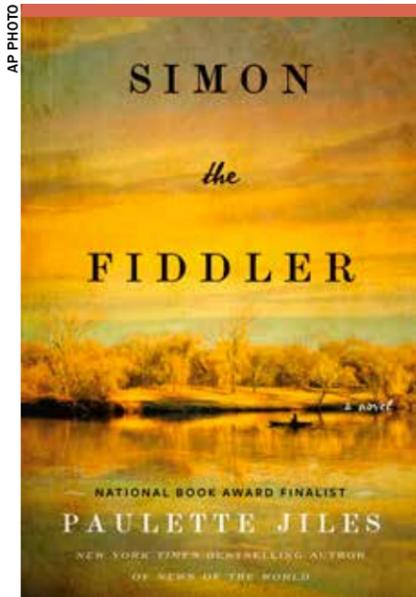
After the South surrenders in 1865, Simon assembles a rag-tag band to eek out a living amid the devastation. They'll play anywhere for anyone, but as Simon tells his bandmates before their first gig, "they've got to damn well pay us."

It's at that first gig that Simon is smitten with Doris Dillon, a young woman he spies in the company of Col. Webb, the commander of the occupying Union forces. He can't take his eyes off her "round face" and "beautiful dark blue eyes" and from that moment on, Simon's ambition is clear, if not his fate.

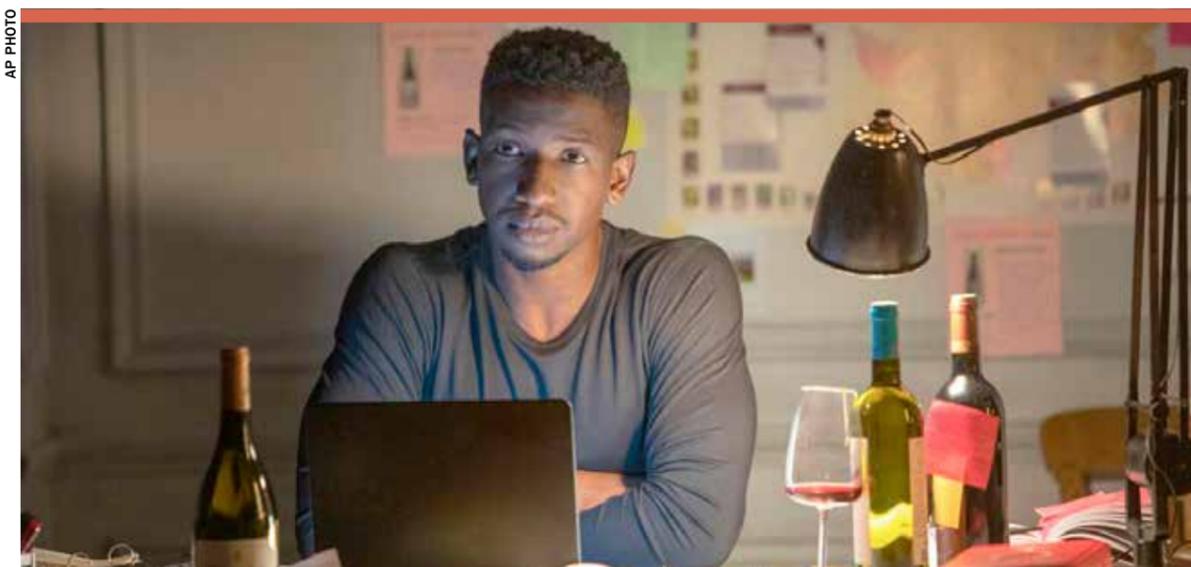
Ms. Jiles' sparse but lyrical writing is a joy to read. As the band checks out possible venues in Galveston, Texas, she dips into her main character's mind: "To Simon, the world of musical structures was far more real than the shoddy saloons in which he had to play ... It existed outside him. It was better than he was. He was always on foot in that world, an explorer in busted shoes."

Later on, as Simon concludes that it won't be easy to buy a plot of land in the Red River Valley for his dream life with Doris: "It was going to take some doing ... But that's why God made people young at first, to get the doing done."

The pace of the novel quickens as Simon and Doris make plans. There are plots and schemes and scrapes, and above it all, music. It's right there in the title — "Simon the Fiddler" — and it's definitely there in the denouement as Ms. Jiles' novel comes to a hopeful conclusion. **AP**



"Simon the Fiddler" by Paulette Jiles



Mamoudou Athie in a scene from "Uncorked"

DRIVE IN

# In 'Uncorked,' a full-bodied coming-of-age tale

JAKE COYLE, AP FILM WRITER

**T**HE wine movie is not exactly known for a bouquet of tasting notes. From "Wine Country" to "Bottle Shock," they are usually light, amiable movies that amble through sunny fields of vines. "Sideways," of course, is the choice vintage, but most come and go about as quickly and breezily as a bottle of pinot.

"Uncorked," the directorial debut of veteran TV writer Prentice Penny, also has a relaxed vibe but it brings some new elements to the table. For starters, it's not about white people. That alone makes "Uncorked," which debuts Friday on Netflix, a rare varietal. Mamoudou Athie stars as Elijah, a young black man in Memphis who doesn't want to take over his father's barbecue restaurant. He wants to be a sommelier.

This is far from an expected career path. When Elijah announces his intentions at dinner, one family member hears "Somalia" and wonders why he wants to get involved with pirates. But his ambition is ear-

nest, even if his father, Louis (Courtney B. Vance), is skeptical.

Elijah's passion attracts others. For a young woman (Sasha Compere) shopping for a bottle, he supplies a hip-hop analogy, comparing chardonnay to Jay-Z, pinot grigio to Kanye West and riesling to Drake. (It remains unclear where Ol' Dirty Bastard would fit on this spectrum.) They begin dating just as Elijah starts prepping for the master sommelier test (which, in reality, is so impossibly hard that virtually no one passes) with a study group of new friends.

Elijah stands out in this world but "Uncorked" doesn't overemphasize it. Instead of going for a broad fish-out-of-water tale, Penny grounds the movie on the relationship between Elijah and his father. The actors help considerably. Both veteran Vance and Athie, a talented newcomer, imbue the film with a vivid emotional honesty. And the family scenes are warmly intimate, including those between Louis and his wife, Sylvia (Niecy Nash).

Penny, the showrunner for the exceptional HBO series "Insecu-

re," has — true to the genre — penned an easy-pouring tale that won't overwhelm anyone by its dramatics. But the pleasures of "Uncorked" are in how it gently eludes stereotype and brings a rich sense of texture to even its smaller moments.

There are other movies about the finest pours — like Ken Loach's "The Angel's Share," about poor young Scots and high-priced whisky — that revolve around the high and low of taste. "Uncorked" goes a different direction, taking time to savor not just its cabernets but its Memphis barbecue. There's little difference between the craft of the wine in "Uncorked" and the art with which Louis, who's seen shopping for just the right wood for his smoker, fires his meats.

All of which is to say, in these quarantined times, be sure you have a decent bottle left in the cupboard or a good rack of ribs in the freezer before pressing play on "Uncorked."

"Uncorked," a Netflix release, is not rated by the Motion Picture Association of America. Running time: 104 minutes. ★★☆☆

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Mark Buchanan, Bloomberg

**HUMANS HAVE THEMSELVES TO BLAME FOR COVID-19**

No one could have predicted the timing and trajectory of the Covid-19 pandemic, triggered by a novel coronavirus leaping from a bat into a pangolin (apparently) and from there into a person. Even so, scientists knew that a pandemic of some kind would come our way sooner or later. In the past few decades, we've seen ever-more-frequent outbreaks of new infectious diseases, as viruses or bacteria hop from their usual animal hosts into people. After this virus, there will be others.

Outbreaks are becoming more frequent for a very simple reason: There are more people coming into contact with wildlife species, as agriculture, forestry, mining and oil exploration activities have pushed into previously unpopulated areas, destroying animals' natural habitats. The high-risk zones for new infections turn out to lie mostly in tropical regions — where biodiversity is high — undergoing significant land-use change.

A disease caused by a virus or bacteria that originates in another animal is known as zoonosis. The word comes from the Greek: "zoo-" for animal, "-osis" for disease. Zoonotic pathogens are a persistent menace all over the world, threatening to jump into humans and spread. The first challenge is to know how many pathogens there are and in which animals they thrive, and on this, researchers are making good progress.

Much as NASA is working to give us advance warning of all the hazardous asteroids that could strike Earth, biologists are doing the same for the hundreds of thousands of unknown zoonotic pathogens living in animal hosts. It's an expensive undertaking, yet vastly cheaper than the costs of a global pandemic. A decade long effort to find such viruses, the Predict project, came to an end just as the novel coronavirus was emerging. But the researchers collected 140,000 samples from animals and identified 1,000 new viruses. They also trained 5,000 people across Asia and Africa in crucial skills, such as how to collect samples from wild and domestic animals, thereby creating new resources of expertise in zones where new viruses are most likely to appear.

Fortunately, the Predict project received an emergency six-month extension effective April 1, and its work will carry on in a follow-up project called STOP Spillover, set to begin in August. Meanwhile, researchers behind a separate scientific project — the Global Virome Project — ambitiously aim to characterize within the next 10 years most of the viruses from the most important zoonotic reservoirs. But merely listing these pathogens isn't enough. We also face the harder challenge of reducing how often those pathogens come into contact with humans, each time having a small chance to create a new epidemic.

Everyone knows that human activities have disturbed ecosystems worldwide. Less well known is that our activities have also increased infectious-disease transmission between humans and animals. Never before have the reservoirs of potential zoonotic pathogens been in such intimate contact with human populations. A review of research on the consequences of land-use change over the past 30 years found consistent evidence of increased pathogen transmission.

The most obvious setting is in wildlife markets, directly implicated in the origins of both the SARS epidemic in 2002 and the current Covid-19 pandemic. In the former case, the virus moved from bats into civet cats, which were sold for meat in markets, and then into people. In response to any pandemic, nations often ban the sale of wild animal products, as China has now, temporarily. But such bans tend to be relaxed after the pandemic is over.

Exploitation of wildlife is the biggest threat to biodiversity in many Southeast Asian countries, with high demand for wildlife products combined with weak law enforcement. That's a major threat to many endangered species, and also a direct threat to all of us. After Covid-19, we should realize that the only solution is international cooperation based on the shared realization that our human activities have made the pandemic problem worse.

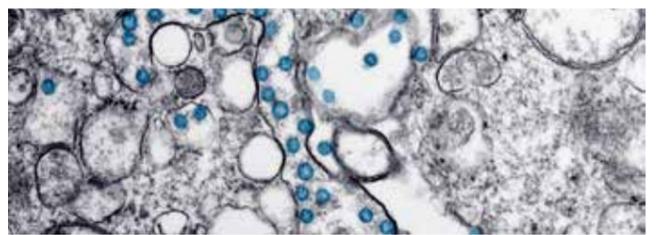
[Abridged]

Chinese scientists have started the second phase of a clinical trial of a coronavirus vaccine in the hardest-hit city of Wuhan in central China's Hubei province.

China Central Television reported 273 out of 500 vo-

lunteers have been injected with the vaccine candidate.

The first phase of the vaccine clinical trial focused on its safety, while the second phase is studying its efficacy. China reported 46 new virus cases yesterday, 36 of them from overseas.



HONG KONG

**BEIJING LOYALISTS BOOST PRESSURE ON DEMOCRACY CAMP**

AP PHOTO



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam

IAIN MARLOW & NATALIE LUNG

**H**ONG Kong officials have joined Chinese counterparts in blasting the city's pro-democracy opposition for filibustering and stalling government policy, even as the coronavirus pandemic keeps its broader protest movement largely at bay.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam and other pro-establishment figures have in recent days accused the opposition of endangering the city's prized autonomy and livelihood. Those remarks followed similar criticism earlier this week from Chinese agencies overseeing the financial hub, including the central government's Liaison Office and the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office (HKMAO), which accused lawmakers of potentially violating their oaths - a sign Beijing could be losing patience with months of legislative gridlock.

The vocal intervention of mainland agencies in the city's politics - particularly after Chinese President Xi Jinping appointed hardliners to head both of the main agencies overseeing Hong Kong - could raise tensions ahead of an important Legislative Council election scheduled for September.

Pro-establishment Hong Kong lawmaker Priscilla

Leung yesterday praised the Chinese agencies for criticizing opposition filibustering tactics in committee meetings at the Legislative Council.

"They're dragging Hong Kong into the grave," she said on a Radio Television Hong Kong program, adding that the comments from the HKMAO and Liaison Office make it clear such behavior "will not be tolerated. And you would bring an end to Hong Kong's 'one country, two systems,' so you should stop doing it."

Ever since Hong Kong's legislature reconvened following months of protests last year against Beijing's tightening grip, pro-democracy lawmakers have shouted Lam down at important speeches and stalled the appointment of committee chairs meant to preside over and approve government policies - with a notable recent exception coming when both sides approved a stimulus package to offset the impact of the virus.

The 70-seat Legislative Council has the power to pass laws under the semi-autonomous "one country, two systems" framework established before the former British colony's return to Chinese rule in 1997.

Hong Kong's pro-democracy opposition politicians, many of whom took

part in or supported the protest movement that has mostly been on hiatus since the virus hit, have defended the filibustering. Both of the mainland agencies have "no power or right to influence or comment on how LegCo and its subcommittees operate and how LegCo members fulfill their responsibilities," lawmaker Dennis Kwok, who was singled out for criticism, said in an emailed statement Monday.

Following the opposition's landslide victory in local district council elections in November, Beijing is likely trying to frighten pro-democracy lawmakers ahead of the even more important Legislative Council vote, said another opposition politician, Claudia Mo.

"They are doing everything they can to clamp down on the opposition," she said. "We used to call Beijing's meddling in Hong Kong the 'invisible black hand.' Now it's not only visible, but actually has gone center stage."

The comments from Leung, the pro-establishment politician, came a day after Lam defended the right of Beijing's agencies to comment on Hong Kong politics, following pushback from the opposition.

"I want to refute categorically that any comments made by the two offices constitutes interference," Lam said. **BLOOMBERG**

AP PHOTO



**Singapore** has made masks mandatory following a sharp spike in new cases. Most people not wearing masks can be fined \$212, while repeated offenders could face stiffer penalties. Infections in the tiny city-state have surged beyond 3,200 after two straight days of sharp increases. Many were among foreign workers living in crowded dormitories.

**Australia's** prime minister expects a tracking app under development in the country will massively boost health authorities' ability to trace coronavirus contacts if the government can overcome privacy concerns. Scott Morrison his government is carefully working through privacy issues because at least 40% of Australians will need to download the app on their smart phones if it is to be effective. The Australian app is based on Singapore's contact tracing app, TraceTogether.

**Japan** About 850,000 people could be seriously sickened by the coronavirus in Japan and almost half of them could die if no social distancing or other measures are followed, according to a government-commissioned estimate released yesterday. Japan has the world's oldest population, and the virus can be especially dangerous for the elderly. And there are concerns that Japan's government has done too little to stave off high numbers of badly ill patients.

AP PHOTO



**South Korea** Voters wore masks and moved slowly between lines of tape at polling stations after the government resisted calls to postpone South Korea's parliamentary elections, seen as a midterm referendum on President Moon Jae-in. Long lines and record-high participation in early voting seemed to defy expectations of low voter turnout in the middle of a social-distancing campaign to slow infections.