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AN ANIMAL WELFARE CHARITY SAYS ITS ADOPTION PROGRAM AND FUNDRAISING EFFORTS HAVE BEEN HINDERED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MUST DEFENDS TOP UNIVERSITY POSITION IN MACAU IN TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION RANKING

THE POLICE HAVE BUSTED AN ILLEGAL GAMBLING OPERATION THAT REVOLVED AROUND FOUR ELDERLY CITIZENS PLAYING MAHJONG



**Philippines** Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. (pictured) said Tuesday he dispatched a diplomatic note to the U.S. ambassador in Manila informing the U.S. government that the Philippines is delaying its decision to abrogate the Visiting Forces Agreement by at least six months. Washington immediately welcomed the move.

**India** A cyclone made landfall yesterday south of India's financial capital of Mumbai, with a storm surge threatening to flood beaches and low-lying slums as city authorities struggled to contain the coronavirus pandemic.



**Russia** President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday endorsed Russia's nuclear deterrent policy which allows him to use atomic weapons in response to a conventional strike targeting the nation's critical government and military infrastructure. By including a non-nuclear attack as a possible trigger for Russian nuclear retaliation, the document appears to send a warning signal to the U.S.



**Yemen** The United Nations warned yesterday that its programs to fight the coronavirus in war-torn Yemen might have to stop by the end the month. The warning comes a day after a U.N. appeal for countries to fund emergency aid in the Arab world's poorest nation fell a billion dollars short of what aid agencies needed to cover essential activities from June to December.

More on backpage



SINGAPORE VIRUS HANDLING TO BE CORE ISSUE IN COMING ELECTION

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## LAWMAKER PROPOSES SCHOOLS JOIN PENSIONS FUND

Lawmaker Ella Lei has proposed for the local government to include schools in the non-mandatory central provident fund. In her most recent interpellation to the government, Lei suggested that all non-teaching staff of educational institutions should be given the chance to join the fund. Lei explained that public school operations depend mostly on public funds, thus these institutions should be key targets to be included in the fund. The fund includes a joint provident fund scheme and an individual provident fund scheme. The former type requires employers and employees to contribute toward the pension, whereas the latter suggests that contributors have complete discretion. A total of 156 employers have joined the fund system, with social service organizations accounting for the majority. The rest include public entities, hotels, restaurants, and gaming, education, finance, retail, and medical organizations, among other commercial organizations. Approximately 40,000 residents have participated in the individual provident fund scheme.

## 15 MARKETING CALL DATA CASES REGISTERED UNTIL MAY

The Office for Personal Data Protection (GPDP) registered 15 cases of personal data infringement related to marketing phone calls in the first five months of 2020. Yesterday, a community advisory body cited the GPDP when referring to personal data infringement cases from January to May. In total, the GPDP handled 52 cases. Among the 15 phone call disturbances, seven cases have already been closed by the office. In 2019, the office issued a total of MOP929,000 in fines to parties that violated personal data regulations. This amount is equivalent to the sum of the fines issued across the 10 years before 2019. Members of the advisory body proposed that the GPDP increase the scale of fines after criticizing that the number of cases does not reflect the actual situation.

## LAWMAKER WANTS MORE URBAN RENEWAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng has requested that the Urban Renewal Committee arrange meetings more frequently. Between October and December last year, the government conducted a 60-day public consultation on the urban renewal regime. As of today, more than half a year has passed since the committee held its last meeting. Wong urged the government to hold committee meetings more regularly, suggesting the committee should conduct more meetings in order to fulfill its function as an advisory body. The lawmaker also demanded the local government explain to the public its methods to protect property ownership and ways to compensate house owners during urban renewal processes. Wong wants the local government to speed up the legislation procedure for the urban renewal regime.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

# MUST SCORES 32ND BEST AMONG ASIAN UNIVERSITIES

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has placed 32nd among the top 100 universities in Asia according to Times Higher Education's (THE) ranking.

The ranking, revealed yesterday, includes the best colleges and universities in Asia, featuring institutions from 30 territories and regions.

MUST's 32nd position also places the university as the best in Macau, followed by the University of Macau (UM) in the 37th position. The two institutions are the only ones from Macau featured in the ranking.

The position of MUST in the Asian ranking is due to a world ranking in the interval of the 251st to 300th positions.

The top of the Asian list is occupied by China's Tsinghua and Peking Universities (respectively 23rd and 24th place in the World University Rankings), with special significance for Peking University which jumped up three positions when compared to 2019.



In third comes the National University of Singapore, falling by one position.

Two universities from Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, completed the Asian top 5.

Hong Kong and China are the most represented countries and regions in the top 10, with three universities each.

Japan leads in the number of universities represented in the overall Asian ranking with a total of 110 universities, followed

by China with 81 ranked institutions and India with a total of 56 universities.

According to THE's ranking, Asian university standings are based on the same 13 performance indicators as THE's World University Rankings, but these have been recalibrated to reflect the region's unique characteristics.

The ranking classifies research-intensive universities across their core missions of teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

With regards to teaching, the criteria assess the learning environment. Research is assessed on the basis of the volume of research, income, and reputation resulting from research work done at the institutions, with citations, referring to how the institution is used as a reference and is seen in terms of research influence.

Meanwhile, the analysis of international outlook takes into account the spectrum of university staff, students and research. The final criteria, related to the industry's income, is classified as the importance and capacity of transference of the knowledge generated by the institution in impacting society and different sectors and industries.

The THE world ranking is led by the University of Oxford in the U.K., followed by the California Institute of Technology in the U.S. and the University of Cambridge, also in the U.K.

The U.S. is represented by a total of seven institutions among the top 10, with the remaining three places held by universities in the U.K.

## MACAU PASS MADE 35.6 MILLION PATACAS PROFIT LAST YEAR

**L**ocal e-payment service provider Macau Pass has announced a profit after tax amounting to 35.6 million patacas for the 2019 financial year.

The company has also announced that it handled 16% more transactions, which generated a 74% increase in the monetary value handled.

In the financial year of 2018, the company made 27.5 million patacas in profit after tax. The company's profit increased by 8.1 million patacas year-on-year, or nearly 30%.

This year, the government has appointed the e-payment platform operator to issue and operate the e-voucher scheme,

which will offer Macau residents a combined 8,000 patacas to spend in the market. The scheme will run until the end of this year, according to the plan currently announced by the government.

The company has made a forecast of its operations this year. It pledges that it will improve the security of its network and control over data monitoring, while fostering more reliable control over the risks in flows of funds and its various forms of mobile payment. **AL**

## MACAO FOUNDATION HOTLINE, WEBSITE READY TO RESPOND TO EMPLOYEE SUBSIDY QUESTIONS

**T**HE Macao Foundation is launching both a hotline and a website to answer the public's questions regarding the government's 10-billion-pataca Covid-19 relief subsidy.

Zhong Yi, vice-president of the foundation, spoke about the relief fund matter yesterday, during a TDM radio program.

From tomorrow, the Macao Foundation will be operating the hotline on 8988 0380, as well as a website to clarify the concerns raised by members of the public.

The government has proposed a six-pronged approach for the use of a 10 billion pataca fund that aims to provide finan-

cial support within the community. The money will be used to compensate local employees and businesses.

On Tuesday, an online inquiry system for the employee subsidies was launched. As of 6 p.m. on the inauguration date, the system had registered approximately 285,000 enquiries.

On June 16 the Macao Foundation will commence distribution of the money, specifically through bank transfer. From June 18, cheques will be used to hand out the money. The government estimates the distribution will be completed within approximately two weeks. **JZ**

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

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

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**ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

**OFFICE MANAGER** Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

**ADDRESS** Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR **Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

**Advertisement** advertising@macaudailytimes.com

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# Health authorities say they assist patients formerly receiving treatment elsewhere

ANTHONY LAM

**M**ACAU health authorities have taken over treating patients who were formerly receiving medical consultations in other jurisdictions, Alvis Lo Iek Long, clinical director of the public Conde São Januário Hospital stated at yesterday's Health Bureau regular press conference.

Lo stressed that the public hospital would not and has not denied any patient who had preceding medical consultations in other jurisdictions, such as Hong Kong and Zhuhai, after the implementation of border restrictions due to Covid-19.

Many Macau residents choose to have medical consultations and treatments in other nearby jurisdictions for many reasons. Some do so because their condition was declared incurable by local medical institutions but deemed otherwise by doctors elsewhere. Others may simply be looking for additional advice on their condition.

Recently, the Times became aware that some readers have had to suspend or terminate effective treatments prescribed elsewhere due to the strict border controls. Some have been forced to change to therapies in Macau for the continuation of treatment.

The medical director acknowledged this yesterday, adding that, because of the present border crossing restrictions, many pa-

ANTHONY LAM



tients have "chosen not to return to medical consultation in nearby places due to the 14-day quarantine requirement."

Lo said that the health authority has made therapy plans for these patients. He also expressed his happiness at the fact that most of these patients have been able to get "suitable treatments" in Macau.

"Provided that these patients have medical needs, we will attend to their needs in Macau," the clinical director added.

The clinical director offered a similar response when he was previously asked by the Times whether there would be means to help patients access medications proven to be effective but not ac-

cessible here.

Back then, Lo said that from a medical perspective, the treatment of a health condition rarely requires a single remedy.

Yesterday, when asked whether residents could expect a relaxation of border control measures, Lo said that the Macau government has been in negotiations with their counterparts in neighboring regions to secure a practical policy. He added that even the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, has met with his counterparts in Guangdong with regards to epidemic and border control measures.

For the time being, Macau residents can only enter Zhuhai with a negative Covid-19 nucleic test, Green Health Code and a Zhuhai

or Zhongshan residence card.

They can only enter Hong Kong on the condition of agreeing to undergo 14 days' of quarantine following their arrival in the neighboring jurisdiction.

Visitors are only accepted by Macau if they are residents of the greater China region and have not been outside the region 14 days prior to their arrival. Only non-resident workers with residence rights in Zhuhai will be admitted to Macau under certain conditions.

Some social media users have expressed frustration at the local government for not relaxing border controls. The government has reiterated that local people have the right to leave Macau. It is the decision of other jurisdictions

whether to accept Macau residents.

With regard to Macau residents needing to attend funerals in Zhuhai or Hong Kong, the Public Security Police Force stressed that they can submit for an exemption from quarantine to Zhuhai authorities for that reason. As for Hong Kong, the local police have not heard about any exemptions being granted.

On the other hand, many are concerned about the reopening of sport facilities. Advice has been provided to the Sports Bureau, said Leong Iek Hou, coordinator of the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, who also revealed that the reopening is at the bureau's discretion.

## Animal welfare struggling amid Covid-19

ANTHONY LAM

**A**N animal welfare charity in Macau says its adoption program and fundraising efforts have been hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wing Lee, convener of Macao Animals' Angels, said that her organization's work has continued in spite of the pandemic situation. They have continued to rescue stray, mistreated or abandoned animals. However, with the adoption rate falling this year, the charity is running out of space to keep the animals before they can be adopted.

Fundraising is also on the decline as Macau has reckoned with a sharp con-

MACAO ANIMALS' ANGELS



traction in the local economy.

"We can't say how hard in terms of donations we have been affected by the pandemic," said Lee. "Our fundraising depends on

what types of incidents happen; whether it is animal rescue or animal medication and hospitalization."

Overall, the group's fundraising is conducted on a case-by-case basis. "If

the case is more severe, usually we will get more donations," Lee explained. "Compared with some similar old cases, this year's cases have generated smaller donations. People who donated MOP500 before have shrunk their donations to MOP200, for example," she said.

She added that the group is constantly in debt to veterinarians, mainly because it needs to send injured or ill animals it rescues for medical consultation. The group generally relies on donations to settle bills, although some vets are happy to work voluntarily.

Earlier this year, when the government was advising people to spend as

much time at home as possible, the channels for animal adoption turned idle. To worsen the situation, the pandemic has also caused more people to abandon their pets, according to Lee.

Fortunately, the recent situation has improved. "Our group has accomplished more than 50 adoptions in the past four or five months," said Lee.

At the press conference held after he announced his first policy address, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said he would "instruct Secretary André Cheong to pay more attention to prosecuting animal abusers," in response to a question raised by the Times.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), under Cheong's supervision and the authority overseeing animal welfare, has only prosecuted a handful of violators of the Animal Protection Law since the law's enforcement in 2016.

Coincidentally, another local animal welfare group, Anima, was informed yesterday that "someone in Macau was brutally beating his dog with a stick," Albano Martins, the group's head, wrote on his social media page.

The animal protection group informed the IAM and the Public Security Police Force before heading to the location. The owner was subsequently fined for not registering his dog. According to Martins, the eight-month-old dog was taken into the care of the IAM's kennels.



# BORIS JOHNSON PLEDGES UK WILL LET IN HONG KONG CITIZENS IF NEEDED

**BRITISH** Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the United Kingdom stands ready to open the door to almost 3 million Hong Kong citizens, as the city's leader arrived in Beijing yesterday for meetings on a planned national security law that has many worried about their future.

Johnson said in a column published online by the South China Morning Post, a Hong Kong newspaper, that the security law would curtail freedoms in Hong Kong and conflict with China's obligations under its agreement with the United Kingdom when it took back the former British colony in 1997.

"Many people in Hong Kong fear their way of life — which China pledged to uphold — is under threat," he wrote. "If China proceeds to justify their fears, then Britain could not in good conscience shrug our shoulders and walk away."

China shocked many of Hong Kong's 7.5 million people when it announced earlier this month that it would enact a national security law for the city, which is guaranteed a high level of autonomy outside of foreign and defense affairs.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, a supporter of the move, arrived in Beijing yesterday morning for meetings with central government officials on the planned law. China could enact the law later this month or at the end of August,



AP PHOTO

analysts have said.

About 350,000 Hong Kong citizens hold British National Overseas passports, a legacy of the colonial era, and 2.5 million others are eligible to apply for them, Johnson said in his column. Long lines have formed at DHL courier offices in the city since the announcement as people rush to apply for or renew their BNO passports.

Johnson, echoing earlier statements by Cabinet ministers, said that if China im-

poses a national security law, Britain would allow holders of the BNO passports to remain for 12 months on a renewable basis and would grant them the right to work, placing them on a possible path to U.K. citizenship.

"This would amount to one of the biggest changes in our visa system in British history," Johnson wrote, adding, "I hope it will not come to this."

BNO passport holders currently can stay in the U.K. for only up to six months.

Separately on Wednesday, Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong called on leaders in Europe to oppose the national security law, saying it erodes the "one country, two systems" framework promised to the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Wong said that after President Donald Trump threatened to impose sanctions on Hong Kong last week, the momentum should be kept to build a "global alliance to stand with Hong Kong." AP

## HSBC, JARDINE VOICE SUPPORT FOR CHINA'S SECURITY LAW

**HSBC** Holdings Plc's top executive in Asia has come out in support of a controversial national security law drafted by China's central government for Hong Kong.

Bank executive Peter Wong signed a petition in support of China's proposed security legislation, according to comments posted on the bank's official WeChat account. The lender reiterates its support for laws that stabilize Hong Kong's social order and revitalize the economy under the 'one country, two systems' principle, the post read.

These are HSBC's first public comments on the topic after Hong Kong's former Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying lambasted the global lender over not publicly voicing its support for China's plan to enact national security legislation in the city.

While HSBC had cited inconsistent activity in the account that it closed down, its motives were questioned at a time when it's pushing into China and repairing its relationship with Beijing after cooperating in the U.S. probe of Huawei Technologies Co.

Meanwhile, Jardine Matheson Holdings Ltd., one of Hong Kong's oldest British trading houses, joined major businesses voicing support for a controversial national security law drafted by China's central government for the city.

"Establishing a legal framework for safeguarding national security is very important and can ensure continued investment in Hong Kong," the group said in a full-page advertisement in the pro-Beijing newspaper Ta Kung Pao yesterday. "The Jardines Group has roots in Hong Kong and will continue to invest. Its promise to Hong Kong has never changed."

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## CRIME

### POLICE DISMANTLE ILLEGAL GAMBLING SCHEME

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Public Security Police Force (PSP) has dismantled an illegal gambling scheme involving betting on Mahjong, a tile-based game similar to the western card game Rummy, and detained the main suspect.

According to the PSP spokesperson during yesterday's joint press conference by the police forces, the police received a complaint from a resident of an apartment building that claimed that someone was operating an illegal gambling scheme in a neighboring apartment.

On June 2, around 11 a.m., the PSP deployed officers to the address and, following the sound of the tiles shuffling, reached an apartment where they found

four people between 60 and 70 years of age playing mahjong at a table.

After questioning the people, PSP found that one of them was the apartment tenant and was exploiting gaming activities.

Players said that besides gambling money which would go to the winner of the game, each player had to play a fee of 10 patacas to the table owner for each game at the table.

Further inspection of the drawers used by the players to hold their belongings yielded a total of 1,400 patacas stored in different compartments.

The 60-year-old male tenant from the mainland confessed to the PSP that he had been operating the activity since February this year, making a profit

of approximately 3,000 patacas each month.

According to evidence by the police, on June 2 until the time he was stopped by the PSP, the man had made a profit of 80 patacas.

While questioning the suspect, the PSP also found that the man's daughter, residing in Macau, had rented the apartment for her father's use since he would frequently have to stay in Macau due to the travel restrictions imposed between the mainland and Macau to combat the Covid-19 outbreak.

The man also said that his daughter was not aware of the gambling. He was presented to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on June 3 accused of operating an illegal gambling activity.

## CRIME

### MAN CHARGED FOR AGGRAVATED BODILY HARM DURING HOUSE VISIT

RENATO MARQUES

**A** non-resident worker from Vietnam has been charged with assaulting another man during a visit to an apartment he hoped to rent, the Judiciary Police (PJ) informed.

According to the PJ report, while visiting an apartment located at a low-rise building in Rua Três do Bairro do Iao Hon, which he intended to rent, the 40-year-old man found the current tenant still living in the apartment.

According to the victim, an argument then broke out because he was not comfortable with the suspect visiting the house without warning while his possessions were there.

In the middle of the argument, the suspect picked up a cleaver and

waved it in front of the victim's face, eventually hitting him in the forehead.

After the suspect left, the victim filed a complaint with the PSP, who then transferred the case to the PJ for further investigation.

On June 1, the day after the incident, the suspect was detained by the PJ in the vicinity of the Areia Preta Triangle Garden, confessing the crime but declaring that he had no intention of hitting the man.

According to the PJ's clarification of media questions, the suspect was presented yesterday morning to the Public Prosecutions Office to be accused of aggravated bodily harm as he had hit the victim with an instrument that is considered a melee weapon.



# Greater Bay 'travel bubble' unlikely to happen until late summer at earliest

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE Greater Bay Area 'travel bubble' remains an uncertain prospect after Hong Kong extended its border restrictions in response to detecting a new cluster of Covid-19 cases.

This week, Hong Kong announced that it will prolong its 14-day quarantine requirements for travelers from China, Macau and Taiwan to July 7. The restrictions had already been extended to June 7.

For analysts and social affairs commentators, the extended restrictions are a disappointment as the flows of tourists is considered essential to the recovery of Macau's economy.

It has been 56 days since the Macau SAR has recorded a new case of Covid-19. However, the city continues to suffer the economic downturn resulting from the continuous travel and entry restrictions.

Hong Kong is Macau's second-largest visitor source market and their arrival in Macau would help boost the city's economy.

Social affairs commentator Larry So said, the matter is a big disappointment.

"We could at least, to a certain extent, have internal travel between these [GBA] districts. But having all this lockdown, it is not possible," So told the Times. "At

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least in terms of Macau casino revenue, we're going to at least see a 90% drop again."

According to So, the current health crisis and social unrest occurring in the neighboring city somewhat dim the region's immediate future.

For him, the 'travel bubble' is unlikely to happen for at least a month, until Hong Kong lifts its

restrictions.

"The issue may continue into the summer vacation. I'm not optimistic," said So.

He added that the restrictions may continue further as Hong Kong is now more cautious of having a new wave of Covid-19 cases.

Hong Kong discovered four new local cases and two impor-

ted cases on Tuesday.

There is also still a ban on non-residents flying to Hong Kong from abroad.

"The situation of Covid-19 outbreak in Hong Kong and the number of confirmed cases has slightly stabilized in the past month or so, but remain very volatile, with local cluster cases reported again recently," the go-

vernment said in a press statement.

Meanwhile, analysts at JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Ltd., have issued a note expressing similar concerns, stating that the move was a disappointment for those waiting for the travel bubble to be implemented this month.

"There is still a [very] small chance that Macau and Guangdong could go ahead first to open up borders with certain safeguarding measures (e.g., negative test results for Covid-19), but it's probably reasonable to think a travel bubble will not happen until July 7, as the Chinese government might prefer not to treat two SARs differently, in our view," analysts DS Kim, Derek Choi and Jeremy An said.

According to the note seen by GGR Asia, the team added, "We do think Macau is suffering 'collateral damage,' as it has been Covid-19-free for 55 days."

On Monday, it was reported that the authorities of Hong Kong are preparing to adopt the health code system currently in use in Macau and the Guangdong province to reopen their borders to travelers from these two regions.

This 'travel bubble' will facilitate easier movement for people in those regions to travel without undergoing a 14-day quarantine.

## Ho Iat Seng in talks with Guangdong officials to facilitate cross-border travel

**M**ACAU Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and Guangdong's governor Ma Xingrui are in agreement over the benefit of resuming cross-border visitor movements, but no arrangement has yet been finalized over the lifting of quarantine measures in the mainland province.

Ho met with Ma and Li Xi, the Communist Party Secretary of Guangdong province, on Tuesday in Guangzhou, during which the current immigration restrictions among other matters were discussed.

During the meeting, the two sides also discussed further cooperation on epidemic-control work and arrangements aimed at facili-

tating cross-border travel in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The officials shared a belief that resumption of normal cross-border movement would be beneficial to the development of the Greater Bay Area.

The Government of the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) has been paying close attention to the developments regarding the novel coronavirus, and has been attaching the utmost importance to epidemic-control work in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 within the city or beyond, Ho told Li and Ma.

The Chief Executive also briefed the Guangdong officials on Macau's efforts to

combat Covid-19, noting that the disease has been controlled in the city.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, Macau gradually closed its borders to visitors and non-local workers, and many flights have been suspended.

During the 13th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), many Macau members expressed their wish to welcome visitors back to the region sooner than planned.

Analysts have previously stated that the resumption of issuing Individual Visit Scheme visas will occur after the 13th CPPCC.

The Chief Executive has remarked several times that the local government has

been in discussions with the mainland government authority regarding the resumption of ordinary border policies so that mainland visitors will be able to travel to Macau and help alleviate the pain caused by the city's economic downfall.

Ho assured Li and Ma that the Macau SAR government will continue to pay close attention to the Covid-19 development and that Macau will keep striving to protect the city from the chance of both local infected cases and imported incidents.

During the meeting, Ho acknowledged that Macau and Guangdong have long-standing close relations.



Macau Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng

He added he was looking forward to collaborating with Guangdong to advance development of the Greater Bay Area project.

Ho said Macau would foster efforts alongside Guangdong in the development of the Guangdong-Macau Intensive Cooperation Zone on Hengqin as a pilot zone under the "One country, two systems" framework and as a new platform for high-standard international economic cooperation.

Top Guangdong leader Li said Guangdong would work closely with Macau to achieve further progress on a number of current issues, including work relating to the prevention and control of Covid-19.

Li also promised that the two regions would contribute to the development of the Greater Bay Area by deepening cooperation on the Guangdong-Macau Intensive Cooperation Zone on Hengqin. JZ



FARIS MOKHTAR,  
PHILIP J. HEIJMANS  
& MICHELLE JAMRISKO

# Singapore's long lockdown challenge

**S**INGAPORE'S approach to the virus is set to become a defining issue in upcoming elections, with lockdown curbs set to drag on past most of Asia's after its original, less restrictive approach was scuppered by a second wave of infections.

The city state is trying to prevent another resurgence in virus cases after an outbreak centered on its army of low-waged migrant workers sent cases above 35,000. The result is a cautious, three-stage strategy of opening up that puts it behind other countries in the region that started restrictive lockdowns weeks before Singapore.

Schools and some offices were re-opened on June 2, but continued restrictions mean that social gatherings and activities like dining at restaurants are forbidden for at least another three weeks.

How the delay is viewed by voters has political implications for the government - which has maintained power through a combination of successful economic management, the lack of a united opposition, and election rules favoring the incumbents - with some businesses saying the protracted timeline means they could go under despite fiscal support.

The People's Action Party, which has held power since Singapore's independence in 1965, is still widely expected to win an election that must be held by early next year. But any significant narrowing of its margin of victory could shake confidence in a new generation of leaders being groomed to take over from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's team. The son of Singapore's founding premier, Lee Kuan Yew, the current leader has signaled he intends to step aside by the time he turns 70 in 2022.

After the PAP won the 2011 election with one of its smallest margin of popular votes, the government

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embraced more populist measures by boosting spending on lower-income families and the elderly. It also tightened rules on work passes for foreigners, who make up more than a third of the island's 5.7 million people.

"Covid has revealed major blind spots of the next generation of leaders, which in turn has raised doubts about the strong mandate the party seeks in the upcoming elections," said Terence Lee, an associate professor of political science at National University of Singapore. He said a disappointing performance could prompt the government to take populist economic steps like spending more to support small businesses and tightening immigration.

Singapore's experience shows how even the best-regarded governments worldwide have been

stymied by the pandemic, in which waves of infection and untraceable chains of transmission have required repeated changes of strategy amid economic devastation.

## PUSHBACK FROM BUSINESSES

Hundreds of businesses and residents are pushing back against the long re-opening runway. Close to 250 restaurant owners who run over 700 outlets have banded together under the campaign #savefnbsg and are lobbying officials for more support. A petition to allow "limited social interactions" from June 2 has garnered over 16,000 signatures.

Businesses that rely on walk-in customers like eateries and gyms have been especially hard-hit by

the extended lockdown. While the government is providing financial support that should in theory cover up to four months of rental relief for small businesses, landlords have not passed this on evenly, prompting legislation to force them to.

## Funding has been extended to Singaporeans and businesses across-the-board, raising questions over whether taxes will need to be increased later to replenish the coffers

It's still unclear how much relief will materialize, said business-owners like Marcus Foo, chief executive of cafe chain PPP Coffee.

For cocktail bar Jekyll & Hyde, the help won't come soon enough. It prepared to shut down in April as sales dropped by more than half. After media reports of the celebrated bar's plight, owner Ee Chien Chua found a new landlord willing

to take a cut of profits rather than charge a fixed rent.

"I think the two months of lockdown was necessary, but I don't fully agree with the phased

re-opening approach and how slow it is," said Chua. "I'm sure in June you're going to see a huge spike in businesses shutting down."

# Wuhan tests 10 million people, finds few infections

**T**HE Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected late last year, has tested nearly 10 million people in an unprecedented 19-day campaign to check an entire city.

It identified just 300 positive cases, all of whom had no symptoms. The city found no infections among 1,174 close contacts of the people who tested positive, suggesting they were not spreading it easily to others.

That is a potentially encouraging development because of widespread concern that infected people without symptoms

could be silent spreaders of the disease.

"It not only makes the people of Wuhan feel at ease, it also increases people's confidence in all of China," Feng Zijian, vice director of China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention, told state broadcaster CCTV.

There is no definitive answer yet on the level of risk posed by asymptomatic cases, with anecdotal evidence and studies to date producing conflicting answers.

Wuhan was by far the hardest hit city in China, accounting for more than 80% of the country's dea-

ths, according to government figures.

A city official announced Tuesday that the city completed 9.9 million tests from May 14 to June 1. If those tested previously are included, virtually everyone above the age of 5 in the city of 11 million people has been tested, said Li Lanjuan, a member of a National Health Commission expert team.

"The city of Wuhan is safe," she said at a news conference with city officials.

The campaign was launched after a small cluster of cases was found in a residential compound,

sparking concern about a possible second wave of infections as Wuhan emerged from a 2 1/2 month lockdown.

The industrial city on the Yangtze River in central China spent 900 million yuan (about \$125 million) on the tests, the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing a Wuhan official.

The rapid testing of so many people was made possible in part through batch testing, in which samples from up to five people are mixed together, Xinhua reported. If the result is positive, then the people are individually tested.

National resources were

AP PHOTO



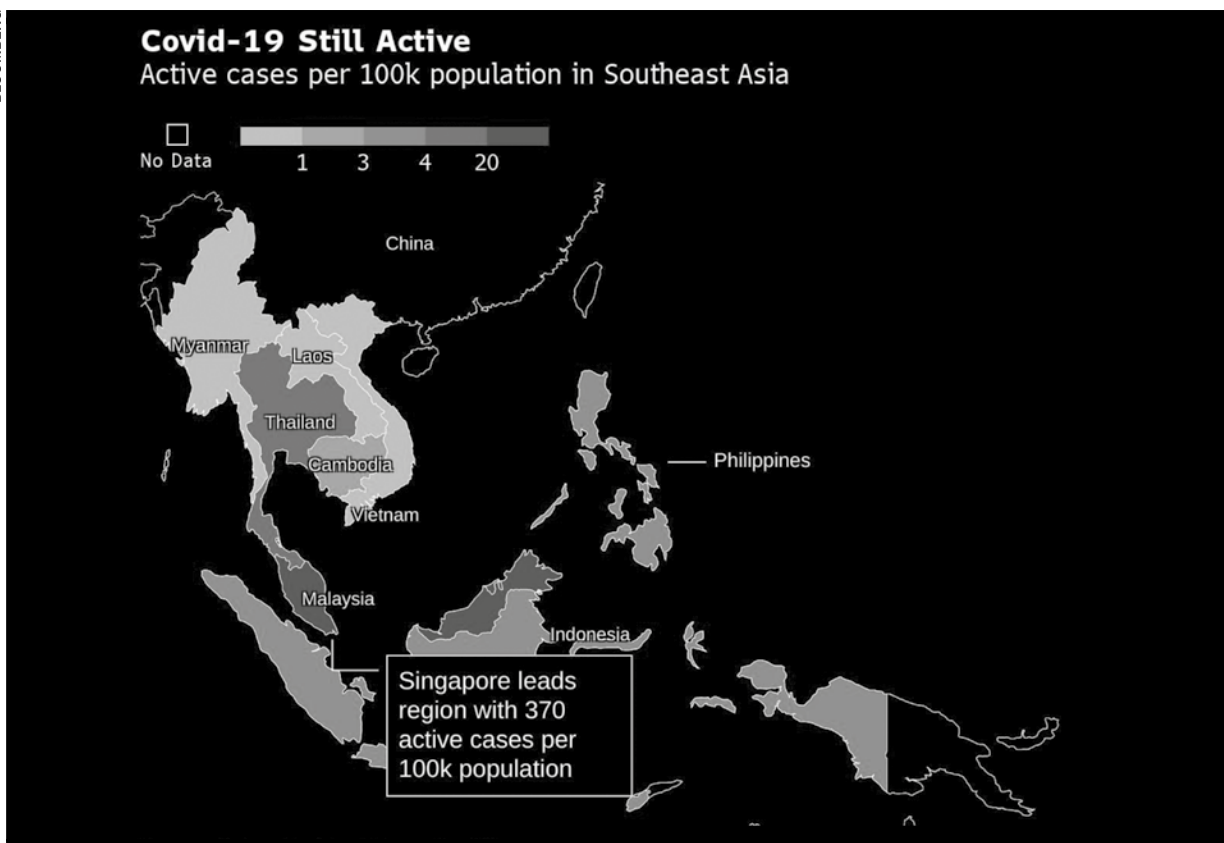
also mobilized to help, said Wang Weihua, deputy director of the Wuhan Health Commission, according to Xinhua. Together, these

efforts raised Wuhan's daily testing capacity from 300,000 to more than one million, she was quoted as saying. AP



# es leaders facing election

BLOOMBERG



## UNLEASHING THE RESERVES

Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong said last week that its re-opening plan is being refined, while emphasizing that it has provided ample financial support for businesses and residents in the form of wide-ranging rental and salary subsidies.

"We are doing all that we can to support businesses that are unable to reopen immediately and also to support their workers," said Wong, who co-chairs the government taskforce on fighting the virus. The timeline "is premised on what we think is safe to do from a public health point of view."

As Singapore heads for its worst recession ever, the city state has unveiled four stimulus packages costing a total of SGD92.9 billion (\$66 billion), or 19.2% of GDP. The measures are being funded in part

by some SGD52 billion this financial year from the nation's flush reserves, allowing it to be one of the few countries in the world that won't have to issue debt to survive the crisis.

It's only the second time that Singapore has drawn down on its national savings, which it's required to pay back by law after the crisis has passed. In 2009, it received approval to draw a relatively paltry SGD4.9 billion to protect jobs during the financial crisis.

Funding has been extended to Singaporeans and businesses across-the-board instead of just being targeted at vulnerable sectors like aviation, tourism and food and beverage, raising questions over whether taxes will need to be increased later to replenish the coffers, said Chua Hak Bin, senior economist at Maybank Kim Eng Research Pte.

Still, the largesse could help sweeten moods in a move reminiscent of the cash handouts that the government has included in its budget during past election years.

"It's good that the older generation of the government had foresight to build such deep reserves, because the new generation of leaders are solving the crisis by throwing money at it," said citizen Ann Lei, a financial services professional in her thirties.

## ELECTORAL VULNERABILITY

The government is "rich enough" to continue doling out financial support and the upcoming polls could show a gain in support given how voters see the ruling party as "big papa," said Bilveer Singh, associate professor at the National University of Singapore's department of political

science.

The opposition presence in Singapore is moribund: the ruling party controls the timing of the poll, dominates parliament which passes electoral rules and oversees resources like community facilities and organizers. Some opposing politicians have been bankrupted by defamation lawsuits.

"The opposition is broken, they are divided, and they are nowhere to be seen," said Singh.

For that reason, local elections are largely seen as a referendum on the government's performance. In the last election in 2015, Singaporeans returned the PAP to power with 69.9% of the vote - the highest level of support since 2001 - in polls held just a few months after a national outpouring of grief over the death of Lee Kuan Yew, a revered figure whose out-sized presence still looms over the small nation.

"There is a quiet determination to redeem the 'gold standard of governance' accolade," said Eugene Tan, a political commentator and law professor at the Singapore Management University. "Bragging rights have somewhat been lost with the massive number of infections in the foreign worker dormitories, and they want to be able to show how good the recovery from the lapses have been, even if they don't publicly admit to having dropped the ball."

The Singapore government's earlier approach of minimal disruption -- which included discouraging masks unless unwell and keeping schools open -- and its late shift to targeted mass testing compared to other countries like South Korea meant infections spread undetected for weeks among foreign workers living in dormitories.

## BEHIND THE CURVE?

The city is still handling its outbreak better than many developed countries: its health-care system is not overwhelmed and its death toll is one of the lowest in the world. Less than 1% of cases are seriously

ill while only six people are in intensive care.

But for citizens used to smooth-running and efficient governance, officials' shifting messaging, the punishing extended lockdown and the global attention attracted by the city's woes have been discomfiting.

"It's not really about how foreign workers are being treated because Singaporeans had in the past accepted their living conditions, but more about keeping cases down as a whole," said former PAP Member of Parliament Inderjit Singh. "The opposition will use those factors to show the government's incompetence."

A survey by Blackbox Research conducted in early April, when the lockdown was beginning, found that 90% of Singaporeans believed the measures would work, though 50% of them thought they should have been implemented earlier -- signaling a broad view that the government has been behind the curve in managing the pandemic, a potential electoral vulnerability given the party's reputation for pro-active leadership.

But others say that Singapore's leaders have done the best they can in a crisis that's confounded governments everywhere.

"The government has been quite responsive to the evolving situation and didn't take it too badly when there was lots of criticism," said citizen Sue Zhu, 53, a counselor in private practice. "I'm particularly impressed with how fast things were rolled out, in terms of financial packages and giving everyone masks."

Regardless of the electoral outcome, Singaporeans are girding themselves for a long period of economic pain.

"Dining-in is not going to resume any time soon, I am prepared for this to drag out for the rest of the year," said Kenneth Yong, 36, who runs a private dining business out of his apartment. "My income is at a level I can get by. It's not a level that I feel secure about the future."

**BLOOMBERG**

# South Korea reopening schools despite spike in cases

**S**OUTH Korea yesterday reported 49 new cases of COVID-19, continuing a weeklong resurgence of the virus as the government defended its decision to reopen schools despite health risks.

The figures announced by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on brought national totals to 11,590 cases and 273 deaths. All but one of the new cases were reported from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where hundreds of infections have been linked to entertainment venues, church gatherings and a

massive e-commerce warehouse.

Mayors and governors in the greater capital area have shut thousands of nightclubs, hostess bars, karaoke rooms, churches and wedding halls to slow the spread of the virus.

Some entertainment venues in Seoul, Incheon and Daejeon began collecting the personal details of their customers through smartphone QR codes this week so they could be located easily when needed, a requirement that will be expanded nationwide on June 10.

Despite the spike in

AP PHOTO



transmissions, the government has been pushing ahead with a phased reopening of schools,

which began with high-school seniors on May 20.

Class openings were planned Wednesday for

nearly 1.8 million children -- high-school freshmen, middle-school juniors and third- and fourth-grade elementary kids.

The Education Ministry couldn't immediately confirm how many schools had to delay their openings because of virus concerns. But it said that 519 schools so far have been forced to go back to remote learning.

Keeping schools closed would have been a difficult political decision in a country where teenagers are thrown into hyper-competitive school environments be-

cause graduating from elite universities is seen as crucial to career prospects. But some critics say that would have been the right decision for public health interests and that officials are risking the safety of children and their families.

Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said that the country kept schools open even during the 1950-53 Korean War.

"I believe that we cannot fail the dreams and future of our children because of the current difficulties," Chung said during a virus meeting. **MDT/AP**



# Italy to map out economic revival as travel ban ends

TOMMASO EBHARDT  
& JERROLD COLTEN

**P**RIME Minister Giuseppe Conte will unveil his plan to rebuild a battered economy on the day Italians end almost three months of lockdown measures and can again travel freely.

The premier will outline his government's recovery strategy in a speech late Wednesday, Italian media reported, and repeat an appeal to put aside the country's political divisions.

Conte, who heads an unruly coalition, on Tuesday had called on Italians to come together and help revive their country, but his message was met by opposition rallies in hundreds of cities on Republic Day.

Giuseppe Conte, Italy's prime minister, speaks during a joint news conference with Emmanuel Macron, France's president, not pictured, at a bilateral summit in Naples, Italy, on Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020. Macron and Conte staged a show of friendship with a summit designed to turn the page on a postwar low in bilateral relations, even as coronavirus concerns overshadowed the meetings agenda.

The renewed appeal comes as new virus cases continue to decline and as Italians can again travel within the country without restrictions starting Wednesday.

Still, local differences are growing deeper, with officials from the substantially



Giuseppe Conte, Italy's prime minister

virus-free South threatening to turn away citizens from Lombardy, Italy's richest and most populous region, where new cases continue to be reported.

Lines for reopened ferry service between Sicily and the Italian mainland began forming as early as 4 a.m. Wednesday, *la Repubblica* reported, with most of the traffic heading away from the island.

"Let's combine and concentrate all our energy in the shared effort to pick ourselves up and begin again with maximum determination," Conte said in a message posted Tuesday on Facebook, evoking efforts to rebuild the nation after World War II.

Conte's finance minister, Roberto Gualtieri, was in the meantime engaged in a sniping war with the head of industry lobby Confindustria, Carlo Bonomi, who charged in an interview with *Repubblica* that some proposed policies could "do more damage than Covid." Pumping resources to indi-

viduals would waste money, he said, while the country needs investments in areas like infrastructure in order to restart the economy.

The Health Ministry on Tuesday reported 55 fatalities, the fewest in more than a week. New cases rose by 318 to 233,515, with almost 60% of new infections in Lombardy. The region, which includes financial center Milan, accounts for almost half of the more than 33,500 fatalities nationwide and still has the highest ratio of new cases per 100,000 people.

The decision to open the country internally is also designed to help boost tourism, which accounts for about 13% of gross domestic product. Italy will now allow travelers from other European Union states to enter without undergoing quarantines.

Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio is due to meet his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian on Wednesday to hammer out details for cross-border travel between

the two countries, daily *La Stampa* reported. Di Maio is also seeking French support in easing travel restrictions for Italians heading to other European destinations, including Greece, *Stampa* said.

Railway operator *Ferrovie dello Stato* is doubling the number of long-haul trains from June 3, with fewer seats to facilitate distancing. Struggling airline *Alitalia* is increasing flights by 36% this month, including a non-stop Rome-New York route.

Some restrictions remain in place. Schools won't reopen before September, while cinemas and theaters will be allowed to operate again from mid-June.

Italy's economy shrank 5.3% in the first quarter, the most since the current data series began in the mid-1990s. A deeper contraction is expected this quarter and the full-year slump is likely to exceed 10%, according to economists.

The recession, along with extra spending on health measures, has prompted additional government borrowing, adding to the nation's already considerable debt pile.

Italy received over 100 billion euros (\$112 billion) of bids for its syndicated offering of 10-year debt on Wednesday. The nation has to drastically ramp up bond sales in order to fund a growing fiscal deficit, with the country's debt as a share of economic output set to top 150% this year. **BLOOMBERG**

## this day in history



### 1968 DOVER BEGINS BIRD PURGE

It's Seagull Week in Dover. This is not, as you might expect, a celebration of the bird whose cry evokes the fresh sea air, fish 'n' chips on the prom and the White Cliffs looming over the ocean - but a purge of a creature regarded as a noisy and dirty pest.

The birds had the nerve to move from the world-famous cliffs to nest in the comfort of the chimney pots and roof tops of the town centre some years ago.

One theory suggests they were frightened away during the war by explosions in the Channel - another that they have been encouraged in by bird-loving townspeople who are feeding them.

Whatever the reason for the gulls' invasion, today residents and workmen are starting to remove hundreds of nests and eggs on Dover's buildings.

And this work is no laughing matter - it can be dangerous, especially if the eggs have hatched and the chicks are disturbed.

Then the egg-snatchers are likely to be dive-bombed by protective mother gulls.

The three-day annual event to rid the resort of gulls began in 1960 when Dover's Chamber of Commerce decided to tackle complaints of a deafening dawn chorus not to mention soiled cars and clothes.

Most Dover residents support the campaign, led by its organiser Arthur Blackman.

He told the BBC: "It's a great embarrassment for people in summer dresses - or any dress, come to that - having their clothes spoilt with these horrible birds."

Courtesy BBC News

## EUROPE'S ECONOMY SCARRED BY LOCKDOWNS STARTS ON SLOW RECOVERY

**E**UROPE'S economy is slowly emerging from a record slump that's destroyed businesses and jobs and could lead to a near double-digit contraction year.

A gauge of economic activity in the 19-nation euro region rose in May to highest in three months after an easing of lockdown restrictions allowed companies and shops to resume business. Yet the measure still signals a sharp contraction in manufacturing and services, according to IHS Markit, which estimates a 9% economic slump this year.

Governments across the euro area are working on fiscal-stimulus plans to restart growth, complementing the European Central Bank's unpreceden-

ted monetary support. The European Commission is adding 750 billion euros (\$837 billion) in grants and loans, with those countries most affected by the pandemic set to receive particular help.

Aid prospects have bolstered confidence in Italy, where the coronavirus has claimed more than 33,000 lives. A measure for future activity in the private sector climbed above the key 50 level for the first time in three months.

Optimism also returned to France, with pessimism easing in the rest of the bloc.

For the euro area, IHS Markit's headline Purchasing Managers Index rose to 31.9 in May from just 13.6 in April.

"The planned lifting of lockdowns

will inevitably help boost business activity and sentiment further in coming months," said Chris Williamson, an economist at IHS Markit. "However, the outlook is scarred by the prospect of demand remaining weak due to household spending being hit by high levels of unemployment and corporate spending being subdued."

Euro-area employment declined sharply in May despite evidence that companies made use of furlough schemes, and orders continued to shrink significantly.

"We therefore remain cautious with respect to the recovery," said Williamson, adding that the recovery to pre-pandemic levels of output will take "several" years. **BLOOMBERG**

## IN CONTEXT

Seagulls have been the bane of many a British seaside resort for decades. Their droppings are not only an "embarrassment" but also damage buildings.

They have also been known to scavenge from rubbish bins and in some cases to attack people.

But since the introduction of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is against the law to kill seagulls or interfere with their nests.

However, Herring Gulls are recognised as being a public nuisance and can be humanely controlled by those owning or occupying the building on which they are nesting. The council usually advises prevention as the best possible cure which involves using special wire, springs and safe plastic spikes to stop gulls from perching.



YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Even if the weather isn't perfect, getting some physical exercise outside would be great. There is nothing better than huffing and puffing to put a smile on your face.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

In order to get more romance in your life, go back in time. Not all old-fashioned ideas are keepers, but some of them are lost treasures you could try, especially in these times.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

There's a reason you're hesitant to reconnect, and you need time to figure out exactly what that is. Don't bow to peer pressure in this situation. This is a decision you'll come to when you come to it, no sooner and no later.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You can choose some things about your life, but there are certain things that you have no control over, and the sooner you understand that, the better you'll be able to connect with others today.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

They could also have a chip on their shoulder about their financial situation and tossing some guilt your way. Put yourself in their place. Work with them and cut them some slack.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

No one is going to sing your praises right now except you. If you want to get the credit you deserve, you should spread the word. Don't worry about people thinking you're boasting.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Other people are all quite adept at talking today, but, unfortunately, none of them are good listeners. The burden will be on you to help everyone understand what needs to happen and how to get it done.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Are you looking for some stimulation of the intellectual kind? Today is a good day to get it! Your curiosity (if you follow it) will lead you to something very fun and educational.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Someone's curiosity might drive you a little bit crazy today. They know you know more than you're letting on, and they won't give up trying to pry it out of you!



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Acting spontaneously today could get you into a bit of trouble, so consider yourself warned. Plans are your friends and not to be ignored. They'll help you stay on task for the day.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Think of it as "lifekeeping" as opposed to housekeeping. You'll have a chance to rearrange a few things in your life and make your immediate surroundings a lot more pleasant.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Whatever you've been contemplating is something you have to stop contemplating. Today, you should finally just do it! Your stalling tactics are wearing thin, and there is no point in putting things off any longer.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

7			4		
		5	2		
				1	
					2
4		3			8
6					5
	3	7			
		4		6	
2					1

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	14	22	cloudy
Harbin	0	15	cloudy
Tianjin	14	21	overcast
Urumqi	15	26	shower
Xi'an	20	36	cloudy
Lhasa	8	17	cloudy
Chengdu	22	31	drizzle
Chongqing	23	31	drizzle
Kunming	14	27	clear
Nanjing	23	33	cloudy
Shanghai	23	32	clear
Wuhan	23	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	22	35	cloudy
Taipei	23	27	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	34	clear
Hong Kong	25	31	cloudy

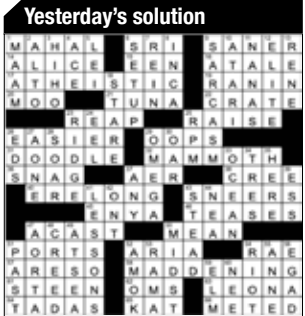
WORLD

Moscow	12	21	drizzle
Frankfurt	6	18	drizzle
Paris	10	19	clear
London	7	15	drizzle
New York	11	25	drizzle

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Camaro model; 5- Noble; 9- Renown; 13- \_\_\_ contendere; 14- Industrialist Schindler; 16- Change for a five; 17- Scottish Celt; 18- Corpulent; 19- Salt Lake City hoopsters; 20- Switch back?; 21- \_\_\_ Kapital; 22- Set on fire; 24- Hot sandwich; 26- Elderly, matured; 27- Legend; 29- Unselfish; 33- Capital of Vietnam; 34- Sunburn soother; 35- Long ago; 36- Slugger Mel; 37- 9 to 5; 38- Microwave; 39- Sudden assault; 41- They may be fine; 42- Role for Clark; 44- Penitentiary island; 46- Reproach; 47- Edible roots; 48- Hammer or sickle; 49- Wagner heroine; 52- Eight-time Norris Trophy winner; 53- Old Fords; 57- Composer Schiffrin; 58- Polite refusal; 60- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 61- Potter's oven; 62- Unit of magnetic induction; 63- Fail to include; 64- Obstacle; 65- Child's toy; 66- Enlivens, with "up";

DOWN: 1- "Picnic" playwright; 2- Din; 3- Bread spread; 4- Commercial capital of Sri Lanka; 5- Breed of dog; 6- Convocation of witches; 7- Squeezes (out); 8- \_\_\_ Tafari (Haile Selassie); 9- Castings; 10- Opposed; 11- Bump into; 12- "\_\_\_ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 15- Ruled; 23- Golly; 25- \_\_\_ Lilly and Company; 26- Ages; 27- Causing death; 28- Caper; 29- Ostentatious glamour; 30- Seeped; 31- Component of organic fertilizer; 32- Calendar abbr.; 33- Israeli round dance; 34- Rich tapestry; 37- Article of clothing; 40- From dawn to dusk; 42- 17th letter of the Greek alphabet; 43- Summit of an earthy mound; 45- Tiny bit; 46- Horse pen; 48- Run of bird-song; 49- Sorts; 50- Spahn teammate; 51- Earthen pot; 52- \_\_\_ buco (veal dish); 54- Duration; 55- Faucet problem; 56- Tennis units; 59- Brit. lexicon;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



**FOR SALE**

**Hoi Wan Garden, Taipa**  
**HK\$4,900,000** 900 ft² 2 1 1

**FOR RENT**

**Taipa Apartment Great Venetian View**  
**\$28,000/mth** 2,060 ft² 4 1 2

**FOR SALE**

[Macau] One Oasis modern studio 1 1  
691 ft² **\$6,357,000** (ref: n/a)

[Taipa] Manhattan D unit 4 1 2  
2,305 ft² **\$15,980,000** (ref: n/a)

[Macau] Keng Ou Office 3 1  
2,352 ft² **\$17,500,000** (ref: 19096002)

[Macau] 2 Shops downtown 1,404 ft² **\$20,800,000** (ref: 19015573)

**FOR RENT**

[Coloane] Grand Coloane Resort 1 1 1  
710 ft² **\$10,000/mth** (ref: 20021002)

[Macau] Vai Fung Triplex, Macau 2 1 2  
1,065 ft² **\$14,000/mth** (ref: 19121001)

[Taipa] Manhattan 3 1 2  
1,626 ft² **\$19,800/mth** (ref: 20031001)

[Taipa] Private house 2 1 3  
4,266 ft² **\$45,000/mth** (ref: 19055006ST)

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# ZOOM TRANSFORMS HYPE INTO HUGE JUMP IN SALES, CUSTOMERS

NICO GRANT

**Z**OOM Video Communications Inc. demonstrated that paying customers have flocked to its virtual-meeting software, transforming the once-niche appmaker into a popular communications service and positioning it to benefit as the nature of work, school and life is upended.

Zoom reported sales soared in the three months ended April 30, when the coronavirus pandemic spurred a wave of stay-at-home orders for millions of people worldwide. The company expects the trend to continue the rest of the year, and projected that revenue and profit will leapfrog investors' earlier expectations.

"A shift in work culture triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic urges corporations to pull forward adoption of cloud-based video-conferencing tools," Boyoung Kim, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, wrote Tuesday in a note. Zoom's "intuitive technology and strong brand recognition should help the company pick up market share in video conferencing, outpacing the industry."

Sales in the current quarter will be as much as \$500 million, the San Jose, California-based company said Tuesday in a statement. Revenue in the third and fourth fiscal quarters should be consistent with that performance, Chief Financial Officer Kelly Steckelberg said during a conference call. Overall, Zoom expects to generate as much as \$1.8 billion this fiscal year, which is almost triple the size of the business last year. Analysts, on average, estimated \$930.8 million, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.



Chief Executive Officer Eric Yuan has tried to ensure that his virtual-meeting platform can cope with a swell of demand from people staying home to curtail the spread of Covid-19. While security and privacy issues plagued the system early in the quarantine, Zoom has become an essential service, attracting more than 300 million participants some days, up from 10 million in December. The software maker allows gatherings of as long as 40 minutes for no charge. While Zoom has attracted more buzz than corporate rivals, the results Tuesday suggested it can attract the paying clients needed to compete against services from Microsoft Corp., Cisco Systems Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google.

The software maker said its potential market has expanded beyond an estimate of \$43 billion by 2022 made by analyst IDC, according to a 2019 re-

gulatory filing. And executives said they have expanded hiring plans to take advantage of the opportunity. While Steckelberg warned that the lifting of stay-at-home orders may cause fewer people to use Zoom's software, the company said it hadn't seen the numbers decline yet in areas that have reopened.

Many educational institutions that teach through Zoom have decided to host virtual classes through at least the fall, pointing to robust demand for the app through the rest of the year. To continue growing at a torrid pace, Zoom will sell its Phone software and Rooms hardware products to existing customers, Steckelberg added. Yuan vowed not to rely on advertising to make money from its legions of free users.

In the fiscal first quarter, revenue increased about 170% to \$328.2 million. Analysts, on average, expected \$203 million, according to data compiled by

Bloomberg. Profit, excluding some items, was 20 cents a share, compared with analysts' average projection of 9 cents.

Shares were little-changed in extended trading after closing at a record \$208.08 in New York. The stock has more than tripled this year.

The company said its expected adjusted profit in the fiscal year will be \$355 million to \$380 million, or \$1.21 to \$1.29 a share. Analysts had estimated 46 cents, just more than Zoom's earlier forecast. The company has been spending to bolster its network capacity, including by buying cloud-computing services from Oracle Corp. during the pandemic. Zoom also continues to use Amazon.com Inc.'s cloud service, which provided the majority of the new capacity.

Zoom's daily meeting participants have dipped a bit below the blockbuster 300 million figure revealed in April, but

Steckelberg said the company expects to consistently surpass that milestone in the future.

The company said it ended the quarter with about 265,400 customers with more than 10 employees, a more than four-fold increase from the same period a year earlier. The company now has 769 corporate clients that have spent more than \$100,000 on Zoom's products over the last 12 months, about double from a year earlier.

With Zoom's popularity has come controversy over the company's security practices. Trolls have invaded myriad meetings, religious gatherings and other events, to share pornography and shout profanity or racial epithets, in a phenomenon known as "Zoombombing." The company highlighted or created a raft of tools users can employ to prevent the virtual attacks, including passwords and waiting rooms.

There also were instances when Zoom calls were routed through servers in China even when no participant was based there and users were unwittingly sending metadata to Facebook Inc. when they signed in. Zoom put an end to both practices. The company pledged to commit to bolstering privacy over all other concerns for three months, purchasing a secure-messaging company, Keybase, to bring the highest standard of encryption to the platform, and hiring cybersecurity experts to guide safety efforts.

Corporate clients will get access to Zoom's end-to-end encryption service now being developed, but Yuan said free users won't enjoy that level of privacy, which makes it impossible for third parties to decipher communications.

"Free users for sure we don't want to give that because we also want to work together with FBI, with local law enforcement in case some people use Zoom for a bad purpose," Yuan said on the call. **BLOOMBERG**

AD



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## VIRUS DIARY

**I** cannot draw. I am unable to sketch anything past the outlines of a simple flower or a house no one would want to live in. For my verbally delayed autistic 6-year-old son though, drawing is a lifeline. It's how he processes feelings and communicates when words literally fail him.

So despite being terrible at it, I often draw to explain complex situations such as why he, a highly sensory child, will have to stop touching his face and avoid others.

I sketch a menacing coronavirus, complete with spiky tops. He takes the pencil from my hands. Clusters of hearts now stand atop the spikes, turning my evil virus into a little bug who has friends. I smile, somewhat defeated, at the landscape of multiplied coronaviruses on the paper, now an army of love spreaders.

Autistics, they will have you believe, exist on the margin of emotions, in a world of their own, disconnected. “They’ve been preparing for lockdown all their lives,” someone jokes on social media.

My son is downstairs with his dad as I try to edit a news conference through my guilt and his explosive meltdown. It's Week Two since lockdown began and his routine got upended. His emotions are very much not on the margin.

His disquiet wraps around  
ours like a Venn diagram. Lack

# He draws, and a world opens up for his mother



of school is in some ways a welcome respite from the sensory overload of his everyday life. But there are also no more soothing swimming lessons, no more playground trips.

Parenting a special needs child has never been a walk in the park, but now we can't even do that without hovering even more over our little human

pinball, desperate to run, touch everything, say hi to all the living souls. For autistics, lockdown is not something they have been preparing for their whole lives. It's a hell of crushed references. For parents, it's like being the pinball machine itself, cushioning the frustration and also reveling in the emerging victories. Homeschooling is a no-go.

Attempts to turn cake-baking into a maths lesson are quickly deconstructed by a boy who sees more than he says. But he has new words and he's asking questions.

I work. In the background I can hear him play Barry White, then the O'Jays. As I process my inability to homeschool, he processes the entire soul mu-

sis catalog, drawing record covers and posing in front of the mirror. He wants to know what everyone is feeling, what they are looking at so longingly. I'm trying to breathe my way out of this pandemic and he's having me wonder what a cigarette-holding Barry White is contemplating and where the O'Jays' love train is going.

In between, he sketches a plane, his grandparents, the beach, a blistering sun. "This is for you to take to your work town," he says. That's the kitchen these days, so I pin the drawings to the fridge.

On Thursdays he goes outside and claps for carers, shouting louder than anyone else: "Come on, you can do it! Don't be shy!" The neighbors across the street, people we barely know, laugh and wave; the social distancing that was there pre-pandemic is bridged by a child whose disability reveals itself in a different ability to connect.

Others will tell you autistics are locked in their own worlds, socially inept, indifferent. I will tell you about the bit where my son — not supposed to be able to read facial expressions — asks during a Zoom call if I'm OK when no one else across the screen can tell I'm not.

He taps into my anxiety, offering up hugs and drawings of where all the emotions live, where hope is stored, where coronaviruses have hearts and Barry White holds the key to the love train. Which, by the way, is headed toward the beach.

**AD**

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 木偶公仔表演

por . 表演者 . by:  
**ELISA VILAÇA**

horário . 開放時間 . schedule:  
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 local . 會場 . venue:

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OPINION

World Views

Marcus Ashworth, Bloomberg

THE MIGHTY U.S. DOLLAR IS HAVING A WOBBLE

The mighty U.S. Dollar is having a wobble, falling to its lowest level on a trade-weighted basis since March. It's a sign that the economic effects of the crisis are waning around the world. Perhaps it's time for the U.S. to rein in the unlimited economic stimulus, or at least keep some in reserve to fight specific fires rather than just ensuring market liquidity.

The Federal Reserve has saved the financial world with its unrelenting monetary packages, pumping in \$3 trillion in the past three months. It has met the soaring global demand for dollars, the haven currency in a crisis, and propped up the U.S. economy and a large swath of the developing world exposed to dollar borrowing. With oil prices regaining their footing, the immediate danger of an emerging markets collapse has passed.

The Fed has also done the job at home. The Nasdaq is within a squeak of its all-time peak, the S&P 500 is within 10% of its record high and corporate bond yields have fallen sharply. The mission to restore confidence in financial valuations is surely complete.

The flip side of this is that with interest rates at zero, the federal deficit soaring and U.S. bond yields barely above the rest of the developed world, there's not much incentive for investors to be parked in dollars. Washington's dispute with Beijing won't be helping, and neither will the civil unrest of recent days and the prospect of mass unemployment.

U.S. assets still have great appeal; the dollar's fall is merely the unwinding of a huge risk premium on other countries that favored the greenback. The danger for Fed Chairman Jay Powell is whether he has overdone the infinite liquidity and whether the recent lurch lower for the dollar turns into a rout. In fairness, the Fed has cut its daily bond purchases from \$75 billion a day at one stage of the Covid-19 crisis into the single billions.

But the balance sheet effect of boosting the Fed's holdings by 70%, to more than \$7 trillion, in such short order is hard to contain. No wonder the dollar has been a casualty. It wouldn't be a surprise if the Fed ceased daily stimulus soon to become much more selective in its asset purchases.

The dollar's weakness also reflects the relative strength of other currencies. Neither China nor Japan have conducted stimulus on anything like the same scale. The dollar's most-traded counterpart, the euro, has scored some notable wins recently. The European Union's still-to-be-agreed 750 billion-euro (\$840 billion) recovery fund is a sign that euro-area unity might finally be happening.

Furthermore, the European Central Bank's pandemic QE program has been weighted substantially toward the euro zone's weakest link, Italy, helping the country's borrowing costs stay in touch with those of Germany.

The lifting of lockdowns across Europe — without much discernible impact on coronavirus infection rates, at least not yet — gives the sense that the recession may not be as deep as feared. The ECB has increased its balance sheet by less than 20% so far, although it might be more by the time its meeting on Thursday is over. That may check the recent euro strength, which would be welcomed by big local exporters such as Germany.

A weaker dollar might be just what the global economy needs to sustain a proper recovery, as it prevents a skew of capital flooding into just one liquid currency. Greater potential returns in emerging economies will reappear. Equally, it will be good news for U.S. exporters with global revenues. The Fed has done a stellar job so far. Now it has to manage the stimulus easing successfully too.

HONG KONG CAN GET US DOLLARS FROM CHINA IF NEEDED, SAYS FINANCIAL CHIEF

THE BUZZ

China's central bank can provide U.S. dollars to back Hong Kong's currency peg should the Trump administration impose sanctions on the territory, according to the city's financial chief.

The dollar peg is underpinned by about \$440 billion of foreign-exchange reserves, which is more than two times the city's money in circulation, Financial Secretary Paul Chan said in an interview with China Central Television yesterday. If needed, Hong Kong can tap a currency swap line with the People's Bank of China, which will cover Hong Kong dollars and the greenback, he said.

Top officials have been keen to reassure investors that the 36-year-old dollar peg remains secure regardless of how the U.S. responds to Beijing's controversial plan to impose national security legislation on Hong Kong.

Banks and money exchange shops have seen queues in recent days as residents are looking to open offshore accounts or get hold of foreign currencies, according to local media reports.

Under the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, the president is empowered to suspend the territory's special trading privileges at any time through an executive order. The law allows for U.S. dollars to be freely exchanged with Hong Kong dollars, which if revoked would amount to what some analysts have called the "nuclear option."

Chan also told CCTV on Wednesday that the linked exchange rate doesn't require any approval from foreign country, without specifying which. He said Hong Kong will definitely not impose capital controls.

US STREETS CALMEST IN DAYS, PROTESTS LARGELY PEACEFUL



PROTESTS were largely peaceful and the nation's streets were calmer than they have been in days since the killing of George Floyd set off sometimes violent demonstrations against police brutality and injustice against African Americans.

An earlier curfew and efforts by protesters to contain the violence prevented more widespread damage to businesses in New York City overnight. As of Wednesday morning, arrests grew to more than 9,000 nationwide since the unrest began in response to Floyd's death May 25 in Minneapolis.

There was a marked quiet compared with the unrest of the past few nights, which included fires and shootings in some cities. Many cities intensified their curfews, with authorities in Washington also ordering people off streets before sundown.

A block away from the White House, thousands of demonstrators massed following a crackdown a day earlier when officers on foot and horseback aggressively drove peaceful protesters away from Lafayette Park, clearing the way for President Donald Trump to do a photo op at nearby St. John's Church. Tuesday's protesters faced

law enforcement personnel who stood behind a black chain-link fence put up overnight to block access to the park.

Trump amplified his hard-line calls from Monday, when he threatened to send in the military to restore order if governors didn't do it. "NYC, CALL UP THE NATIONAL GUARD," he tweeted. "The lowlifes and losers are ripping you apart. Act fast!"

Thousands of people remained in the streets of New York City Tuesday night, undeterred by an 8 p.m. curfew, though most streets were clear by early Wednesday. Midtown Manhattan was pocked with battered storefronts after Monday's protests.

Protests also passed across the U.S., including in Los Angeles, Miami, St. Paul, Minnesota, Columbia, South Carolina and Houston, where the police chief talked to peaceful demonstrators, vowing reforms.

More than 20,000 National Guard members have been called up in 29 states to deal with the violence. Not in New York City, where Mayor Bill de Blasio has said he does not want the Guard, despite an offer from Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

On Tuesday, Cuomo called what happened in the city Monday night "a disgrace."

"The NYPD and the mayor did not do their job," Cuomo said at a briefing in Albany.

He said his fellow Democrat underestimated the problem, and the nation's largest police force was not deployed in sufficient numbers, though the city had said it doubled the usual police presence.

Tuesday marked the eighth straight night of protests that began after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck while the handcuffed black man called out that he couldn't breathe. The officer, Derek Chauvin, has been fired and charged with murder.

The mother of George Floyd's 6-year-old daughter, Gianna, said she wants the world to know that her little girl lost a good father.

"I want everybody to know that this is what those officers took," Roxie Washington said during a Minneapolis news conference, her daughter at her side. "I want justice for him because he was good. No matter what anybody thinks, he was good." MDT/AP

**Germany** The government has agreed on a bill that would speed up the dismissal of soldiers involved in extremism or serious crimes. Current military rules mean that soldiers who have served for more than four years can only be kicked out after they have been convicted of a crime or removed as part of a court-led disciplinary procedure. In practice, this can mean soldiers remain in the military for years until they are removed.



**Germany** The government wants to increase offshore wind power capacity five-fold by 2040 as part of its plan to wean the country off fossil fuels. The Cabinet on yesterday agreed on a bill that would set a goal of 40 Gigawatts of installed offshore wind power capacity in 20 years, from about 7.5 Gigawatts at present.



**Italy** is the first European country to fully open its international borders, dropping the 14-day quarantine requirement for visitors. But most European nations see Italy's move — which aims to boost its collapsed yet critical tourism industry — as premature. Many of them are moving to open only on June 15 — and some even much later than that.



**Turkey** Police in Istanbul have dispersed a small group of demonstrators who gathered in the Turkish city to denounce police violence and to stand in solidarity with protesters in the United States. At least 29 demonstrators were detained, Turkey's state-run agency reported.