

The Macao SAR Government urges:

- Let's all persist;
- Wash hands frequently;
- Wear a mask properly;
- Avoid crowd gathering;
- Keep a social distance;
- Declare health conditions;
- Reduce leaving Macao.

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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SANDS CHINA IS REPORTEDLY ARRANGING CHARTERED FLIGHTS FOR SOME 130 FILIPINO WORKERS THAT HAVE BEEN STRANDED IN THE CITY

▲ P2

NEW MACAU EXPOSES SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN UN REPORT

▲ P3

AMONG ALL MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED IN MACAU LAST YEAR, EYE SURGERIES GREW THE MOST: 40.4% YEAR-ON-YEAR

▲ P2

Australia Canberra Airport opened a register for travelers interested in flying from the Australian capital to New Zealand on July 1 in a proposed resumption of international travel. The proposal to restart flights connecting the two capitals was under discussion between the two governments as well as Qantas and Air New Zealand, Canberra Airport Managing Director Stephen Byron said yesterday.

AP PHOTO



South Korea confirmed 39 additional cases of the coronavirus, all but three in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area as authorities are struggling to contain a resurgence of COVID-19. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the newly reported cases raised the country's total to 11,629 with 273 deaths. The agency says 10,499 of them have recovered while 857 remain in treatment.

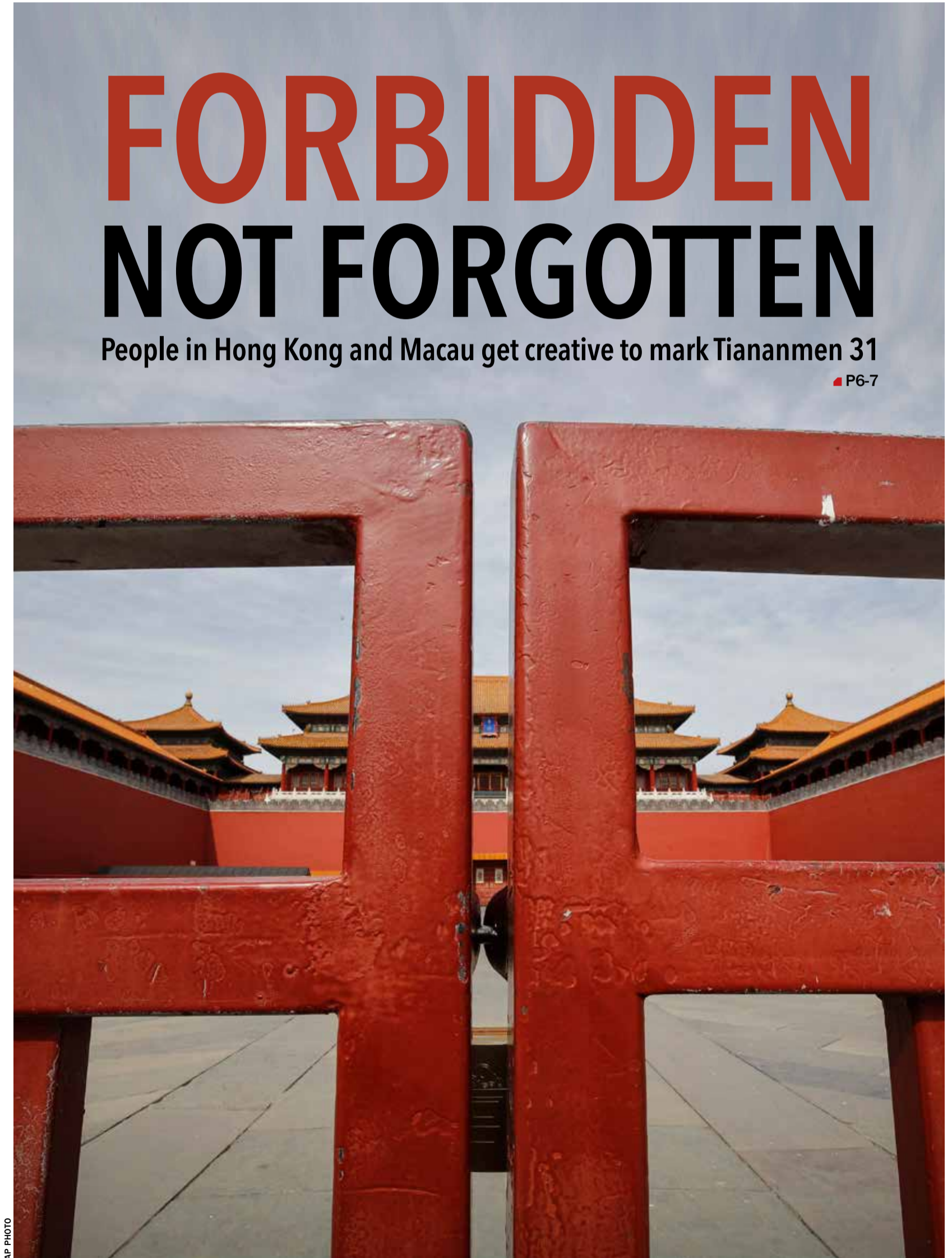
Indonesia Authorities in Jakarta will ease a partial lockdown as the world's fourth most populous nation braces to gradually reopen its economy. Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan announced the reopening of mosques, churches and temples today but only at half capacity. Offices, public transport, restaurants, grocery stores and beaches will be allowed to operate also at half capacity.

AP PHOTO



India's tally of COVID-19 fatalities has crossed the 6,000-mark after registering 260 deaths in the last 24 hours. The country also reported 9,304 new cases of the coronavirus in another biggest single-day spike, raising the total infections to 216,919 with 6,075 deaths. The Health Ministry said it was ramping up testing across the country with 4 million people tested so far.

More on backpage



FORBIDDEN NOT FORGOTTEN

People in Hong Kong and Macau get creative to mark Tiananmen 31

▲ P6-7

AP PHOTO

CONSTRUCTION WORKER INJURED IN FALL

A 32-year-old construction worker was injured when he fell from a structural support while refurbishing a medical clinic located at Avenida de Horta e Costa. The local resident was standing on a three-meter-tall structural support when he fell. He sustained head injuries and began to lose consciousness when being transferred to the hospital. The Labour Affairs Bureau has already been informed of the case. In addition to this, the Public Security Police Force found a 60-year-old local resident who had been responsible for a car accident yesterday. On May 30, this man had caused a car accident as the result of his speeding. He was still banned from driving when he caused the second accident.

CULTURAL DECORATIONS WANTED FOR GUIA HILL PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL

Lawmaker Leong Sun lok has proposed that the local government decorate the Guia Hill pedestrian tunnel with Macau historical cultural elements. Earlier this year, the local government announced plans to excavate a tunnel through Guia Hill for the exclusive use of pedestrians. Considering the probable scale of the tunnel and its internal walls, Leong hopes that the government can make the facility a walking system that comprehensively displays Macau history, culture and creativity. Leong believes that this kind of wall will "enrich Macau peoples' cultural life." In addition, the lawmakers called for more updates on transport arrangements at both ends of the tunnel.

LAWMAKER CALLS FOR URBAN MASTER PLAN TIMETABLE

Lawmaker Lam Lon Wai has asked the local government to reveal the timetable for Macau's urban master plan. In 2014, the Legislative Assembly (AL) passed the urban planning bill. However, as of today, the local government has not completed an urban master plan. Lam believes that Macau's urban development will be negatively impacted without this plan because the city will not be able to make separate plans for each district. Nonetheless, the designated purpose of each area will also be put in doubt. The lawmaker also questioned the government as to whether it will transform spare land into leisure zones and whether it will improve the city's environment for walking.

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SURGERIES GROW OVER 40% IN 2019

RENATO MARQUES

AMONG all medical services provided in Macau during 2019, ophthalmological surgeries grew the most, registering a year-on-year increase of 40.4%, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) revealed.

These medical procedures continue to grow at a rate well above all other services, registering growth of more than 40% for two consecutive years.

Out of 20,000 surgical operations in 2019, almost 4,000 (20%) were related ophthalmology. This significant figure also pushed the total number of surgeries up by 6.3% year-on-year.

In general, demand for services from the five hospital units and sub-units in Macau registered a growth in demand, with outpatient services growing 5.8% to 1,892,000. Consultations in internal medicine (312,000) accounted for 16.5%, followed by physiotherapy and rehabilitation (252,000), which made up 13.3%.

During this period, patient presentations for Emergency services rose by 5.2% year-on-year to 489,000, with those attending in the Peninsula (383,000) and Taipa (107,000) increasing 5.9% and 3.0% respectively.

In 2019, the number of inpatients went up by 3.9% year-on-year to 62,000, with the average hospital stay increasing 0.2 days to 7.4 days.



OLGA GURYANOVA

CHINESE MEDICINE CONSULTATIONS GROW 28%

According to the same statistical data from DSEC, traditional Chinese medicine became more popular in 2019, registering 27.8% growth in the number of consultations to a total of 1,143,000. This is just below the number of general practice con-

sultations held in private clinics (1,227,000).

Including consultations hosted by government health establishments, the number of consultations from the 716 primary health care establishments in Macau reached 4,112,000. This represented a year-on-year increase of 4.5%.

The number of vaccinations was also on a rise, increasing by 9.5% year-on-year. A total of 416,000 vaccines were administered in both hospitals and primary healthcare settings in 2019.

The influenza vaccines accounted for 38.7% of all vaccines administered, totaling 161,000 doses.

ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF BLOOD DONATIONS IN 2019 WERE BY FIRST-TIMERS

Of the 11,150 people who donated blood in Macau in 2019, 3,369 did so for the first time, accounting for 30.2% of all blood donors.

The new donors contributed to the increase in donations last year, which rose by 3.9% to 15,441, official statistics from DSEC show.

According to the statistics and data from the Health Bureau, there were a total of 1,808 physicians and 2,491 nurses in Macau in 2019, 3.1% and 1.1% more than in the previous year respectively.

The ratio of physicians and nurses per 1,000 people was 2.7 and 3.7, respectively.

According to the latest figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the list of countries and regions with the highest ratio of physicians per 1,000 people is led by Austria, with a ratio of 5.2.

Macau's ratio is equivalent to countries such as the United States of America or Canada, and is 0.7 higher than China.

Sands China to repatriate stranded workers to the Philippines

GAMING operator Sands China Ltd. is said to be arranging chartered flights for some 130 Filipino workers that have been stranded in the city due to the pandemic outbreak, TDM Radio reported.

The report noted that there are still no dates yet

for the arranged flight.

The Times contacted the gaming operator to confirm the number of passengers the chartered flight would carry as well as further details on the flight.

However, no reply was given by press time.

Earlier this week, the

Philippine Consulate General in the SAR announced that its request for a chartered flight to bring back home the remaining stranded nationals has already been forwarded to the country's Department of Foreign Affairs.

"The date of the flight

and the number of passengers to be included in the repatriation are yet to be determined," the statement read.

Last month, gaming operator Melco Resorts & Entertainment chartered a special flight for its workers and some stranded Filipinos wishing to

return home.

Since there were still available flight seats, the gaming operator has offered the seats to the Philippine Consulate General in Macau who then contacted stranded Filipinos under special circumstances such as those with disabilities, elderly people, or pregnant women.

The special flight included 88 of its former employees, along with 56 other distressed Filipinos in the city. LV

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Group demands gov't prepare for 'imminent war'

JULIE ZHU

MACAU People Power has demanded the local government to create measures and instructions in preparation for an "imminent war," and have called on the Macau authority to announce the plans within three days.

Yesterday, two members of Macau People Power delivered a petition of complaint and concern to the government headquarters.

Ian Weng Hong, a spokesperson from the group, urged the media to take their proposals seriously and report them in a positive light.

In the petition, Macau People Power explain that the world has been affected by "pivotal, unpredictable and uncontrollable incidents" since the end of last year, ranging from the viral pandemic to political upheaval.

Given these global problems, the association believes that the world has already entered a "dangerous and explosive era," and that a "nuclear war may come anytime." The group suggested that the local government should prepare for impending warfare.

"What if a war really [breaks out]? What if Macau is really bombed? What measures will the government take? The government should consider it," said Ian. "It is time for the government to consider the matter and, within three days, present measures and instructions to keep Macau residents alive during a war."

Aside from the concerns of war, the association also demanded improved living standards for Macau people.

They claimed that they were highly concerned about Macau residents' disquiet, and they promoted several measures to "regulate" Macau's food market.

Macau has maintained a capitalist system under the "one country, two systems" policy. Ian said that Macau appre-



ciates a free economy, and allows goods and service providers to determine prices freely. However, there are flaws in such a liberal economy.

In particular, the association accused some business operators of manipulating food prices and thus harming livelihoods.

Ian gave the example of local vegetable and meat prices, saying that there are big discrepancies in price between street markets, supermarkets and vendors. People without the correct information go to the wrong suppliers and are frequently ripped off by expensive food products, according to Ian.

Macau People Power proposed two solutions to regulate food prices.

As part of the first solution, the government would unify vegetable and meat prices. As for the second solution, local authorities would remove barriers from the vegetable and meat supply chains. The association believes these two measures will prevent supermarkets, vendors, wholesalers and associations from profiteering.

"We don't think that the government should ignorantly allow the price to be determined freely by the market. We [...] recommend the government to unify the price of vegetables and meat," the petition reads.

"The SAR government should firmly eliminate all unnecessary steps in the supply process, including stopping the unreasonable [profiteering] of the wholesale and the concerned business chambers," Ian said.

Recently, the local community has been closely watching the city's pork prices. The local government met with representatives of supermarkets, including San Miu, urging pork suppliers to lower prices.

Yesterday, San Miu reduced the price of pork by 7% to 10%. Prices in street markets are frequently higher than in supermarkets.

The Association of Chicken and Pork Merchants Long Hap Tong is the organization currently handling Macau's import of pork and chicken.

Macau People Power consistently makes unique proposals to the government. Earlier, the association wanted the government to remove Long Hap Tong from the supply chain in order to make pork prices go down.

It also asked the Macau government to consider a second cash handout for 2020.

"From the opinions we have collected [from our members], the government can either give two cash handouts in two different phases or give two cash handouts in a one-off stint in April," said Si Tou, head of the association.

NMA highlights city's human rights conditions in UN report

ANTHONY LAM

LOCAL democrat group the New Macau Association (NMA) announced that it has sent a report on the city's human rights conditions to the UN Human Rights Committee, emphasizing that the city's human rights conditions are deteriorating.

The report, which focuses on Macau's implementation of the rights guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, was sent for adoption at the Committee's 129th Session.

This is not the first time the group has submitted a human rights report to an international body.

In the report, the democrat group addressed its views across different aspects, namely civil rights and freedom, judicial procedures and "rights remedy", privacy rights and government surveillance, democratic universal suffrage, and others, including labor rights, domestic violence preventions

and sexual minority rights.

The Committee's upcoming periodic review of global human rights conditions will take place this July. The international body has the right to request a response from the Macau government.

The democrat group stated in the report that civil society is under more pressure. The use of legal apparatus by the government to suppress basic human rights is also becoming more frequent.

NMA has also accused the Macau government of avoiding the problem of universal suffrage in the report the government submitted to the UN last year. They hope the local government will "face the international community honestly and [...] seriously regard and implement the rights guaranteed by the Convention in the future," the group noted in a statement.

The group is also encouraging local people to speak out against "the suppression of basic rights, otherwise freedom will be lost one day."

NMA has made particular

note of freedom of expression being attacked in Macau, with examples such as the "crime of rumor" legislation, dismissal of outspoken scholars and denial of entry for foreign journalists.

Furthermore, the group believes that the right to a fair trial is also at risk as the government "[pre-selects] certain judges to try national security cases." Additionally, the association says the judicial assistance mechanism "should be reformed to ensure quality of defense."

The group has been opposing the installation of illegal facial recognition technology in local surveillance systems. There is, according to the group, no legal grounds for law enforcement authorities to do so. This topic forms part of the report to the UN.

In addition, NMA has reiterated its dissatisfaction with the absence of a schedule on universal suffrage, apart from the absences of trade union legislation and coverage of same-sex couples under the Domestic Violence Law.

DISEASE CONTROL GUIDE

PERSONAL PRECAUTIONS

<p>Wear a face mask and avoid social gathering</p>	<p>Keep a safe social distance</p>
<p>Personal Hygiene</p>	<p>Wash hands frequently and avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth</p>
<p>Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue paper or your elbow when sneezing</p>	<p>After using the toilet, flush it with the lid down</p>
<p>Clean and disinfect your home and workplace regularly</p>	<p>Avoid contact with people who have fever or symptoms of respiratory illnesses</p>
<p>Avoid going to the hospital to visit friends or relatives</p>	<p>Avoid travelling outside of Macao</p>

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



JOÃO MIGUEL BARRROS

LAWYER-CUM-PHOTOGRAPHER WINS INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

RENATO MARQUES

LAWYER by trade and photographer by passion, João Miguel Barros has recently had his photography work recognized at the Moscow International Foto Awards (MIFA). MIFA is one of the affiliate competitions of the Tokyo International Foto Awards, which exhibits the work of winners from several international-level photography competitions each year in Tokyo.

Barros won the 2020 Silver Awards in the Editorial-Sports (non-professional) category with a series of monochrome photographs taken in the city of Akuapem, Ghana.

The series was about the traditional Odwira Festival. It

is celebrated every year in September, and integrates multiple cultural, religious, and traditional activities. One of these activities is boxing, the topic Barros chose for his series.

As the photographer explained, the project includes two sets of images of various bouts taking place in a crowded public square. The first set consists of images that show movement and the dynamics of the fighting. The second series illustrates some of the particularities and details, and portrays the event to the audience.

This was one of three projects that Barros submitted to the international competition. The other two were awarded honorable mentions. They fea-

tured Jamestown, one of the oldest districts of the Ghanaian city of Accra, and a self-portrait titled "Self-portrait of a not-so-young artist in times of crisis," which deals with the themes of the Covid-19 outbreak and was submitted under the category of "Conflict."

This is the second time that Barros has won the silver accolade. In 2019, his project "Wisdom," which was about a school in Accra, was also awarded the silver accolade in the category of Editorial-Photo Essay.

The MIFA is an event organized by the Farmani Group. Founded in 1985, the organization is dedicated to curating and promoting photography, design, and architecture around the world.

Education authority fines center for unlicensed admission of students

THE Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) has initiated procedures to fine a local education center for advertising their services despite the revocation of their license.

The defendant is the Douglas International Education Center.

According to the education authority, the department recently noticed that "an organization, [calling itself] the Douglas International Education Center" had been advertising a remote education program.

However, the DSEJ had revoked the company's license to operate a continuing education business in March 2019. Since their license was revoked, the center is forbidden from providing any type of teaching. All advertisements and publicity regarding its teaching services are also banned.

In the last three years or so, the education authority has opened investigations into 45 continuing education service

providers. 41 of these cases involved severe irregularities.

Local residents do not pay to enroll in a continuing education course. The DSEJ pays the fees directly to the organizations on local residents' behalf. Each student is entitled to a maximum tuition sponsorship of 6,000 patacas.

In April, the Commission Against Corruption revealed fraud relating to an education center. The center had gathered the personal information of 192 local residents, gaining a total of over 1 million patacas from the government and deceiving the DSEJ. The majority of these students never attended a course.

In July 2011, the SAR government launched a continuing education development program encouraging local residents above the age of 15 to pursue further studies. Since then, the government has invested 1.78 billion patacas into the program. **JZ**



MOP600M OF TYPHOON DAMAGE COMPENSATION STILL UNPAID

THE insurance companies of Macau still owe people and companies some 600 million patacas in compensation for damages related to the passage of Typhoon Hato in 2017 and Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) acknowledged in the 2019 Annual Report, which was published in the government's Official Gazette.

According to the report, which has a chapter dedicated to the topic, as of the end of 2019, the in-

surance sector has settled claims for damages related to the typhoons in full or in part in the amount of 3.2 billion patacas, out of an estimated total of 3.8 billion patacas.

In the report, the monetary authority states that they have maintained close communication with insurers during this period to ensure solid operations. They state that claims were processed on time, recalling that to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) deal with the damage caused

by the typhoons and other major disasters, AMCM had launched a special "Property Disaster Insurance for SMEs" in August 2019. This insurance scheme aims to provide these companies with adequate tools to face major disasters. It creates an insurance mechanism that reduces the risks faced by SMEs, by making use of financial support provided by the government that allows companies to save up to 50% of their annual insurance premium up to 30,000 patacas. **RM**

MGTO: RETURNEE RETRIEVAL OPERATION UNLIKE REGULAR TRAVEL

FURTHER details need to be negotiated and confirmed before the retrieval operation for returnees can commence, Inês Chan, an official from the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) explained at the regular Health Bureau press conference on Covid-19.

With the summer holidays around the corner, the tourism regulator has disclosed that many overseas students have contacted the MGTO asking about air-to-land transit

in Hong Kong so they can return home.

The MGTO has initiated talks with the Hong Kong government on the matter. Chan explained that the talks involved the MGTO's counterpart in Hong Kong, as well as also the neighboring city's Airport Authority, border control authorities, and transport authorities, among other public entities.

Some students aiming to return home during summer have expressed that it would be hard to

obtain a ticket at the last minute. They are hoping the MGTO will make an announcement about the retrieval operation as early as possible so as to extend the buffer period.

In response, Chan said that it would be confusing to make premature announcements, but pledged that the tourism regulator would publicize the details once available. She added that the measures would become meaningless if exemptions were always made. **AL**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GEG Holds "Healthy and Fun Carnival" in Support of Local SMEs



The "Healthy and Fun Carnival" was unveiled on May 16.

Co-organized by Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) and the Macao Chamber of Commerce, the "Healthy and Fun Carnival" was unveiled on May 16. Held every Saturday and Sunday at the 1/F and M/F of Broadway Macau until June 21, the Carnival aims to help local SMEs ride through the pandemic and assist Macau with its steady economic recovery by creating a fun and enjoyable atmosphere for all. Over the years, GEG has supported a wide variety of events organized by social service organizations, and provided a business platform for local SMEs at Broadway Macau. This time, to help local

SMEs expand their business amid COVID-19, a total of 70 free-of-charge booths were provided to more than 100 different local merchants that participated in the Carnival. Mr. Ian Daniels, Senior Vice President of Procurement and Warehousing of GEG, said, "SMEs are a key driver to Macau's economic diversification and at GEG, we consider them as our key partners and prioritize them in business cooperation.

We are committed to helping local SMEs and actively provide tailor-made training courses and activities to help them further develop and grow their business with us." During the Carnival, GEG's Procurement Team went around to meet and explore future development opportunities with the on-site exhibitors and local SMEs. To boost residents' direct spending, a variety of offers and incentives were provided at the Carnival, including the MOP1 bargain on selective products, and the special scheme to promote repeated consumption in the community. Mr. Lo Tak Chong, President of the Macau International Grand Events Promotion Association, the contractor of the event, said "We hope to bring in different discounts and offers so that residents can buy what they like at bargain prices. Residents can use the government's e-consumption card here and get extra coupons at the

carnival for their future use." In addition, attendees who spend MOP400 or above at the Carnival can also participate in the on-site lucky draw where they will have the opportunity to win cash coupons for use at the merchants' physical stores or other small gifts and prizes. All lucky draw entries will receive prizes.



A cultural and creative zone is set up on-site.

The Carnival is divided into three zones to provide attendees with a good place to visit on weekends: the retail zone, gourmet zone, and game area. In particular, a zone featuring cultural and creative products has also been set up on-site. Many participating SMEs say that the Carnival gives them a good opportunity to recover their business amid the continuing impacts of COVID-19. Local artist Mr. Pakeong Sequeira Fortes feels encouraged about the set-up of the cultural and creative zone. "Last year, I participated in the Hello Kitty Hello Again Exhibition held by GEG at Broadway Macau. GEG's support for the cultural and creative sector gives us confidence and helps us open up more opportunities."



Mr. Ian Daniels, Senior Vice President of Procurement and Warehousing of GEG (middle) and Mr. Vincent Ip, Marketing Director of Vang Kei Hong Trading Co., Ltd (right).



A host of preventive measures have been implemented at the Carnival.

PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL SMES

As the first integrated resort operator to launch a SME partnering program, GEG has taken a proactive approach in assisting local traditional brands in their modernization and corporatization, hoping to inspire the industry about the importance of brand and diversify Macau's economy. Chak In Kei, a GEG tenant sells local egg bubbles waffles at Broadway Food Street of Broadway Macau. Its representative, Mr. Ivan Cheong thanked GEG for giving them a variety of ongoing support. "Since opening our business in the Food Street, GEG has given us much professional advice on our operations. Their dedicated teams have helped us on our brand promotion and helped us expand our business from a micro-size enterprise to operating several stores across Macau." GEG invited local SMEs in the retail and food and beverage sectors to open outlets in the Food Street since 2015. Providing the SMEs with professional advisory services and technical support and helping them establish and promote their own brands, the initiative has brought synergies and win-win outcomes for both parties, and received positive feedback from society.



Mr. Ivan Cheong

VARIED SUPPORTS OFFERED TO SMES AND YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS



To support potential young entrepreneurs in Macau, GEG's Procurement Team has recently participated in a virtual roadshow and business matching event under the ProQ Alliance scheme organized by Macao Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre (MYEIC). During the activity, GEG's Procurement Team carried out dedicated one-on-one business matching sessions with six local young start-ups and proactively explored future cooperation opportunities with them. In addition, GEG has also supported Macau's first online shopping festival organized by the Macau Convention & Exhibition Association by providing a series of discounts on the festival's online platform to help enrich the Festival offerings and boost consumption among residents.

To create a safe, sanitized and worry-free-Carnival for exhibitors and residents, all staff and visitors are required to wear a face mask, present a valid Macau Health Declaration and have their temperatures checked. In addition, all venue entrances and exhibition booths are equipped with hand sanitizers. To enhance the comfort level of consumers and for crowd control, all attendees are required to register via an online registration system in advance. "The prevention measures have guaranteed a safe and comfortable Carnival environment for all," said Mr. Vincent Ip, Marketing Director of Vang Kei Hong Trading Co., Ltd. He also thanked GEG for its continued support to local SMEs. "In the past, GEG has organized a host of activities and visits for the industry so that we can understand their procurement needs, participate in their business matching, and to become one of their partners."

MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY MAKING A COMMITMENT



銀娛GEG

ANTHONY LAM



Senado Square, Macau, last night

BLOOMBERG



JUNE 4 VIGIL GOES ONLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME

ANTHONY LAM

THE city's annual June 4 vigil was forced to run online this year, following the serial denial by the authorities of commemorative events relating to the incident that happened in Beijing 31 years ago.

Lawmakers António Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San have been the backbone of these events for many years. The events include an exhibition that takes place at different locations across the city, as well as a vigil held on the evening of June 4.

For the first time in 31 years, the city's government banned both events. The reason the authority gave was to safeguard public health given the Covid-19 pandemic. They noted that both the exhibition and the vigil would, if approved, break of infection control.

Two days ago, the police department even issued a note to remind

people not to gather at the Senado Square.

Last night, when no vigil or other civil assembly was taking place at the Senado Square, the police department still deployed a team of about 50 officers in uniform, with an unknown number of those not in a uniform, to the Square.

Once people gather in groups of three people or so, police officers would interfere and ask the group to disperse. As per observation by the Times last night, even people having small-group conversations with beer cans in their hands were also asked to disperse.

A person who requested to remain anonymous said that the police's operation was completely unnecessary. "I think they're doing it for an obvious reason," the resident said. "Honestly I think there are more journalists than people actually coming here for [today's vigil]."

The observer was there by herself and stressed that she was not following anybody's call. She simply wanted to commemorate the incident.

Meanwhile, the online vigil organized by Ng and Au accepted only 10 people at a location of which the address was not publicized.

As of yesterday, the city has had 57 days in a row without a new infection. All 45 of the city's infections were either imported or connected to an imported case. Not to mention the strict border and quarantine control measures that have been enforced since late January.

As Ng is part of the organizing body for the annual event, he posted an article on his social media bearing his name on the letterhead. In the article, he says "the devil's claw that suppresses freedom of expression" has come to Macau, referring to the ban on this year's commemorative events due to the

pandemic.

Ng pointed out that efforts for democracy in the city should not be paused, saying "Macau people are fed up with corruption and the hurting of public interests due to the small-circle election."

Slightly optimistic, he believes that if the disease disappears or is at least contained, the city will be able to hold its annual vigil physically next year.

The Macau Conscience submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Commission regarding the persecution of the commemorative events. It referred to the ban as "political censorship" and asked the UN sub-body to request an explanation from the Macau government.

Thirty-one years ago when the incident took place in Beijing, Ng organized the city's first protest at the Ruins of St Paul's. Despite the hoisting of typhoon signal No. 9 that day, the event attracted an attendance of more than 10,000.

Several subsequent events held for the same reason that year attracted large numbers of people, except for one event that attracted 100,000 people.

According to All About Macau, two residents holding the famous Tank Man photo while walking around the Square were taken by police officers for investigation.

EU RESPONDS TO BAN ON VIGILS

At the same time, the European Union has made a comment on the situation in Macau and Hong Kong. "We trust that the people of Hong Kong and Macau will nevertheless be free to mark the anniversary appropriately," EU spokeswoman Virginie Battu-Henriksson said.

The European body pointed out that law-enforcement authorities are using the Covid-19 pandemic "as an excuse" to ban the annual commemorations, citing unnamed critics.

"A clear commitment to fully respecting guaranteed rights and freedoms is now more important than ever in light of recent developments," the EU added.

Hong Kong anniversary

ZEN SOO & KEN MORITSUGU, HONG KONG

THOUSANDS of people in Hong Kong defied a police ban yesterday evening, breaking through barricades to hold a candlelight vigil on the 31st anniversary of China's crushing of a democracy movement centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

With democracy snuffed out in the mainland, the focus has shifted increasingly to semi-autonomous Hong Kong, where authorities for the first time banned the annual vigil that remembers victims of the 1989 crackdown.

Despite the police ban, crowds poured into Victoria Park to light candles and observe a minute of silence at 8:09 p.m. (1209 GMT, 8:09 a.m. EDT). Many chanted "Democracy now" and "Stand for freedom, stand with Hong Kong."

While police played recordings warning people not to participate in the unauthorized gathering, they did little to stop people from entering the park. Authorities had cited the need for social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic in barricading the sprawling park, but activists saw the outbreak as a convenient excuse.

"If we don't come out today, we don't even know if we can still come out next year," said participant Serena Cheung.

Police said they made arrests in the city's Mongkok district, where large crowds also rallied. When several protesters tried to block a road, officers rushed to detain them, using pepper spray and raising a blue flag to warn them to disperse or they would use force on the unauthorized gathering.

TOP COURT TERMINATES DEMOCRAT APPEAL ON CIVIL ASSEMBLY

AS the court that handles the New Macau Association's (NMA) appeal on its June 4 Vigil announced to terminate the legal procedure, the local democrat group "expressed great disappointment" yesterday at a press conference.

The group has declared to host several small-scale vigils on June 4 to commemorate the 31-year-old incident. The Public Security Police Force (PSP) has subsequently refused its right to do so. The group hence filed an appeal with the Court of Final Appeal, which legally handles cases on civil activities.

The top court of the city announced in a statement that it would not proceed with the case on the ground that the ruling would not realize the event on the declared date. The democrat group filed the appeal on June 1.

According to the association, the court stated in its notice to it that "the police only gave a reply [yesterday] morning." The court carried on saying that the event date was earlier than the legal deadline on which

the court should make a judgment, making "[careful] study and discussion of the content of the appeal impossible."

The court told the group that in the said case, the judgment of the appeal would lose its "useful effect", with which the group did not agree.

NMA disclosed that its intention to file an appeal was to seek a court's ruling over the PSP's decision, which the group considered a breach of law.

At the press conference, lawmaker and member of the association, Sulu Sou, reiterated that the court ruling, if any, is part and parcel of the conservation of the legal rights to civil activities. He added that pursuant to Law on the Prevention, Control and Treatment of Infectious Diseases, which was cited by the PSP to ban the series of vigils, only the Chief Executive has the legal right to implement restrictive measures.

In this case, according to the lawmaker, it is unlawful for the PSP to ban the vigil. **AL**



Mong Kok neighbourhood, Hong Kong, last night

ng marks Tiananmen ry, defying a police ban

On Twitter, they urged people not to gather in groups because of the coronavirus.

After the vigil ended in Victoria Park, groups of protesters dressed in black carried flags that said, "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of our times" as well as "Hong Kong Independence."

Hundreds and possibly thousands of people were killed when tanks and troops moved in on Tiananmen Square the night of June 3-4, 1989, to break

up weeks of student-led protests that had spread to other cities and were seen as a threat to Communist Party rule.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson offered the government's standard defense of the 1989 crackdown.

"The Chinese government has made a clear conclusion about the political disturbance that occurred in the late 1980s," Zhao Lijian said. "The great achievements that we have

achieved [...] have fully demonstrated that the development path China has chosen is completely correct, which conforms to China's national conditions and has won the sincere support of the Chinese people."

Yesterday, the square where thousands of students had gathered in 1989 was quiet and largely empty. Police and armored vehicles stood guard on the vast space. Few pedestrians lined up at security checkpoin-

ts, where they had to show IDs to be allowed through as part of nationwide mass surveillance to prevent any commemoration of the event.

As has become customary, many dissidents were placed under house arrest and their communications with the outside world cut off, according to rights groups.

"We all know the Hong Kong government and the Chinese government really don't want to see the candle lights in Victoria Park," said Wu'er Kaixi, a former student leader who was No. 2 on the government's most-wanted list following the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

"The Chinese Communists want us all to forget about what happened 31 years ago," he told The Associated Press in Taiwan, where he lives. "But it is the Chinese government themselves reminding the whole world that they are the same government... doing the same in Hong Kong."

The cancellation of the vigil came amid a tightening of Beijing's grip over Hong Kong. China's ceremonial legislature last month ratified a decision to impose national security laws on Hong Kong, circumventing the city's legislature and shocking many of its 7.5 million residents.

"The ban comes amid an alarming acceleration of attacks on the autonomy of Hong Kong and the undermining of the rights and freedoms of the Hong Kong people guaranteed under Hong Kong and international law," Sharon Hom, executive director of Human Rights in China, said in a statement.

About 15 members of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic and Democratic Movements of China, the group that organizes the annual vigil, gathered at Victoria Park at 6:30 p.m. (1030 GMT, 6:30 a.m. EDT). They wore black shirts with the Chinese characters for "truth" emblazoned on the front.

The activists lit candles and urged the public to do the same later to mourn victims of the massacre and show their support for the democratic cause in China.

Alliance Chairman Lee Cheuk-yan then led the group of about 15 members in a candlelit procession around the perimeter of the park, shouting slogans including, "Stand with Hong Kong."

"We have been doing this for 30 years, we have the right to do this, this is a peaceful procession," he said, stating that it would be absurd if this behavior is criminalized.

The group later removed one of the barricades surrounding the park, and entered. Eventually, thousands followed.

Lee said that the danger in the national security law is that Beijing will define what is a crime. "If we commemorate June 4th, condemn the massacre, (call for the) end of one-party rule, will this be labeled as subversion? We don't know," he said.

Other vigils, virtual and otherwise, were held elsewhere, including in Taiwan, the self-ruled island democracy whose government called again this year for Beijing to own up to the facts of the crackdown. AP

LegCo outlaws insulting China's national anthem

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

HONG Kong's legislature approved a contentious bill yesterday that makes it illegal to insult the Chinese national anthem.

The legislation was approved after pro-democracy opposition lawmakers tried to disrupt the vote. The bill was passed with 41 lawmakers voting for it and just one voting against. Most of the pro-democracy lawmakers boycotted the vote out of protest.

The pro-democracy camp sees the anthem bill as an infringement of freedom of expression and the greater rights that residents of the semi-autonomous city have compared to mainland China.

The pro-Beijing majority said the law was necessary for Hong Kong citizens to show appropriate respect

for the anthem.

Those found guilty of intentionally abusing the "March of the Volunteers" face up to three years in prison and a fine of up to 50,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$6,450).

The legislative debate was earlier suspended after pro-democracy lawmakers staged a protest, with one dropping a pot of pungent liquid in the chamber.

Raising a sign that said "A murderous regime stinks for ten thousand years," lawmaker Ray Chan walked to the front with the pot hidden inside a Chinese paper lantern. When security guards tried to stop him, he dropped the lantern and the pot, and was ejected from the meeting. Another lawmaker who accompanied him was also ejected.

The chamber was eva-

AP PHOTO



Pan-democratic legislator Ray Chan Chi-chuen holding a placard reading "A murderous regime stinks for ten thousand years"

cuated and police and firemen were called in to investigate the incident.

When the meeting resumed, pro-democracy lawmaker Ted Hui again splashed some liquid at the front of the meeting room and was escorted out. Legislative Council President Andrew Leung called such behavior irresponsible and childish,

before calling for the vote.

The contentious debate over the bill comes after China's ceremonial national legislature formally approved a decision last week to enact a national security law for Hong Kong that could see Chinese security agents posted in the city.

The national security law is aimed at curbing

subversive activity, with Beijing pushing for it after a monthslong pro-democracy protest movement at times saw violent clashes between police and protesters.

While experts have warned that the law could imperil Hong Kong's status as one of the world's best places to do business, at least two banks with a strong Asian presence have publicly backed the decision.

HSBC said in a Chinese social media post that it "respects and supports all laws that stabilize Hong Kong's social order," while Standard Chartered said it believed the national security law would "help maintain the long-term economic and social stability of Hong Kong."

Opponents of the anthem bill and the national security law see them as

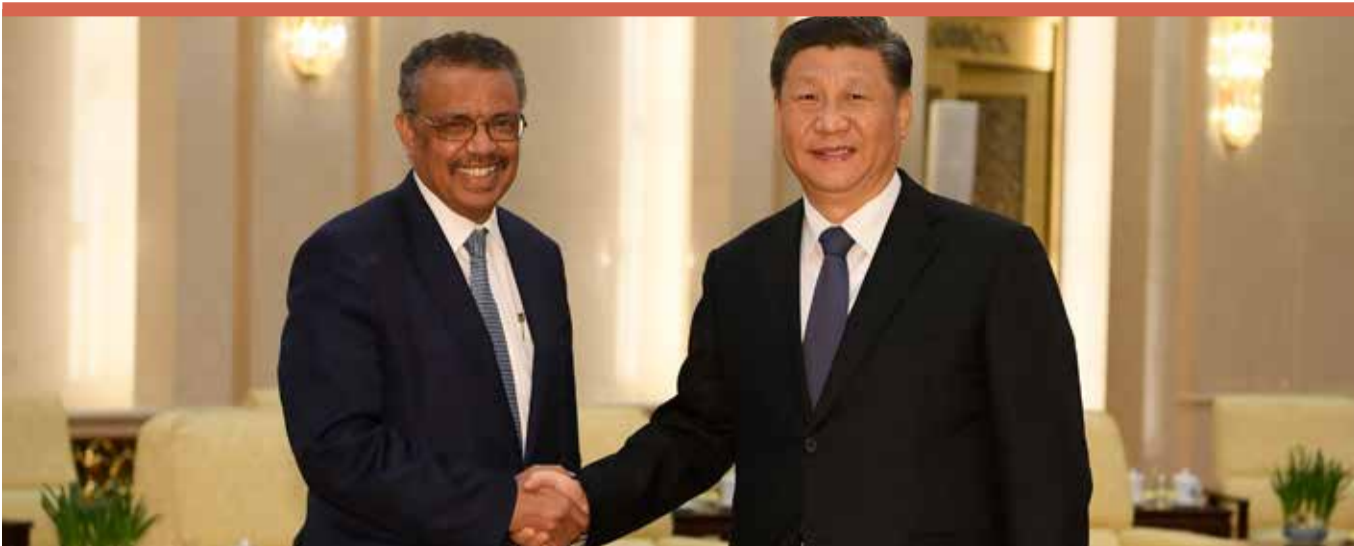
signs of Beijing's tightening control over the territory.

Beijing began pushing for the anthem law after Hong Kong soccer fans jeered the national anthem at international matches in 2015. As anti-government protests engulfed Hong Kong last year, thousands of fans booed loudly and turned their backs when the anthem was played at a World Cup qualifier match against Iran in September. FIFA later fined the Hong Kong Football Association over the incident.

The legislative session yesterday coincided with the 31st anniversary of China's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Before debate began, pro-democracy lawmakers stood in silence to mark the anniversary and put up signs on their desks that said "Do not forget June 4, the hearts of the people will not die." AP

AP PHOTO



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization, shakes hands with President Xi Jinping before a meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing (January 28)

AP report raises concerns about China and WHO; Beijing denies

At least two U.S. senators said yesterday [Macau time] that China hid data from the World Health Organization that could have altered the course of the coronavirus outbreak, even as a Chinese official denied delays in sharing information and said the government acted openly and transparently.

They were referring to an Associated Press investigation published this week that found China stalled on providing critical coronavirus information to WHO, which expressed considerable frustration in private even as it praised the country in public. Politicians said the report raised key questions, and public health experts said it shed light on a story that has become highly politicized.

At a press briefing on Wednesday, Zhao Lijian, a spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called the AP report "seriously inconsistent with the facts." He read off a timeline of events that did not contradict the AP's findings and added that China had always maintained "close and good communication and cooperation with WHO."

WHO officials refused to answer repeated questions from international journalists about the AP report, but they did not question its accuracy.

Ami Bera, chairman of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs subcommittee that focuses on Asia, acknowledged that

WHO was imperfect and said the U.N. health agency should stand up more forcefully to powerful countries like China.

"I do think the WHO has to be very careful in not being so conciliatory to China," he said.

Senator Rick Scott said that instead of exposing China's failure to share information, WHO officials praised the country's response to the coronavirus.

The AP found significant delays by China in the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak that compromised the WHO's understanding of how the disease was spreading, according to internal recordings of WHO meetings, documents and interviews. The AP uncovered evidence that China sat on releasing the genome of the virus for more than a week after three government labs had fully decoded it.

The recordings of meetings throughout January obtained by the AP showed the WHO was kept largely in the dark, while its public commendations of China were likely aimed at trying to coax more information out of officials.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus praised the Chinese response in public as "very impressive, and beyond words."

Zhao said he was unfamiliar with the internal information cited by AP. But he said "the facts and data are in plain sight" and that China acted "with openness, transparency and a sense of

responsibility." He did not directly address the comments made by WHO officials in the recordings.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said AP's reporting raised critical issues about how the outbreak was handled.

"I think there are many questions that need to be asked about the World Health Organization, about China and other countries' behaviors through this," Trudeau said. "The World Health Organization remains a truly important ally...but there are many questions that need to be answered going forward."

At the White House, a senior Trump administration official maintained that China pressured the WHO to mislead the world when the virus first emerged.

"The WHO's complicity with China to cover up the source of the virus violated the organization's own regulations," the White House staffer said.

The WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak to be a global emergency on January 30, its highest level of alert. Numerous Western countries, including the United States, did not make serious preparations for the virus' arrival for months.

In recent weeks, U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly blasted the WHO for allegedly colluding with China to hide the extent of the outbreak, saying the U.S. would be cutting its ties with the organization.

The new information un-

covered by the AP does not support the narrative of either China or the U.S., but instead portrays an agency urgently trying to solicit more data despite limited authority.

In one internal meeting, the WHO's top China representative acknowledged the country was only providing outbreak information with the U.N. health agency about 15 minutes before it appeared on state-owned China Central Television.

Several British Conservative politicians known for their hawkish views on China also cited the AP story.

In a tweet, former Cabinet minister Owen Paterson tweeted called it a "shocking report." Paterson noted the finding that in the week after three Chinese government labs and one commercial lab had all sequenced the virus but could not share it publicly, 600 more people were infected.

Suerie Moon, a global health academic at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, called the AP report "a huge public service in uncovering what happened in January."

"It does show the Chinese government is a powerful stakeholder in WHO," said Moon, who sat on an independent panel evaluating the WHO's flawed response to the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

"I do think Tedros' praise was excessive," Moon said. "But there was a clear objective behind it." AP

this day in history



1963 PROFUMO RESIGNS OVER SEX SCANDAL

Secretary of State for War, John Profumo, has resigned from government, admitting he lied to Parliament about his relationship with a call girl.

Prime Minister Harold Macmillan accepted the resignation calling it a "great tragedy".

Profumo, 48, made a personal statement to the House of Commons on 22 March in which he admitted being misleading about his relationship with 21-year-old call girl Christine Keeler.

He had made the statement in response to allegations from fellow MPs that he was involved with Miss Keeler, who has also had relations with an attache at the Russian embassy.

It was also alleged that Profumo, who has been War Secretary since 1960, had assisted in the disappearance of Miss Keeler, who had not appeared at the Central Criminal Court where she was due to give evidence in the case against a West Indian accused of possessing a firearm.

She was later discovered in Spain.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Profumo, said: "You will recollect that on 22 March, following certain allegations made in Parliament, I made a personal statement.

"At that time the rumour had charged me with assisting in the disappearance of a witness and with being involved in some possible breach of security.

"So serious were these charges that I allowed myself to think that my personal association with that witness, which had also been the subject of rumour, was by comparison of minor importance only.

"In my statement I said there had been no impropriety in this association.

"To my very deep regret I have to admit that this was not true, and that I misled you and my colleagues and the House."

The prime minister told Profumo that he had no option but to accept his resignation and said: "This is a great tragedy for you, you family and your friends.

Profumo also sent a personal letter to the chairman of the Conservative party in his constituency of Stratford-upon-Avon where there will now be a by-election.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Financial Secretary at the War Office, Mr James Ramsden, will take temporary charge of the department.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

John Profumo was educated at Harrow and Brasenose College, Oxford.

He entered Parliament in 1940 at the age of 25, representing Kettering.

At the time he was the youngest member of the Commons.

Before being appointed at the War Office he held many positions including Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and Minister of State at the Foreign Office.

Following his resignation he devoted himself to philanthropy and in 1975 was named Commander of the British Empire for his charitable work.

He died on 10 March 2006, aged 91.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You might have to grab this attention soon, though. Your window of opportunity will be closing by the end of the day. So speak up now or forever hold your peace.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
If you need to run errands or take care of routine tasks today, set aside any personal worries for a while and remember that every day can be as enjoyable as you want to make it.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Chance are, they just want to hear from you. You can rest assured that they will return the favor when you need something, because that's what friends do.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
There is no question that this partnership has legs, so take any insecure energy and channel it toward confidence. You're on equal footing and things look promising.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Get ready for some fun conversations today! Due to a rare combination of positive feedback, confidence, and coincidence, you'll be able to hold your own with a wide variety of people.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Your recent achievement was wonderful, but it isn't as recent as you might think it is. You can't go on resting on these laurels for much longer. It's time to pick a new challenge and conquer it!

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
If it's possible today, avoid driving or operating any heavy machinery. Just think of it as a prescription for your day. The big problem is your energy. It may not be dependable.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
It's totally out of your hands, so focus on future prevention instead. Choose your words and your audience wisely, and don't say more than you absolutely have to.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Yes, things have been a blur lately, but since your emotions are finally starting to settle down, your body should, too. Relaxation and comfort are more important than speed.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Any extra time you have today should be spent doing some research. Are you thinking about making a big purchase soon? Get online and search for the pros and cons about what you're considering.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Any business deals you take part in today, whether it's buying groceries or signing papers for a home loan, deserves your focused attention. Check the receipt.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
If you want more romance in your life, one of the hardest tasks is coming up with a list of likes and dislikes, which are often a part of the conversation when you first talk to someone.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

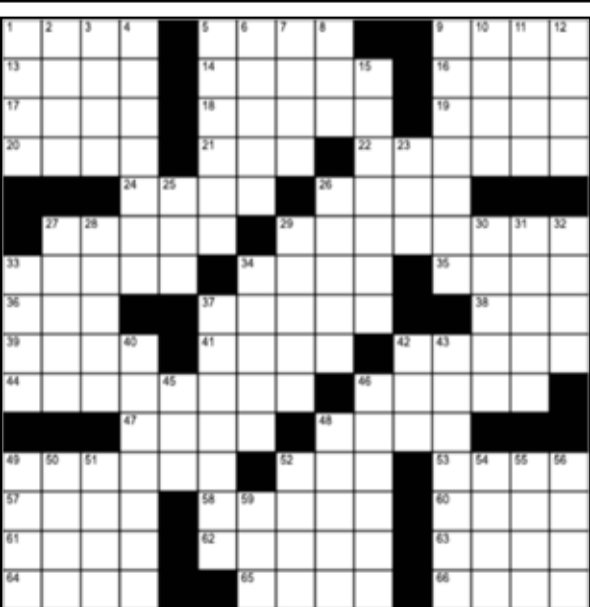
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	18	30	cloudy
Harbin	12	23	thundershower
Tianjin	20	28	cloudy
Urumqi	22	33	cloudy
Xi'an	22	37	clear
Lhasa	10	20	drizzle
Chengdu	19	34	cloudy
Chongqing	21	33	clear
Kunming	15	29	shower
Nanjing	22	28	moderate rain
Shanghai	22	26	heavy rain
Wuhan	23	31	drizzle
Hangzhou	22	25	heavy rain
Taipei	25	30	drizzle
Guangzhou	25	31	moderate rain
Hong Kong	28	32	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	13	18	drizzle
Frankfurt	9	18	drizzle
Paris	11	18	drizzle
London	9	19	drizzle
New York	21	31	moderate rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- Pasternak heroine; 5- Rat-___; 9- South American Indian; 13- Loads; 14- Hue; 16- Chief; 17- Ritz; 18- Prefix with red; 19- Hey, over here!; 20- Authenticating mark; 21- Genetic letters; 22- Think; 24- Ashtabula's lake; 26- This can be guilty or not guilty; 27- Nahuatl speaker; 29- Dejected; 33- Spring sign; 34- ___ fide; 35- Panama and bowler; 36- ___ Aviv; 37- Fop; 38- "Michael Collins" actor; 39- A single time; 41- Roadside stops; 42- Bellowing; 44- Prince of India; 46- Stately; 47- Han ___ was a "Star Wars" character; 48- Freeway access; 49- Harmful intent; 52- ___ Brooks, filmmaker responsible for "Blazing Saddles"; 53- Affectedly dainty; 57- Rival of Bjorn; 58- Silk cotton; 60- Russian river; 61- Curse; 62- Fax forerunner; 63- Ascend; 64- Send forth; 65- Be dependent; 66- Bluesy James;

DOWN: 1- Drinks (as a cat); 2- Drug-yielding plant; 3- Parks on a bus; 4- Jock; 5- Like toxic rainfall; 6- 1,000 kilograms; 7- Code word for A; 8- Rocky hilltop; 9- Bring an accusation against; 10- American space agency; 11- Prehistoric sepulchral tomb; 12- Poker payment; 15- Railroad; 23- Lair, often for wild animals; 25- Legal matter; 26- Tadpole milieu; 27- Stadium used for sports or musical events; 28- Nothing; 29- Italian lady; 30- Biblical brother; 31- Lieu; 32- Boris Godunov, for one; 33- Molecular component; 34- Musical instrument; 37- Argot; 40- Least difficult; 42- Escort's offering; 43- Ecstasy; 45- Mythical bird; 46- Large system of stars; 48- Insurgent; 49- House rodents; 50- Homecoming guest; 51- Actress Vima; 52- Track event; 54- Habeas corpus, for one; 55- 3:00; 56- Zeno's home; 59- Always;



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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\$28,000/mth 2,060 ft² 4 1/2 2 1/2

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691 ft² \$6,357,000 (ref: n/a)
- [Taipa] Manhattan D unit 4 1/2 2 1/2
2,305 ft² \$15,980,000 (ref: n/a)
- [Macau] Keng Ou Office 3 1/2
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 1/2 1 1/2
710 ft² \$10,000/mth (ref: 20021002)
- [Macau] Vai Fung Triplex, Macau 2 1/2 2 1/2
1,065 ft² \$14,000/mth (ref: 19121001)
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 1/2 2 1/2
1,626 ft² \$19,800/mth (ref: 20031001)
- [Taipa] Private house 2 1/2 3 1/2 3 1/2
4,266 ft² \$45,000/mth (ref: 19055006ST)

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JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

China easing airline access amid conflict with Washington

CHINESE regulators said yesterday more foreign airlines will be allowed to fly to China as anti-coronavirus controls ease but it was unclear whether the change will defuse a fresh conflict with the Trump administration over air travel.

The announcement came after Washington said Wednesday it would bar four Chinese airlines from the United States because Beijing was failing to allow United Airlines and Delta Air Lines to resume flights to China.

Airlines that were flying to China when controls were imposed in March were allowed to keep making one flight per week. United and Delta had suspended their flights before that and asked permission to resume.

Airlines that aren't on the March list can make one flight per week starting Monday, the Civil Aviation Administration of China said on its website.

The announcement appeared to open the door to United and Delta but CAAC gave no indication which carriers were affected. An employee who answered the phone at CAAC said she had no details. She would give only her surname, Yan.

Asked what it heard from Chinese regulators about its status,



United said in a statement, "We look forward to resuming passenger service between the United States and China when the regulatory environment allows us to do so."

The dispute adds to U.S.-Chinese strains over trade, technology, Taiwan, human rights and the status of Hong Kong.

All foreign carriers authorized to fly to China will be allowed to increase to two flights per week if

they go three weeks with no passengers testing positive for the virus, CAAC said. It said a route will be suspended for one week if the number of passengers who test positive reaches five.

Ahead of the Chinese announcement, the U.S. Transportation Department accused Beijing of violating a 1980 agreement on air travel. It said in response, Chinese carriers would be allowed the same number of flights as Beijing

permitted for U.S. airlines.

The department said President Donald Trump could put the order into effect before June 16. The department protested last month that Beijing was preventing U.S. airlines from competing fairly against Chinese carriers.

The four airlines affected by the order are Air China, China Eastern Airlines, China Southern Airlines and Xiamen Airlines.

The Chinese ministries of com-

merce and transportation didn't immediately respond to questions about how Beijing might react.

Before the pandemic, there were about 325 passenger flights a week between the United States and China, including ones operated by United, Delta and American Airlines. While U.S. carriers stopped flying, Chinese airlines made 20 weekly flights in mid-February and 34 by mid-March.

The Transportation Department said it objected to China's March limit but Beijing responded last week that it was not violating the air-travel treaty because the same one-flight limit applies to Chinese airlines.

United and Delta announced last month that they hoped to resume flights to China in June, as air travel has begun to recover recently. United wants to fly from San Francisco to Shanghai and Beijing and from Newark, New Jersey, to Shanghai. Delta seeks to resume flights via Seoul to Shanghai from Seattle and Detroit. AP

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OPINION

World Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg

HONG KONG BULL MARKET FOUND DEAD IN A POSH FLAT

Hong Kong's finance industry is thriving from the great divorce between the U.S. and China. Billion-dollar initial public offerings are on the horizon again, as New York-listed mainland companies seek a second home. The city's blue-chip index has even revised its weighting rules so tech stocks can feature more prominently.

But is this enough to rouse a sleepy stock market? While Hong Kong is on par with Shanghai in terms of total market capitalization, turnover pales in comparison, and it's practically a stagnant pool compared with the very liquid Shenzhen bourse. While mega IPOs are exciting, they are one-time events. Once bankers earn their fees and wave goodbye, trading could languish again.

South Korea may offer some insights. One year ago, Seoul was still in a deep bear market, plagued by steep conglomerate discounts and historically low turnover. Now, it's teeming with life. Since global markets started turning around in late March, the benchmark Kospi index has soared more than 40%, making it one of the world's best performers.

All of a sudden, Koreans, who dabbled in cryptocurrencies and all sorts of structured products, are frantically buying cash equities. Retail investors have single-handedly supported the main stock index as foreigners and domestic institutional investors sold.

CLSA Ltd. recently conducted a fascinating study explaining what's become one of the Kospi's largest ownership changes in history. Survey data show a few usual suspects: historically low deposit rates, cheap valuations, and blow-ups in popular alternative investments, such as mezzanine convertible bonds and equity-linked securities. A liquidity crisis and global market meltdown have tamed Koreans' taste for exotic products.

But the most interesting finding is that investors are swapping their real estate holdings for stocks. This comes as President Moon Jae-in's administration has made it harder to invest in residential property, with a recent ban on mortgage lending for anything valued over 1.5 billion won (\$1.2 million). In the past few years, a series of tightening measures has worked: A flattening of home prices, along with dwindling sales volumes, dented investor sentiment.

Apartments in Seoul were once considered one of Korea's best performing long-term assets. They registered a capital gain of 80.9% over the past 15 years, with flats in the affluent Gangnam district returning more than 200%, data provided by CLSA show. Yet property restrictions look set to remain as long as Moon's around — and he's not required to leave office until 2022. So people with money to invest have to look elsewhere. Samsung Electronics Co., which gained 443% over the same period, is a good alternative. Retail investors have poured \$7.2 billion into the company's shares this year.

Many of the catalysts that drove Koreans to stocks are present in Hong Kong, too. Interest rates are even lower and high-profile stocks are landing, including NetEase Inc., while Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. completed its secondary listing last year. Meanwhile, local investors can no longer count on HSBC Holdings Plc for reliable dividend payouts, forcing them to look at tech companies instead. It's no coincidence that the retail portion of NetEase's Hong Kong listing was met with brisk demand on the first day, enabling the company to increase its allotment to local investors.

The missing piece, however, is real estate. As soon as Hong Kong loosened its social distancing rules in May, secondary home-sales prices ticked up, along with transaction volume. The Land Registry recorded 6,885 property deals in May, a 12-month high. The faith that this sector can outperform stocks hasn't broken yet.

For an equity market to shine, local retail participation is essential. Overseas institutional investors, the biggest contributors to Hong Kong's turnover, come and go. Those from the mainland, now active players through the stock connect, are equally fickle, given they're so used to liquidity-driven markets back home. So unless Hong Kong moms and pops can learn from the Koreans — trading away their flats in Gangnam for a slice of Samsung — the Hang Seng will remain asleep.

AT LEAST 39 INJURED IN KNIFE ATTACK AT CHINA KINDERGARTEN

A school security guard injured at least 39 people in a knife attack at a kindergarten in southern China yesterday morning, state media reported. The motive remains unknown.

The attack was an eerie throwback to deadly attacks at schools in China over past years that prompted security upgrades and that authorities have blamed largely on people bearing grudges or who had unidentified mental illnesses.

The local government in the Guangxi region's Cangwu county said 37 students and two adults suffered injuries of varying degrees in the attack.

Chinese state media identified the attacker as a security guard at the school surnamed Li. The suspect had been detained while an investigation was underway, they said.

State broadcaster CCTV said 40 had been injured, three seriously, including the head of the school, another security guard and a student.

In earlier attacks, a woman wielding a knife injured 14 children at a kindergarten in the western city of Chongqing in October 2018.

Almost 20 children were killed in school attacks in 2010, prompting a response from top government officials and leading many schools to add gates and security guards.

THE BUZZ

PENTAGON-TRUMP CLASH BREAKS OPEN OVER MILITARY AND PROTESTS

ZEKE MILLER & ROBERT BURNS, WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's Pentagon chief shot down his idea of using troops to quell protests across the United States, then reversed course on pulling part of the 82nd Airborne Division off standby in an extraordinary clash between the U.S. military and its commander in chief.

Both Trump and Defense Secretary Mark Esper also drew stinging, rare public criticism from Trump's first defense secretary, Jim Mattis, in the most public pushback of Trump's presidency from the men he put at the helm of the world's most powerful military.

Mattis' rebuke followed Trump's threats to use the military to "dominate" the streets where Americans are demonstrating following the death of George Floyd, a black man who died when a white police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes. The president had urged governors to call out the National Guard to contain protests that turned violent and warned that he could send in active duty military forces if they did not.

Esper angered Trump yesterday [Macau time] when he said he opposed using military troops for law enforcement, seemingly taking the teeth out of the president's threat to use the Insurrection Act. Esper said the 1807 law should be invoked in the United States "only in the most urgent and dire of situations." He added, "We are not in one of those situations now."

After his subsequent visit to the White House, the Pentagon abruptly overturned an earlier decision to send a couple hundred active-duty soldiers home from the Washington, D.C., region, a



President Donald Trump departs the White House to visit outside St. John's Church in Washington earlier this week

public sign of the growing tensions with the White House amid mounting criticism that the Pentagon was being politicized in response to the protests.

" Militarizing our response, as we witnessed in Washington, DC, sets up a conflict, a false conflict, between the military and civilian society.

GEN. MATTIS

Former Secretary Mattis, a retired Marine general, lambasted both Trump and Esper in an essay in The Atlantic Wednesday for their consideration of using the active-duty military in law enforcement — and for the use of the National Guard in clearing out a largely peaceful protest near the White House on Monday evening.

"We must reject any thinking of our cities as a 'battlespace' that our uniformed military is called upon to 'dominate,'" Mattis wrote, referencing quotes by Esper and Trump respectively. "Militarizing our response, as we witnessed in Washington, D.C., sets up a conflict — a false conflict

— between the military and civilian society."

Trump responded on Twitter by calling Mattis "the world's most overrated General," adding: "I didn't like his 'leadership' style or much else about him, and many others agree, Glad he is gone!"

Days ago, Esper had ordered about 1,300 Army personnel to military bases just outside the nation's capital as Trump weighed whether to invoke the Insurrection Act and send active-duty troops into the city, the scene of large protests that devolved

into violence and looting over the weekend. But after a night of calm enforced by a large deployment of National Guard troops and heavily armed federal law enforcement agents, defense officials said the troops would begin returning to their home base.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told The Associated Press that the decision was reversed after Esper's visit to the White House.

White House officials had indicated even before Esper's comments that Trump was backing away from invoking the act, though officials said Trump was upset that Esper's statement conveyed "weakness." AP



Myanmar's Election Commission said this year's general election will take place as planned in November and won't be postponed because of the coronavirus crisis. The exact date will be announced later. Myanmar yesterday announced one new confirmed case of COVID-19, bringing its total to 234 including six deaths.

Russia The United States has delivered another batch of ventilators to Russia as part of a \$5.6 million humanitarian donation to help the country cope with the pandemic. The U.S. Embassy said the second shipment of U.S.-manufactured breathing machines arrived in Moscow yesterday, following a batch delivered last month.



Spain says restrictions on land border crossings with France and Portugal will be lifted from June 22. Under special measures imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus, only residents, cross-border workers and truck drivers were allowed since mid-March. 6,000 German tourists are expected to test new safety measures for travelers in the Mediterranean Balearic islands in mid-June, as the country prepares to fully reopen to international tourism on July 1.



Mexico The coronavirus toll in Mexico has soared to a new daily high, with the health department reporting 1,092 deaths. That is more than double the previous one-day record and in line with numbers in the United States and Brazil. The report was an embarrassment for officials, who have consistently predicted that cases in Mexico were about to start leveling off.